

**AGENDA**  
**Gettysburg Montessori Charter School**  
**Board of Trustees**  
**888 Coleman Road, Gettysburg**

**Wednesday, July 25, 2019**

- 5:40 pm Executive Session
- 6:00 pm Call to Order the July 25th Meeting;  
Introduction of Members and Guests;  
Public Comment on Agenda Items;  
Approval of Consent Agenda  
Old Business Action
- 6:05 pm Chair's Report – Jill Clinton  
Housekeeping
- 6:25 pm Administrator's Report – Faye Pleso  
Enrollment Update  
Employee Handbook Changes  
Parent/Student Handbook Changes  
Hiring Recommendation – Teaching Assistants Action  
Hiring Recommendation – Long Term Substitute Action  
Hiring Recommendation – Rtl Learning Support Action  
Hiring Recommendation – PE/Health Teacher Action
- 7:05 pm Finance Committee – Diana Williams & Jesse Bean, Charter Choices  
Budget Review
- 7:20 pm Personnel Committee – Rose Thornberry  
2018/19 Staff and Parent Survey Analysis Presentation  
CEO/Principal Evaluation Update
- 7:35 pm Executive Committee – Jill Clinton  
GMCs Policy on Personal Relationships  
Proposed Policy Changes & Updates – Health & Safety; Substance Abuse; and Action  
Students with Disabilities Policies  
Presentation of Proposed Policy Change – Evaluations, Reevaluations, and Independent  
Evaluations Policy  
Presentation of Proposed Policy Change – Instruction Conducted in the Home and  
Homebound Instruction Policy
- 7:55 pm Governance Committee – Jill Clinton  
Update on Recruitment Efforts  
Recommendation on Re-Election of Board Members Action
- 8:15 pm Building Committee  
Update on Renovations, Building Design and Funding

8:25 pm

New Business: For the good of the order

8:30 pm

Public Comment

8:35 pm

Adjourn

**Gettysburg Montessori Charter School**  
**Board of Trustees Official Minutes**  
**June 26, 2019**

**Board Members Present**

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

**Board Members Absent**

Tish Weikel, Member, at-large (Family Commitment)  
Liaucrèia Swain, Member, at-large (Resignation Submitted)

**Others Present**

Dr. Faye Pleso, CEO  
Shamin Caplener, Member Elect

**Executive Session**

The Board met for executive session at 5:46pm 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 attend for the entire session. Executive session closed at 6:03pm.

**Call to Order**

Jill Clinton called the meeting to order at 6:04pm. Introductions were made.

**Public Comment on Agenda Items**

No comment

**Old Business**

No old business

**Approval of Consent Agenda**

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

### **Report of the Chair**

There was a brief discussion about Board content for the next newsletter, which is due in October.

Staff meetings will resume in August and will be held on the last Tuesday of the month during the 2019-20 school year. Becky Uppercue will attend the August 27<sup>th</sup> meeting; new Board member Shanin Caplener will attend the September 24<sup>th</sup> meeting; and Diana Williams will attend the October 29<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Tom Hoekensmith was the second Board member, after Rose Thornberry, to complete the online Act 55 training. He submitted his reflections to Dr. Pleso in return for his certificate, which will be placed on file with the school. He felt the training was beneficial.

Shanin Caplener, a new Gettysburg parent at GMCS, was sworn in as a new member of the Board of Trustees to fill the seat vacated by Lieueretia Swain this month. Shanin's term will expire in May 2020.

Jill Clinton will contact Jesse Bean at Charter Choices to inquire about Shanin Caplener's Act 55 compliance requirement date.

Jill and Dr. Pleso will work together to update the Board calendar by August.

Jill previewed summer tasks for the Board, which include the Executive Committee compiling all proposed policy updates and changes to present at the July Board meeting, along with Dr. Pleso's proposed changes.; updating the student/parent handbook; approving the PDE report; and reviewing records retention procedures. We also need to prepare a report on the Parent Survey and review the results of the Staff Survey. In addition, the evaluation for Dr. Pleso needs to be prepared and completed by August.

The Finance Committee meeting has been rescheduled from July 17<sup>th</sup> to July 24<sup>th</sup> at 3:30pm. Jill will place an ad in the *Gettysburg Times* for notification.

The Governance Committee meeting will be rescheduled from July 1<sup>st</sup> to July 9<sup>th</sup> at 4:30pm to accommodate everyone's work schedules. Jill will place an ad in the *Gettysburg Times* for notification.

### **Administrators Report**

Current enrollment stands at 231, down from 237, for the 2019-2020 school year.

Dr. Pleso has begun the process to re-vamp the school's website.

Dr. Pleso has submitted a flyer to *The Merchandiser* to run in mid-July concurrent with an article to be featured in the Family section.

Dr. Pleso is planning to have a 6<sup>th</sup> grade 'graduation' ceremony for students beginning in the 2019-20 school year.

The review of last year's exit surveys revealed that the top reasons for students leaving GMCS included a family move, too long of a bus ride to the school, the desire for more homework and traditional grading, and going with a sibling to a different school.

The Lincoln Intermediate Unit (LIU)'s Dr. Brad Sterner, Director of Educational Services, has offered a contract for the coming school year with services for teacher evaluations, classroom observations, curriculum development, instructional coaching, and specific professional development for identified staff at a cost of \$30,000. Dr. Pleso feels that this is the prudent route to take instead of hiring an assistant principal at this time. The Board discussed the benefits of this vastly lower cost option, saving approximately \$80,000 in salary and benefits, and agreed that during this time when we are trying to secure funding for our building, this is a good idea. Becky Uppercue mentioned that it was a good discovery to find that the LIU has the professional staff to offer these kinds of services to school's like ours. Jill Clinton offered that this would be wise at this time when we are preparing for charter renewal and Dr. Pleso may not have the time to adequately train an integral new administrator, however all Board members agreed that this layer of administration needs to be put in place down the road if enrollment continues to grow. Rose Thornberry also said that it would be a good idea for 'succession' to have another high-level administrator in place in the coming years.

Charter Choices is in agreement with Dr. Pleso's assessment that we need to change the school's insurance broker every 3-5 years. This year, they have recommended David E. Skarbek, Investment Advisory Representative of Commonwealth Financial Network, due to his accommodating schedule, access, and availability; an improvement of dental insurance benefits at no additional cost; and no cost for administering COBRA benefits.

Dr. Pleso submitted the final 2019-20 Personnel Report, which includes several new postings not in the last report: promotion of a long-term sub to 3/4 aide; two new aides for 1/2 classrooms; new lead teacher for a 1/2 classroom; new Kindergarten aide; new PE/Health teacher; and new Breakfast/Lunch server. Dr. Pleso has also decided to put the request for two new part-time RtI Learning Support teachers on hold until evaluations are done at the beginning of the year. She will instead offer more hours to the current part-time RtI teacher. Jill Clinton raised an objection, saying that it is hard to staff these positions during the school year and that she believed the learning support population at the school did support these new positions, but deferred to Dr. Pleso in this matter, as is appropriate.

GMCS parent and former Board member Melissa Ring will attend the Title I state parent conference July 8-10 at a cost of \$373. She will share what she learns with the school upon her return.

Dr. Pleso recommended hiring Hope Lansford as 1/2 classroom teacher. Becky Uppercue made a motion to approve the hiring of Hope Lansford at \$39,000 a year, with benefits. Jill Clinton seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Dr. Pleso also recommended promoting Kim Barber from long-term substitute to aide in Megan Stough's 3/4 classroom at \$17.50/hr, less than 30 hours, with no benefits. Becky Uppercue seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Dr. Pleso has presented several policy changes to be discussed in the Executive Committee portion of the meeting.

The Board reviewed the three contracts included in this month's Consent Agenda: Martin Water/Wastewater services contract; the Lincoln Intermediate Unit curriculum and professional services contract (discussed extensively during the earlier portion of the Administrative Report), and the SEK Certified Public Accountants auditing contract (also later discussed during the Finance Committee portion of the meeting).

#### Finance Committee

Becky Uppercue gave a detailed overview of the May balance sheet, which includes a net income of approximately \$250k for the year, up from the total income the prior year.

The contract with Charter Choices expires July 1, 2019. After reviewing several options, Dr. Pleso will be recommending renewing our contract with them and bring it to the Board for a resolution in July, along with a cleaning contract with ServiceMaster and the LIU contract outlined elsewhere in these minutes.

Dr. Pleso and Jesse Bean from Charter Choices had a conference call with Members 1<sup>st</sup> to discuss the possibility of a construction loan while the USDA loan is on hold. The school's banking services will move to Members 1<sup>st</sup> on August 1, 2019.

Dr. Pleso spoke with Ryan Schumm from Charter Choices regarding changing the school's auditor every 3-5 years. SEK is currently offering a significant discount to complete our audit in July/August because we are a new client and used SEK to complete our loan application audit for the USDA.

Dr. Pleso will look into the status of our record audit with Leigh Gugliette.

Statement of Financial Interest forms have been received by all except AJ Warner, who is no longer a parent at the school. Becky Uppercue has been unsuccessful in her attempts to reach him about this matter. A certified letter, including the SOFI, was prepared for AJ Warner and sent out at the end of May. It was received back at the school in June, marked 'returned to sender' and 'no forwarding address.' Dr. Pleso will file that and the enclosed paperwork to document our many efforts over time to get the SOFI signed by AJ Warner, who resigned from the Board and left the school in June 2018.

#### Personnel Committee

Becky Uppercue will present the 2018/19 Staff and Parent Survey analysis at the July Board meeting.

Tom Hockensmith will prepare the CEO/Principal evaluation based on materials from last year's evaluation, the results from this year's staff, parent, and Board surveys, and guidance from Jesse Bean of Charter Choices. Members discussed meeting prior to the next Board meeting on July 25<sup>th</sup> to finalize the evaluation. Jill Clinton will coordinate.

Members held a lengthy discussion of the results of the Board Self-Assessment survey. There were several detailed suggestions and critiques in the survey results and members decided to focus on three key areas for improvement in 2019-20: documentation, procedures, and succession planning.

The Board agreed that we need to do a better job of documentation and continue to put procedures in place to make sure that everything lands in Dropbox for easy access. Megan Parks is helping us with this, but it would be helpful to have several members have an area of responsibility (minutes, advertising/notices, committee minutes, handouts, etc.)

Procedural improvement was wide-ranging and could include closer adherence to Robert's Rules of Order when conducting meetings or more detailed resolutions, all of which are important to the Board.

Lastly, members agreed that we need to have periodic discussions and 'check-ins' about succession and have a plan for what would occur should the CEO/Principal leave for medical, personal, or employment reasons, either temporarily or permanently. We need to talk about how that would be handled and who on the staff could be moved into positions of greater responsibility. We also need to think about what we would look for in a replacement CEO/Principal. We have precedent and documented history we could call upon in these discussions. Jill Clinton will follow up on this particular matter.

At the next Executive committee meeting, members will examine the Students Responsibilities and Rights Policy. In the fall, the committee will tackle the Instruction Conducted in the Home and Homebound Instruction Policy.

Dr. Pleso worked with our attorney, Kathy Nagle, to craft a new Personal Relationships policy and presented it to the Board for review. After discussing the policy, no changes or additions were made. The Board will vote to adopt the policy or not at the July Board meeting.

The Executive Committee also presented their findings after reviewing the Health & Safety and Substance Abuse policies and the Students with Disabilities policy.

- The Health/PE teacher was named on page three (3) of the Health & Safety and Substance Abuse policy. The committee suggested that the position be referred to by title only, rather than the name of the current teacher. Dr. Pleso concurred and this policy change proposal will be voted on at the July meeting.
- Rose Thornberry point to a passage on page five (5) that states, “student artwork is to be displayed in the service and/or dining areas.” Dr. Pleso reviewed this and has re-committed to having student artwork displayed as outlined in this policy for the upcoming school year.
- There was also a discussion about fundraising referenced on page seven (7). The committee felt that it should be kept to healthy options when it involved food, and the annual Gertrude Hawk fundraiser may not fall within those guidelines. Dr. Pleso feels that this particular fundraiser doesn't violate the policy due to the products not being sold in school.
- When referring to the schools Nurse/Nurses' Aides, the policy outlined care that they could perform at the school, including “starting IVs,” which the committee questioned. Dr. Pleso would like to keep this part of the policy in place, just in case it may be needed someday.

Dr. Pleso is going to present another proposed change at the July meeting, involving several wording changes.

#### Governance Committee

Becky Uppercue made a motion to add newly sworn in Board member Shannin Caplener to a position on the Governance Committee. Diana Williams seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

The Governance Committee, now consisting of Board members Tom Hockensmith, Tish Weikel, and Shannin Caplener; parent representative Shannon McConnell; and staff representative Megan Stough, will meet at a rescheduled meeting on July 9<sup>th</sup> at 4:30pm in order to accommodate work



schedules. Jill Clinton will place the public notification ad in the *Gettysburg Times* for the rescheduling. Tom will prepare and post the agenda and circulate the appropriate minutes and documents by July 2<sup>nd</sup> in order to re-vet Rose Thornberry for re-election at the meeting.

The committee has decided to recommend Ashley Reid to the Board to fill the vacancy left at the end of Tish Weikel's term at the end of August. This new term will expire May 2022. Ashley has been vetted by the committee and has submitted all clearances and necessary paperwork to the committee.

Jill Clinton made a motion to accept the committee's recommendation and elect Ashley Reid to the Board of Trustees, to fill the term of Tish Weikel when it expires August 31<sup>st</sup>. Rose Thornberry seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote. Ashley will be sworn in at the August meeting.

The following Board members' terms expire August 31<sup>st</sup>: Jill Clinton, Tish Weikel, Becky Uppercue, and Rose Thornberry. Jill is running again, with the caveat that she will be unable to continue in the Chair position. Becky and Rose will also run again. Tish will not seek re-election.

Jill Clinton and Becky Uppercue were re-interviewed at a June 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Governance Committee, although it was not required to do so according to our Bylaws. They have also re-submitted their clearances to the committee.

#### Building Committee

Our new CPA firm, SEK, has provided a list of possible issues and questions based on the feasibility study they did, for Dr. Pleso to bring to the USDA to try and find out more about why our loan application was put on hold. Something in that study halted our loan process, but they cannot say what it was. With these questions, Dr. Pleso may be able to identify it if the USDA provides answers. She is not spending a lot of time and effort on it, but is trying to keep the possibility alive.

The USDA has told us that we cannot move forward with extensive renovations if we expect them to fund a new building. Bob Sharrah, our civil engineer, and Jannie Unkefer from Digsau believe that it is already too late in the summer to start to plan for renovations to start and so we will wait and see and plan for 2020.

Dr. Pleso and Jesse Bean from Charter Choices approached our new banking partner, Members 1<sup>st</sup> Federal Credit Union, via conference call so see if they may be interested in providing the entire construction loan if the USDA loan does not come to fruition. The credit union is open to

a possible fixed-rate conventional loan and is gathering information using all of our studies for a proposal, which will hopefully be put forth around July 8<sup>th</sup>.

In the meantime, Jesse is going to come up with an enrollment number we can 'survive' on if we go forward with a conventional construction loan and making interest and principal payments. He will also calculate the interest payment differences between a 25-year and 35-year loan.

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

None


**Public Comment**

None

**Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair Jill Clinton at 8:04pm.

Approved:



Rose Thornberry, Secretary

**AGENDA**  
**Gettysburg Montessori Charter School**  
**Board of Trustees**  
**888 Coleman Road, Gettysburg**

**Thursday, August 29, 2019**

- 5:45 pm Executive Session
- 6:00 pm Call to Order the August 29<sup>th</sup> Meeting;  
Introduction of Members and Guests;  
Public Comment on Agenda Items;  
Approval of Consent Agenda  
Old Business Action
- 6:05 pm Administrator’s Report – Faye Pleso  
CEO Report  
Enrollment Update Action  
Policy Change Motion – Evaluations, Reevaluations & Independent Evaluations Policy Action  
Policy Change Motion – Instruction Conducted-Home & Homebound Instruction Policy Action  
REAP Grant  
Personnel Motion – Salary Adjustment for Administrative Employee Action  
Marketing Update  
Hiring Motion – Teacher’s Assistants (2) Action  
Hiring Motion – Receptionist/Front Office Clerk Action  
Hiring Motion - Long Term Substitute (Kindergarten) Action  
Hiring Motion – 1/2 Teacher Action  
Hiring Motion – Breakfast/Lunch Server Action
- 6:35 pm Chair’s Report – Jill Clinton Action  
Swearing in of New Board Member – Ashley Reid  
Housekeeping  
Annual Report of the Board Action  
Board Orientation  
Annual Meeting Schedule  
Staff Meeting Attendance  
Election of Officers Action  
Committee Formation & Meeting Schedule
- 7:05 pm Finance Committee – Diana Williams  
2018/19 Year-End Budget Report – Year End Actuals & Long-Term Budget Priorities
- 7:10 pm Governance Committee – Jill Clinton  
Update on Recruitment Efforts
- 7:20 pm Building Committee  
Update on Renovations, Building Design, Funding
- 7:30 pm New Business: For the good of the order
- 7:35 pm Public Comment

7:40 pm

Adjourn

Gettysburg Montessori Charter School  
Board of Trustees Official Minutes  
July 25, 2019

**Board Members Present**

Jill Clinton, Chair  
Becky Uppercue, Vice Chair  
Rose Thornberry, Secretary  
Shanin Caplener, Member, at-large

**Board Members Absent**

Tish Weikel, Member, at-large (Family Commitment)  
Diana Williams, Treasurer (Family Commitment)  
Tom Hoekensmith, Member, at-large (Family Commitment)

**Others Present**

Dr. Faye Pleso, CEO  
Ashley Reid

**Executive Session**

The Board met for executive session at 5:07pm to discuss the CEO evaluation which ended at 5:53pm. The Board then invited Dr. Pleso to attend the rest of the session which included 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. Executive session closed at 6:02pm.

**Call to Order**

Jill Clinton called the meeting to order at 6:04pm. Introductions were made.

**Public Comment on Agenda Items**

No comment

**Old Business**

No old business

**Approval of Consent Agenda**

Jill Clinton 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.

### **Report of the Chair**

There was a brief discussion about Board content for the next newsletter, which is due in October. Lieouretia Swain will still be producing these.

Jill Clinton and Dr. Pleso worked together to update the Board calendar for 2019-20 and reviewed it with the Board. We discovered a few typos and will ask Megan to correct these and have updated calendars ready for the August Board meeting.

The staff and parent surveys from 2018/19 are complete. Becky Uppercue was able to put together a report just prior to the meeting date and we were able to review it at length, as outlined in the Personnel Committee report here. Jill will include a copy of this summary in the next Board package for the district.

Tom Hockensmith worked to take the data and responses from the surveys to distill into the draft of Dr. Pleso's evaluation. The Board met in Executive Session to review it and worked together to craft new goals to be included. When the evaluation is finalized, the Personnel committee will meet with Dr. Pleso for her review and signature before the August Board meeting.

The updates to the Student/Parent handbook are in progress proposed changes will be included in the August consent agenda.

Jill and Dr. Pleso have set up a meeting to review and approve the PDE report.

Jill reached out to Jesse Bean at Charter Choices to get clarity on our newest Board member, Shanin Caplener's, deadline to complete the Act 55 training. While he reported back that she has a year from now to complete this, Jill encouraged her to do it sooner, as it will be very useful to her term on the Board.

The next Finance Committee meeting is August 21<sup>st</sup>. Jill mentioned that there won't be Governance Committee or Executive Committee meetings in August.

Jill proposed that Dr. Pleso and the school join the American Montessori Society. Jesse agreed that while he doesn't have personal experience with the organization, his research suggested this would be a net positive for GMCS. Dr. Pleso was familiar with AMS as she had used some of their training courses for staff in the past and was happy to see that they are now open to accepting charter Montessori schools. The cost is somewhat prohibitive at around \$3,600, but Dr. Pleso will consider it. The program offers extensive resources for the school and staff in terms of marketing, networking, training, certifications, and other resources that would help the school in several different areas. It would also please families that urge the school to be more "Montessori." The Board discussed the opportunity and would be happy to see the school join.

Jill also requested a spreadsheet for the Board to use 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. Dr. Pleso said she will bring this to the August meeting.

Jill is working on the Annual Report. She will reach out to Jesse to have the data from Charter Choices updated and then will meeting with Dr. Pleso and Diana Williams to go over next steps in getting the report completed by the end of August.

#### Administrator's Report

Current enrollment stands at 230, down from 231, for the 2019-2020 school year.

Dr. Pleso reported that the year-end budget review will be complete by next week. The Finance committee will discuss this and present this, along with long-term budget priorities, at the August Board meeting.

The process of re-vamping the school's website is underway, a project that will take several months to complete, but she will have the bulk of it completed before school starts.

The Robert C. Hoffman Charitable Endowment Trust contacted Dr. Pleso to inform her they have made the rare decision to increase the amount of our grant from \$15,000 to \$18,000, the amount we originally requested for books for our new library. Dr. Pleso is working with them to allow for a delayed purchase of the books, coinciding with the library's opening in August 2021. Shanin Caplener has offered to craft a press release and send it to the *Gettysburg Times*.

*Celebrate Gettysburg* has asked Dr. Pleso to be on the cover of the August/September issue as an area expert in education. They will also be interviewing her regarding unique education opportunities in the area. This will be Dr. Pleso's second cover appearance in the magazine!

Dr. Pleso presented two proposed policy changes – one in the area of Evaluations, Reevaluations, and Independent Evaluations and the other in the area of Instruction Conducted in the Home and Homebound Instruction. These were discussed and will be added to the August meeting agenda for approval.

Dr. Pleso also made several minor student/parent handbook changes which will be included in the August consent agenda.

Dr. Pleso has received positive feedback from the first week of the inaugural academic summer camp which is currently underway, including incoming students being introduced into a school atmosphere and teachers being able to assess who will need extra support in the coming school year.

Dr. Pleso recommended hiring Chelsy Rodgers, Hannah Hood, and Courtney Seitz as classroom teacher's assistants. Jill Clinton made a motion to approve the hiring of Chelsy Rodgers, Hannah Hood, and Courtney Seitz at \$17/hr, for less than 30 hours, with no benefits. Shanin Caplener seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Dr. Pleso recommended hiring Lisa Rufalo as a classroom teacher's assistant. Becky Uppercue made a motion to approve the hiring of Lisa Rufalo at \$20/hr, for less than 30 hours, with no benefits. Shanin Caplener seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Dr. Pleso recommended hiring Stephanie Crater as a long-term substitute in Kindergarten beginning August 5<sup>th</sup>. She will eventually transition to part-time RtI learning support. Jill Clinton made a motion to approve the hiring of Stephanie Crater at \$125/day for the substitute position. Shanin Caplener seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Becky Uppercue made a motion to approve the hiring of Stephanie Crater and Brittany Perry at \$25/hr for less than 30 hours, with no benefits, for the RtI learning support positions. Jill Clinton seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

These learning support positions had been put on hold in June, but Dr. Pleso decided to move forward based on the needs of the incoming IEP students.

Dr. Pleso recommended hiring Sierra Boehner as a PE/Health Teacher. Jill Clinton made a motion to approve the hiring of Sierra Boehner at \$25/hr, less than 30 hours, with no benefits. Becky Uppercue seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

The flyer Dr. Pleso created for *The Merchandiser* has gone out, along with an editorial article about the school. Rose Thornberry reported receiving it at her home.

