

**Gettysburg Montessori Charter School  
Board of Trustees Official Minutes  
August 29, 2019**

**Board Members Present**

Jill Clinton, Chair  
Becky Uppercue, Vice Chair  
Diana Williams, Treasurer  
Rose Thornberry, Secretary  
Shanin Caplener, Member, at-large  
Tom Hockensmith, Member, at-large  
Tish Weikel, Member, at-large

**Others Present**

Dr. Faye Pleso, CEO  
Ashley Reid, Member Elect

**Executive Session**

The Board met for executive session at 5:51pm to discuss employee-related issues, which if conducted in public would violate a lawful privilege or would lead to a disclosure of information confidentially protected by law. Dr. Pleso was invited to join the Board in Executive session to discuss these matters. Executive session closed at 6:21pm.

**Call to Order**

Jill Clinton called the meeting to order at 6:22pm. Introductions were made.

**Public Comment on Agenda Items**

No comment

**Old Business**

No old business

**Approval of Consent Agenda**

Diana Williams made a motion to approve the consent agenda as submitted. Shanin Caplener seconded the motion. The consent agenda was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

**Administrator's Report – Dr. Faye Pleso**

Current enrollment stands at 239, up from 231, for the 2019-2020 school year. Dr. Pleso reported that the three 1/2 classrooms are nearly full.

Dr. Pleso reported that the year-end budget review has been delayed, but it will be available before the next Finance committee meeting. The Finance committee will discuss this and present this, along with long-term budget priorities, at the September Board meeting.

The school's website has been revamped and is now live. Refinement will continue, but Becky Uppercue noted that it was much improved and looks great. Jill Clinton reminded Board members to please forward her a new or updated bio for the Board page.

Dr. Pleso told the Board that the school has received a REAP grant of over \$16,000 as part of their small rural achievement program. These funds will be used to offset the cost of the ESL teacher we need to contract with through the LIU. Dr. Pleso has also applied for a \$500,000 RACP grant.

Dr. Pleso mentioned that she continues to meet with local and state political leaders to introduce them to the school and educate them on the need for high-performing charter schools. She recently met with newly elected state senator Doug Mastriano and his chief of staff at his office and discussed our school and educational goals.

Dr. Pleso announced that the GMCS will be holding its first science fair in 2020! There will also be a first-ever 6<sup>th</sup> grade graduation ceremony and celebration at the school.

Shanin Caplener has made attempts to contact the Gettysburg Times regarding a press release about our recent Hoffman Trust library grant, since we are both a local school and a local charitable organization. Dr. Pleso offered her contacts so that she may be able to email it to them at the paper.

In other marketing news, Dr. Pleso is working with Kapp Advertising to target families with children attending this year's York Fair. She is also looking into working with Southern PA magazine, a glossy monthly that serves York and Adams counties. She presented the Board with copies of Celebrate Gettysburg magazine, which featured an interview with Dr. Pleso about the school and unique educational opportunities in the area.

Jill Clinton made a motion to approve proposed policy changes to the Evaluations, Reevaluations, and Independent Evaluations which were presented for review in July. Becky Uppercue seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Becky Uppercue made a motion to approve proposed policy changes to the area of Instruction Conducted in the Home and Homebound Instruction, which were presented for review in July. Tish Weikel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Dr. Pleso recommended a pay increase for Leigh Gugliette, who will now be working as a 12-month employee with four weeks of paid vacation. Tom Hockensmith made motion to increase Leigh Gugliette's salary to \$41,260 retroactive to August 21, 2019. Tish Weikel seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Dr. Pleso recommended hiring Kathy Strausbaugh and Mara Stojik as classroom teacher's assistants. Jill Clinton made a motion to approve the hiring of Kathy Strausbaugh and Mara Stojik at \$17/hr, for less than 30 hours per week, with no benefits retroactive to August 5, 2019. Tish Weikel seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Dr. Pleso recommended hiring Jackie Hoover as a receptionist/front office clerk. Tish Weikel made a motion to approve the hiring of Jackie Hoover as receptionist/front office clerk at \$25,000/yr, as a 12-month position, with benefits and two weeks of paid vacation, retroactive to August 9, 2019. Becky Uppercue seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Dr. Pleso recommended hiring Brittany Perry as a long-term substitute teacher in Kindergarten beginning August 5<sup>th</sup>. She will eventually transition to part-time RtI learning support. Tish Weikel made a motion to approve the hiring of Brittany Perry at \$150/day for the substitute teaching position, with no benefits, retroactive to August 5, 2019, until October 21<sup>st</sup>, when Brittany Lawrence returns from FMLA. Becky Uppercue seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Dr. Pleso recommended hiring Amy Gebhart as a 1/2 grade teacher. Jill Clinton made a motion to approve the hiring of Amy Gebhart as a 1/2 grade teacher at \$39,000/yr, with benefits retroactive to August 19, 2019. Tish Weikel seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Dr. Pleso recommended hiring Brianna Price as Breakfast/Lunch Server. Tish Weikel made a motion to approve the hiring of Brianna Price as Breakfast/Lunch Server at \$10/hr, under 30 hours, with no benefits, retroactive to August 12, 2019. Tom Hockensmith seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

