

Bluffview Montessori Board of Directors Meeting Minutes- 7/30/20

Board Members Present- Dan Kirk, Erich Lippman, Molly Leifeld, Ann-Marie Dunbar, Meghan Booth, and Henry Schantzen, Shelly Merchlewitz

Absent: Katie Kinneberg

Others in attendance: Sherry Lohmeyer

1. Meeting was called to order at 8:10 AM.
2. Meghan motioned and Molly seconded approval of the retreat agenda. Unanimous approval.
3. Molly motioned and Shelly seconded approval of the minutes from last year's board retreat. Unanimous approval.
4. Discussion of the large anonymous donation totaling \$1 million for teacher salaries, but with few strings attached dictating how it's used. The family that made the donation wants to remain anonymous. Henry suggested allocating some of it toward the construction of a large garage for storage, workshop, and Erdkinder activities. The goal at this point is to build the endowment and structure a process that allows for a sustainable increase in salary that doesn't fall off a cliff when the salary drops off.
5. School Planning for Fall: Plexiglass probably won't work because it's not flame-retardant. However, there will soon be over 2,000 masks in the building. There are also face shields. We have probably 90% of what we need going forward. We are continuing to discuss hybrid scenarios for return. There are a lot of possible scenarios as it's not clear how things are going to change between now and when school begins, both in terms of the disease process and in terms of families' desire to send their children to school.
6. Authorizer Search: Audubon is out and Bethel is teetering for us. Volunteers of America and The Minnesota Guild of Charter Schools are the two that are very much in the running. VoA requires a service piece, but our Happy Harvest event would satisfy that requirement. Board members divided into teams to discuss the potential authorizers and fill in the information in our potential authorizer assessment tool. Working teams gave overviews of the positives and negatives of each potential authorizer. At this point, VoA and the Guild are the top contenders. A working group from the board will continue with interviews of the two with the goal of bringing a proposal to the August board meeting.
7. Job Descriptions Approval: We divided the descriptions and each board member edited 5 descriptions.
8. New Business: None.
9. Adjournment: 11:25.

Guests for Core Values session in attendance (agenda lines 7&8): Diane Amundsen, Marcy van Fossen, Dan Kirk, Kim Bell, Shelly Merchlewitz, Rachel Heim, Shelby Wagner

Absent but invited: Erin Gervais and Maurella Cunningham

1. Meeting was called to order at 8:11 AM
2. Review and approve agenda: Changed to add a 12-12:30 lunch. Molly motioned, Kelly seconded.
3. Approve minutes from 8/22/18: Molly moved, Kelly seconded.
4. Open Forum: nothing.
5. Discussion of HOS Eval summary: Discussion of comments on HOS Eval compilation form.
6. Break-
Icebreaker in which all of the guests and board members introduced themselves.
7. Strategic Plan Review and "Celebration"
 - a. Why are we here now? (Diane)
 - b. Henry explains need to revisit Strategic Plan, see what we've done, move forward
 - i. Need to revisit core values, consider place for Montessori and other concerns
8. Work Session Re: Strategic Plan
 - a. Diane hands out sheet with re: strategic planning
 - i. Vision, mission, core values, culture, strategic initiatives, long term goals, short term objectives, action plan, action
 - b. Re: vision--Diane suggests, "Empowered children unfolding their full potential as whole and unique persons in a global community."
 - c. Re: mission--Henry wants new, broader mission rooted in Montessori philosophy, but put Montessori philosophy in a separate statement
 - d. In Culture Statement, instead of talking about expectations from each stakeholder group, talk about relationship we want to have with stakeholders
 - i. Language of relationship better than language of expectation
 - e. Looking at Strategic Plan: Start by celebrating what has been accomplished
 - i. Goal 1 largely checked off
 - ii. Goal 2 = still a struggle
 1. Orientation day volunteer sheets have helped
 - iii. Goal 3 just haven't gotten to yet, but Henry is laying the groundwork
 1. A lot of foundational work has been done
 - iv. Goal 4 most of points in process
 1. Assessment of Montessori processes still needs to be addressed
 - v. Goal 5 Still in process, but underway
 - f. Looking at MACS document: Welcoming All
 - i. We are looking for a similar type of document
 - g. Back to Mission and Vision Statement document
 - i. Core Value Development
 1. Groups of 2 develop core values
 2. Values posted on board--connections made
 3. Reduced to 7 categories: Environment, Global Citizenship, Respect and Inclusivity, Montessori Philosophy, Celebrate the Individual, Culture of Excellence, Partnership
 - ii. Diane provides Mission Statement for response:
 1. To guide each child to their fullest potential by providing relevant learning opportunities at the child's level in a cooperative environment that also cares about the child's social, emotional, and physical wellbeing.
 2. Dan suggests that the vision no longer covers everything after the visioning exercise. Suggests changing "children" to "learners"

3. To create a cooperative environment in which the individual thrives socially, emotionally, and physically and guides learners to their full potential by providing relevant and engaging learning opportunities.
4. (Henry's version) To sustain a culture of respect and inclusion, grounded in the Montessori philosophy, that
5. Ann Marie, Erich, Marcy, Molly, and Henry will meet to revise mission statement
- iii. Back to Strategic Plan
 1. Goal #1 Pretty much done
 2. Diane asks if 2-5 need to stay as such
 3. Henry says #3 = biggest priority
 4. Erich suggests merging 2 and 4
 5. Marcy suggests 3 and 5
 6. Diane suggests we need champions for remaining categories
 7. Lori = champion to look at #2 and #4, see if there are ways to merge them and bring them back to the board
 - a. Lori will sit down with Erich and Marcy at 5 PM on 8/21 to look at #2 and 4
 - b. Updated by 9/18 board meeting
 8. Henry champions #3 (fundraising) initiative + Ann Marie + Erin Gervais
 - a. Updated plan by 9/18
 9. Henry champions #5 with B&G committee + Katie + building corporation
 - a. Updated plan by 12/18
9. Adjourn Core Values Work Session
10. Break/Conversation
11. Job Descriptions Update
 - a. Lori is in the process of updating job descriptions
 - i. Has been working 2 days a week
 - ii. Soft goal of having them done by April
 - b. Enrollment is at 213, but we know some students will be leaving shortly
12. Parent Survey Results
 - a. Parent and Staff survey results were discussed and HOS has key points to work toward
13. Composition of Annual Meeting Celebration in the future
 - a. Need to combine annual meeting with events that draw parents
 - b. Night of the Arts/choir concerts/hors d'oeuvres/project displays/**celebration of learning**
14. Annual Giving Campaign Plans
 - a. Will not be done strategically this year
 - b. Fundraising Committee will be set up for fall or winter
 - c. Cookie Dough and Give to the Max will happen again
15. Minnesota School Board Association
 - a. Good source for updating policies as theirs are vetted by attorneys
 - b. Henry is hoping for a volunteer to look at how we could use this update policies
 - c. Ann Marie volunteered to research membership in MSBA and what it might get us
16. Wrap up items, loose ends from day
 - a. Henry needs to figure out a time for the mission group
 - b. Ann Marie, Molly, and Henry will work on Mission while Erich, Marcy, and Lori work on parent goals during work time at 5 PM on 21 August
17. Additional New Business
18. Adjournment at 2:05 PM