#### Finance Committee

According to last year's budget, the school brought in over \$200,000 beyond what was budgeted. The school's total current assets of \$993,053.89 with \$65,867.12 in total accounts payable. We have \$714,000 on hand in checking as of the end of June and we still have over \$200,000 in receivables. We do owe \$65,000 in salary due to paying full time staff over the summer. This terrific financial news is due to Charter Choices' conservative estimates, particularly when is



comes to rates from sending districts, as well as Dr. Pleso's frugal fiscal choices throughout the year.

Members First has offered two loan proposals for the school to consider: Option 1 is a 25yr loan with an APR of 4.5% with \$38,000 in closing fees. Option 2 has an APR of 4.87% with \$17,000 in closing costs. Charter Choices studied the matter and determined that a minimum of 257 enrollment is needed to consistently cover the monthly payments, far less than our full capacity of 285. However, Members First requires that we keep 1.2 times more on hand than we owe them.

The Board discussed this at length and where we are with the USDA. After several contact changes at the agency and queries about our position, they have not moved from their position that they will not even consider our loan until after charter renewal is complete, a brand new requirement. In addition, they stated that any renovations to our building in the meantime will exclude us from loan consideration.

The terms offered by a commercial lender are not as favorable as a federal loan, but their requirements are less onerous and allow for a personal, local banking relationship. In addition, due to the many government requirements for application, we have completed all studies that Members First needs, except for our year-end financial report. Jill Clinton noted that we were previously in a place where no commercial bank would work with us just a few short years ago and are now in a position for significant financial support from a local banking institution.

After continued discussion amongst the Board members -with input from its Finance Committee, CEO and Business Manager -- the Board recommend the selection of the Members First Federal Credit Union as the primary lender on its upcoming construction project to convert its modular classrooms to permanent space. Members First has been selected and recommended for board consideration based on the competitiveness of their rates and terms (4.5% over 25 years, first year interest-only during construction, closing fees of \$38,000) and on the overall quality of their presentation of banking services to the school. A proposed amortization schedule of the principal and interest payments on this loan has been included for Board member's consideration and was sent to the district, as well.

It is noted that the selection of Members First as the primary lender in this transaction represents a decision not to pursue USDA loan funding any further. This conclusion has been reached by school leadership and the Finance Committee based on a number of factors including prohibitive cost, time investment and the relative strength of the Members First rates.

Jill Clinton makes the motion that the Board approve the selection of Members First Federal Credit Union as its primary lender for the upcoming construction/expansion project. The Board

authorizes its CEO and Business Manager to work with the credit union to establish a date and time for loan settlement and to file the necessary documentation. Rose Thornberry seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

#### **Personnel Committee**

Becky Uppercue provided a Parent Survey analysis based on 43 responses. Dr. Pleso received praise for her leadership, accessibility, and commitment to the students. The Board discussed feedback looking for a better transition into public school for 7th grade; more STEAM activities such as a science fair; a desire for expanded specials, including instruments for upper elementary students and the hope the GMCS will expand to include 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. Becky's summary will be included in a package to the District in August.

The Board will finalize the goals of the CEO/Principal evaluation and Tom Hockensmith will include these in the overall evaluation to present to Dr. Pleso by the end of August.

#### **Executive Committee**

Shann Caplener made a motion to adopt the GMCS Policy on Personal Relationships, as presented at the Board of Trustees meeting on June 26<sup>th</sup>. Jill Clinton seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Rose Thornberry made a motion to adopt the policy changes and updates to the Health & Safety; Substance Abuse; and Students with Disabilities Policy. Becky Uppercue seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

As mentioned in the Administrator's Report, Dr. Pleso presented policy changes to page seventy-six (76) under Evaluations, Reevaluations, and Independent Evaluations Policy and Instruction Conducted in the Home and Homebound Instruction Policy. Actions for approval at the August meeting.

#### **Governance Committee**

New Board member Ashley Reid will be sworn in at the August meeting. She has submitted all clearances and paperwork and has been recommended and voted on by the Board. She is replacing Tish Weikel, who is not seeking a second term. Ashley's term will expire in May 2021.

Jill Clinton recommended Rose Thornberry for re-election to the Board. Shann Caplener seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Jill recommended Becky Uppercue for re-election to the Board. Rose Thornberry seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Rose Thornberry recommended Jill Clinton for re-election to the Board. Becky Uppercue seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

The Board will swear in the three re-elected members at the August meeting. This will be Jill's and Becky's second terms, though Rose will eligible for a second term as she was previously finishing out that of another member. All three terms will expire in May 2021.

The Board will also elect officers at the August meeting, as well as determine a meeting schedule for the Board and committees. Committees will also be formed at the August meeting.

#### **Building Committee**

Jamie Unkefer, our architect with Digsau, proposed moving the building timeline up slightly, and they now plan to break ground in spring of 2020. Charrettes (design-related brainstorming sessions involving all stakeholders) will also be planned in the spring, 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 she has created a Facebook page for GMCS parents. The board had a lengthy discussion and decided that the Facebook page will be combined with Becky Uppercue's page and they will both be administrators. The page will not represent the school or be affiliated in any way. Dr. Pleso will check with the school's attorney on the propriety of a Board member administering a social media page referencing the school.

#### **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair Jill Clinton at 7:48pm.

Approved:



Rose Thornberry, Secretary

**AGENDA**  
**Gettysburg Montessori Charter School**  
**Board of Trustees**  
**888 Coleman Road, Gettysburg**

**Thursday, September 26, 2019**

5:45 pm

Executive Session

6:00 pm

Call to Order the September 26<sup>th</sup> Meeting;

Introduction of Members and Guests;

Public Comment on Agenda Items;

Approval of Consent Agenda

Old Business

Action

6:05 pm

Administrator's Report – Faye Pleso

*CEO Report*

*Enrollment Update*

*Policy Change Presentation – Title 1 Parental Involvement Policy*

*Policy Change Presentation – Related Services Policy*

*Mrs. Keri Bechtel – Overview of New 3/4 Grade Science Program*

*Marketing Update*

*Excused Education Trip Days*

*School Safety Report*

*Baseline Salary Worksheet*

*Mrs. Leigh Gugliette – Review of PIMS Data*

*SPAC Title 1 Conference Summary*

*Hourly Rate Adjustment – Teaching Assistant (1)*

*Hiring Motion – Personal Care Assistants (3)*

Action  
Action

7:05 pm

Chair's Report – Tom Hockensmith

*Housekeeping*

*Revised Board Calendar*

7:20 pm

Finance Committee – Becky Uppercue

*Budget Review*

7:30 pm

Governance Committee – Jill Clinton

*Update on Recruitment Efforts*

7:35 pm

Building Committee

*Update on Renovations, Building Design, Funding*

7:45 pm

New Business; For the good of the order

7:50 pm

Public Comment

7:55 pm

Adjourn

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 at 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 Rtl 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, appearing to read "Rose Thornberry".

Rose Thornberry, Secretary

**AGENDA**  
**Gettysburg Montessori Charter School**  
**Board of Trustees**  
**888 Coleman Road, Gettysburg**

**Monday, October 21, 2019**

- 5:15 pm Executive Session
- 6:00 pm **Call to Order the October 21<sup>st</sup> Meeting;**  
Introduction of Members and Guests;  
Public Comment on Agenda Items;  
Approval of Consent Agenda  
Old Business Action
- 6:05 pm Administrator's Report – Faye Pleso  
CEO Report  
Enrollment Update Action  
Vote on Policy Change – Title 1 Parental Involvement Policy Action  
Vote on Policy Change – Related Services Policy  
Ms. Loren Householder – Presentation of Kid Writing Curriculum  
Hiring Motion – Part-Time Rtl Teacher Action  
Comprehensive Plan Update  
CSN  
Updated Job Descriptions 2019-20  
Vote on PhD Science/Great Minds Curriculum Action  
Acadience Math & Reading Data Reports
- 7:05 pm Chair's Report – Tom Hockensmith  
Housekeeping
- 7:20 pm Finance Committee – Jesse Bean, Charter Choices  
Budget Review Q1 – YTD
- 7:35 pm Governance Committee – Jill Clinton  
Update on Recruitment Efforts
- 7:40 pm Building Committee  
Update on Renovations, Building Design, Funding
- 7:50 pm New Business: For the good of the order
- 7:55 pm Public Comment
- 8:00 pm Adjourn

**Gettysburg Montessori Charter School  
Board of Trustees Official Minutes  
September 26, 2019**

**Board Members Present**

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

**Others Present**

Dr. Faye Pleso, CEO  
Keri Bechtel, 2/3 Grade Teacher  
Leigh Gugliette, Head Executive Assistant

**Executive Session**

The Board met for executive session at 5:47pm to discuss employee and 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. Dr. Pleso was invited to join the Board in Executive session to discuss these matters. Executive session closed at 6:00pm.

**Call to Order**

Tom Hockensmith called the meeting to order at 6:03pm. Introductions were made.

**Public Comment on Agenda Items**

No comment

**Old Business**

No old business

**Approval of Consent Agenda**

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

**Administrator's Report**

Current enrollment remains steady at 239 for the 2019-2020 school year.

Dr. Pleso presented two changes in current policies: a move to change the title of on policy from “Title 1 Parental Involvement Policy” to “Title 1 Parental Engagement Policy” and an addition to the Related Services policy which would include “...provided at no cost to families.” These changes were briefly discussed by the Board and will be put on the agenda for a vote in October.

Keri Bechtel, a 3/4 grade teacher, made a presentation on a new science curriculum she is going to use this year. This is the first year a third 3/4 class has been added and Keri has taken on the science and social studies piece of the curriculum for all of the grade band’s students. The science program she has chosen is called ‘PhD Science/Great Minds’ and her assessment, along with Dr. Pleso’s, is that it is a strong, hands-on program with a vigorous writing piece and other elements that make it a good fit with our overall Montessori philosophy. It emphasizes collaborative learning, making detailed observations, and logging (writing) observations, hypotheses, and experiments. Keri also believes that it dovetails nicely with our Wonders curriculum and Eureka math curriculum.

The Board members engaged in a brief discussion about the new program. Jill Clinton asked if there were plans to roll this out to the other grade bands next year or sooner. Dr. Pleso said this is a trial period and there will be plans to include other grades next year if this program proves fruitful.

In addition, Keri reported that she’ll be spearheading the school-wide, first-ever science fair in the spring. Through ‘PhD Science/Great Minds’ she plans to assign a science project for 3/4. It will be mandatory for 5/6 as well.

In all, the cost of the new program was \$2,800 for the science experiments, building kits, and associated books. Keri did not purchase the traditional, standard textbooks in favor of more hands-on STEM learning involving experimentation, trial and error, and building-based learning, pulling from all other areas of the 3/4 curriculum.

Shanin Caplener has reported resistance from the Gettysburg Times when submitting her press release about our Robert C. Hoffman Charitable Endowment Trust award and its rare decision in August to increase the amount of our grant from \$15,000 to \$18,000, the amount we originally requested for books for our new library. Dr. Pleso offered to help her get some kind of response through her contacts. If nothing looks promising by the October meeting, Shanin will move on.

The October newsletter content is due October 24<sup>th</sup>. Jill Clinton has some ideas about submissions and will run them by Tom Hockensmith and Dr. Pleso. She will work with Becky Uppercue after the next Board meeting to reach out to Lieucrétia Swain and get this done.

Dr. Pleso reported that the Speech Language Pathologist that we contract with through the LIU, Rebecca Kane, has been removed from our school and placed elsewhere. The LIU has been unable to find a replacement for us after making these changes so late in the summer, so Dr. Pleso and Becky Black have worked to find an adequate temporary program for the numerous students needing speech services until the LIU can find a replacement for GMCS. Until then, Becky will be overseeing a Skype-style service called Teach Speech that will involve a live video conference with a Speech Language Pathologist and the applicable students in Becky's office throughout the day. Jill Clinton noted this was certainly not ideal and we should continue to pressure the LIU to provide us with a regularly scheduled SLP as soon as possible.

Dr. Pleso would like to amend our rules on 'excused education trip' days. She believes some families are taking advantage of this informal policy and it is hurting the school's position with the state, which is monitoring student absences more closely than ever. Dr. Pleso spoke with the school's attorney, Kathy Nagel, who told her that the amount of days we allocate to 'excused education trip' days (currently five) is at our discretion. Dr. Pleso plans to change the amount of days to three. In addition, she will not allow these excused absences to occur during the first week of school and will require a two-week advanced notice before approving them. Dr. Pleso will make these changes in the Parent/Student Handbook.

Leigh Gugliette, Head Executive Assistant at GMCS, presented an overview of our PIMS (Pennsylvania Instructional Management System) data collection system. Unlike most elementary schools who have an administrative district office to manage all of the data collection and reporting for their schools, Leigh is solely responsible for those tasks at GMCS. She showed the Board her calendar, filled with myriad due dates, as well as her student spreadsheets that have well over 200 fields. She also showed examples of the enrollment and district transfer spreadsheets she manages. Leigh is also responsible for dealing with the state to create IDs for students that come to the school without them already set up. All of her duties involve meticulous collection, organization, reporting, and computer skills combined with the responsibilities of properly tracking, updating, managing, and reporting an almost overwhelming amount of data to the district and state.

Leigh also presented to the Board the results of the 2018-19 Safe Schools Report that she puts together. This report for the state tracks any incidents that happen at the school effecting student and staff safety over the course of the school year. GMCS had 12 incidents of truancy and 17 out-of-school suspensions in 2018-19.

The Board members expressed their appreciation for the vast amount of data the Leigh manages. Rose Thornberry asked Leigh if there was a 'succession' plan in place should Leigh need a leave of absence or otherwise leave GMCS' employment. This was discussed at length and Tom Hockensmith stressed the need for there to be a 'cheat sheet' of some kind created for other



GMCS administrators to have should the circumstances arise – phone numbers, helplines, websites, passwords, calendars/due dates, and an outline of the basics so that someone unfamiliar with Leigh’s job might be able to jump in and help meet key state reporting deadlines and know how access and retrieve/input data into our data management system. Leigh offered to start work on a document that we can have on hand.

The Board had requested at a previous meeting that Dr. Pleso prepare a baseline salary worksheet so that all base pay rates for each type of job at GMCS is outlined for the Board to use as a reference and for future members and administrators have to use as a guideline when hiring. Dr. Pleso presented this document, it was included in the district package of documents this month, and we briefly discussed it at the meeting. Members thanked her for such a clear, helpful outline. Jill Clinton asked if Dr. Pleso could direct Megan Parks to upload this as a stand-alone document in Dropbox. Tom Hockensmith said that he would follow up with that, as well.

Becky Uppercue met with Melissa Ring, who was our parent representative to the state’s SPAC Title 1 conference over the summer, to gather some detailed information about what she learned there. Becky reported to the Board that Melissa attended several classes, including one about strategies to improve PSSA scores through an interactive study process and school-wide game. She was provided with a complete guide to the implementing this program, which Melissa gave to Dr. Pleso. Melissa also shared with Becky info on the best class she attended, which revealed how important regular cardio exercise throughout the day is for enhancing active student learning and long-term memory. The instructors suggested that after 17 minutes of seated learning, the students would benefit from brief, vigorous exercise to re-engage the brain and prevent it from starting to go into ‘rest’ mode. This will also help students retain and store the information they have learned and promote continued learning throughout the day. Through examples, Melissa was able to see and feel the benefits and believes this could work very well in the Montessori classroom. The instructors also recommended yoga, which is a practice GMCS has embraced. They went on to emphasize games with balls (catching, throwing, rolling) as well as singing, jumping, and standing on one foot as a way to practice crossing-the-midline exercises, which are important to the brain development, learning retention, fluency, and reading readiness. These skills made a significant difference for students with learning delays.

Melissa also shared with Becky that there was a recurring theme at the conference about social media and how to get parents involved using these tools to promote school activities, connect parents to resources, and create community involvement. She also told Becky about resources she learned about in a class that help motivate the home learning process, particularly for challenging students. They brainstormed ideas about a GMCS presentation for families that included organizational tips to help overcome the challenges of working with challenging kids at home. One specific tip was the use of audiobooks, which may seem counterintuitive, but

Melissa learned that is one way to increase students' literacy and even speech skills independent of caregivers.

Finally, Melissa passed along several ideas for parent, teacher, and administration collaboration, including reading a collective book as a school and participating in a school-wide activity related to the book as well as a program available via grant for Title 1 schools called "ThinkStretch."

This was recommended for helping to bridge the summer learning gap and could be easily incorporated into our summer academic camp. The Board offered its thanks to Melissa for attending the conference and coming back with such a thorough review of the concepts and ideas presented there. Members felt that several of these could be implemented in a modified way to benefit our students.

Dr. Pleso recommended adjusting Kim Barber's rate to \$20/hr, for less than 30 hours, with no benefits. This increase is due to Kim, working as Mrs. Stough's 3/4 grade classroom teacher's assistant, holding a Master's degree. Becky Uppercue made a motion to approve the rate increase for Kim Barber to \$20/hr, for less than 30 hours, with no benefits. Ashley Reid seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Dr. Pleso recommended hiring Jannie Farris, Tiffany Schetter, and Shauna Wolfley as personal care assistants in Mrs. Lawrence/Mrs. Perry's classroom, Mrs. Lansford's classroom, and as a floater in the 3/4 grade band. Becky Uppercue made a motion to approve the hiring of Jannie Farris, Tiffany Schetter, and Shauna Wolfley at \$14.50/hr, for less than 30 hours, with no benefits. Rose Thornberry seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

#### **Report of the Chair**

Board members and Dr. Pleso continue to edit and refine the Board calendar. Jill Clinton will reach out to Megan Parks and ask her to correct these and have updated calendars ready for the October Board meeting.

The Board discussed conflicts with the advertised Board meeting date in October and agreed to move it to October 21<sup>st</sup>. Jill Clinton will advertise the rescheduling in the Gettysburg Times within the next week and forward a copy to the district in the next Board materials package.

Tom Hockensmith reminded members that they have until the end of June to complete their Act 55 training. He has completed it, as have Rose Thornberry and Shanin Caplener, but Jill Clinton, Becky Uppercue, Ashley Reid, and Diana Williams will need to do it as soon as is convenient.

Tom Hockensmith noted that there will not be an Executive committee meeting on October 24<sup>th</sup>. Becky Uppercue confirmed the next Finance committee meeting on October 16<sup>th</sup>. Jill Clinton reported that there is no need for a Governance committee meeting on October 10<sup>th</sup>.

Jill Clinton followed up with Dr. Pleso regarding GMCS joining the American Montessori Society and she confirmed that we are now a member! The organization offers extensive resources for the school and staff in terms of marketing, networking, training, certifications, and other resources that would help the school in several different areas. Jill noted that families will be pleased to see the school as part of a larger, official Montessori school network and would urge them to look into the incredible, user-friendly website: [www.amsq.org](http://www.amsq.org)

Rose Thornberry raised the issue of a contingency plan for Dr. Pleso. She would like to continue the search for an assistant principal as soon as possible. Dr. Pleso agreed that this was a concern for the Board and that she had spoke to Dr. Brad Sterner at the LIU, who has ties to Penn State's principal certification program. He advised that a search for an assistant principal needs to begin in earnest in March if we expect to have someone in place for the next school year. Rose urged the Board to keep this on our agenda as an ongoing discussion.

Ashley Reid inquired about the status of the generous offer made by Dick's Sporting Goods to gift GMCS with a store display in-ground basketball hoop. Dr. Pleso was grateful for the offer, but had to decline because we don't have any current way to transport and store it for now. She was also concerned about breaking ground or otherwise disturbing our current landscape before the building process begins. She would need to get a permit from Straban Township, as well as an inspection and she would prefer to wait to deal with them until it comes to our building project.

Rose Thornberry mentioned to Dr. Pleso that she would be happy to research new vendors for t-shirts for GMCS and Dr. Pleso said she would love to see whatever options Rose was able to find.

The Board engaged in a brief discussion of recent charter school rallies at the state house as the legislature has put forth new drastic proposals affecting cyber charter schools. Dr. Pleso has begun to send updates she receives via email home to families so they can stay apprised of proposed changes and urge advocacy, if necessary, as many of these new restrictions, guidelines, and changes that the legislature proposes for cyber charter schools may likely trickle down to brick-and-mortar charter schools like GMCS in the future.

#### Finance Committee

Becky Uppercue reports that in August, Charter Choices transferred approximately \$250,000 from our Centric Bank account to Members 1<sup>st</sup> for monthly payables: \$244,000 in Members 1<sup>st</sup> operating account and several smaller accounts are at minimums.

We have \$366,300 remaining at Centric Bank for now.

Our total checking and savings for all accounts is \$616,000.

PDE missed a 'unipay' in August and is now including it with our September payment, which is due to arrive next week. We also did not have an \$80,000 payment from GASD reflected in our August financials.

Our long-term liabilities including our primary building loan of \$887,000 (\$7226/month) and our secondary building loan of \$70,000 (\$1182/month). We still have 100% of the \$500,000 committed fund balance available for the building project.

Our net income is \$204,000 so far, since the start of the fiscal year in July. Very early days, Becky Uppercue noted, but according to Jesse Bean at Charter Choices, "We are looking good so far for the year. We will likely hit or be close to our million-dollar assets goal this year."

Dr. Pleso recommended hiring a least one more personal care assistant at \$37,649/yr as soon as possible given our current student needs. She recognizes that we very likely may need an additional one or two more PCAs.

Becky Uppercue reported that our actual budget is now not inclusive of an assistant principal, which reflects positively on the budget, so that these funds may be diverted for now. However, the Finance committee wants to assure that this goes back into the 2020-21 budget so that we can transition from LIJ personnel and administrative support to an assistant principal.

Medical insurance costs came in at \$280,000 versus the \$290,000 we had budgeted, adding to the budget surplus.

Dr. Pleso shared the new rate table she created for the Board with the Finance committee, which breaks down pay rates for GMCS staff, to be used as a guideline and filed for future use.

Becky Uppercue mentioned a brief discussion the Finance committee had regarding new state legislation that says if school districts do not make timely payments to charter schools, the schools may involve PDE to seek out the funds owed, but will take a portion for their administrative efforts on the charter schools' behalf. Essentially, Becky reports, charter schools will be penalized if districts don't pay their negotiated rates. Our worst case scenario if GMCS needed to utilize PDE to seek out payments from all 17 sending districts on a monthly basis would amount to approximately \$3,000/yr.

#### Personnel Committee

Nothing new to report.

**Executive Committee**

Nothing new to report.

**Governance Committee**

Jill Clinton reports that as there is now a full Board with terms not expiring until May 2020, there was not a need for a meeting on September 12<sup>th</sup>. She said there will also not be meetings through the end of the year unless necessary. Recruitment will need to begin in earnest in the beginning of the year. She will likely write an appeal for interested parties in the newsletter that prints in January. She also mentioned that she is touching base with two parents who expressed interest in joining the Board in the last couple of months.

**Building Committee**

Meetings with our architect, Jamie Unkefer, of Digsau, will begin again on October 1<sup>st</sup>. There will be a financial-based meeting at 10:00am followed by a design-based meeting at 11:00am. This more general second meeting will also update the timeline. Monthly meetings will likely follow into the new year.