### **Report of the Chair**

Ashley Reid, a parent from Gettysburg new to GMCS, was sworn in as a new member of the Board of Trustees to fill the seat vacated by Tish Weikel. The Board thanked Tish for her service during her term on the Board. Ashley's term will expire in May 2021. She was reminded about her Act 55 obligations and will need to complete the training by the end of June 2020.

Jill Clinton and Dr. Pleso worked together to update the Board calendar for 2019-20 and presented it to the Board. Megan prepared the calendars and they were distributed, but upon further review, Dr. Pleso noticed an error with the Strategic Goals report. The calendars will be revised and new ones given to members at the September meeting.

Jill Clinton presented the Board manuals she and a former member have been preparing. The content and format are finished, but Jill needs to copy and collate the information into six additional binders for Board members. She hopes to have them ready at the September meeting.

Jill reported information given to us by Kathy Nagle, our school attorney regarding Board member involvement in social media associated with GMCS. She advises that no Board member administer or moderate a site or page referencing the school. They should also not be seen as representing GMCS, its administration, or the Board in any capacity online or on social media. Becky Uppercue had previously launched a Facebook page that will now instead be moderated by a parent.

The next newsletter content is due in October and will primarily discuss the new makeup of the Board.

Becky Uppercue attended the August staff meeting and reported that she shared highlights of the Parent Survey analysis. She also discussed the Board member changes and details on the American Montessori Society. Becky shared with the Board that the school is now using a fingerprint-activated time clock for staff and is looking into purchasing a giant trophy to award to those students who have perfect attendance. Becky also mentioned that Christine Felicetti is launching an in-classroom, weekly guidance program this year.

Shanin Caplener will attend the September 24<sup>th</sup> staff meeting and Diana Williams will go to the one on October 29<sup>th</sup>.

Tom Hockensmith completed the CEO evaluation for 2018-19. Tom, Becky, and Rose met with Dr. Pleso to present it to her and have her sign off on it.

Jill requested that Dr. Pleso continue to develop the baseline spreadsheet for employee pay; Dr. Pleso hopes to have it ready for the September meeting. Jill said the hope is that the Board can use it as a reference that outlines starting salaries for teacher aides, aides with teaching certifications, teachers, and teachers with additional certification or degrees. She suggested that Dr. Pleso may or may not want to also include starting salaries for specials teachers, RtI and Special Ed staff, and administrative staff.

Jill asked Becky Uppercue to reach out to Melissa Ring to schedule her for the September meeting, where she will present her findings from the Title I conference she attended in the summer.

Jill presented the 2018-19 Annual Report of the Board in a detailed review, which is required every year and covers the assets and liability changes. It is a summary of the school's legal compliance.

Rose made a motion to accept the 2018-19 Annual Report of the Board. Diana seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Jill thanked all officers of the 2018-19 Board for their service in those roles and nominated Tom Hockensmith for Chair of the 2019-20 Board. Tish seconded the nomination. Tom accepted and the nomination was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Tish nominated Jill Clinton for Secretary of the 2019-20 Board. Becky seconded the nomination. Jill accepted and the nomination was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Jill nominated Rose Thornberry for Vice Chair of the 2019-20 Board. Becky seconded the nomination. Rose accepted and the nomination was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Jill nominated Becky Uppercue for Treasurer of the 2019-20 Board. Rose seconded the nomination. Becky accepted and the nomination was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Dr. Pleso mentioned that she will start the process of getting Jill bonded as Secretary.

