

**Gettysburg Montessori Charter School
Board of Trustees Official Minutes
March 28, 2019**

Board Members Present

Jill Clinton, Chair
Becky Uppercue, Vice Chair
Diana Williams, Treasurer
Rose Thornberry, Secretary

Board Members Absent

Lieucetia Swain (Family Commitment)
Tish Weikel (Work Commitment)

Others Present

Dr. Faye Pleso, CEO
Evan Stare, 1st/2nd Grade Teacher
Crystal Moore, Classroom Management Specialist

Executive Session

The Board met for executive session at 6:00pm to discuss student related issues, which if conducted in public would violate a lawful privilege or would lead to a disclosure of information confidentially protected by law. Executive session closed at 6:02pm.

Call to Order

Jill Clinton called the meeting to order at 6:03pm. Introductions were made.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Becky Uppercue made a motion to approve the consent agenda as submitted. Diana Williams seconded the motion. The consent agenda was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Public Comment on Agenda Items

No comment

Old Business

No old business

Administrators Report

Crystal Moore provided a PowerPoint presentation covering the role and need for a social worker in a school setting. Social workers can do assessments and testing that include the student's families. They can also support families seeking help within the community that affects students – from homelessness to addiction to mental health concerns. Social workers add services school counselors cannot provide, such as staff training programs, assistance with classroom management, and assessments for students in crisis and/or with mental health concerns. In most cases, a social worker would replace a contracted psychologist while providing crisis intervention, develop intervention strategies to increase academic success, help conflict resolution and anger management, provide support services for grief and divorce counseling, and help children develop social-emotional skills.

There was a brief discussion following the presentation. Jill Clinton pointed out that this may be an enormous task for one person due to our school having so many sending districts. A social worker would potentially be working with agencies and service providers from several towns and counties. Becky Uppercue asked how this person would work with our already-contracted providers through the LIU. The Board would want to avoid doubling up on fees and services and it may be difficult or impossible to remove these types of services from the overall package of services and therapies we pay the LIU to provide. It was agreed that more discussion is needed on this subject.

Dr. Pleso reported a current enrollment figure of 219 students, down one from last month. There are 225 students enrolled for the 2019-2020 school year so far, with only 4 spaces left in Kindergarten. Dr. Pleso anticipates meeting the total enrollment goal of 250 students for the next school year.

Dr. Pleso recommended hiring Kayla Bucher as PCA. Becky Uppercue made a motion to approve the hiring of Kayla Bucher at \$14.50/hr, no benefits, under 30 hrs/week as of April 1, 2019. Diana Williams seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Dr. Pleso is currently interviewing candidates for Mrs. Stough's classroom assistant for the remainder of the school year and should have someone in place by the April meeting.

School Attorney Kathy Nagle made adjustments to the Teacher's Assistant (Title I and non-Title I) and part-time support staff job descriptions. The primary change made was that Title I assistants must now have an Associates Degree. There was some discussion about the role of the part-time support staff. Kathy Nagle wanted to include clarification that this was a non-academic position. Jill Clinton questioned why there is a paid non-academic support position for students when there are several PCAs at the school in addition to teacher's aides. Dr. Pleso explained that there is currently one that has been working with students in this capacity for

several years. Jill suggested re-visiting this position next year. Diana Williams made a motion to accept the revised job descriptions of Teacher's Assistant (Title I), Teacher's Assistant (non-Title I) and part-time support staff. Becky Uppercue seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Dr. Pleso reported that the Kegerreis one-year contract for billboards is due and she will be renewing it for \$5,825. Becky Uppercue inquired about how much of an increase it is over last year's contract. Dr. Pleso will let the Board know at the April meeting.

The school's IT company, Kirbtech, is currently being paid by the visit and they have suggested to Dr. Pleso that we could save money by entering into a contract that would begin on July 1, 2019. Because the amount would exceed \$10,000, Dr. Pleso will obtain two additional quotes and will present each one to the Board in April.

The school received a large donation of new children's clothing from the Gettysburg Freemasons Good Samaritan Lodge 336. Nurse Adrian will inventory and administer the donation.

Report of the Chair

Submissions for the next newsletter were due yesterday. It will be printed and distributed next week.

Jill will attend the next staff meeting on April 23rd and Rose will attend the one on May 26th.

The May 30th board meeting is changed to May 29th at 6pm.

The next Executive Committee meeting is April 9th, with the agenda due April 2nd. The committee will be reviewing the Students' Rights and Responsibilities Policy.

Jesse Bean was able to find a free, online course through the PA Department of Education to satisfy the Board's Act 55 duties. Jill will send each Board member a link and once reflections are written, Dr. Pleso will certify that they have completed the course and produce certificates to keep on file. Rose Thornberry and a new Board member serving out Melissa Ring's term will need to complete the course by June 30th. Jill Clinton, Tish Wiekkel, and Becky Uppercue must complete the course by June 30, 2020. Lieucetia Swain and Diana Williams have until June 30, 2021 to take the course.