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

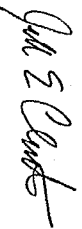
**Public Comment**

None

**Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair Tom Hockensmith at 8:10pm.

Approved:



Jill Clinton, Secretary

**AGENDA**  
**Gettysburg Montessori Charter School**  
**Board of Trustees**  
**888 Coleman Road, Gettysburg**

**Thursday, November 21, 2019**

- 5:15 pm **Executive Session**
- 6:00 pm **Call to Order the November 21<sup>st</sup> Meeting;**  
**Introduction of Members and Guests;**  
**Public Comment on Agenda Items;**  
**Approval of Consent Agenda**  
**Old Business** Action
- 6:05 pm **Administrator's Report – Faye Pleso**  
*CEO Report*  
*Enrollment Update*  
*Comprehensive Plan Update, Review, and Approval*  
*Vote on Kids Writing Curriculum*  
*Fund Balance Policy*  
*Search for CSN*  
*PA Future Ready Index*  
*Speech and Language Services* Action  
Action
- 7:05 pm **Chair's Report – Tom Hockensmith**  
*Housekeeping*
- 7:20 pm **Finance Committee – Jesse Bean, Charter Choices**  
*Budget Review Q1 – YTD*  
*Review & Approve revised Budget*
- 7:35 pm **Governance Committee – Jill Clinton**  
*Update on Recruitment Efforts*
- 7:40 pm **Building Committee**  
*Update on Renovations, Building Design, Funding*
- 7:50 pm **New Business; For the good of the order**
- 7:55 pm **Public Comment**
- 8:00 pm **Adjourn**

Gettysburg Montessori Charter School  
Board of Trustees Official Minutes  
October 21, 2019

**Board Members Present**

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

**Board Members Absent**

Ashley Reid, Member, at-large (family emergency)

**Others Present**

Dr. Faye Pleso, CEO  
Loren Householder, Reading RtI Learning Support  
Jesse Bean, Charter Choices

**Executive Session**

The Board met for Executive session at 5:21pm to discuss an employee-related matter, which if conducted in public would violate a lawful privilege or would lead to a disclosure of information confidentially protected by law. Kathy Nagle, Conrad & O'Brien attorney representing GMCS, and Jesse Bean of Charter Choices were invited to join the Board in Executive session to discuss this matter. Dr. Faye Pleso was invited to join the Executive session at 6:04pm to discuss employee and 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 6:10pm.

**Call to Order**

Tom Hockensmith called the meeting to order at 6:12pm. Introductions were made.

**Public Comment on Agenda Items**

No comment

**Old Business**

No old business

### Approval of Consent Agenda

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

### Finance Committee

The current budget was distributed and Tom Hockensmith said he would be forwarding the September financials because they arrived too late to be distributed to members, due to the Board meeting being moved up to October 21<sup>st</sup>. They will also be included with the October financials in the next package that goes to the GASD in mid-November.

Jesse Bean, our business manager from Charter Choices, gave an overview of our monthly financials and background on what specific line items are for the edification of newer Board members. Discussions were focused on the balance sheet and profit-and-loss reports.

Jesse explained that the 'current ratio' is our ability to pay our bills (similar to a debt-to-income ratio that banks look at when applying for a loan) went up significantly from June-September due to retained earnings.

In the 'days cash on hand' (funds used to pay our bills, but not including savings), we are at a lower margin, 71 days, because we recently transferred money from checking to savings. This is expected to improve, and Jesse would like to see it back to 90-100+.

Total checking and savings (including both Centric and Member 1<sup>st</sup> accounts) was \$725k at the end of September.

Several school districts still owe us \$238k from the 2018-19 school year. The filing deadline for reconciling these discrepancies was October 1<sup>st</sup>, so payments should start coming in to us over the next several weeks. For the school year 2019-20, school districts still owe us \$282k. We have been billing them at the 2018-19 rates, but Charter Choices believes that higher rates will be approved by most of our 17 sending districts.

Net income for thus far for the 2019-20 school year was \$303k and, when added to the \$800k fund balance we have already, positions us very favorably. This is due to conservative budgeting and spending, but Jesse also noted that personnel costs are running significantly lower due to budgeted positions that have not been filled yet, such as the assistant principal position. Approximately \$84k is not being utilized as budgeted as of the end of September.

Dr. Pleso would like us to have a Fund Balance policy. Jesse can provide the Board and Kathy Nagle with some language we can use to craft the policy. Dr. Pleso thinks that the auditors may



want a documented paper trail, though she thinks that what we have currently is sufficient – but we may want to have a standing policy.

Jesse led a discussion on Governor Wolf's proposition to significantly change special education funding for charter schools. This would begin with cyber charters, but information has leaked from the governor's office that they will be targeting brick-and-mortar charter schools with these proposed changes as well.

Governor Wolf is proposing that special education students be funded at a multiplier of 1.5, compared to regular education students. Currently districts budget based on weighted averages. For example, GMCS receives an average of \$11k per each regular education student and \$25k per each special education student. This number would shrink to \$17k, significantly impacting GMCS, which currently has 39 special education students. The effects on the school would be completely devastating and accomplish a Wolf administration goal of discouraging current charter schools from remaining open and others from forming

The worst potential outcomes for GMCS would result in a loss of total funding of \$290k (or approximately \$8k per special education student) for the 2019-20 school year. Jesse believes that this is an ambitious, overreaching starting point to begin negotiations to lower funding for special education students attending charter schools. Advocacy groups and some legislators are proposing a bi-partisan funding committee or commission to examine the issue.

The budget is essentially balancing out similarly with a few minor changes, mostly related to staffing and salaries. It changed from \$151k to \$161k budgeted net income. Dr. Pleso will talk with Michael Snyder at Charter Choices to discuss specific numbers on the revised budget and will plan to present it at the November meeting for the Board to vote on.

Dr. Pleso noted that she has added one PCA to the staff and increased the hours for RtI teacher, Julie Rawlicki, though they are still under 30/per week. She also explained that the LIU line items have increased due to the broader scope of work being done by Dr. Brad Sterner, including instructional coaching and other support the LIU is providing this year.

#### **Administrator's Report**

Current enrollment dipped to 235 as of October 9<sup>th</sup>. Kindergarten has 38 students; 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> grade has 79; 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> has 73; and 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> has 45.

In September, Dr. Pleso presented two changes in current policies: a move to change the title of on policy from "Title 1 Parental Involvement" policy to "Title 1 Parental Engagement" policy and an addition to the "Related Services" policy which would include "...provided at no cost to families." Jill Clinton made a motion to change the language in the 'Title 1 Parental

Involvement” policy to “Title I Engagement” policy and Shanin Caplener seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote. Becky Uppercue made a motion to change the language in the “Related Services” policy to include “. . . provided at no cost to families” and Shanin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Loren Householder, a Learning Support (RtI) Reading teacher, presented an informal curriculum or method called “Kid Writing” to the Board. It is designed to accelerate the reading and writing skills of young learners through structured activities that help teachers individualize instruction and develop students’ phonics, spelling, and writing skills.

It includes an alphabetic principle (what we say, we can write) and includes instruction for phonics, but takes the ‘invented spelling’ approach. The philosophy behind the curriculum is that students are already writers and that the teacher is there to support them as they write stories based on their lives and interests.

With “Kid Writing,” the teacher develops a daily mini lesson based on the needs of students and provides praise and teachable moments while conferencing. The teacher also provides structure for scaffolding and helps children understand the process of sounding out words, while embracing phonetic writing. Through this method, students learn the sound/letter relationships and they see conventional writing during the teacher’s underwriting phase. This approach is also student-centered because it addresses the distinct learning needs, interests, aspirations, and cultural backgrounds of individual learners. It also provides for collaborative learning – students work together to stretch sounds or seek help. Loren feels that this method is highly differentiated, open-ended, and developmentally appropriate.

Since implementation in Kindergarten this year, Loren has seen remarkable early results. She is currently co-teaching this with Heather Edmond, but plans to roll it out to Brittany Lawrence’s Kindergarten class as well as 1<sup>st</sup> grade shortly.

Dr. Pleso recommended hiring Melanie Kansagra as a Learning Support (RtI) teacher at \$25//hr, for less than 30 hours, with no benefits, effective October 22<sup>nd</sup>. She will be working with K-6 grade and the RtI team will decide whether she will focus on Math or Reading support, depending on student needs. Becky Uppercue made the motion and Rose Thornberry seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

The first part of our Comprehensive Plan is due November 30<sup>th</sup>. There are four sections that will be addressed:

- Pro Ed Plan
- Induction Plan
- Safe & Supportive School Plan

- Student Services Requirements

Dr. Pleso need to post each of these four sections publicly for 28 days. The Board will set up the necessary vote at the November meeting. Tom Hockensmith may need to look at the PA Department of Education website and sign off on it.

The Board's assistance is not needed until March; the previously outlined sections will require the work of more staff, teachers, school counselor Christine Felicetti, and Dr. Pleso.

Dr. Pleso informed the Board that the state requires a Certified School Nurse to oversee registered nurses like Adrian Kavanaugh who do not have that particular certification. Dr. Pleso will begin interviewing a CSN who can serve as a consultant and fill that role for us.

Dr. Pleso prepared a very comprehensive job description update package for 2019-20, which has been filed in Dropbox and forwarded to the GASD.

At the last meeting, Keri Bechtel presented the new PhD Science/Great Minds curriculum to the Board and we engaged in thorough discussion. Shanin Caplener made a motion to move ahead with this science curriculum and all associated costs. Diana Williams seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Dr. Pleso presented the results of the Acadience Math and Reading reports, which were also forwarded to the district. This is very early data since it was collected in September, so Dr. Pleso is waiting for more comprehensive, usable data from the next assessment, but this gives the faculty benchmarks and baselines for students at the beginning of the school year.

Dr. Pleso was very impressed with some 6<sup>th</sup> grade reading scores, with a whopping 83% Reading Composite Score at-or-above benchmark! The Math Composite Score in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades was a bit concerning, with all three grades having only 36%, 33% and 36% at-or-above benchmark, respectively. 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade scores were more alarming, with only 34% and 19% at-or-above benchmark, respectively. Dr. Pleso reiterated that these were very early assessments and that teachers were fighting the 'summer slide' at this point. She is also addressing some support issues with more RtI learning support teachers and increasing hours for our current ones, which should help raise our scores during the next Acadience testing period.

Dr. Pleso had some good news from the American Montessori Society. Instead of the listed dues on their website, which was approximately \$3,000, they were lowered for GMCS to \$1,440 because we are a charter school. Dr. Pleso's membership is an additional \$149.

While the Board was not able to vote to approve changes to the budget at this meeting, it will be on the agenda at the November meeting or addressed at a special meeting of the Board, if

necessary. Tom Hockensmith will need to sign a printed resolution and the Board will need to approve the revised budget as presented by Jesse Bean, our business manager at Charter Choices, and by Dr. Pleso.

#### **Report of the Chair**

The next edition of “Montessori Moments” has been put to bed and should be out by the time report cards are issued in November, if not sooner.

Diana Williams will be attending the staff meeting on October 29<sup>th</sup> and Jill volunteered to cover one of the November meetings. She will let Tom Hockensmith know whether she will attend the one on November 12<sup>th</sup> or 26<sup>th</sup> meeting. Tom will cover the December 10<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Jill Clinton will follow up with Jackie Hoover in the front office to see of the binders and other materials she ordered have come in and then she can begin to put the Board manuals together. Dr. Pleso is still working to correct the Board calendar, so Jill will use an older version in the manuals for now.

Tom Hockensmith asked Dr. Pleso if she would make sure the GMCS website links to the American Montessori Society site, which is very comprehensive and would be a great resource for current and prospective families.

Dr. Pleso is still working with Shanin Caplener to craft a press release about our recent grants and plans to release it to all local press outlets in Gettysburg, Hanover, York, and Harrisburg.

Tom requested that Dr. Pleso follow up with Leigh Gugliette regarding the request the Board made for contingency documents. Leigh will be tasked with creating brief documents outlining important due dates, instructions, websites, contact numbers, and other information vital to the compliance of the school should she not be available to continue her duties.

#### **Personnel Committee**

Nothing new to report.

#### **Executive Committee**

Nothing new to report.

#### **Governance Committee**

Jill Clinton reports that as there is now a full Board with terms not expiring until May 2020, there was not a need for a meeting on October 10<sup>th</sup>. She said there will also not be meetings through the end of the year unless necessary. Recruitment will need to begin in earnest in the

beginning of the year. She will likely write an appeal for interested parties in the next newsletter.

#### **Building Committee**

There is a tentative meeting set for October 30th, but Dr. Pleso is waiting to hear from architect Jamie Unkefer on what time he can attend before sending out invitations to stakeholders.

Dr. Pleso reports that nothing has changed in the design, but that all members of the committee were tasked with thinking about changes, including the idea that the classrooms switch wings in the new plan to accommodate bathrooms for 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grades and 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> grades and providing more storage.

Members 1<sup>st</sup> executives have met with our architect and we will be inviting our water treatment contractor, our technology contractor, a state trooper and safety consultants to attend future meetings.

Dr. Pleso will be placing an ad for an owner's rep in November and stated that she already has five or six recommendations. She is hoping to have a contractor for this position hired by January.

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

Rose Thornberry forwarded a suggestion to Dr. Pleso for inspirational, uplifting artwork for the student bathrooms, with the idea that perhaps our 6<sup>th</sup> graders could spearhead it.

Tom Hockensmith asked Dr. Pleso for a brief overview of the recent Pennsylvania Coalition of Public Charter Schools conference she attended. She mentioned that the two-day meeting was beneficial and included several relevant breakout groups and seminars.

The Board reviewed our 2019 Gettysburg Giving Spree video appeal, which started two of our upper elementary students.

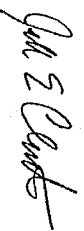
#### **Public Comment**

None

#### **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair Tom Hockensmith at 8:01pm.

Approved:



Jill Clinton, Secretary

**AGENDA**  
**Gettysburg Montessori Charter School**  
**Board of Trustees**  
**888 Coleman Road, Gettysburg**

**Thursday, December 19, 2019**

5:45 pm

Executive Session

6:00 pm

Call to Order the November 21<sup>st</sup> Meeting;

Introduction of Members and Guests;

Public Comment on Agenda Items;

Approval of Consent Agenda

Old Business

Action

6:05 pm

Administrator's Report – Faye Pleso

*CEO Report*

*Enrollment Update*

*School Counseling Program – Christine Felicetti*

*Fund Balance Policy - Approval*

*Revised Mission/Vision/Values*

*Trauma Informed Education Approach – Policy Addition Review*

*Exit Survey Summary*

*Speech Language Update*

*Owner's Representative Update*

*Procurement Review Closed*

*School Food Authority Review*

*Comprehensive Plan*

*Charter Renewal*

*Federal Programs Review*

Action

7:05 pm

Chair's Report – Tom Hockensmith

*Housekeeping*

*Dr. Pleso Contract Addendum - Approval*

Action

7:20 pm

Finance Committee – Becky Uppercue

*Budget Review Q1 – YTD*

*Review & Approve revised Budget*

7:35 pm

Governance Committee – Jill Clinton

*Update on Recruitment Efforts*

7:40 pm

Building Committee

*Update on Renovations, Building Design, Funding*

7:50 pm

New Business; For the good of the order

7:55 pm

Public Comment

8:00 pm

Adjourn

Gettysburg Montessori Charter School  
Board of Trustees Official Minutes  
November 21, 2019

**Board Members Present**

Tom Hockensmith, Chair  
Rose Thornberry, Vice Chair  
Jill Clinton, Secretary  
Becky Uppercue, Treasurer  
Ashley Reid, Member, at-large  
Diana Williams, Member, at-large

**Board Members Absent**

Shanin Caplener, Member, at-large (illness)

**Others Present**

Dr. Faye Pleso, CEO

**Executive Session**

The Board met for Executive session at 5:40pm to discuss an employee-related matter, 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 6:05pm.

**Call to Order**

Tom Hockensmith called the meeting to order at 6:08pm. No introductions were necessary.

**Public Comment on Agenda Items**

No comment

**Old Business**

No old business

**Approval of Consent Agenda**

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

**Administrator's Report**

Current enrollment remained at 235 as of November 11<sup>th</sup>, but Dr. Pleso has given four recent tours to prospective families and two have enrolled their students in Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade.



Loren Householder, a Learning Support (RtI) Reading teacher, presented an informal curriculum or method called “Kid Writing” to the Board at the October meeting. It is designed to accelerate the reading and writing skills of young learners through structured activities that help teachers individualize instruction and develop students’ phonics, spelling, and writing skills. It has proved fruitful during the initial roll out to Kindergarteners.

Rose Thornberry made a motion to approve the Kid Writing curriculum and associated costs for Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Diana Williams seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Dr. Pleso updated the Board on the Comprehensive Plan, which is done every three years. It is due to be revamped this year, but instead of all 35 sections needing to be done by November 30<sup>th</sup>, only four sections are due on that date. The rest will be due in March. The first part due November 30<sup>th</sup> include these four sections that will be addressed:

- Professional Education Plan
- Induction Plan
- Safe & Supportive School Plan
- Updated Assurances for Chapters 12 & 14

Dr. Pleso has already identified a language change that is needed on page six in the “Health & Safety” area under the “Safe & Supportive School Plan” section. It should include information that our school nurse, Adrian Kavanaugh, has received her emergency certification to act as our Certified School Nurse temporarily, until a permanent CSN is hired, as required by state law.

Dr. Pleso has posted these four sections publicly for 28 days. Becky Uppercue made a motion to approve these four sections of the Comprehensive Plan, as presented by Dr. Pleso. Rose Thornberry seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Dr. Pleso presented a proposed Fund Balance policy for the Board’s review. It would serve as recognition that the maintenance of a fund balance (defined as a measurement of available financial resources – the difference between total assets and total liabilities in each fund) is essential to the preservation of the financial integrity of the school and is fiscally advantageous for both the school and the taxpayer. The goal is to use an excess fund balance for nonrecurring expenditures, not for normal operating costs. The restricted fund balance (amounts limited by external parties or legislation, such as grants or certain debts) will be reduced to the extent that the underlying reason for the restriction has been eliminated.

The policy proposal also sets forth the order in which the fund balance would be consumed, should the school experience more expenditures than revenues in a given fiscal year. The order would be:

1. Restricted fund balance to the extent that the expenditures related to the restriction contributed to the excess of expenditures over revenues.
2. Committed fund balance (these are amounts limited by Board policy or Board action – which must be taken by the Board in order to commit the fund balance for the designated purpose prior to the end of the fiscal year) to the extent that the expenditures related to the commitment contributed to the excess of expenditures over revenues. If a plan for the periodic use of the committed fund balance is reviewed and approved by the Board, the committed fund balance will not be reduced by more than the amount designated in the plan.
3. Assigned fund balance (these are amounts intended for a particular purpose, such as a capital/building project) to the extent that the expenditures related to the assignment contributed to the excess of expenditures and revenues.
4. Unassigned fund balance (amounts available for consumption and not restricted in any way) for any remaining excess of expenditures over revenues.
5. The Board may elect to consume unassigned fund balance prior to restricted, committed, or assigned fund balance.

The Board consensus was that this is a positive step and will add it to the December meeting agenda for a vote.

Dr. Pleso presented the first Future Ready PA Index report to the Board. The Board reviewed the 2019 data and also had the 2018 data for comparison. While the data is collected quite early in the school year, there were several areas of concern within the “Proficient or Advanced” categories on the PA State Assessment tests, such as all student groups not meeting interim goal/improvement targets in ELA/Literature – but Dr. Pleso pointed out that our trend is the same or increasing, not decreasing in this area. Our percentage proficient or advanced is 57%, while the statewide average is 62%. Similarly, in the Mathematics/Algebra category, we are trending upward, although all student groups did not meet interim goal/improvement targets. Our percentage proficient or advanced is 36%, while the statewide average is 45%. Science/Biology results were more promising, because our students met or exceeded the interim target and were trending upward from there. Our percentage proficient or advanced is 69%, while the statewide average is 66%.

We have 17% of students testing as “Advanced” in ELA/Literature and 10% in Math/Algebra. The statewide average in both areas is 18%. However, the statewide average is 30% in Science/Biology, we have over 41% of students testing as “Advanced.” This prompted a discussion about support for Gifted & Talented students. This is an area that Dr. Pleso is exploring and she is looking to provide more testing and resources to identify and support these students in 2020-21.

Moving away from the state assessments, in the umbrella category of “Meeting Annual Academic Growth Expectations,” we fared much better. Our academic growth score is 73% in ELA/Literature, just shy of the statewide average of 75%. Similarly, our Math/Algebra academic growth score is 70%, just short of the statewide average of 75%. We are trending upward in both areas and have shown marked improvement in Math/Algebra since 2018. We also exceeded the statewide average of 75% in Science/Biology with a score of 77%.

In other testing areas, we have seen significant improvement in regular attendance, with over 87% versus the statewide average of 86%. Dr. Pleso attributes this to better systems and communication put in place to track and monitor student attendance.

In a final area of interest, the state tests college and career measures, setting a career standards benchmark. The statewide average is 90% and we scored a 100%. The state now requires each student to have a portfolio with two new activities or components each year related to career exploration and interests, so we meet this requirement with our annual career day and other areas of instruction by school counselor Christine Felicetti.

Dr. Pleso informed the Board that the LNU has still not replaced our Speech Language Pathologist. She has become increasingly dissatisfied with Teach Speech’s services and has reached out to IU13 to see if they can provide similar virtual speech services, while we wait for the LNU to hire a new SLP. Dr. Pleso notes that while we are still in compliance with IEPs, we will double up on services when someone comes on board, hopefully in December.

The Comprehensive Plan committee continues to work with Dr. Pleso to develop and refine our Mission, Vision, and Values Statement. This needs to be finalized and reviewed by March as part of the Comprehensive Plan. The Committee is currently fine-tuning it and making it consistent across all formats. Dr. Pleso is planning to present it to the Board in December or January.

School Counselor Christine Felicetti has put together a training for staff and the Board on “Trauma-Informed Approaches” meant to comply with Act 144. The training will take place at the school on January 7<sup>th</sup> from 3:30pm-5:00pm. Dr. Pleso will talk to Christine about potentially offering the training on an additional day and/or setting up the training on YouTube or another platform for those who cannot be there due to scheduling conflicts.

The Board has also decided to invite Christine Felicetti to the next Board meeting to present some of the data she has collected, as well as an overview of her curriculum when teaching Guidance in the classroom. Dr. Pleso will coordinate with Christine to ensure she can attend on December 19<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Pleso is wrapping up the financial audit and currently working on a procurement audit for the federal government. She has outlined the school's process in a Procurement Transaction Procedures document which requires the CEO to, in all cases, identify needs and then select the method of purchase: Micro-Purchase, Informal or Formal.