The Board debated the merits of different meeting days and times for the 2019-20 school year and decided to keep the Board meetings at 6:00pm on the last Thursday of each month, with several exceptions made for holidays. Jill will advertise the following Board meeting dates in the Gettysburg Times:

September 26

October 24

November 21

December 19

January 30

February 27

March 26

April 30

May 28

June 25

July 30

August 27

The Board also approved the following committee members, as well as dates and times of committee meetings for 2019-20, which are all held at the school. Jill will advertise the Finance committee and Governance committee meeting dates and times in the Gettysburg Times. The committees and meeting dates/times are the following:

Executive: Tom (Chair), Rose, Becky, Jill

Finance: Becky (Chair), Diana

Audit: Becky (Chair), Diana

Personnel: Tom (Chair), Ashley, Rose

Comprehensive Plan: Shanin (Chair)

Governance: Jill (Chair), Diana, Ashley, Megan Stough (faculty representative), Shannon McConnell (parent representative)

Building: Jill (Chair), Diana (alternate)

Executive: last Thursday of each month at 5:15pm

September 26, October 24, November 21, December 19, January 30, February 27, March 26, April 30, May 28, June 25, July 30, August 27

Finance: second-to-last Wednesday of each month at 3:30pm

September 18, October 16, November 13, December 11, January 22, February 19, March 18, April 22, May 20, June 17, July 22, August 19

Governance: second Thursday of each month at 3:30pm

September 12, October 10, November 14, December 12, January 9, February 13, March 12, April 9, May 14, June 11, July 9, August 13

### **Finance Committee**

The August budget review revealed \$727k in operating accounts at Centric; \$3,800 at PNC in the 'Wolfpack' account; \$343k in accounts receivable; \$1.07 million in total assets; and \$46,700 in accounts payable. The school owes \$891k on our primary building loan and \$71,000 on our secondary loan.

The 2019-20 budget was created with a base of 237 students (we are currently at 239). The goal is to transfer a portion of what we have at Centric to Members 1<sup>st</sup> to open our account as required by our agreement by the end of the week. It will consist of approximately two payrolls and two months' worth of expenses (\$300k). The majority of our funds will remain in a higher-yielding

money market account at Centric for now. Members 1<sup>st</sup> is working with Charter Choices and Dr. Pleso to offer similar money market rates in an effort to continue our growing relationship.

The PNC account holding the \$3,800 in ‘Wolfpack’ funds has been closed and the money moved to Members 1<sup>st</sup>. It has been renamed the ‘Student Activities Account’.

### **Personnel Committee**

The Committee met to finalize the goals of the CEO/Principal evaluation. Tom Hockensmith will include these in the overall evaluation. The Committee then presented the evaluation to Dr. Pleso, who added comments and signed off, along with Jill Clinton as Chair of the Board.

### **Governance Committee**

Jill Clinton reported that there are two parents who have expressed interest in serving on the Board, one a previous Board member. Jill explained to them that we currently have a full Board, but may have openings with expiring terms in May 2020 and will stay in touch with them to maintain and gauge their interest. If nothing changes, recruitment will begin in earnest at the end of the year.

Jill mentioned that under the current circumstances, there is no need for a Governance committee meeting on September 12th, but will let members know about the October 10<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### **Building Committee**

Dr. Pleso reported that a meeting to update all parties will be scheduled for September. The plan is still to break ground in the spring while also holding charrettes (design-related brainstorming sessions involving all stakeholders) at that time, to take advantage of student and family feedback while school is in session.

Advertising for the project manager will begin in May now, rather than waiting until the summer months.

### **New Business; for the good of the order**

None

### **Public Comment**

Ashley Reid notified the Board that she has an opportunity to provide an unused, floor model in-ground basketball hoop (which can cost between \$350-\$2,900) free of charge to the school. It would require delivery and installation, however, as well as inspection by Straban Twp, but Dr. Pleso offered to investigate the feasibility of accepting this generous gift.

### **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair Jill Clinton at 8:29pm.

Approved:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rose Thornberry".

Rose Thornberry, Secretary