

Gettysburg Montessori Charter School
Board of Trustees Official Minutes
SPECIAL MEETING
August 10, 2020

Board Members Present

Tom Hockensmith, Chair
Rose Thornberry, Vice Chair
Jill Clinton, Secretary
Ashley Reid, Member, at-large
Diana Williams, Member, at-large
Traci Elligson, Member, at-large

Board Members Absent

Becky Uppercue, Treasurer (work committment)

Others Present

Dr. Faye Pleso, CEO
Jay Appleton, Greyhawk
Jason Officer, Parent
Flor Scanlan, Parent

Call to Order

Tom Hockensmith called the special meeting to order at 5:34pm via Zoom conference call, in accordance with PA state health guidelines during the COVID-19 crisis. All information regarding public access to the special meeting was advertised in the [Gettysburg Times](#).

Introductions

Introductions of all attendees were made.

Public Comment on Agenda Items

Parent Jason Officer inquired as to how Kindergarteners and 1st/2nd graders were going to focus during a full day of synchronous distance learning. He mentioned that surrounding school districts (Gettysburg, Littlestown) were providing in-person instruction four-to-five days per week. He expressed wanting the most ‘normal’ school experience for his incoming Kindergartener. Tom Hockensmith reminded Mr. Officer that these opinions were offered and discussed at the previous Board meeting within a larger conversation of the A/B schedule that was subsequently approved by the Board at the July meeting.

Building Committee

Jay Appleton from Greyhawk reported that bid results on August 31st were “spectacular” compared to the way the bidding process has been going in general over the past 18 months. We received multiple bids for each of the prime contractors: general construction, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing/fire protection.

The best news is that the total base bids came to \$3,219,264 which was approximately \$100k less than we budgeted and nearly \$1 million dollars less than our impending Members 1st loan.

Grayhawk prepared a memo outlining the bid results and their recommendations for awarding the construction contracts and forwarded it to Digsau, GMCS attorney Kathy Nagel, and Dr. Pleso, who sent it to the Board.

Grayhawk recommends awarding the general construction contract to eci Construction, LLC in the amount of \$2.14 million dollars (base bid); the mechanical contract to Rodney B. Smith Plumbing, Heating & Cooling in the amount of \$459k (base bid); the electrical contract to Hull’s Electric in the amount of \$272,164 (base bid); and the plumbing/fire protection contract to Mann Plumbing & Heating in the amount of \$348,100 (base bid).

The exciting news about the budget lead to an extensive discussion of “add alternates,” which are additional “wish list” projects related to the new construction and renovation. Each contractor also submitted bids for these projects that were related to their trade. These include:

1. Renovations to the multi-purpose room and the addition of a ‘bump out’ music room
2. Renovations to existing offices and teacher’s lounge/conference room
3. Interior roller shades on the glass/window wall of the new library addition
4. Exterior 21-color gradient paint scheme on the cement board siding of the new addition

If all of these “add alternates” are awarded, the new maximum bid amount would total \$3,357,594, not including any “deducts.” This would be approximately \$158k over budget, but \$842k below our loan amount (though Jay Appleton points out that associated “soft costs” like permitting and testing may put us closer to the \$4.2 million loan amount) and given our excellent financial position as outlined by Charter Choice’s Jesse Bean in the last Financial committee report and included in July’s Board minutes, Dr. Pleso and the Board felt confident that we should move ahead with the bids as submitted, including all “add alternates.” The maximum total bids with these “add alternates” result in an amount significantly lower than our loan figure. Jill Clinton noted that we would probably see savings in doing these needed renovations and additions with the main construction project, instead of trying to revisit them a year or more down the road.

Jay Appleton reports that Members 1st has set an August 18th closing date for our financing loan. They would like to see our signed contracts with the contractors prior to the closing, so Jay will finish drafting the contracts and send them to Kathy Nagel. After that, they will be reviewed by the contractors and their attorneys. Representatives of the Board and GMCS will then sign them.

Dr. Pleso said that Members 1st actually would like everything ready to go by August 12th. Jay Appleton can help expedite this process by sending the unsigned contracts to Rebecca at Members 1st for review.

Rose Thornberry made a motion to approve the four prime contractor bids as outline in Jay Appleton of Greyhawk's letter dated August 3, 2020. These total \$3,357,594 and include all general construction, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing/fire protection work as detailed in the letter. This total includes all "add-alternates" and no "deducts," which are construction "soft costs" such as testing and permits, which will add to the total number. Ashley Reid seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Adminstrator's Report

Dr. Pleso explained that the Pennsylvania Department of Education is now requiring masks at all times by students attending school in person. They have also released a dashboard related to how districts should reopen, which is tied to their school district's (or geographical area's) positivity rate. In Adams County, right now it is recommended that schools teach in a hybrid, A/B schedule as we are, or go all virtual.

Dr. Pleso reported that there has been much discussion amongst parents and the administration over what distance learning will look like at GMCS. She explained that we are going to do synchronous learning because we are not a cyber school – we have to have high quality education taught by highly qualified teachers and presented in a way that allows all students to be tuned in and engaged in lessons on new material. She also said the school is aiming to have 9 to a classroom and answered questions from Board members and parents about the presentation of specials for in-person and distance learners. Traci Elligson inquired about how these will work for those at home and Dr. Pleso explained that they will take place live, in the classroom, with the exception of gym. She also said the school will supply art supplies for distance learning families.

Dr. Pleso and Chris Kirkpatrick are working on updating our Health and Safety Plan, which would change the start date of school to August 31st, change our schedule to the blended, A/B schedule, include the daily, universal mask-wearing, and include our method for daily health checks (administration is looking for ways to do this and stay paperless).

Dr. Pleso reported that, for now, free/reduced lunches will only be served on in-person days. She is working with Rita Engloff to potentially make it available to families who want to purchase on their virtual days.

Traci Elligson asked about the status of student Chromebooks. Dr. Pleso authorized our IT contractor, Kirbtech, to purchase 225 hard-to-find Chromebooks of any make and model from any sources. As of today, half are on their way to Kirbtech, where they will be prepared for student use. Dr. Pleso has also identified five families that may need to be set up with personal hotspots because they do not have access to the internet at their homes.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Rose Thornberry made a motion to approve the consent agenda as submitted. Jill Clinton seconded the motion. The consent agenda was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair Tom Hockensmith at 6:27pm.

Approved:



Jill Clinton, Secretary