- **Micro-Purchase** – if goods/supplies or services are less than \$10k.
  1. No quotes are required but compare prices from three different vendors
  2. Consider the price to be reasonable
  3. Distribute equitably among suppliers if practical
  4. Use small, minority-owned or women-owned businesses and labor surplus firms if possible
- **Informal Procurement** – if goods/supplies are between \$10k-\$20,100 or if services are between \$10k and \$249,999
  1. Obtain at least three documented quotes
  2. If three vendors do not exist, we may go with fewer, but this should be documented
  3. Another option is to go through COSTARS
  4. Use small, minority-owned or women-owned businesses and labor surplus firms if possible
- **Formal Procurement (Sealed Bids)** – if goods/supplies are more than \$20,100
  1. Advertise for sealed bids in two major newspapers for three weeks
  2. Contract is awarded to the bidder with the lowest, firm, fixed price
  3. Manage contract
  4. Another option is to go through COSTARS
- **Formal Procurement (Competitive Proposals)** – for services more than \$250k
  1. Advertise for Request for Proposals in two major newspapers for three weeks
  2. The price is not the sole selection factor...consider experience, technical resources, and past performance
  3. Post on GMCS website the evaluation method for scoring competitors
  4. Oversee contractor for performance, according to the terms, conditions, and specifications of contract

Non-competitive Proposals (Fixed Price or Cost-Reimbursement) can occur: if in a public emergency; available only from a single source; if inadequate competition; or if awarding or pass-through agency authorizes it; in response to a written request from GMCS.

In reviewing these procedures, Dr. Pleso found that our food service vendor, Michelle Michaels Catering, had an expired license. It had been in place when we first contracted with them, but it had since not been renewed. The owner has now re-applied through the Division of Food and Nutrition in Pennsylvania.

Dr. Pleso has begun the charter renewal process. She met with Superintendent Perrin of the GASD, who is an expert in charter renewals. He explained to Dr. Pleso that he has overseen approximately 16 charter renewals through his work at Penn State. He met with Dr. Pleso to outline our next steps and gave her reports and applicable paperwork. He told her it will be essentially the same process that VIDA just successfully completed. There are no set rules for charter renewal, but Dr. Pleso feels we are fortunate to be working with Dr. Perrin because he set so many of the guidelines while at Penn State.

There are seven sections to charter renewal and the Board was pleased to learn that Dr. Pleso and her team are already on the fifth section. Dr. Perrin may return to GMCS – possibly as early as January - with as many as six people from the GASD to take our prepared materials. Dr. Pleso expects a letter announcing this to arrive in December.

#### **Report of the Chair**

The November staff meeting has been canceled and Tom Hockensmith plans to attend the December one on the 10<sup>th</sup>. Jill Clinton will attend the January staff meeting.

Jill Clinton reports that the Board manuals are nearly done (she is waiting on some pocket pages on order with Jackie Hoover) and she will have them ready for the December Board meeting. She will also add her member terms document and an updated Board calendar to the binders.

The Finance committee meeting is on December 11<sup>th</sup>, with an agenda due on December 4<sup>th</sup>. The Executive committee meetings have been canceled for November and December and will resume on the posted date of January 30<sup>th</sup>.

Tom Hockensmith noted the upcoming 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of GMCS and Dr. Pleso added that next year is also Maria Montessori's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday. We discussed forming a committee to explore celebration ideas, including a summer party and alumni reunion.

Tom Hockensmith announced that we will be voting on the revised budget in December. This needs to be posted publicly for at least 30 days.

Tom Hockensmith asked Dr. Pleso if she would make sure the GMCS website links to the American Montessori Society site, which is very comprehensive and would be a great resource for current and prospective families.

Tom Hockensmith requested that Dr. Pleso follow up with Leigh Gugliette regarding the request the Board made for contingency documents. While this may take longer than anticipated due to her extensive work on charter renewal, Leigh will be tasked with creating brief documents outlining important due dates, instructions, websites, contact numbers, and other information

vital to the compliance of the school should she not be available to continue her duties. Tom also revisited the Board's request for Dr. Pleso to begin formal documentation of 'succession' plans, as discussed previously. These will continue to be fleshed out and made a priority even throughout the charter renewal process and building project.

#### Finance Committee

Becky Uppercue reports that GMCS currently has a net income of \$219k due to conservative revenue assumptions and the negative expense variances mentioned in past minutes. In addition, Jesse Bean of Charter Choices reports that we have received \$100k from GASD and several smaller checks from other districts in the past week. These will be reflected in the November financials.

We have \$254k in checking, with approximately \$403k in savings accounts and \$549k in district receivables. We currently hold approximately \$1.1 million in assets.

Our assets-to-liability ratio is currently 10:3, even better than last month when it was 11:9, putting us in a very good financial position.

The local school district revenues are below (\$55k) YTD budgeted figures due to discrepancies between billed (216) versus budgeted (237) enrollment. These must be resolved to ensure that the school receives all of its revenue in a timely fashion. Dr. Pleso has asked Dave at Charter Choices to send a detailed list of exactly who has been billed. She said she will get to the bottom of the discrepancy with Leigh Gugliette's assistance.

Our total personnel costs are lower (\$77k) than budgeted due to several funded positions that have not yet been filled. Total expenses are also lower (\$133k) than budgeted due to the seasonality of costs.

GMCS currently shows a net income of \$219k due to conservative revenue assumptions and the negative expense variances mentioned above.

Becky Uppercue also reported that we are running about \$65k ahead of budget YTD and still have \$500k in our committed fund balance for the building project, however we are starting to utilize those funds this month to pay Digsau, our architecture firm.

Dr. Pleso has been working on a contingency plan in the event of an emergency need for funding that involves Charter School Capital, which is a factoring company – a business that provides cash advances to organizations (in this case, charter schools) at a high interest rate. While we do not plan to use them, if we experienced an unforeseen event that required immediate additional funds, Dr. Pleso feels that it is wise to be set up with them ahead of time.

Dr. Pleso questioned Jesse Bean from Charter Choices about the possibility of us having to draw from the PSEERS fund if the current wave of state legislative charter school reform negatively impacts us. Jesse indicated that it is very unlikely for us to be substantially affected in the short term and that the federal government would also be involved because each state has different pension laws. Jesse also pointed out that the “cyber” charter schools are currently being targeted and are at the most risk of being hit. Becky Uppercue agreed that this was the overall sense she got when attending the recent Pennsylvania Department of Education committee hearing on October 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Becky Uppercue reports that GMCS will pay out \$214k to Digsau for the 2019-20 fiscal year. We had budgeted \$176k, so we are off significantly (\$38k), however we also budgeted another \$260k that was not assigned, so we can use this to cover the shortfall. She notes that we will need to have a designated architect line in the 2020-21 budget for \$66k to cover our remaining balance with Digsau.

Dr. Pleso acknowledged that we have not been approving Financial committee meeting minutes, as meetings prior to November 2018 had only one Board member present and thus did not require formal minutes. As a result, the committee fell out of the good practice of taking minutes (though detailed notes were outlined in each month’s Board meeting minutes), but that has been rectified and will be maintained consistently going forward.

Dr. Pleso, Diana Williams, and committee chair Becky Uppercue reviewed the minutes from prior meetings and Becky made a motion to approve the minutes from prior meetings on November 28, 2018 and the following dates in 2019: February 20<sup>th</sup>, March 20<sup>th</sup>, April 18<sup>th</sup>, May 15<sup>th</sup>, August 21<sup>st</sup>, September 18<sup>th</sup>, and October 13<sup>th</sup>.

Should there be discrepancies on missing dates, it may be assumed that no meeting was held that month or that only one Board member was present, and thus no minutes were required

Becky Uppercue was contacted by Bill Oyster from our auditing company last week and the most prominent issue he raised was our high write-off costs for food services in the 2018-19 school year. Dr. Pleso recognized that our food services director, Rita Engloff, was not aware of the need to send monthly statements to families who have not paid for their students’ meals until the last part of the 2018-19 school year. Dr. Pleso hopes that by sending these letters, some families will become current, but acknowledges that the figures are significant and that after a certain amount of time, it becomes bad debt. Rita recognizes that we continue have parents and guardians who routinely send their kids to school without lunch, understanding that, by law and moral obligation, and GMCS has to feed them. Rita also works to help parents who do not pay to access the reduced lunch program, but often they cannot demonstrate an inability to pay. Non-

payment for food services by families is an ongoing issue for GMCS, but one that is very difficult to resolve.

#### **Personnel Committee**

Nothing new to report.

#### **Executive Committee**

Nothing new to report.

#### **Governance Committee**

Jill Clinton reports that as there is now a full Board with terms not expiring until May 2020, there was not a need for a meeting on November 14th. She said there will also not be a meeting in December unless necessary. Recruitment will need to begin in earnest in the beginning of the year. She will likely write an appeal for interested parties in the next newsletter.

#### **Building Committee**

The committee met on October 30<sup>th</sup> and discussed plantings and the footprint of the new building, as well as the idea of turning parking (the current gravel area) back into a paved lot. Bob Sharrah, of Sharrah Design Group who is serving as our civil engineer, expressed concern about adding impervious services and the flags that might raise with Straban Township. He suggested pushing parking back further, perhaps creating a landscaped island. We discussed the current 47 paved and 42 gravel spaces, which are all needed because of the student population – although the township’s standard for this size is 69 spaces. We have ‘over parking’ but it is truly needed on a practical level.

Bob Sharrah also mentioned that we will need to go from “sediment control” and convert to a permanent stormwater management strategy. Jamie Unkefer from Digsau said that this may become a budgetary consideration.

Nurse Adrian asked Jamie Unkefer if Digsau could provide materials for our “Giving Spree” booth and other fundraising and marketing endeavors and Jamie said he would provide these to her.

The committee also discussed the option of a second playground (perhaps where the mods stand now) or whether we would prefer to build on to the existing one. The consensus seemed to be that it would be better to have a second, separate playground, perhaps for upper elementary students, depending on the final design of the addition. Bob Sharrah reminded the group that as long as it is not an impervious surface and does not go over our approved footprint, we should be fine to move forward.



Several attendees mentioned the need for shade structures and while that is more of a zoning issue, Bob Sharrah feels it would be fine – though the more separated from actual structures and the smaller they are, the better things would go with the Township. He said to mindful of structures that have a solid roof, thus preventing rainfall coming through – he said this is a red flag for zoning. Jamie Unkefer reminded the committee that it is best to keep these ideas separate from the main project as they often require completely separate approvals.

Nurse Adrian also proposed a parent drop-off loop, but Jamie Unkefer said it would have a major impact on the project and that we should plan to address this at a later date. Dr. Pleso said she envisions changing all drop-off and pick-up procedures in the future, while not adding new roads or impervious surfaces.

The committee also discussed the various tanks on the property, especially the propane tank, which will have to be moved. We will also need either a larger or additional water tank to provide more potable water, as well as necessary water for fire suppression. We would rather not move it due to costs, but will have a mechanical engineer do an assessment.

The new addition will have built-in sprinklers, but Jamie Unkefer's reading of the building code is that the original structure will have to be retrofitted with a sprinkler system.

Dr. Pleso would also like our site to be evaluated for solar, wind, and geothermal feasibility.

Dr. Pleso is in need of our previous Environmental Assessment; Bob Sharrah will look to see if he has it from several years ago.

The committee also discussed restroom needs – staff feels very strongly that we need to match or exceed what we have now in the mods.

Jamie Unkefer showed three plans... one moved the two Kindergarten classrooms to the end of the left wing, the other moved them to the end of the right wing, and the third plan had them next to the library at the top of one of the wings. There was a lively debate about these, which continued to the next meeting on November 13<sup>th</sup>.

At the November meeting, the committee started by looking at "project precedent" photos and Brian from Digsau showing examples of other similar projects so the committee could get an idea of the final product, before moving on to renderings of our building's proposed exterior, which is metal siding/cladding to match part of our existing building. It will be a neutral color, switching to more playful colors when looking at the interior/courtyard side of the building. Digsau's idea is not to match the current exterior, but rather to complement it and maintain

neutral hues in order to introduce color elsewhere. Brian and Jamie Unkefer, also from Digsau, explained that the different colors used would signify what the usage of that area is.

They plan to also introduce an irregular window pattern for distinctiveness and interest – this sparked debate about windows' role in providing light, security, and distraction for students. Jamie Unkefer remarked that this will be a critical ongoing discussion.

We also returned to the previous discussion about restroom numbers and capacity.

Brian from Digsau said he will forward examples and ideas of storage options for staff to look at and discuss.

Dr. Pleso asked about when we may be able to set up a presentation for families. Jamie Unkefer said that this could happen in early January.

The teachers were given a survey about what they would like to see (and not see) in the new building – unfortunately, only the art, music, and 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers responded, so Nicole Gulden will try and seek out more opinions directly. Nicole did express that teacher want tile flooring, not carpeting as well as lots of electrical outlets in the classrooms and hallways. They also want much more storage, lockers in the classrooms, and ceiling-mounted projectors for whiteboards.

The classrooms for the new design have coming it at 857 square feet. This is larger than all current classrooms in the mods, with the exception of the 'double' classrooms in use by the 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade classes.

Dr. Pleso is going to look into grants for solar panels on the property and Bob Sharrah from Sharrah Design Group, suggested there might be some way to tie in or 'piggyback' off of the massive 55+ community being built up the road.

According to Dr. Pleso, plans are in the works for an open house sometime in January to show off the renderings and designs to families and other stakeholders.

Dr. Pleso advertised for the owner's rep position in November and currently has four options. First, she will work with Kathy Nagel to develop a job description, which will need to be presented to the Board in December. The Board would then vote on it in January and she would be free to provide it to the interested parties, which would then submit quotes to Dr. Pleso.

The next Building committee meeting is currently scheduled for December 4<sup>th</sup>, but Dr. Pleso needs to confirm with Digsau.

New Business: for the good of the order

None

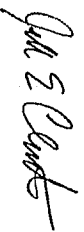
Public Comment

None

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair Tom Hockensmith at 7:54pm.

Approved:



Jill Clinton, Secretary

**AGENDA**  
**Gettysburg Montessori Charter School**  
**Board of Trustees**  
**888 Coleman Road, Gettysburg**

**Thursday, January 30, 2020**

5:30 pm

Executive Session

6:00 pm

Call to Order the January 30, 2020 Meeting;

Introduction of Members and Guests;

Public Comment on Agenda Items;

Approval of Consent Agenda

Old Business

Action

6:05 pm

Administrator's Report – Faye Pleso

*CEO Report*

*Enrollment Update*

*Owner's Rep Review & Approval*

*Trauma Informed Education Approach – Policy Addition Approval*

*Revised Mission/Vision/Values - Approval*

*Hiring Recommend Approvals:*

- *Amanda Braukus, Teacher's Assistant*

- *Kristine Gelazela, Breakfast and Lunch Server*

- *Christine Kirkpatrick, Long-term RtI Math sub*

*PVAAS*

*Charter Renewal Update*

*Comprehensive Plan Update*

*U.S. Department of Education Visit*

*Assistant Principal Job Posting Update*

*Chair's Report – Tom Hockensmith*

*Housekeeping*

7:20 pm

*Finance Committee – Becky Uppercue*

*Budget Review Q1 – YTD*

*Review & Approve revised Budget*

7:35 pm

*Governance Committee – Jill Clinton*

*Update on Recruitment Efforts*

7:40 pm

*Building Committee*

*Update on Renovations, Building Design, Funding*

7:50 pm

*New Business; For the good of the order*

7:55 pm

*Public Comment*

8:00 pm

*Adjourn*

**Gettysburg Montessori Charter School  
Board of Trustees Official Minutes  
December 19, 2019**

**Board Members Present**

Tom Hockensmith, Chair  
Rose Thornberry, Vice Chair  
Jill Clinton, Secretary  
Becky Uppercue, Treasurer  
Ashley Reid, Member, at-large  
Shanin Caplener, Member, at-large

**Board Members Absent**

Diana Williams, Member, at-large (illness)

**Others Present**

Dr. Faye Pleso, CEO  
Christine Felicetti, School Counselor

**Executive Session**

The Board met for Executive session at 6:02pm to discuss an employee-related matter, 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 Executive session to discuss these matters. Executive session closed at 6:24pm.

**Call to Order**

Tom Hockensmith called the meeting to order at 6:25pm. Introductions were made.

**Public Comment on Agenda Items**

No comment

**Old Business**

No old business

**Approval of Consent Agenda**

Becky Uppercue 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

Enrollment increased this month from 235 to 237 with the addition of two new Kindergarteners. Rose Thornberry requested a breakdown, or 'delta', of enrollment per month from Dr. Pleso. She will bring it to the January meeting.

Jill Clinton made a motion to approve the Fund Balance Policy as presented. It would serve as recognition that the maintenance of a fund balance (defined as a measurement of available financial resources – the difference between total assets and total liabilities in each fund) is essential to the preservation of the financial integrity of the school and is fiscally advantageous for both the school and the taxpayer. The goal is to use an excess fund balance for nonrecurring expenditures, not for normal operating costs. The restricted fund balance (amounts limited by external parties or legislation, such as grants or certain debts) will be reduced to the extent that the underlying reason for the restriction has been eliminated. Ashley Reid seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

School Counselor Christine Felicetti presented a review of ASCA (American School Counselor Association)-approved percentages for a school counseling program and shared the GMCS school counseling program data. Ms. Felicetti noted that our program is falling within appropriate guidelines with 83% of her efforts going toward providing direct services with students and 17% of her time being focused on indirect services, such as contact between her and various agencies, and these percentages align with the ASCA-approved counseling program.

Ms. Felicetti said that she would like to find ways to share what she is doing in the classroom with our families. Jill Clinton suggested that she put together a school counseling newsletter, similar to the one that Art teacher Erica Swiger produces. Ms. Felicetti mentioned that she could also include information from our Comprehensive Plan, such as our values and mission. Ms. Felicetti said she would reach out to Ms. Swiger for a template for the newsletter and will aim to send her first one home to families in the New Year.

Ashley Reid and Tom Hockensmith spoke with Ms. Felicetti about laying out truancy guidelines for families. They felt that the explanation for excused and unexcused absences needs to be more clearly and more prominently outlined. They said that the policy is not in the Parent Handbook. Tom suggested bullet points of the guidelines on our website in the "Student Absences" section, along with examples of what is an excused absence and what is not. Other members agreed that they would like to see these explanations and definitions on our website, along with forms that are needed. It could also be part of a welcome or registration packet, an informational sheet handed out at Back-to-School Night, linked on our Facebook page, in our Montessori Moments newsletter, etc. Truancy has become a major focal point for state regulators, especially, and we need to make sure all families are informed about the rules and guidelines about tardiness, excused absences, and unexcused absences. Ms. Felicetti stated her

goal for the current school year is to increase attendance by 25%. She is also looking into implementing a mentoring program that may have a positive effect on truancy.

Ms. Felicetti also presented an overview of her other duties besides her classroom curriculum and attendance responsibilities. She also oversees transcripts, SAP (Student Assistance Programs), MTSS (Multi-Tier Systemic Systems), the PBIS (Positive Behavior Support Systems) like our Stellar Stones program, and our annual Career Café. She is also working on implementing the Junior Achievement program for grades 3/4 and 5/6 this year. She would also like to introduce JA's BizTown program for 5/6, which is very popular, but costly.

Ms. Felicetti is also putting together a "Trauma Informed Approaches" training on January 7<sup>th</sup>. All Board members and staff need to attend, but teachers are the priority for this training. State law says that this training must be done school wide by the end of 2020 in order to comply with Act 144. Ms. Felicetti will record the training and make the program available online for those that are not available on the 7<sup>th</sup>.

Jill Clinton also suggested that we implement at schoolwide monthly "values" focus that dovetails with our Comprehensive Plan's outlined values and mission. This could be accomplished by artwork, books, morning announcements, newsletters, and on our website and Facebook page.

Dr. Pleso has held two meetings to discuss a revision of our stated Mission, Vision, and Values. She received a lot of feedback and thoughtful suggestions via email and in these meetings. Dr. Pleso thinks this is an advantageous time to be doing this with the charter renewal process beginning and was proud to present the results of this collaboration to the Board.

Dr. Pleso proposed this language for our Mission statement:  
*Gettysburg Montessori Charter School is a K-6 public charter that embodies the theories of Dr. Maria Montessori while promoting a multifaceted, child-centered learning environment for Gettysburg and the surrounding area. Our Montessori-trained, PA-certified teachers provide children with a dynamic and engaging education using a holistic curriculum that blends the Montessori educational philosophy and the Pennsylvania State Academic Standards. Our mission is to develop the full diversity of human intelligence while nurturing the whole child and instilling a lifelong love of learning.*

While Dr. Pleso was advised that the Vision statement could include more raw data, she feels that this statement is not the place for that and aims to keep it direct and simple:  
*Our vision is to guide, inspire, and empower children. Our goal is to give them the tools and confidence to achieve their dreams, lead meaningful lives, and make positive contributions as world citizens in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

Finally, Dr. Pleso presented the proposed Values statement:

- *Hands-on learning environment*
- *Independent exploration*
- *“Whole child” learning*
- *Freedom within limits*
- *Grace and courtesy*
- *Family and community partnerships*
- *Self-regulation*
- *Mindfulness*
- *Intrinsic motivation*
- *Sensitivity, respect, and compassion*

The Board will vote on the Mission/Vision/Values statements at the January meeting. The Comprehensive Plan, which is done every three years, is still in progress. Four sections were completed and voted on by the Board in November 2019 and the remaining 31 sections of the plan are due in March. Dr. Pleso expects to take next steps in January or February.

Dr. Pleso presented a proposed addition before the “Suicide Awareness, Prevention, and Response” on page 116 of the Policy manual. She would like it to read:

#### **Trauma Informed Approaches**

GMCS will provide school employees and the Board of Trustees training on trauma informed approaches. The evidence-based training shall address, but shall not be limited to, the following:

1. Recognition of the signs of trauma in students.
2. Best practices for schools and classrooms regarding trauma informed approaches and using multitiered systems of support.
3. Recognition of the signs of the impact of secondary trauma.
4. Services available to connect students.

The Board will vote on the addition of this language to our Policy manual at the January meeting.

Dr. Pleso reviewed the results of exit surveys after the departure of several students. One family was unhappy with the school, but did not provide details; another loved the school, but moved some distance away; and another left GMCS to homeschool because they objected to several of the schoolwide celebrations as well as the recognition of birthdays in the classroom.

Dr. Pleso provided an update on the ongoing speech language therapist issues created when the LIU removed our SLP, Rebecca Kane, from our school at the beginning of the year. Our contracted video services with the Chester County IU will be in place until January, but the



Board was very happy to hear that the LIU has hired a new SLP named Sara Hoffman. Ms. Hoffman is currently updating assessments, evaluations, IEPs, and other paperwork and will start seeing students in February.

Dr. Pleso gave the Board an update on our search for an Owner's Representative for our building project. She is required to have three quotes and has send out the scope of work to get bids from four companies that have been recommended by our business manager at Charter Choices, Jesse Bean; by our attorney, Kathy Nagel; or by our architecture firm, Digsau. Three of these companies, Avison Young, Northstar Museum Education, and Grayhawk, have recently sent proposals. The fourth, Becker & Frondorf, will be sending their proposal soon. For now, Dr. Pleso favors Northstar Museum Education and Grayhawk. We have \$62,000 budgeted for this contracted position this fiscal year and Dr. Pleso expects to have it filled about halfway through the year.