Executive Committee

The committee met on March 12th to review the Health, Safety, and Substance Abuse policy as well as the Special Education and Students with Disabilities policy. Rose, Diana, and Jill

discussed their findings from individual review and were unable to find any appropriate deletions or additions – or even any spelling or grammatical errors. They did have several suggestions:

- The Health/PE teacher was named on page three of the Health, Safety, and Substance Abuse policy. The committee suggested that be referred to by title only, rather than the name of the current teacher.
- Rose pointed to a passage on page five that states, “student artwork is to be displayed in the service and/or dining areas.” Dr. Pleso will look into this and we will discuss at the April board meeting.
- There was also a discussion about fundraising referenced on page seven. The committee felt that it should be kept to healthy options and that our annual Gertrude Hawk fundraiser may not fall within those guidelines.
- When referring to the school’s Nurse/Nurses’ Aides, it outlined care they could do at the school, including “starting IVs,” which the committee questioned.

Finance Committee

Review of Budget

- As of February 28th, we have approximately \$550k in checking and total assets are approximately \$937k, which includes funds still due from sending school districts.
- Overall, we continue to have a very strong year financially, with increasing net income with four months left in the fiscal year. We are in good shape as we end the year to secure loans and have a strong down payment for our building project. We have tracked fairly close to the budget throughout the year.

2019-2020 Draft Budget Review

- The committee met to draft an initial budget for 2019/20 and it will be based on 230 students, though Dr. Pleso is expecting 240-255 to enroll for the next school year. Our total enrollment capacity is 285.
- The draft budget is anticipating net income of \$145,000
- The draft budget includes two part-time RtI teachers, a vice principal/instructional coach, a new 1st/2nd grade teacher and classroom as well as an aide. These additions will be discussed at length when the draft is presented to the Board at the April meeting. Jill Clinton reminded Dr. Pleso and the Board that technology upgrades were also mentioned as part of the next budget. Dr. Pleso wants to be sure we don’t invest in something permanent or difficult to move in light of the coming renovations to the building and removal of the mods in 2021. The Board discussed the need for more computers in the classrooms, given the investment in programs like Rosetta Stone. Without the hardware, the students can’t access these on a regular basis. We also need to be mindful about mobile classroom technology that could be used as instructional tools for teachers and as research

tools for students. Dr. Pleso reminded the Board that the Montessori philosophy does not include an emphasis on technology and that many of our families are mindful of that, so we need to try and maintain an appropriate balance.

- There was also a discussion of the surplus when crafting the new budget. Dr. Pleso said the Board in the past was comfortable with \$150,000 in surplus. Jill Clinton agreed that this was a minimum we need to have, untouched, in the bank, and accessible. She said she would be more comfortable with \$175,000 but that we could look at this more closely when the draft budget is available.
- The draft will be presented to the Board at the April meeting.

Building project funding updates

- Jesse Bean from Charter Choices and Dr. Pleso reports that the independent feasibility study process, which was the last major item needed for the USDA, is almost complete.
- The environmental study will be started once the design for the new building has been chosen with Digsau.
- The Reinvestment Fund is currently in the best position to provide our bridge loan, but Citizens Bank and Member's First have also submitted proposals to Dr. Pleso. She will provide an update at the April meeting.

Statement of Financial Interest forms are needed from Tish Weikel, AJ Warner, and Lieucetia Swain. This is a top priority for the Finance Committee, as they were due on March 31st. The next Finance Committee meeting will be April 17th when they will continue to refine the budget in preparation for the Board meeting.

Personnel Committee

Lieucetia Swain reported that she requested a PDF of last year's survey to forward to Dr. Pleso for revisions. The survey will be revised, Survey Monkey subscription started, and email out to parents on April 29th. Lieucetia looked into an upgraded plan on Survey Monkey, but said that the additional features did not bring a lot of value for the additional cost.

Governance Committee

The committee met on March 4th to re-interview a candidate that was previously vetted last year and not chosen for the available Board seat. Unfortunately, the candidate did not show up to the meeting and did not respond to calls or emails. Multiple attempts were made to contact the candidate with no success. The open position has been posted on the school's Facebook page and in the forthcoming newsletter. A few people have responded and Jill Clinton is making contact with them and following up.

Building Committee

The committee has narrowed the design to three options. At the next meeting, revisions to the three designs will be presented and the committee will choose the final design. The architecture firm, Digsau, anticipates the new footprint will be 15,000 sq. ft – 16,000 sq. ft. They are working with our civil engineer, Bob Sharrah, who worked on the original expansion plans and helped get our approvals and permits from the township. He feels that as long as the new footprint does not exceed 1,000 sq. ft – 2,000 sq. ft over what was originally approved, we should not have an issue with the township. The architects would like to plan for as close to the original square footage as possible, not only for permitting reasons, but also for cost considerations. Once the final design is chosen, the committee will not meet again for 4-6 weeks while refinements and adjustments are made, information is forwarded to the USDA and studies are started.

As mentioned elsewhere in these minutes, the feasibility study should be done this week or next. The CPA firm has completed their work. Dr. Pleso has received proposals from several financial institutions offering bridge loans. The Reinvestment Fund has offered \$4.2 million; Members 1st has offered \$3.4 million (pending the outcome of the feasibility study); and Centric Bank has offered \$4.4 million for the bridge loan. Citizens Bank is expected to make an offer for a loan this week.

Housekeeping

None

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair Jill Clinton at 8:02pm.

Approved:



Rose Thornberry, Secretary