Dr. Pleso presented a very comprehensive outline of the school's procurement process at the November meeting of the Board, which included details on Micro-Purchases, Informal Procurement, and Formal Procurement (Sealed Bids and Competitive Proposals), as well as Non-Competitive Bids (Fixed Price or Reimbursement). She informed the Board that the Procurement Review conducted by the PA Department of Education has been closed, per a letter received November 27<sup>th</sup>.

In yet another audit, Dr. Pleso is processing the School Food Authority Review. It has ten components and has been very time-consuming. Dr. Pleso expects it all to go well, however. She was also recently informed that we now have to undergo a Federal Programs review, with regulators expected at the school in March.

The charter renewal process continues to move forward. Dr. Pleso has settled on January 27<sup>th</sup> as the date that Superintendent Perrin and other members of the GASD will arrive to take our prepared materials. Kathy Nagel, our school's attorney, has offered to have our information made into bound books to present to the GASD. Dr. Pleso will look into the fee for having this done, but believes it will be a deeply discounted price.

In related news, Rose Thornberry reports that there are now five new GASD Board members, as well as a new Board chair. It's unclear how or if this will affect our charter renewal process, but this will not be the same Board that just approved VIDA's new charter.

### **Report of the Chair**

Jill Clinton will attend the January 14<sup>th</sup> or 28<sup>th</sup> staff meeting and Ashley Reid will plan to go to the February 25<sup>th</sup> meeting. Tom Hockensmith attended the December staff meeting and heard feedback about the Ag Lab, among other subjects discussed.

Dr. Pleso let Tom Hockensmith know that she needs the Acknowledgement form each Board member signed prior joining the Board. She needs the forms from Tom, Jill Clinton, Melissa Ring, Kathy Johnson, Kirsten Johnson, and Tish Weikel. Jill will send the blank form to Dr. Pleso for her files.

Jill Clinton presented the Board manuals to each member and went through each of the included documents. She also handed out new and updated Board calendars and a list of Board terms of election to add to the binders.

Tom Hockensmith reminded Board members that our next meetings are January 30<sup>th</sup> and February 27<sup>th</sup> and that our PA state required Act 55 training needs to be completed by June.

Per the Board's request, a link to the American Montessori Society website has been set up on the GMCS website.

Rose Thornberry inquired about a previous Board request, that Leigh Gugliette prepare contingency documents – brief pages outlining important due dates, instructions, websites, contact numbers, and other information vital to the compliance of the school should she not be available to continue her duties. Tom Hockensmith also revisited the Board's request for Dr. Pleso to begin formal documentation of 'succession' plans, as discussed previously. These will continue to be fleshed out and made a priority even throughout the charter renewal process and building project.

After several executive session discussions of the matter, Shanin Caplener made the motion to approve the addendum to Dr. Pleso's contract, as prepared by our school attorney; Kathy Nagel. Becky Uppercue seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

#### Finance Committee

The Finance committee met on December 11<sup>th</sup> with all present.

According to the November financials, we went down about \$70k in October due to high district receivables for 2018-19, but Becky Uppercue reports that we are back up to \$860k.

We also have 'solid cash flow' according to business manager from Charter Choices, Jesse Bean. We were down to approximately 70 days' cash flow due to the aforementioned district receivables, but we are now back to approximately 84 days' cash flow. Outstanding district receivables are now mostly from this current 2019-20 school year.

Our total personnel costs are lower (\$77k) than budgeted due to several funded positions that have not yet been filled. Total expenses are also lower (\$173k) than budgeted due to the seasonality of costs.

Jesse Bean anticipates walking into the loan settlement with \$900k in liquid assets with additional district receivables to show.

As previously mentioned in the minutes, Dr. Pleso has asked for quotes from four companies offering Owner's Rep services for our building project. These companies were recommended by Jesse Bean and Kathy Nagel.

#### **Personnel Committee**

Nothing new to report.

#### **Executive Committee**

Nothing new to report.

#### **Governance Committee**

Jill Clinton reports that the terms of Tom Hockensmith, Shanin Caplener, and Diana Williams will expire at the end of August. She will contact them separately to determine if they wish to run again and hopes to have answers by May in order to have time to recruit and vet new members if necessary. Tom and Shanin are currently serving vacated terms, so they have two two-year terms open to them. Diana is eligible for a final two-year term.

As there is now a full Board with terms not expiring until next summer, there was not a need for a December meeting of the Governance meeting and chair Jill Clinton said that there will likely not be meeting in January, as well.

#### **Building Committee**

The committee met and achieved a milestone with a full building schematic now finished.

The committee did a major materials review and discussed acoustic panels for the music room, a flexible wall for both the music room and 5/6 rooms, exposed wood trusses, operable and fixed windows, and other items.

The team from Digsau is also addressing the issue of bringing in additional natural light to both the new addition and the existing building through the use of more glass, skylights, and solar tubes.

The committee also discussed using versatile furniture, including movable cubbies, new desks for the 3/4 rooms and 5/6 rooms, and standing stations.

The Digsau team had their engineer look at all of our systems and their mechanical engineer has done an assessment and plans to meet with Bob Shaaran.

The next meeting is planned for January 15<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Pleso asked about when we may be able to set up a presentation for families. Jamie Unkefer from Digsau said that this could happen in late January.

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

Rose Thornberry suggested to Dr. Pleso that an ad for the vice principal position be placed in March, with a hiring target date of June. The Board discussed the idea of placing ads around areas where universities offer the certification courses. The Montessori Society may be of some assistance, as well.

Dr. Pleso would like to have Board members' involvement in the vetting process; Becky Uppercue offered that she knows an interested candidate.

Rose Thornberry and Tom Hockensmith both suggested that an ad should actually begin running in January or February in order to target interviews for March or April, with the vetting and hiring process to follow in May or June.

Dr. Pleso said she will work with Dr. Brad Sterner from the LIJ to write a job description and that this would incorporate elements from her job. Rose Thornberry asked if it would also include duties handled by Crystal Moore, Leigh Gugliette, Christine Felicetti, and Meghan Parks and Dr. Pleso agreed that it would make sense to pull certain responsibilities from each that are better suited to a vice principal. Dr. Pleso also envisions this position will include systems management, staff development, and behavior management. She would like a vice principal to take over all aspects of behavior management, including incident reports, reflections, and communication with families. She would also like the vice principal to take over staff development and evaluations down the road. The Board agreed with Dr. Pleso that this position needs to be filled by an individual who will come to understand and embrace the school's culture as quickly as possible and be open to the idea of eventually stepping into the CEO position.


**Public Comment**

None

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair Tom Hockensmith at 8:43.

Approved:



Jill Clinton, Secretary

**AGENDA**  
**Gettysburg Montessori Charter School**  
**Board of Trustees**  
**888 Coleman Road, Gettysburg**

**Thursday, January 30, 2020**

5:30 pm **Executive Session**

6:00 pm **Call to Order the January 30, 2020 Meeting;**

**Introduction of Members and Guests;**

**Public Comment on Agenda Items;**

**Approval of Consent Agenda**

**Old Business**

Action

6:05 pm **Administrator's Report – Faye Pleso**

**CEO Report**

**Enrollment Update**

**Owner's Rep Review & Approval**

**Trauma Informed Education Approach – Policy Addition Approval**

**Revised Mission/Vision/Values - Approval**

**Hiring Recommend Approvals:**

- Amanda Braukus, Teacher's Assistant
  - Kristine Gelazela, Breakfast and Lunch Server
  - Christine Kirkpatrick, Long-term RtI Math sub
- PVAAS

**Charter Renewal Update**

**Comprehensive Plan Update**

**U.S. Department of Education Visit**

**Assistant Principal Job Posting Update**

**Chair's Report – Tom Hockensmith**

**Housekeeping**

7:20 pm **Finance Committee – Becky Uppercue**

**Budget Review Q1 – YTD**

**Review & Approve revised Budget**

7:35 pm **Governance Committee – Jill Clinton**

**Update on Recruitment Efforts**

7:40 pm **Building Committee**

**Update on Renovations, Building Design, Funding**

7:50 pm **New Business: For the good of the order**

7:55 pm **Public Comment**

8:00 pm **Adjourn**

**Gettysburg Montessori Charter School  
Board of Trustees Official Minutes  
December 19, 2019**

**Board Members Present**

Tom Hockensmith, Chair  
Rose Thornberry, Vice Chair  
Jill Clinton, Secretary  
Becky Uppercue, Treasurer  
Ashley Reid, Member, at-large  
Shanin Caplener, Member, at-large

**Board Members Absent**

Diana Williams, Member, at-large (illness)

**Others Present**

Dr. Faye Pleso, CEO  
Christine Felicetti, School Counselor

**Executive Session**

The Board met for Executive session at 6:02pm to discuss an employee-related matter, 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 Executive session to discuss these matters. Executive session closed at 6:24pm.

**Call to Order**

Tom Hockensmith called the meeting to order at 6:25pm. Introductions were made.

**Public Comment on Agenda Items**

No comment

**Old Business**

No old business

**Approval of Consent Agenda**

Becky Uppercue 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

Enrollment increased this month from 235 to 237 with the addition of two new Kindergarteners. Rose Thornberry requested a breakdown, or 'delta', of enrollment per month from Dr. Pleso. She will bring it to the January meeting.

Jill Clinton made a motion to approve the Fund Balance Policy as presented. It would serve as recognition that the maintenance of a fund balance (defined as a measurement of available financial resources – the difference between total assets and total liabilities in each fund) is essential to the preservation of the financial integrity of the school and is fiscally advantageous for both the school and the taxpayer. The goal is to use an excess fund balance for nonrecurring expenditures, not for normal operating costs. The restricted fund balance (amounts limited by external parties or legislation, such as grants or certain debts) will be reduced to the extent that the underlying reason for the restriction has been eliminated. Ashley Reid seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

School Counselor Christine Felicetti presented a review of ASCA (American School Counselor Association)-approved percentages for a school counseling program and shared the GMCS school counseling program data. Ms. Felicetti noted that our program is falling within appropriate guidelines with 83% of her efforts going toward providing direct services with students and 17% of her time being focused on indirect services, such as contact between her and various agencies, and these percentages align with the ASCA-approved counseling program.

Ms. Felicetti said that she would like to find ways to share what she is doing in the classroom with our families. Jill Clinton suggested that she put together a school counseling newsletter, similar to the one that Art teacher Erica Swiger produces. Ms. Felicetti mentioned that she could also include information from our Comprehensive Plan, such as our values and mission. Ms. Felicetti said she would reach out to Ms. Swiger for a template for the newsletter and will aim to send her first one home to families in the New Year.

Ashley Reid and Tom Hockensmith spoke with Ms. Felicetti about laying out truancy guidelines for families. They felt that the explanation for excused and unexcused absences needs to be more clearly and more prominently outlined. They said that the policy is not in the Parent Handbook. Tom suggested bullet points of the guidelines on our website in the "Student Absences" section, along with examples of what is an excused absence and what is not. Other members agreed that they would like to see these explanations and definitions on our website, along with forms that are needed. It could also be part of a welcome or registration packet, an informational sheet handed out at Back-to-School Night, linked on our Facebook page, in our Montessori Moments newsletter, etc. Truancy has become a major focal point for state regulators, especially, and we need to make sure all families are informed about the rules and guidelines about tardiness, excused absences, and unexcused absences. Ms. Felicetti stated her



goal for the current school year is to increase attendance by 25%. She is also looking into implementing a mentoring program that may have a positive effect on truancy.

Ms. Felicetti also presented an overview of her other duties besides her classroom curriculum and attendance responsibilities. She also oversees transcripts, SAP (Student Assistance Programs), MTSS (Multi-Tier Systemic Systems), the PBIS (Positive Behavior Support Systems) like our Stellar Stones program, and our annual Career Café. She is also working on implementing the Junior Achievement program for grades 3/4 and 5/6 this year. She would also like to introduce JA's BizTown program for 5/6, which is very popular, but costly.

Ms. Felicetti is also putting together a "Trauma Informed Approaches" training on January 7<sup>th</sup>. All Board members and staff need to attend, but teachers are the priority for this training. State law says that this training must be done school wide by the end of 2020 in order to comply with Act 144. Ms. Felicetti will record the training and make the program available online for those that are not available on the 7<sup>th</sup>.

Jill Clinton also suggested that we implement at schoolwide monthly "values" focus that dovetails with our Comprehensive Plan's outlined values and mission. This could be accomplished by artwork, books, morning announcements, newsletters, and on our website and Facebook page.

Dr. Pleso has held two meetings to discuss a revision of our stated Mission, Vision, and Values. She received a lot of feedback and thoughtful suggestions via email and in these meetings. Dr. Pleso thinks this is an advantageous time to be doing this with the charter renewal process beginning and was proud to present the results of this collaboration to the Board.

Dr. Pleso proposed this language for our Mission statement:  
*Gettysburg Montessori Charter School is a K-6 public charter that embodies the theories of Dr. Maria Montessori while promoting a multifaceted, child-centered learning environment for Gettysburg and the surrounding area. Our Montessori-trained, PA-certified teachers provide children with a dynamic and engaging education using a holistic curriculum that blends the Montessori educational philosophy and the Pennsylvania State Academic Standards. Our mission is to develop the full diversity of human intelligence while nurturing the whole child and instilling a lifelong love of learning.*

While Dr. Pleso was advised that the Vision statement could include more raw data, she feels that this statement is not the place for that and aims to keep it direct and simple:  
*Our vision is to guide, inspire, and empower children. Our goal is to give them the tools and confidence to achieve their dreams, lead meaningful lives, and make positive contributions as world citizens in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

Finally, Dr. Pleso presented the proposed Values statement:

- *Hands-on learning environment*
- *Independent exploration*
- *“Whole child” learning*
- *Freedom within limits*
- *Grace and courtesy*
- *Family and community partnerships*
- *Self-regulation*
- *Mindfulness*
- *Intrinsic motivation*
- *Sensitivity, respect, and compassion*

The Board will vote on the Mission/Vision/Values statements at the January meeting. The Comprehensive Plan, which is done every three years, is still in progress. Four sections were completed and voted on by the Board in November 2019 and the remaining 31 sections of the plan are due in March. Dr. Pleso expects to take next steps in January or February.

Dr. Pleso presented a proposed addition before the “Suicide Awareness, Prevention, and Response” on page 116 of the Policy manual. She would like it to read:

**Trauma Informed Approaches**

GMCS will provide school employees and the Board of Trustees training on trauma informed approaches. The evidence-based training shall address, but shall not be limited to, the following:

1. Recognition of the signs of trauma in students.
2. Best practices for schools and classrooms regarding trauma informed approaches and using multitiered systems of support.
3. Recognition of the signs of the impact of secondary trauma.
4. Services available to connect students.

The Board will vote on the addition of this language to our Policy manual at the January meeting.

Dr. Pleso reviewed the results of exit surveys after the departure of several students. One family was unhappy with the school, but did not provide details; another loved the school, but moved some distance away; and another left GMCS to homeschool because they objected to several of the schoolwide celebrations as well as the recognition of birthdays in the classroom.

Dr. Pleso provided an update on the ongoing speech language therapist issues created when the LIU removed our SLP, Rebecca Kane, from our school at the beginning of the year. Our contracted video services with the Chester County IU will be in place until January, but the

Board was very happy to hear that the LIU has hired a new SLP named Sara Hoffman. Ms. Hoffman is currently updating assessments, evaluations, IEPs, and other paperwork and will start seeing students in February.

Dr. Pleso gave the Board an update on our search for an Owner's Representative for our building project. She is required to have three quotes and has send out the scope of work to get bids from four companies that have been recommended by our business manager at Charter Choices, Jesse Bean; by our attorney, Kathy Nagel; or by our architecture firm, Digsau. Three of these companies, Avison Young, Northstar Museum Education, and Grayhawk, have recently sent proposals. The fourth, Becker & Frondorf, will be sending their proposal soon. For now, Dr. Pleso favors Northstar Museum Education and Grayhawk. We have \$62,000 budgeted for this contracted position this fiscal year and Dr. Pleso expects to have it filled about halfway through the year.

Dr. Pleso presented a very comprehensive outline of the school's procurement process at the November meeting of the Board, which included details on Micro-Purchases, Informal Procurement, and Formal Procurement (Sealed Bids and Competitive Proposals), as well as Non-Competitive Bids (Fixed Price or Reimbursement). She informed the Board that the Procurement Review conducted by the PA Department of Education has been closed, per a letter received November 27<sup>th</sup>.

In yet another audit, Dr. Pleso is processing the School Food Authority Review. It has ten components and has been very time-consuming. Dr. Pleso expects it all to go well, however. She was also recently informed that we now have to undergo a Federal Programs review, with regulators expected at the school in March.

The charter renewal process continues to move forward. Dr. Pleso has settled on January 27<sup>th</sup> as the date that Superintendent Perrin and other members of the GASD will arrive to take our prepared materials. Kathy Nagel, our school's attorney, has offered to have our information made into bound books to present to the GASD. Dr. Pleso will look into the fee for having this done, but believes it will be a deeply discounted price.

In related news, Rose Thornberry reports that there are now five new GASD Board members, as well as a new Board chair. It's unclear how or if this will affect our charter renewal process, but this will not be the same Board that just approved VIDA's new charter.

### **Report of the Chair**

Jill Clinton will attend the January 14<sup>th</sup> or 28<sup>th</sup> staff meeting and Ashley Reid will plan to go to the February 25<sup>th</sup> meeting. Tom Hockensmith attended the December staff meeting and heard feedback about the Ag Lab, among other subjects discussed.

Dr. Pleso let Tom Hockensmith know that she needs the Acknowledgement form each Board member signed prior joining the Board. She needs the forms from Tom, Jill Clinton, Melissa Ring, Kathy Johnson, Kirsten Johnson, and Trish Weikel. Jill will send the blank form to Dr. Pleso for her files.

Jill Clinton presented the Board manuals to each member and went through each of the included documents. She also handed out new and updated Board calendars and a list of Board terms of election to add to the binders.

Tom Hockensmith reminded Board members that our next meetings are January 30<sup>th</sup> and February 27<sup>th</sup> and that our PA state required Act 55 training needs to be completed by June.

Per the Board's request, a link to the American Montessori Society website has been set up on the GMCS website.

Rose Thornberry inquired about a previous Board request, that Leigh Gugliette prepare contingency documents – brief pages outlining important due dates, instructions, websites, contact numbers, and other information vital to the compliance of the school should she not be available to continue her duties. Tom Hockensmith also revisited the Board's request for Dr. Pleso to begin formal documentation of 'succession' plans, as discussed previously. These will continue to be fleshed out and made a priority even throughout the charter renewal process and building project.

After several executive session discussions of the matter, Shanin Caplener made the motion to approve the addendum to Dr. Pleso's contract, as prepared by our school attorney, Kathy Nagel. Becky Uppercue seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

#### **Finance Committee**

The Finance committee met on December 11<sup>th</sup> with all present.

According to the November financials, we went down about \$70k in October due to high district receivables for 2018-19, but Becky Uppercue reports that we are back up to \$860k.

We also have 'solid cash flow' according to business manager from Charter Choices, Jesse Bean. We were down to approximately 70 days' cash flow due to the aforementioned district receivables, but we are now back to approximately 84 days' cash flow. Outstanding district receivables are now mostly from this current 2019-20 school year.

Our total personnel costs are lower (\$77k) than budgeted due to several funded positions that have not yet been filled. Total expenses are also lower (\$173k) than budgeted due to the seasonality of costs.

Jesse Bean anticipates walking into the loan settlement with \$900k in liquid assets with additional district receivables to show.

As previously mentioned in the minutes, Dr. Pleso has asked for quotes from four companies offering Owner's Rep services for our building project. These companies were recommended by Jesse Bean and Kathy Nagel.

#### **Personnel Committee**

Nothing new to report.

#### **Executive Committee**

Nothing new to report.

#### **Governance Committee**

Jill Clinton reports that the terms of Tom Hockensmith, Shanin Caplener, and Diana Williams will expire at the end of August. She will contact them separately to determine if they wish to run again and hopes to have answers by May in order to have time to recruit and vet new members if necessary. Tom and Shanin are currently serving vacated terms, so they have two two-year terms open to them. Diana is eligible for a final two-year term.

As there is now a full Board with terms not expiring until next summer, there was not a need for a December meeting of the Governance meeting and chair Jill Clinton said that there will likely not be meeting in January, as well.

#### **Building Committee**

The committee met and achieved a milestone with a full building schematic now finished.

The committee did a major materials review and discussed acoustic panels for the music room, a flexible wall for both the music room and 5/6 rooms, exposed wood trusses, operable and fixed windows, and other items.

The team from Digsau is also addressing the issue of bringing in additional natural light to both the new addition and the existing building through the use of more glass, skylights, and solar tubes.

The committee also discussed using versatile furniture, including movable cubbies, new desks for the 3/4 rooms and 5/6 rooms, and standing stations.

The Digsau team had their engineer look at all of our systems and their mechanical engineer has done an assessment and plans to meet with Bob Sharaah.

The next meeting is planned for January 15<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Pleso asked about when we may be able to set up a presentation for families. Jamie Unkefer from Digsau said that this could happen in late January.

**New Business: for the good of the order**

Rose Thornberry suggested to Dr. Pleso that an ad for the vice principal position be placed in March, with a hiring target date of June. The Board discussed the idea of placing ads around areas where universities offer the certification courses. The Montessori Society may be of some assistance, as well.

Dr. Pleso would like to have Board members' involvement in the vetting process; Becky Uppercue offered that she knows an interested candidate.

Rose Thornberry and Tom Hockensmith both suggested that an ad should actually begin running in January or February in order to target interviews for March or April, with the vetting and hiring process to follow in May or June.

Dr. Pleso said she will work with Dr. Brad Sterner from the LIU to write a job description and that this would incorporate elements from her job. Rose Thornberry asked if it would also include duties handled by Crystal Moore, Leigh Gugliette, Christine Felicetti, and Meghan Parks and Dr. Pleso agreed that it would make sense to pull certain responsibilities from each that are better suited to a vice principal. Dr. Pleso also envisions this position will include systems management, staff development, and behavior management. She would like a vice principal to take over all aspects of behavior management, including incident reports, reflections, and communication with families. She would also like the vice principal to take over staff development and evaluations down the road. The Board agreed with Dr. Pleso that this position needs to be filled by an individual who will come to understand and embrace the school's culture as quickly as possible and be open to the idea of eventually stepping into the CEO position.

**Public Comment**

None

**Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair Tom Hockensmith at 8:43.

Approved:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jill Clinton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end.

Jill Clinton, Secretary

**AGENDA**  
**Gettysburg Montessori Charter School**  
**Board of Trustees**  
**888 Coleman Road, Gettysburg**

**Thursday, February 27, 2020**

- 5:45 pm **Executive Session**
- 6:00 pm **Call to Order the Febriary 27, 2020 Meeting;**  
**Introduction of Members and Guests;**  
**Public Comment on Agenda Items;**  
**Approval of Consent Agenda**  
**Old Business**  
  
Action
- 6:05 pm **Administrator’s Report – Faye Pleso**  
***CEO Report***  
***Enrollment Update***  
Personnel Recommendations for 2020  
10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary / 150<sup>th</sup> Montessori Birthday Anniversary  
Montessori Focus and University of Delaware  
School Food Authority Review  
Kindergarten Enrollment
- 7:05 pm **Chair’s Report – Tom Hockensmith**  
***Housekeeping***
- 7:20 pm **Finance Committee – Becky Uppercue**  
***Update on Finance Committee Meeting***
- 7:35 pm **Governance Committee – Jill Clinton**  
***Update on Recruitment Efforts***
- 7:40 pm **Building Committee**  
***Update on Renovations, Building Design, Funding***
- 7:50 pm **New Business: For the good of the order**
- 7:55 pm **Public Comment**
- 8:00 pm **Adjourn**



**Gettysburg Montessori Charter School  
Board of Trustees Official Minutes  
January 30, 2020**

**Board Members Present**

Tom Hockensmith, Chair  
Rose Thornberry, Vice Chair  
Jill Clinton, Secretary  
Becky Upperque, Treasurer  
Ashley Reid, Member, at-large  
Shannin Caplener, Member, at-large  
Diana Williams, Member, at-large

**Others Present**

Dr. Faye Pleso, CEO

**Executive Session**

The Board met for Executive session at 6:00pm to discuss employee and student-related matters, 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 Executive session to discuss these matters. Executive session closed at 6:17pm.

**Call to Order**

Tom Hockensmith called the meeting to order at 6:17pm. No introductions were necessary.

**Public Comment on Agenda Items**

No comment

**Old Business**

No old business

**Approval of Consent Agenda**

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

**Administrator's Report**

Enrollment remained at 237 as of January 21<sup>st</sup>. We lost two students over the last month, but had two new enrollments, including one new 6<sup>th</sup> grade student from Colorado and one 5<sup>th</sup> grade student who previously withdrew from the school and then decided to return. Per Rose

Thornberry's request, Dr. Pleso presented the Board with a new way to read enrollment data on her CEO/Principal Report, which includes a breakdown of enrollment at each grade level and comparisons with previous month's information so the Board can more easily track and compare numbers.

Dr. Pleso gave the Board an update on our search for an Owner's Representative for our building project. She is required to have three quotes and has requested bids from four companies that have been recommended by our business manager at Charter Choices, Jesse Bean; by our attorney, Kathy Nagel; or by our architecture firm, Digsau. Dr. Pleso used a spreadsheet provided by Digsau that outlined the duties of each stakeholder and she was able to highlight the ones that the Owner's Rep would be responsible for in order to give the firms an idea of the scope of the work.

Three companies, Avison Young, Northstar Museum Education, and Greyhawk, sent proposals. A fourth, Becker & Frondorf, did not submit a bid. Despite competitive pricing, Avison Young's bid did not reflect what Dr. Pleso is looking for and she did not feel that the representative she spoke to would be able to forge the relationships necessary to make this position a success for the project.

Dr. Pleso presented two final candidates' bids for consideration. Northstar Museum Education, while impressive, was by far the most expensive bid. They projected \$160,000 for the job in addition to travel expenses. We have \$62,000 budgeted for this contracted position this fiscal year.

Greyhawk, the only firm to actually visit our school and meet with Dr. Pleso during this process, submitted a bid totaling \$91,000, which does include travel expenses. The Board reviewed and discussed the bids at length and felt that Grayhawk's proposal and very extensive school project list put them in the best position to provide what we need from an Owner's Rep as we move into the next phase of our building project. Dr. Pleso found during the visit that the project manager we would be working with, Jay Appleton, has personally done many of the jobs of the contractors that he would be working with on our behalf and made a point to acknowledge the importance of relationships in the role of Owner's Rep. Greyhawk's entire portfolio and team work experience was both extensive and impressive and focused on school additions, renovation, and construction projects. In addition, Greyhawk was the least expensive bid and they provided an all-in price that included travel expenses, despite being headquartered in Mount Laurel, NJ.

After the Board deliberations, Dr. Pleso announced that she would like to hire Greyhawk. Becky Uppercue made a motion to hire Greyhawk to provide comprehensive Owner's Representative services for \$91,000 for the life of our building project. Jill Clinton seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Dr. Pleso will draw up a contract with Greyhawk with a line for the Board chair to sign. She hopes to get them to start in February. According to Jamie Unkefer from Digsau, anytime from now until April would be the ideal time to bring on an Owner's Rep as we are currently in the Design Development phase of the project and soon to be moving int to the Construction Documents phase. Jamie anticipates that this phase may be slightly sped up, so the timing now is ideal to bring on the Owner's Rep. Dr. Pleso also learned that these firms are in higher demand after winter, so it would be wise to secure a contract now.

At the December meeting of the Board, Dr. Pleso presented a proposed addition before the "Suicide Awareness, Prevention, and Response" on page 116 of the Policy manual. She would like it to read:

#### **Trauma Informed Approaches**

GMCS will provide school employees and the Board of Trustees training on trauma informed approaches. The evidence-based training shall address, but shall not be limited to, the following:

1. Recognition of the signs of trauma in students.
2. Best practices for schools and classrooms regarding trauma informed approaches and using multilayered systems of support.
3. Recognition of the signs of the impact of secondary trauma.
4. Services available to connect students.

After the Board reviewed this addition, Ashley Reid made a motion to approve the addition of the "Trauma Informed Approaches" language to the policy. Becky Uppercue seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

At the December meeting of the Board, revisions to the Mission/Vision/Values statements were presented and discussed.

Dr. Pleso proposed this language for our Mission statement:

*Gettysburg Montessori Charter School is a K-6 public charter that embodies the theories of Dr. Maria Montessori while promoting a multifaceted, child-centered learning environment for Gettysburg and the surrounding area. Our Montessori-trained, PA-certified teachers provide children with a dynamic and engaging education using a holistic curriculum that blends the Montessori educational philosophy and the Pennsylvania State Academic Standards. Our mission is to develop the full diversity of human intelligence while nurturing the whole child and instilling a lifelong love of learning.*

Dr. Pleso proposed this language for our Vision statement:

*Our vision is to guide, inspire, and empower children. Our goal is to give them the tools and confidence to achieve their dreams, lead meaningful lives, and make positive contributions as world citizens in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

Finally, Dr. Pleso presented the proposed Values statement:

- *Hands-on learning environment*
- *Independent exploration*
- *“Whole child” learning*
- *Freedom within limits*
- *Grace and courtesy*
- *Family and community partnerships*
- *Self-regulation*
- *Mindfulness*
- *Intrinsic motivation*
- *Sensitivity, respect, and compassion*

Rose Thornberry made the motion to approve the revised Mission/Vision/Values statements as presented. Shanin Caplener seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Dr. Pleso recommended hiring Amanda Braukus as a Teacher’s Assistant in a 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> classroom. Shanin Caplener made a motion to hire Amanda Braukus at a rate of \$17/hour for less than 30 hours per week, with no benefits, and with a hire date of 1/6/20. Jill Clinton seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Dr. Pleso also recommended hiring Kristine Gelazela as a Breakfast and Lunch Server. Ashley Reid made a motion to hire Kristine Gelazela at a rate of \$10/hour for less than 30 hours per week, with no benefits, and with a hire date of 2/3/20. Diana Williams seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Finally, Dr. Pleso recommended hiring Christine Kirkpatrick as an RtI Math teacher. Shanin Caplener made a motion to hire Christine Kirkpatrick at a rate of \$25/hour for less than 30 hours per week, with no benefits, and with a hire date of 1/27/20. Ashley Reid seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Dr. Pleso presented the school’s 2018-19 PVAAS (Pennsylvania Value Added Assessment Summary) results. These are considered ‘growth results’ to be used in conjunction with our ‘achievement results’ as reported on the PA state assessments. Dr. Pleso believes our curriculum additions and changes have put us in the ‘green’ this past year, so that we are now meeting

standards for PA academic growth. The standard is met when the student group maintains its relative average achievement from one year to the next.

In grade 4 math, we were down slightly (1.2 points) last year, but still met the standard for growth. That grade is showing an even level over three years, again maintaining PA's standard for growth in math. Grade 5 was also down slightly (less than a point) last year, but was down 1.2 points over the past three years. Grade 6 showed a larger area of concern, being down 1.7 points last year, but it should be noted that this is still within the area of meeting PA's standard for academic growth. The cohort for testing in grade 6 has been too small over the past three years to provide an average for that period. Dr. Pleso noted that this should change as we continue to retain more and more sixth graders each year and that there will be third 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> classroom next year. Dr. Pleso also noted that the staff is in the process of writing our math curriculum this year, which should significantly benefit our scores next year.

In grade 4 ELA, there is some area of concern with a downward trend (down 1.2 points last year) that extends to that grade's three-year average. That score, minus 3.1, puts grade 4 in a category ('red') that shows significant evidence that the school did not meet the standard for PA academic growth. By contrast, last year's scores for grade 5 were up 1.9 points and the three-year average showed moderate evidence that the school exceeded the standard for growth (the 'blue' category). This was the highlight of the entire report, as it was our only 'blue' level category. Dr. Pleso and the Board applauded the achievements of Nicole Gulden and her grade 5 ELA students. Grade 6 saw a 1.6 point drop last year, but maintained the 'green' level and again, the student testing cohort has not been large enough to provide a three-year average for this subject in grade 6.

In science, only the grade 4 students are tested. They were up an amazing 9.3 points last year, but are still at a three-year average deficit of minus 6.1. Fortunately, even this score is enough to keep our school meeting the standard for PA academic growth in science for grade 4 last year and over the last three year. Dr. Pleso pointed out that this is the academic category poised for the biggest growth now that Keri Bechtel has taken over our grade 3/4 science curriculum and we have introduced a new program this school year.

The charter renewal process continues to move forward. Eight people representing the GASD arrived January 27<sup>th</sup> to discuss charter renewal. These included Superintendent Perrin, GASD's attorney, assistant superintendent, special education director, human resources director, business manager, and the assistant business manager. They visited the school for two hours and joined Dr. Pleso on a tour and looked at the model for our new addition. The attorney subsequently sent a long list of requests to be fulfilled by Dr. Pleso and Leigh Gugliette.

Dr. Pleso reports that she believes they will be done and present a report to the GASD Board in April, despite our current charter being in place until July. While it was an uneventful visit, we remain in stand-by mode as they continue to investigate items they would like to see from GMCS pursuant to the charter renewal.

Dr. Pleso was pleased to report to the Board that the Comprehensive Plan due date has been moved from March to April to accommodate all stakeholders. She will have another update at the February meeting.

Dr. Pleso was recently contacted by the U.S. Department of Education informing her that Aimee Viana, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, had been made aware of our Small Rural School Achievement Grant we had achieved (which helps to fund ESL instruction) and wanted to visit the school. Mrs. Viana serves as the principal advisor to the Assistant Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education on all matters related to elementary and secondary education, including grants management, data reporting and analysis, program evaluation, and technical assistance. She previously served in the Department as the Executive Director of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics.

A visit was arranged for January 24<sup>th</sup> and Dr. Pleso invited several local and state officials to join us. For several hours, GMCS hosted Aimee Viana and her assistants; State Senator Doug Mastriano, who represents PA's 33rd district; Gettysburg Mayor Theodore Streeter; Adams County Commissioner Jim Martin; and Executive Director of the PA Coalition of Public Charter Schools, Ana Myers. All were given a tour of the school and shown the model of our new building. The guests were invited to observe classrooms and have discussions with students, parents, and faculty. They were able to hear directly how much the kids love GMCS and how special it is to our families.

This was a prestigious, exciting, and highly successful event that was covered by the Gettysburg Times, appearing with color photos on the front page of the Saturday edition. The full story of the visit was posted on their website. Dr. Pleso has also has it posted on our website and Facebook page. The event and its local coverage was a wonderful prelude to the start of our charter renewal and helped continue to raise the school's positive profile in Gettysburg. Dr. Pleso and the Board were grateful to have the support of the local officials who have long understood the importance of both school choice and Montessori education. Ana Myers had the opportunity to speak to a federal education official about the pressure charter schools are under in Pennsylvania under the current governor and his administration. She appealed for support so that proposed budget cuts for charter schools can be avoided.

Following this event, Dr. Pleso was invited to be part of a White House briefing (via conference call) during School Choice Week with Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos. About 30 people from around the United States participated and discussed \$5 billion in future federal funding for school choice initiatives.

The LIU's Dr. Brad Stemer recommended that Dr. Pleso post advertising for a 2020-21 assistant principal position in early March. Dr. Pleso has worked with him on the advertising copy and is preparing to place ads with Indeed (online), Penn State University, and will investigate opportunities with the American Montessori Society. She will have an update for the Board in February.

### **Report of the Chair**

Ashley Reid is planning to go to the February 25<sup>th</sup> staff meeting. At the next Board meeting, Tom Hockensmith will see if additional Board members can attend the March and April staff meetings.

Tom Hockensmith reminded Board members that our next meetings are February 27<sup>th</sup> and March 26<sup>th</sup> and that our PA state required Act 55 training needs to be completed by June.

Rose Thornberry inquired about a previous Board request, that Leigh Gugliette prepare contingency documents – brief pages outlining important due dates, instructions, websites, contact numbers, and other information vital to the compliance of the school should she not be available to continue her duties. Tom Hockensmith also revisited the Board's request for Dr. Pleso to begin formal documentation of 'succession' plans, as discussed previously. These will continue to be fleshed out and made a priority even throughout the charter renewal process and building project.

The state-mandated Trauma Informed Approach training will take place on May 14<sup>th</sup>. Christine Felicetti will have an alternative set up so that staff and Board members who cannot make it can take the training online.

Dr. Pleso reported the school was gifted with \$1,369 at Adams County's annual Giving Spree in Gettysburg, making it one of our most successful fundraisers of the year. A lot of effort went into preparing for it and the school earned far more than the previous (our first) year. Dr. Pleso said she will print the results of the Giving Spree and other fundraisers in the winter edition of "Montessori Moments."

### **Finance Committee**

Becky Uppercue distributed Statements of Financial Interest to all Board members.

According to the December financials, Becky Uppercue reported that our cash on hand decreased slightly to \$808k as the school as begun to incur costs related to construction. District receivables also decreased slightly to \$380k, but the vast majority are from the current school year. Charter Choices told Becky Uppercue at the recent Finance committee meeting that a large payment of over \$108k will arrive from the GASD by the end of January.

Our accounts payable balance is currently at \$57k and all invoices received have been paid. The accrued payroll was paid out to employees at the beginning of September, so it has been accruing monthly since then and is now at approximately \$50k.

Our local school district revenues remain slightly below budgeted figures at \$63k due to enrollment discrepancies between what GMCS has billed for (231 students) versus what was originally budgeted for (237 students).

Total personnel costs are lower at \$101k than budgeted due to the delayed hiring of several positions (some hired in November, others tod) and savings on health insurance. Total expenses are similarly lower by \$281k than originally budgeted, due in part to building costs that have not yet come to fruition.

GMCS has used \$45k of released funds from the Committed Fund Balance toward capital improvements so far this year.

The Board voted on Dr. Pleso's recommendation for an Owner's Rep; we hope to have them in place by February or March. This will be a large expenditure that we should see reflected in the next financial report.

Jesse Bean from Charter Choices reminded the committee that we were allowed to switch from PSERS, the PA state retirement fund, which required a 32% contribution to a 403(b) savings plan. This new retirement funding option only requires a 5% contribution from the school, saving a huge amount of money.

Dr. Pleso met with Members 1<sup>st</sup> to show them our new building model provided by Digsau and to update them on the continued financial health and progress at the school. They discussed closing on our loan in June.

#### **Personnel Committee**

Nothing new to report.

#### **Executive Committee**

Nothing new to report.

#### **Governance Committee**

Jill Clinton reports that the terms of Tom Hockensmith, Shanin Caplener, and Diana Williams will expire at the end of August. She contacted them inquire if they wish to run again and hopes to have answers by May in order to have time to recruit and vet new members if necessary. Tom



and Shannin are currently serving vacated terms, so they have two two-year terms open to them. Diana is eligible for a final two-year term.

As there is now a full Board with terms not expiring until next summer, there was not a need for a January meeting of the Governance committee and chair Jill Clinton said that there will likely not be meeting in February, as well.

#### **Building Committee**

The committee met on January 22<sup>nd</sup> with Jamie and Brian from Digsau, Dr. Pleso, Adrian Kavanaugh, Nicole Gulden, Jill Clinton, and our engineering contractor, Bob Shaarah.

The team from Digsau told us that we are now entering the Design Development phase, having finished Feasibility, Financial, Team Mobilization, and the Schematic phases. The next phase will be Construction Documents. Jamie Unkefer told everyone present that this phase may be 'sped up' due to previous phases going very smoothly and meeting deadlines so far.

Bob Shaarah reminded the team that we are currently about 600 sq ft over where we started when Crabtree & Rohrbaugh originally drew up plans during our building move. He feels this is not enough to raise any red flags with the township and as long as we remain mindful about our impervious surfaces, we should not run into problems with permitting.

In March and April, Digsau and our contractors will submit for permitting we will need to begin construction this summer.

Jamie said any time between January and April would be the ideal time for the school to hire an Owner's Rep. Dr. Pleso has received three bids from firms who perform these services and she plans to have a contract drawn up in February with the idea to have a company in place in February or March.

There was a lot of focus on the exterior materials. It will be a concrete clapboard and we looked at several different styles. We also talked about an exterior paint scheme for the interior courtyard – this will be a 'wow' factor and reflect the developmental age of our students – there was discussion of an 'ombre' rainbow paint scheme on the exterior walls, which could be 'brought in' from the outside to the library that connects the two wings.

There was also an extensive discussion of what to do with our existing space that is currently beyond the scope of work, like flooring, windows, and painting. The Digsau team asked the committee to meet and submit a 'wish list' for items they would like to see renovated as part of the overall project. Dr. Pleso said she would follow up ask members to submit ideas and then meet to discuss prior to forwarding to Digsau.

Dr. Pleso asked again about when we may be able to set up a presentation for families. Jamie Unkefer had originally said this could happen after the holidays, but moved the timeline to late January. Now that we have a model for families to see, he thinks that February could be a good time. Dr. Pleso also asked about what outdoor access we are going to have for a spring/summer 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. Jamie outlined what he thought would be the best space to hold a gathering during early construction.

**New Business: for the good of the order**

Dr. Pleso announced that we are no longer working with Ruth's Harvest, but that Diana Williams had reached out to Bakewell Farms (a consortium of retirees who have a grant to work with schools to tie in history, culture, and science) about partnering with GMCS to make an all-natural, three-ingredient bread and they have agreed to work with our students for a terrific learning experience that dovetails with the Montessori philosophy. Rita Engloff, Dr. Pleso, and Diana will work together to try and plan something with Bakewell Farms by the end of this school year.

Jill Clinton asked Dr. Pleso for an update on our grant writing. There has not been any work with our consultant so far this school year, but she plans to work on something after charter renewal.

Dr. Pleso touched on several upcoming events, such as a 'preschooler welcome night' as part of Kindergarten registration; a 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary summer celebration; a middle school transition night; and the potential for a lottery system for registration and re-registration of students for 2020-21. There will be more information to come at the February meeting.

**Public Comment**

None

**Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair Tom Hoekensmith at 8:07.

Approved:



Jill Clinton, Secretary

Gettysburg Montessori Charter School  
Board of Trustees Official Minutes  
February 27, 2020

**Board Members Present**

Tom Hockensmith, Chair  
Rose Thornberry, Vice Chair  
Jill Clinton, Secretary  
Becky Uppercue, Treasurer  
Ashley Reid, Member, at-large

**Board Members Absent**

Diana Williams, Member, at-large (due to illness)

**Others Present**

Dr. Faye Pleso, CEO

**Executive Session**

The Board did not hold an Executive Session.

**Call to Order**

Tom Hockensmith called the meeting to order at 6:06pm. No introductions were necessary.

**Public Comment on Agenda Items**

No comment

**Old Business**

No old business

**Approval of Consent Agenda**

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

**Administrator's Report**

Enrollment increased from last month's total of 237 to 239, as reflected in Dr. Pleso's report. However, just prior to the Board meeting, she enrolled three additional students. The five total new students since last month included a Kindergartener, three 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> graders, and a 5<sup>th</sup> grader. Dr. Pleso also reports that there is some additional 'shadowing' at school with potential students. student who previously withdrew from the school and then decided to return.

Dr. Pleso gave the Board an overview of her personnel recommendations for 2020, which for now are limited to the long-discussed assistant principal and a full-time specials position. Dr. Pleso has begun the search for the assistant principal via ads with Indeed.com and other resources available through the American Montessori Association and Dr. Brad Sterner at the LIU. She will begin interviewing as soon as she has candidates. Her proposal for the full-time specials teacher extends to the Gym/Health position. She is trying to find more professional duties that will justify the additional hours. Ashley Reid suggested that this person could also serve as an “outreach coordinator” for the school. Dr. Pleso is also discussing scheduling with staff and trying to find ways that this teacher could work throughout the day – including potentially including recess duty as a part of the job description.

Dr. Pleso mentioned that there are two new anticipated staff maternity leaves this summer, in addition to the ones currently underway and the others that are impending this spring that we will need to keep in mind when thinking about staffing.

Katie Sauter is spearheading our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary/Maria Montessori 150<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration set for Saturday, August 1<sup>st</sup>. She has had three meetings already to arrange for a DJ, tents, portable toilets, vendors, food, and other elements of the party. She will make appeals for parental involvement.

Dr. Pleso informed the Board that she has looked into requirements for a Superintendent’s certificate and found that she already meets most of them and may investigate an “alternative” path to receiving one. She has found a “Principal Leadership” program through the National Institute for School Leadership that is free and she has completed the first two courses already. She needs the final course, consisting of six classes, which is offered through the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Through this, she would earn a Superintendent’s certificate. There is also a “Superintendent Academy” through the Pennsylvania Department of Education which is run by Dr. Pedro Rivera, the head of the department. It is also free and runs for 18 months. Dr. Pleso has applied.

Dr. Pleso is also looking for ways to help the school become more “Montessori” in its educational delivery. She found Dr. Linda Zarkowski at the University of Delaware who has created a Montessori academy specifically for public (charter) Montessori teachers. She came to meet with Dr. Pleso and provided her with a rubric for our teachers to do a self-assessment of just how much of the Montessori principles and practices they are applying in their classrooms. Dr. Pleso would also like to show the staff videos of other public Montessori instruction. In addition, she would like to potentially work with Dr. Zarkowski to help provide GMCS with a blended curriculum (she shared examples to our LIU consultants to make sure these elements are incorporated into the new curriculum they are currently working with us to write) and team instruction.

The School Food Authority review, which occurs every five years, is ongoing. We need to make a number of changes and improvements, including breakfast signage changes and maintaining temperature logs in our refrigerators and freezers. Overall, there are nine items to improve and/or supplement that Rita Engloff and Dr. Pleso will oversee. Rita will also be tasked with writing a Food Safety Plan.

Our Kindergarten enrollment for 2020-21 stands at 24 students. Open houses have taken place and registration is ongoing. Ashley Reid inquired about the order of eligibility should our classes fill quickly. Dr. Pleso explained that siblings have first priority, followed by children of staff members, and Gettysburg residents third. After that, any PA resident may enroll their children. Dr. Pleso will let the Board know during the last weekend of March whether she anticipates a lottery for the 44 Kindergarten spots being necessary. If it is, it will take April 1<sup>st</sup> and the Board will need to be involved.

The charter renewal process continues to move forward. There has been no update during the month of February, except that the committee has asked for additional items from our Special Education Coordinator, Rebecca Black. Dr. Pleso reports that she believes they will be done and present a report to the GASD Board in April, despite our current charter being in place until July.

Dr. Pleso provided the Board with an update on our upcoming Comprehensive Plan. The Pennsylvania Department of Education is experiencing glitches in its software pertaining to charter schools, so Dr. Pleso applied for and received a six-month extension. The Comprehensive Plan is now due October 30<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Report of the Chair**

Board member-at-large, Shanin Caplener, had to resign her seat effective immediately due to a new job with an Adams County court that precluded her from serving on governing bodies of any kind. Tom Hockensmith accepted her written resignation and the Governance committee has begun a search for her replacement. The term she was filling expires at the end of August.

Ashley Reid attended the February 25<sup>th</sup> staff meeting. Jill Clinton will attend the March 24<sup>th</sup> meeting and Becky Uppercue will plan to go to the April 28<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Ashley Reid reported that the kick-off for our building project is taking place in the multipurpose room on March 4<sup>th</sup>. Jill Clinton has been asked to start the event by reading If I Built a School to students attending with their families. There was a discussion about refreshments, seating arrangements, music, photos, enter-to-wins, and new language to communicate the event to the school community. Ashley also said there were several other areas touched on at the staff meeting, including a lockdown drill and fire drill.

Ashley Reid also said there was an extensive discussion about new dismissal procedures to tighten things up and ensuring that every child is where they need to be at the end of the school day. Staff need to use their computers to update transportation info throughout the day. Families will be asked to make sure changes are submitted in the morning/early afternoon, not at the last minute. There will also be a new bus dismissal routine staff is calling “on deck” where students will line up so that they will be ready when the next bus rolls up.

Dr. Pleso also shared that she was a victim of an email scam that involved staff. The situation is being handled by the local police and the FBI, but it prompted a discussion about ways to tell if the email is coming from an outside source and not truly from our server. Tom Hockensmith and Ashley Reid both offered ways in which the school could take part in online security training.

Ashley Reid also mentioned upcoming events covered at the staff meeting, including Read Across America next week. There will be various dress-up days for students and the staff brainstormed other ideas that don't just focus on Dr. Seuss and would appeal to the upper elementary students. George from the Adams County library system will come to read to students, as well. Our book swap will also be held next week and our first science fair is on March 17<sup>th</sup>. Keri Bechtel is coordinating it and could use some additional help with judging. Our first talent show is on April 9<sup>th</sup>. There are over 70 students participating! Auditions are March 11<sup>th</sup> during school hours. Strawberry Hill Nature Preserve trout release on April 18<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am. There are also plans in the works for a breakfast with farmers that Becky Black is coordinating.

Tom Hockensmith reminded Board members that our next meeting is March 26<sup>th</sup> and that our PA state required Act 55 training needs to be completed by June.

Rose Thornberry inquired about a previous Board request, that Leigh Gugliette prepare contingency documents – brief pages outlining important due dates, instructions, websites, contact numbers, and other information vital to the compliance of the school should she not be available to continue her duties. Tom Hockensmith also revisited the Board's request for Dr. Pleso to begin formal documentation of 'succession' plans, as discussed previously. Dr. Pleso told the Board that we will discuss these matters in more detail at the March meeting of the Board.

The state-mandated Trauma Informed Approach training will take place on May 14<sup>th</sup>. Christine Felicetti will have an alternative set up so that staff and Board members who cannot make it can take the training online.

### Finance Committee

Becky Uppercue distributed Statements of Financial Interest to all Board members. She currently has all the ones needed, except for those from Lucretia Swain, Rose Thornberry, and Tish Welkel. She's been in touch with everyone and anticipates having all SOFI forms by the Board meeting in March.

According to the December financials, Becky Uppercue reported that our cash on hand decreased significantly to \$854k as the school received several large district payments. District receivables increased to \$409k; most of the outstanding receivables are from the current school year.

Our accounts payable balance is currently at \$35k and all invoices received have been paid. The accrued payroll was paid out to employees at the beginning of September, so it has been accruing monthly since then and is now at approximately \$62k.

Our local school district revenues are moving closer to YTD budgeted figures (\$44k) as the previous enrollment discrepancies (actual vs. billed) were resolved.

Total personnel costs are lower at \$111k than budgeted due to the delayed hiring of several positions and savings on health insurance. Total expenses are similarly lower by \$266k than originally budgeted, due in part to building costs that have not yet come to fruition.

GMCS has used \$66k of released funds from the Committed Fund Balance toward capital improvements so far this year. We show a net income of \$239k due to conservative revenue assumptions and lower cost expenditures.

Our financial partners in the building project, Members 1<sup>st</sup>, have been invited to attend the March 4<sup>th</sup> construction kick-off party.

Plans are in the works for Dr. Pleso, Charter Choices, and the Finance committee to draft a budget for 2020-21 in time for the March meeting. In addition to the two new personnel positions (assistant principal and full-time gym/health teacher), the only major budget wish list item Dr. Pleso intends to include is a new information management system that will track attendance, lunch count, and other items. She may also include better communication devices for use in school, such as wireless headsets, as a budget request.

Jill Clinton inquired about the 2019-20 budgeted expenditure for new computers and tablets in the classrooms, noting that over 25% of the funds (\$7,500) in the "Computers" line item has not been spent. Additionally, almost \$7k of the "Technology – Other" line item had also not been spent.

Dr. Pleso explained that additional devices had been purchased for the classrooms over the summer, but only recently put into service. She is mindful that our Montessori philosophy does not encourage heavy use of technology, but agreed to look into this and how the computers are currently being used, as several Board members noted that we have certain curriculum elements that are computer-based, such as typing, and that only a fraction of students in each classroom can access this at any one time, leading to sporadic engagement with these lessons. Dr. Pleso also noted that she does intend to fully equip the 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms with Chromebooks for the 2020-21 school year.

**Personnel Committee**

Nothing new to report.

**Executive Committee**

Nothing new to report.

**Governance Committee**

Jill Clinton reports that the terms of Tom Hockensmith and Diana Williams will expire at the end of August and she hopes to hear whether or not they intend to run again by April or May.

In the meantime, the Governance committee will begin searching for a replacement for Shannin Caplener. She was filling a term that expires at the end of August. Her replacement will see out that term and be eligible for two additional two-year terms.

An appeal for interest in a seat on the Board was put on the school's website and Facebook page, garnering interest from Rachel Earnest. Jill Clinton sent her in initial email with next steps, but she never replied.

Jill also reached out to Abbie Beall and Traci Elligson, parents who both expressed interest in a seat on the Board over the summer. Abbie was previously a Board member several years ago who left mid-term. Abbie did not return an email or a text follow-up from Jill. Traci, however, replied and plans to return her signed Acknowledgement Form. She also received a copy of our bylaws. Her next steps are to submit her clearances and a resume. Jill will proceed with the regular meeting of the Governance committee in March and will reach out to Megan Stough, Shannon McConnell, Ashley Reid, and Diana Williams to see if they can attend. If March 12<sup>th</sup> does not work for all parties, they will try to meet on April 9<sup>th</sup>. If that date does not work with everyone's schedule, Jill will try to reschedule or arrange for a new Governance committee date in which to interview and discuss Traci Elligson's candidacy, but also any new candidates who come forward in the interim.



Dr. Pleso and Ashley Reid both said they may have interested candidates and will reach out to them and forward information to Jill. Jill has also asked the other Governance committee and Board members to reach out to other parents, guardians, and community members to see if they have any interest in serving on the Board.

### **Building Committee**

The committee met in January to discuss a prioritized “wish list” for renovations on the existing building. All members were encouraged to submit their ideas and Dr. Pleso would present the final list to the Digsau team.

The final submitted list, in order, was as follows:

1. New flooring
2. Reconfigured office space (additional walls)
3. HVAC updates
4. Repurpose the walkway structure that currently shelters the space between the modulars and the existing building
5. Repainting, especially the hall and lobby
6. Washer-dryer hook-up
7. Replace the windows due to be lost in Becky Black’s and Nurse Adrian’s offices
8. Additional outlets for Becky Black’s office
9. Wall for Rita Engloff and Leigh Gugliette
10. Skylights/solar tubes in the hall and/or lobby
11. New/additional windows in the multipurpose room

We hope to be able to cover at least the first eight items on our list, but we will find out more at the next meeting in March.

Dr. Pleso is researching old photos of the schoolhouse that used to be on this property to potentially enlarge and use as artwork in the lobby. So far, no one has had any to share, but she is still looking.

The next committee meeting will be on March 4<sup>th</sup> at 1:30pm. Our new Owner’s Rep, Jay Appleton from Grayhawk, will be in attendance.

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

Becky Uppercue mentioned that were a lot of complaints from families about school photos this year. Despite continuing to work with Victoria Allen Photography, for some reason this year saw prints arrive months late and some parts of families’ orders missing and never delivered. Dr. Pleso has heard the same complaints and has already investigated the idea of additional bids for the photography contract.

Jill Clinton presented a packet of information to Dr. Pleso on a device called a "Breakout Box" made by Breakout EDU. It is an immersive games platform that is similar to the exciting challenges of an "escape room." The platform offers a huge amount of options for curriculum and standards-aligned games in ELA, math, science, and social studies across several grade levels, particularly 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup>. Jill saw one in use in a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classroom and observed how engaged all students were for a remarkable period of time for that age level and understood how well suited the platform is to the Montessori philosophy as a sophisticated, customizable work that could be used by both grade levels in each classroom at once. Dr. Pleso agreed that the idea was interesting and would review the information and costs.

**Public Comment**

None

**Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair Tom Hockensmith at 8:16pm.

Approved:



Jill Clinton, Secretary

**AGENDA**  
**Gettysburg Montessori Charter School**  
**Board of Trustees**  
**888 Coleman Road, Gettysburg**

**Thursday, April 30, 2020**

- 5:30 pm **Executive Session**
- 6:00 pm **Call to Order the April 30, 2020 Meeting (via Zoom);**  
**Introduction of Members and Guests;**  
**Public Comment on Agenda Items;**  
**Approval of Consent Agenda**  
**Old Business** Action
- 6:10 pm **Administrator’s Report – Faye Pleso**  
**CEO Report**  
**Enrollment Update**  
Continuity of Education Plan  
Review McKinney Vento Policy and Procedures  
Music Survey Summary  
GMCS Technology User Agreement  
Remote Learning Notice and Confidentiality Agreement  
Approve hiring of Front Office - Rebecca Yurkanin 4/2/2020  
Approve hiring of Assistant Principal and starting date Action  
Action
- 7:10 pm **Chair’s Report – Tom Hockensmith**  
**Housekeeping**
- 7:30 pm **Finance Committee – Becky Uppercue**  
**Update on Finance Committee Meeting**  
**Members First Loan Resolution Approval**  
**Governance Committee – Jill Clinton**  
**Update on Recruitment Efforts** Action
- 7:50 pm **Building Committee**  
**Update on Renovations, Building Design, Funding**
- 8:00 pm **New Business: For the good of the order**
- 8:15 pm **Public Comment**
- 8:30 pm **Adjourn**

**AGENDA**  
**Gettysburg Montessori Charter School**  
**Board of Trustees**  
**888 Coleman Road, Gettysburg**

**Thursday, May 28, 2020**

- 5:30 pm **Executive Session**
- 6:00 pm **Call to Order the April 30, 2020 Meeting (via Zoom);**  
**Introduction of Members and Guests;**  
**Public Comment on Agenda Items;**  
**Approval of Consent Agenda**  
**Old Business** Action
- 6:15 pm **Building Committee**  
*Update on Renovations, Building Design, Funding*
- 6:30 **Administrator’s Report – Faye Pleso**  
*CEO Report*  
*Wellness Policy*  
*Summer Packets/Plan*  
*Summer School*  
*20/21 School Year*  
*Charter Renewal*  
*Approve hiring of Assistant Principal and starting date* Action
- 7:15 pm **Chair’s Report – Tom Hockensmith**  
*Housekeeping*
- 7:45 pm **Finance Committee – Becky Uppercue**  
*Update on Finance Committee Meeting*
- 8:00 pm **Governance Committee – Jill Clinton**  
*Update on Recruitment Efforts*
- 8:10 pm **New Business; For the good of the order**
- 8:20 pm **Public Comment**
- 8:30 pm **Adjourn**

**Gettysburg Montessori Charter School**  
**Board of Trustees Official Minutes**  
**April 30, 2020**

**Board Members Present**

Tom Hockensmith, Chair  
Rose Thornberry, Vice Chair  
Jill Clinton, Secretary  
Becky Uppercue, Treasurer  
Ashley Reid, Member, at-large  
Diana Williams, Member, at-large

**Board Members Absent**

**Others Present**

Dr. Faye Pleso, CEO  
Jay Appleton, Greyhawk

**Executive Session**

The Board met for Executive session at 5:35pm via Zoom conference call to discuss employee-related matters, 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 6:07pm.

**Call to Order**

Tom Hockensmith called the meeting to order at 6:09pm via Zoom conference call. Introductions were made. All Board members were introduced to the Owner's Representative for our building project, Jay Appleton, PE, CHC, CSSHO. He is a project executive at Greyhawk consulting in Mount Laurel, NJ.

**Public Comment on Agenda Items**

No comment

**Old Business**

No old business

**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 approved by unanimous roll call vote.

### **Building Committee**

The Board was excited to welcome Jay Appleton from Greyhawk to our monthly Board meetings via Zoom. He has an incredible depth of knowledge in all areas of contracts, construction, and permitting and will work closely with our architecture team at Digsau and our civil engineer, Bob Sharrah. He will be joining us each month to provide detailed updates on our building project now that renovations and the project itself are moving forward.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Digsau has moved the completion date for the construction documents to May 22<sup>nd</sup> and that moved the project calendar back a bit. Jay Appleton has adjusted the calendar to reflect the changes. He mentioned that he is thrilled to be working with the professional and creative team at Digsau and highly complemented our choice of architect on this project.

Jay anticipates bid notices going out on May 25<sup>th</sup>, followed by meetings with interested contractors on June 10<sup>th</sup>, with bids due on June 25<sup>th</sup>. Jay noted that we must meet some specific wage and advertising requirements, but thinks we will have a lot of interest in our bid notices. He also noted that under the circumstances, with Pennsylvania's long shutdown, it is a good time for public bidding. He also noted that all contracts for the different trades and services must be bid separately.

Construction is set to start June 29<sup>th</sup> with renovations in the existing school building to make the most of the summer break. The construction schedule is still considered feasible, with a scheduled finish date of early June 2021.

Jay reported that Bob Sharrah expects our plan to be approved by the Straban Township planning board on May 4<sup>th</sup> at their regular meeting.

### **Administrator's Report**

Enrollment stands at 239, with 175 students having already turned in their paperwork. 35 of our 44 Kindergarten spots have been taken, though there was no need for a lottery this year. In addition to 35 incoming Kindergartners, the re-enrollment numbers are as follows:

1<sup>st</sup> grade: 33  
2<sup>nd</sup> grade: 25  
3<sup>rd</sup> grade: 27  
4<sup>th</sup> grade: 24  
5<sup>th</sup> grade: 16  
6<sup>th</sup> grade: 14

Dr. Pleso believes our Kindergarten spots will be gone before school is out and we will end up starting the new school year with 250 students, but she is mindful of the changes that the

pandemic crisis may bring. The school may or may not open for the new year and distance learning may continue.

Dr. Pleso informed the Board that the state is requiring all districts/schools to submit a “Continuity of Education Plan” surrounding our new distance learning model. She noted that GMCS was ready with packets from the very first day of the shutdown. Our plan was prepped with guidance from the LIU and the Montessori Society.

While our distance learning plans are still being adjusted, Dr. Pleso has received positive feedback on the Schoology platform, the accessibility of the teachers, read-alouds, links provided, and Montessori activity suggestions, among other things. Negatives have been the overwhelming amount of resources and links and the technical glitches within the platforms and websites. In addition, it is apparent that some teachers are adjusting better to the new education than others. Jill Clinton’s suggestion was that Dr. Pleso encourage teachers to continue to evolve and tweak their presentation to students and not allow each week to stagnate with the same types of assignments. She would like to see them have continuity with the basic ELA and Math platforms, but vary offerings of enrichment, links to new websites and videos, Zoom videos and instruction, Zoom class calls, and Zoom one-on-one calls.

Jill also suggested that Dr. Pleso make a Zoom video for families, so that they can see her and still feel connected to what’s going on with the leadership of the school. Further, she suggested Dr. Pleso make appearances on various class Zoom calls so that students can see her. She is such an important daily presence in the school that Jill thinks students and families need to see and hear from her at this uncertain time. Dr. Pleso liked the idea and will look into it.

Dr. Pleso has reviewed our participation and compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act, which outlines policies and procedures that protects children who are homeless by providing a continuity with schooling and transportation. This vulnerable group need not switch schools when homelessness has caused their location to change. Transportation will continue to be provided under these circumstances, as well. For GMCS, this affects approximately 5-10 children per year. After review, Dr. Pleso determined that nothing needed to be changed at this time.

Dr. Pleso spearheaded a Music Survey of families and shared the results with the Board. She has begun to make a variety of changes in response to the robust feedback (approximately 45 responses) she got from families. For instance, from now on both Kindergarten classes will have their seasonal concerts on one night. In addition, each grade band will have their own night for concerts, though she is considering having the 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grades participate with the 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> grade classes. Dr. Pleso has also ordered more chairs to accommodate our families in the multipurpose

room. Dr. Pleso will be making more changes, as she noted many specific responses from families, many of which echoed each other.

Dr. Pleso worked with the GMCS attorney, Kathy Nagel, to craft a GMCS Technology User Agreement for those families borrowing devices to use during distance learning. They also developed a waiver – a Remote Learning Notice and Confidentiality Agreement – to address privacy concerns. Both of these documents will be included as updates to our policy manual.

Dr. Pleso has recommended Rebecca Yurkanin as the new Front Office Assistant. Becky Uppercue made a motion to hire Rebecca Yurkanin as the new Front Office Assistant retroactive to April 2, 2020 at a full-time salary of \$25,000 with benefits. Diana Williams seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Dr. Pleso asked to move the hire date of the Assistant Principal candidate to June 15<sup>th</sup> from July 1<sup>st</sup> and increase the offered salary by \$5,000. The hiring for the position has been tabled until the May Board meeting. She will forward additional paperwork to Board members in response to a query from Jill Clinton.

The Gettysburg Area School District has scheduled a hearing on our charter renewal on May 4<sup>th</sup>. Kathy Nagel will be joining Dr. Pleso via Zoom, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The GASD will vote on our charter renewal on May 18<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Pleso will forward a link to meeting information on Zoom to the Board.

Dr. Pleso continues to conduct grade band meetings and is in touch with staff daily via email. Staff is also still working on writing the new math curriculum.

Ms. Felicetti continues to work on setting up a way to watch the trauma-informed training seminar online on May 18<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Pleso plans to send out a survey in early June to gather feedback from parents on distance learning and will work to refine it should it be needed in the fall.

Report cards and our newsletter will go out on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, the last day of school.

Dr. Pleso and Jesse Bean, our business manager at Charter Choices, are investigating a CARES federal grant to support our second annual two-week summer school in July as well as other ideas to encourage learning to continue throughout the summer.

### Report of the Chair



Tom Hockensmith announced that meetings of the Board and its committees will likely continue to be virtual via Zoom for the foreseeable future. Jill Clinton will contact the Gettysburg Times to provide public notice of the Zoom id and passwords for the next Board meeting on May 28<sup>th</sup> and for the Governance meeting on May 14<sup>th</sup>.

Tom Hockensmith will work on getting a Personnel Committee meeting together with Ashley Reid and Rose Thornberry in order to start working on the Staff Survey and Parent Survey. Jill Clinton noted that Becky Uppercue, Kathy Johnson, and Lieucreria Swain all have recent experience with the surveys should the committee need to consult with them. Tom mentioned that they would need Dr. Pleso to re-activate our access to Survey Monkey.

Tom Hockensmith reminded Board members that our next meeting is May 28<sup>th</sup> and that our PA state required Act 55 training needs to be completed by June.

Rose Thornberry inquired about a previous Board request, that Leigh Gugliette prepare contingency documents – brief pages outlining important due dates, instructions, websites, contact numbers, and other information vital to the compliance of the school should she not be available to continue her duties. Tom Hockensmith also revisited the Board's request for Dr. Pleso to begin formal documentation of 'succession' plans, as discussed previously. Dr. Pleso told the Board that we will discuss these matters in more detail at the May meeting of the Board.

#### Finance Committee

Becky Uppercue hoped to collect all of the SOFI forms by the end of March, but the COVID-19 crisis hampered her efforts. Tish Weikel's and Lieucreria Swain's forms are still outstanding.

There was no Finance Committee meeting in March due to the committee chair's health and the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the March financials, Becky Uppercue reported that our cash on hand is \$757k with over \$400k in savings, so we will be approaching Members 1<sup>st</sup> for our loan with over \$1.1 million in liquid assets.

We are on top of PSERS payments for the fiscal year and paid up on all debts. Our total income/gross is \$252k more in local revenues than budgeted due to conservative estimates of rates, back payments from districts, and savings on personnel. Jesse Bean thinks that the school's finances are stronger than ever and we are in a great position.

Dr. Pleso, Charter Choices, and the Finance Committee worked together to draft a first version of our proposed 2020-21 budget and discussed it at the April 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting via Zoom call due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

When crafting the proposed new 2020-21 budget, Jesse conservatively projected a 0% revenue increase in regular education payments and a 2% increase in special education payments, as well as 3% increase from other revenue sources like grants and savings from contracted services. He said it's unlikely we'll see a decrease this year, but warns we may in the 2021-22 fiscal year due to the financial crisis caused by COVID-19. Jesse's projections were based on numbers as of February 29th, as school has been closed since March 14<sup>th</sup>.

The new budget is also assuming a 10% increase in health benefits (though Jesse acknowledged that this may be closer to 5%-7%) and unemployment costs due to vastly increased claims this year.

In addition, the proposed budget includes \$65k for an Assistant Principal and an increase of about \$6,000 for a phys ed/health teacher, who would go from part-time to full-time.

Other budget plans include a re-appropriation of funds to be dedicated to students with Speech IEPs as required by the PA Department of Education. Dr. Pleso noted that \$6,400 also needs to go to ELA curriculum writing or professional development.

In addition, a proposed \$18k would be appropriated for "emergency restoration" to cover contractors as needed during repair and renovation to our current building this summer.

Dr. Pleso will call the modular building company to see if the costs we were originally give for removal of the leased units (an incredible \$157k) have changed; the committee will then determine how to split this cost into the 2020-21 and 2021-22 budgets.

Other elements of the new budget include a decreased cost for IT due to a new contractor, saving the school \$3,000. \$30k has been budgeted for various LIU services, including \$5,000 for professional development. Dr. Pleso noted that she will likely need \$10k more for curriculum. Jesse will add this to the next budget draft.

Overall, the current budget proposal includes a projected \$35k surplus, but it is likely we'll have more due to conservative projections in several areas.

Jesse reviewed a letter from Members 1<sup>st</sup> for the committee. It confirms we have a line of credit with them and we can use this to share with any vendors who might need it.

The committee discussed the building project and determined that there will be approximately \$4.2 million in total costs. We owe approximately \$900k on our existing building loan, which will be acquired when we close on our new loan. The interest rates we were offered (4.3% for a

5yr ARM and 4.5% fixed rate) for the 10 year loan are slightly lower than what they initially offered back in the fall of 2018, which is excellent news. In addition, our “commitment fee” was reduced from \$17k to \$10K, offering a substantial savings.

Jesse, Becky, and Dr. Pleso all preferred the 4.5% fixed rate because an ARM could prove too unpredictable and put us in a bad financial position. The Finance Committee’s recommendation to the Board was to choose the fixed rate. Dr. Pleso discussed the recommendation with Katly Nagel and she drafted a resolution should the Board decide to move in that direction. The Board discussed these options and agreed that the percentage rate is only very slightly higher with the fixed option and that the fixed rate is a safer choice for our school.

Jill Clinton made a motion to approve the resolution stating that the Board approves acquiring a commercial loan up to \$129,000.00 from Members 1<sup>st</sup> Federal Credit Union. This is for the GMCS building project (previously approved by the Board) under the conditions described in a letter received from the lender on March 20, 2020. The Board has chosen Option 2 regarding the interest rate as detailed fully in the letter. Ashley Reid seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

#### Governance Committee

Jill Clinton reports that the terms of Tom Hockensmith and Diana Williams will expire at the end of August and she needs to hear whether or not they intend to run again before the end of May. If they decline, an appeal will go out immediately for candidates. If they accept, they will need to be re-interviews and their clearances reviewed over the summer in time to be sworn in at the August meeting.

The Governance committee has been searching for a replacement for Shanin Caplener. She was filing a term that expires at the end of August. Her replacement will see out that term and be eligible for two additional two-year terms. An appeal for interest in a seat on the Board was put on the school’s website and Facebook page, garnering interest from Rachel Earnest. Jill Clinton sent her in initial email with next steps, but she never replied.

Jill also reached out to Abbie Beall and Traci Elligson, parents who both expressed interest in a seat on the Board over the summer. Abbie was previously a Board member several years ago who left mid-term. Abbie did not return an email or a text follow-up from Jill. Jill has not received any further interest or inquiries.

However, Traci Elligson is moving forward in the process. She received a copy of our bylaws and has returned her Acknowledgement Form. She has also forwarded her resume to the committee. Her next steps are to provide a Statement of Interest and copies of her clearances.

The regular meeting of the Governance Committee on April 9<sup>th</sup> did not happen due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Jill will reach out to members Megan Stough, Shannon McConnell, Ashley Reid, and Diana Williams to see if they can attend a Zoom call on the next scheduled meeting date, May 14<sup>th</sup>. If candidate Traci Elligson is available, she will be vetted and interviewed during the meeting.

Jill hopes the committee will have a candidate to recommend to the Board at the May or June meeting.

**Personnel Committee**

As mentioned above, Tom Hockensmith will work on getting a Personnel Committee meeting together with members Ashley Reid and Rose Thornberry in order to start working on the Staff Survey and Parent Survey. Jill Clinton noted that Becky Uppercue, Kathy Johnson, and Lieuretha Swain all have recent experience with the surveys should the committee need to consult with them. Tom mentioned that they would need Dr. Pleso to re-activate our access to Survey Monkey.

**Executive Committee**

Nothing new to report.

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

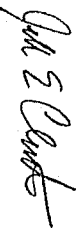
**Public Comment**

None

**Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair Tom Hockensmith at 7:31pm.

Approved:



Jill Clinton, Secretary

**AGENDA**  
**Gettysburg Montessori Charter School**  
**Board of Trustees**  
**888 Coleman Road, Gettysburg**

**Thursday, June 25, 2020**

- 5:30 pm **Executive Session**
- 6:00 pm **Call to Order the June 25, 2020 Meeting (via Zoom);**  
**Introduction of Members and Guests;**  
**Public Comment on Agenda Items;**  
**Approval of Consent Agenda**  
**Old Business**  
  
Action
- 6:10 pm **Building Committee**  
*Update on Renovations, Building Design, Funding*
- 6:30 pm **Governance Committee – Jill Clinton**  
*Update on Recruitment Efforts*  
*Traci Elligson – Vote as Board Member (Swearing In if Approved)*  
  
Action
- 6:50 pm **Administrator’s Report – Faye Pleso**  
*CEO Report*  
*Exit Summary*  
*Summary of SWOT analysis and continuity plan*  
*University of Delaware / Montessori*  
*Health and Safety Plan – Review & Approve*  
  
Action
- 7:20 pm **Chair’s Report – Tom Hockensmith**  
*Housekeeping*
- 7:45 pm **Finance Committee – Becky Uppercue**  
*Update on Finance Committee Meeting*  
*2020/2021 Budget Review and Approval*  
  
Action
- 8:10 pm **New Business; For the good of the order**
- 8:20 pm **Public Comment**
- 8:30 pm **Adjourn**

**Gettysburg Montessori Charter School  
Board of Trustees Official Minutes  
May 28, 2020**

**Board Members Present**

Tom Hockensmith, Chair  
Rose Thornberry, Vice Chair  
Jill Clinton, Secretary  
Becky Uppercue, Treasurer  
Ashley Reid, Member, at-large  
Diana Williams, Member, at-large

**Others Present**

Dr. Faye Pleso, CEO  
Jay Appleton, Greyhawk

**Executive Session**

The Board met for Executive session at 5:38pm via Webex conference call to discuss employee-related matters, 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 5:48pm.

**Call to Order**

Tom Hockensmith called the meeting to order at 6:03pm via Zoom conference call, in accordance with PA state health guidelines during the COVID-19 crisis. All information regarding public access to the meeting was advertised in the Gettysburg Times. No introductions were necessary.

**Public Comment on Agenda Items**

No comment

**Old Business**

No old business

**Approval of Consent Agenda**

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

### **Building Committee**

Jay Appleton from Greyhawk reports that the Design phase of our building project is complete and we are entering the Construction Procurement phase. He explained that the Keystone Purchasing Network will be a good resource for us, providing pre-qualified and pre-vetted Pennsylvania contractors. They will give us a full bid package with all contractors' bids submitted together. We will benefit from this because their timeline allows for this package to come in quite early in our bidding process. The Keystone Purchasing Network will let us know if there are any problems and we'll have the time to address them. For instance, if bids and proposals are coming in too high, they will be able to re-visit them. Using the conventional bid process may lead to very high proposals on a later timeline – we would be stuck. Jay plans to hold a mid-June pre-bid conference to make sure that word is out on our project and that we receive the maximum amount of proposals. He plans to have bids due on June 25<sup>th</sup>.

Construction is set to start June 29<sup>th</sup> with renovations in the existing school building to make the most of the summer break. All bids and our schedule place this as our priority. The construction schedule is still considered feasible, with a scheduled finish date of early June 2021.

Jay Appleton reports that we are using two bid proposals – one with our entire 'wish list'. If bids come in too high, then modifications to the multipurpose room will be removed from the list.

Jay Appleton will be posting public notices (probably in the Gettysburg Times) as well as directly calling 40 local contractors he has identified within the four "prime" categories of contracting.

Jay Appleton reached out to Mobilize Modular Space in NJ five times to try and get a revised quote for removing our modular units. He is still waiting on a price.

Jill Clinton raised the issue of signage as part of our new building. Jay Appleton agreed that we need to put this into the mix and plan for signage or lettering, as well as putting together a sign package to prep and take to Straban Township for approval.

### **Administrator's Report**

Enrollment is at 215 as of May 28<sup>th</sup> (up from 200 on May 19<sup>th</sup>). Dr. Pleso and the Board discussed the effects of the coronavirus pandemic on our enrollment numbers. There are families that are waiting to register their Kindergarteners, either weighing their options with their home districts, private schools, or home schooling depending on what the various schools decide to do in 2020/21 with respect to traditional school, blended school, or distance learning approaches.

Dr. Pleso believes this is also affecting returning GMCS families. She is waiting to hear from about 25 families that may have otherwise already re-enrolled under normal circumstances. She and her staff are conducting outreach. The Board and Dr. Pleso are beginning to discuss contingencies should enrollment dip significantly for 2020/21.

Dr. Pleso reported that the tri-annual review of our Wellness Policy was due this spring. Due to the coronavirus-related shutdown, she was granted an extension to June 2021 by federal authorities overseeing the review.

GMCS's summer packets for students are being prepared. Packets for the incoming Kindergarteners have been sent out online. Ashley Reid inquired about these and Dr. Pleso agreed to follow up and make sure they have been sent.

Wonders, Zearn, and other online platforms used by students during our distance learning period are being extended, at the school's expense, for all families to continue distance learning at their own pace over the summer months.

Plans for our second annual two-week summer academic camps are proceeding. Dr. Pleso will let the Board know if these will take place traditionally, at the school, or a blend of at-school and distance learning, or all distance-learning. At this point, Dr. Pleso believes it will be blended, and serve a bonus purpose as a trial-run for the academic school year, but she will know more at the June meeting of the Board.

Registration for the summer camp weeks is currently being offered to all GMCS families, incoming Kindergarteners, and will then be open to Gettysburg and Adams County families. The first week will be for Kindergartners and 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> grade band students and the second week will be for students in the 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade bands.

Dr. Pleso believes the academic summer camp weeks will be a pilot program for staff to learn best practices for the upcoming school year. The Board discussed some of the many factors to consider when trying to envision a safe 2020/21 year, including all of the different sending districts, buses, childcare needs, technology needs, staff, student, and family safety, food services, etc. Dr. Pleso discussed purchasing wash stations, face shields, and thermometers. She noted that there are many expenses involved in making sure the staff and students practice social distancing and other mitigating efforts, like masks, sanitizing, and hand washing.

There may be a need to purchase more Chromebooks and tablets to facilitate needed distance learning, as well. She will update the Board at the June meeting. Dr. Pleso informed the Board that PBS is offering a grant for antennas for families in rural areas to download information and material, which may apply to several of our students.



Jesse Bean of Charter Choices had suggested to Dr. Pleso that the school should be able to use some of the funds from the CARES Act to offset these expenses. He also mentioned that there may be a \$40,000 grant to purchase supplies and provide training that is separate from the CARES Act funding.

Dr. Pleso is planning an all-staff meeting on May 29<sup>th</sup> to discuss the new academic year and will have information to report to the Board at the June meeting. Becky Uppercue passed on a message from parent and substitute Melissa Ring, saying that she would like Dr. Pleso to consider inviting guest teachers to the staff meeting, as well. Dr. Pleso agreed to take that under advisement.

Dr. Pleso is also doing weekly check-ins with laid-off staff, including our teaching assistants, personal care assistants, and food service workers to make sure they know we are thinking of them through this and hope to resume employment for them as soon as possible.

Dr. Pleso and 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> teacher Katie Sauter are making plans to drive to each graduating 6<sup>th</sup> grader's home next week to deliver cupcakes and congratulations for their accomplishments.

Dr. Pleso delivered marvelous news to the Board: GMCS has received their 5-year charter renewal from the GASD! We are now chartered through the 2024-25 school year. We were evaluated in several areas by Gettysburg's Board and their attorneys. In finance, they looked at five years of our audits, contracts, and more. In human resources, they looked at compliance, clearances, salaries, staff degrees, policies, and more. In student services, they looked at our homeless, ESL, attendance, demographic, and Title 1 policies and compliance. In special education, they looked at our communication and compliance with PDE policies, as well as monitoring and progress documentation. In curriculum, they examined our resources, curriculum samples, teacher evaluations, grading policies, PSSA results, PA Future Ready Index data, and other achievement-related information.

Some of the GASD and attorney recommendations as a result of the process involved finance information on the website and clarity and detail of the Board minutes; Dr. Pleso made sure that Dr. Perrin knows there may have been a miscommunication in these recommendations as these two areas have been fully addressed and compliant beyond the level they need to be. Rose Thornberry mentioned that the GASD employs a company to take and produce their Board meeting minutes; Dr. Pleso said that she would look into the software needed to aid in this.

However, Dr. Pleso did note there were a couple of recommendations that did require action. In the area of special education, Dr. Pleso needs to change the reference to the LNU to "providers" in the annual report to be clear that special education services are GMCS's responsibility. In addition, both the administration and the Board needs to increase their awareness about

“Sunshine Law” compliance. In the past, the Board has tried to over-inform and over-notify when it came to public notices, with notification at the school, in the Gettysburg Times, and on the school website, but this needs to be a continuous practice. To this end, with the public health crisis, the Board has called on our attorney, Kathy Nagel, for guidance about additional public notices as it relates to meetings held virtually.

The GASD’s attorney went through our bylaws, mission statements, handbooks, policies, clearances, MOUs, property deed, SOFIs, certifications, annual reports, Montessori-related info, bonds, activities, safety and security measures, Act 44, Act 55, memos, agendas, and minutes.

In the end, the charter renewal process went quickly and our charter was renewed by the GASD unanimously, with no questions asked or objections noted by any concerned party or stakeholder. The Board wishes to thank Dr. Faye Pleso and her team, particularly Leigh Gugliette, Megan Freeman-Parks, and Rebekah Black, for their outstanding attention to detail, follow up, hard work and professionalism throughout this process. Their continued efforts have helped GMCS establish best practices when it comes to documenting, reporting, and accessing information needed to help make our second charter renewal far smoother than the first. The Board is excited to partner with and support Dr. Pleso as she moves GMCS into another decade of providing a Montessori-based, academically rigorous choice to Gettysburg-area students.

Based on several discussions with the Board, Dr. Pleso has recommended Christine Kirkpatrick to serve as Assistant Principal. Becky Uppercue made a motion to hire Christine Kirkpatrick as the Assistant Principal as of June 15, 2020 at a salary of \$65,000 with full benefits. Diana Williams seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

### **Report of the Chair**

Tom Hockensmith announced that meetings of the Board and its committees will likely continue to be virtual via Zoom for the foreseeable future. Jill Clinton will contact the Gettysburg Times to provide public notice of the Zoom id and passwords for the next Board meeting on June 25<sup>th</sup>. He and Dr. Pleso determined it is not necessary to provide that type of public notice for the Governance and Finance committee meetings, as per our attorney, Kathy Nagel. She advised that notice of the Zoom access information for those public committee meetings need only be posted with the agenda on the school’s door and on the school’s website.

Tom Hockensmith reported that he will reach out to Jesse Bean at Charter Choices to determine what the Board needs be doing for the Annual Report and if we are meeting our deadlines/timelines.

Tom Hockensmith announced that the Staff survey went out on time and we have already received six responses. In addition, the Board survey has also gone out to all six members. The Parent survey is still coming together. Tom was looking for feedback, noting the changes made to reflect experiences with the Rosetta Stone program and our recent distance learning. The Board discussed the expanded survey. Jill Clinton said that while it is great that we were able to touch on an exhaustive amount of areas, 65 survey questions may be too much. Other members agreed, but felt that it would be better to at least get surveys where some, if not all, questions were answered, and they may be based on a parent's level or area of interest. Others said it was important to gather feedback on our distance learning and that those questions may be eliminated on next year's survey. Rose Thornberry suggested that Board members find and questions that we may be able to eliminate as we do the survey. Becky Uppercue asked if we could share the survey on the family Facebook page. Tom will let her know and send out the survey via email to all families, as well as post on the school's website in the coming week.

Tom Hockensmith reminded the Board that Christine Felicetti's Trauma Informed Training course is available online and all members need to complete it by the end of June. Dr. Pleso added that all full-time staff need to complete it by June 5<sup>th</sup>.

Tom Hockensmith reminded Board members that our next meeting is June 25<sup>th</sup> and that our PA state required Act 55 training needs to be completed by the end of June. Diana Williams, Jill Clinton, Becky Uppercue, and Ashley Reid need to turn their answers in to Dr. Pleso. Jill Clinton reported that she is about halfway through the modules and has found several interesting things she would like the Board to explore in coming meetings – one is the idea of succession documents and plans, which the Board has started to discuss, and the other is the idea of an academic committee that would work with Dr. Pleso to drill down on results from the PSSAs and PA's Future Ready Index data to interpret all of the information for the Board, identify areas of improvement and concern, and ensure we are achieving our academic goals and maintaining academically rigorous standards. Jill would like to see an ongoing Board discussion about these two Act 55 ideas.

The Board briefly discussed artwork for the school. Nurse Adrian Kavanaugh had forwarded a link to Jill Clinton that included prints from an artist that painted an image of the historic Hunterstown schoolhouse previously on our land at 888 Coleman Road. Adrian suggested that we purchase a print for somewhere in the school. Tom Hockensmith forwarded the link to Dr. Pleso and Board members so they could see the print in question. Dr. Pleso shared her vision of artwork, which would include historic, black and white photographs of local schoolchildren, buildings, or other sites blown up to a very large size – perhaps pixilated on canvases – to be hung in the lobby.

### Finance Committee

A Finance committee meeting was held on May 20<sup>th</sup> via conference call to review the April financial statements, which showed \$811k in the school's checking account and approximately \$404k in the school's savings account, which means that we will still be well over the \$1 million in assets required for our loan.

We are still owed \$324k in district receivables, but these will continue to roll in.

We currently have 119 days of operating cash on hand, which is our highest amount this year. Per Jesse Bean of Charter Choices, these are great numbers to share with the underwriters going into the loan process.

Net income for this fiscal year (through 4/30/20) is about \$520k.

We are on top of PSEER's payments for the fiscal year and paid up on all outstanding debts.

Total income/gross profit is at \$252k, thanks to more in local revenues than budgeted, including conservatively budgeted rates, back payments from districts, savings on personnel expenditures, and projected construction costs.

Becky Uppercue hoped to collect all of the SOFI forms by the end of March, but the COVID-19 crisis hampered her efforts. Tish Weikel's and Lieouretia Swain's forms are still outstanding.

When crafting the proposed new 2020-21 budget, Jesse conservatively projected a 0% revenue increase in regular education payments and a 2% increase in special education payments, as well as 3% increase from other revenue sources like grants and savings from contracted services. He said it's unlikely we'll see a decrease this year, but warns we may in the 2021-22 fiscal year due to the financial crisis caused by COVID-19. Jesse's projections were based on a pre-COVID timeline and he will continue to operate with these assumptions until further notice.

The new budget is also assuming a 10% increase in health benefits (though Jesse acknowledged that this may be closer to 5%-7%) and unemployment costs due to vastly increased claims this year. While there was a 3% COLA included in the proposed budget, Jesse Bean suggested that Dr. Pleso be open with the staff about the possibility of no COLA raises in the 2121-22 fiscal year.

In addition, the proposed budget includes \$65k for an assistant principal and an increase of about \$6,000 for a phys ed/health teacher, who would go from part-time to full-time. Dr. Pleso expressed concern at the prospect of hiring an assistant principal only to have to let her go due to potential budget issues in 2121-22. Given those prospects, and the fact that we may not be

returning to the school building this fall, Dr. Pleso has decided to maintain a part-time gym teacher instead of filling it as a full-time position.

We are carrying over \$260k in construction-related funds that were not used this fiscal year and adding additional funds based on cost estimates (we spent \$176k for the architects and \$54k for the owner's rep)

\$18k has been appropriated for "emergency restoration" to cover contractors as-needed during renovation of our existing building.

Dr. Pleso led a discussion about how to split the \$157k cost of removing the modulars between the 2020-21 and 2121-22 budgets. Jay Appleton has called Mobilize to try and get a more reasonable figure.

In addition, a proposed \$18k would be appropriated for "emergency restoration" to cover contractors as needed during repair and renovation to our current building this summer.

Other elements of the new budget include a decreased cost for IT due to a new contractor, saving the school \$3,000. Grant writing services were also cut from \$8,000 to \$4,000. There was also savings in LNU services being over-estimated and keeping the gym/health teacher position to part-time.

\$30k has been budgeted for various LNU services, including \$5,000 for professional development and \$10k more was added for curriculum.

Charter Choices, the Finance committee, and Dr. Pleso continue to base the budget draft on 237 students. We currently have 200 enrolled as of May 20<sup>th</sup> and Dr. Pleso projects an additional 150 by the start of school, though so much depends on COVID-19 restrictions.

Overall, the current budget proposal includes a projected \$16k surplus, but it is likely we'll have more due to conservative projections in several areas.

Jesse Bean cautioned that we need to keep a tight rein on the budget and continue to watch economic developments due to the financial and health crises. While this fiscal year, we may have stipends, grants, and additional state and federal government funding sources, we need to be aware that this will likely all go away in the 2021-22 fiscal year. We also have to keep in mind that the first 15 months of our business loan are interest-free, then payments will nearly double to include the principal and interest.

We are in a holding pattern with Members 1<sup>st</sup> and our building loan because the first appraisal came back extremely low. It was too low for the bank, so Dr. Pleso has hired a different appraiser and reported that Members 1<sup>st</sup> was also were not pleased with the outcome of the first appraisal. Since they recommended that appraiser to us, they offered to pay for the second appraisal, which is to take place by the end of May.

The 2020-21 proposed budget needs to be posted for 30 days prior to a vote by the Board. Dr. Pleso will have Rebecca Yurkanin post the budget draft on the website following the meeting.

#### Governance Committee

Jill Clinton reports that the terms of Tom Hockensmith and Diana Williams will expire at the end of August and she was happy to announce that they are both seeking new terms. For Tom, it will be his first two-year term, as he is currently filling a vacated seat. And for Diana, this will be her final two-year term, though she, too, filled a vacant seat prior to serving her first official term.

Jill Clinton will coordinate scheduled committee meetings, if possible, to review their clearances and re-interview both Tom Hockensmith and Diana Williams this summer in time to be sworn in at the August meeting, if recommended by the committee and approved by the Board. Jill will try and coordinate Tom's interview at the next Governance committee meeting on June 11<sup>th</sup>.

The Governance committee has been searching for a replacement for Shanin Caplener. She was filling a term that expires at the end of August. Her replacement will see out that term and be eligible for two additional two-year terms. At the May 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the committee, candidate Traci Elligson was interviewed and vetted. After discussion, the committee unanimously decided to recommend Traci for the seat on the Board. Traci has provided all materials and clearances except for the PA Criminal Background check and FBI Criminal Background check. She has both on file with her employer in Maryland, but will need to provide Pennsylvania copies to us.

After recommending Traci Elligson for the vacated seat on the Board, Jill Clinton asked Tom Hockensmith to schedule a vote by the Board at the next meeting, June 25<sup>th</sup>. If approved, Traci will also be sworn in that evening. Our attorney, Kathy Nagel, reported to Tom that the Board would not have to swear Traci in again at the start of her new term, August 27<sup>th</sup>. She will, along with other recommended candidates for open seats, need to be voted on by the Board at that meeting, however.

Jill is trying to get Shanin Caplener to return her copy of the Board handbook for Traci. Diana Williams also said she did not receive hers prior to the pandemic shutdown, due to missing a

meeting. Jill will try and find her handbook with Dr. Pleso's help when she is back in the school building.

**Personnel Committee**

Tom Hockensmith expects to have initial results of the Staff survey, Parent survey, and Board survey for the Board at the June 25<sup>th</sup> meeting, but may decide to hold a Personnel committee meeting to go over the data prior to the Board meeting.

**Executive Committee**

Nothing new to report.

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

**Public Comment**

None

**Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair Tom Hockensmith at 8:00pm.

Approved:



Jill Clinton, Secretary