

St. Augustine Montessori Community, Inc.

Board Meeting Minutes 4/9/14
7 Williams St., St. Augustine, FL 32084

Board Members:

Present: Jean McDowell, Roman Pytel, Nan Nutt, Judi Dunlap, Irene Arriola, Carrie Morgan

Quorum present? Yes

Others present: Luciana Gasset, Richard Gasset, Sylvi Herrick, Jeff Goff, Frank O'Rourke, Ryan Albaugh, Edwin Pascasio, Cindy Waters, Denise Faulk

Proceedings: Meeting called to order at 6:00 pm by Jean McDowell.

Review of Public Notice: The meeting was advertised in the *St. Augustine Record*, as well as on the school website and by email to the school community.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes from the February meeting were approved. The motion to approve was made by Irene and seconded by Nan. The minutes from the March meeting were approved with corrections. The motion to approve was made by Roman and seconded by Irene.

Public Comment on Agenda Items:

Jeff Goff spoke about the enrollment preference for students with Montessori experience.

Sylvi Harrick spoke about the school mission and the enrollment preference for students with Montessori experience.

Frank O'Rourke spoke about the availability of public Montessori education in St. Johns County.

Ryan Albaugh spoke about the enrollment preference for students with Montessori experience and the school's 4:1 ratio.

Items from Officers: N/A.

Lottery: Nan reviewed the 2014-15 lottery results, from the lottery conducted at the March 12 Board meeting. They are as follows:

First grade – 18 applicants in lottery /10 spots

- 5 with Montessori experience accepted
- 5 without Montessori experience accepted

Second grade – 12 applicants in lottery/no spots

- 2 with Montessori experience not accepted
- 10 without Montessori experience not accepted

Third grade – 2 applicants in lottery/0 spots; neither applicant with Montessori experience

Fourth grade – 7 applicants in lottery, one with Montessori experience/ 0 spots

Fifth grade – 7 applicants in lottery/1 spot

- 1 student accepted, sibling of current student, no Montessori experience.
- 6 students not accepted

Sixth grade – one applicant accepted for one spot/no Montessori experience.

Board members agreed that the 2013-14 lottery results would stand. Board members discussed the current enrollment guidelines, including the preference for Montessori experience and the desired ratio of 4:1 (students with Montessori experience to those without prior Montessori experience). The legal basis for enrollment preference is established in the Charter School section of Florida Statutes, and the enrollment guidelines were approved by the school district in the Charter Application and by addendum in the Charter Contract. The enrollment guidelines could be amended moving forward, but this will require careful research. Jean asked board members to research guidelines used by other public Montessori schools and bring ideas for discussion at next month's meeting.

Finance and Development:

- A. Financial Report:** Nan provided the financial reports prepared by Evelyn. The school is under budget for income and expenses for the current month and the year-to-date.
- B. Fundraising Plan:**
 - 1. Art Show:** Jean reported the Art Show will be held May 2, either at Irene's office or at the First United Methodist Church on King Street. Judi and Heather will decide on the location. As soon as the location is finalized, Jean will send a press release to Renee Unsworth to include in the *Compass*. Artwork is being sought from every student at SAPMS, with a deadline of April 15. Volunteers and supplies are needed. Jean will contact parents.
 - 2. Capital Campaign Part B:** Jean met with Gerry Galloway and Saro Loucks to discuss identifying potential "deep pocket" donors, with the hope of securing a land donation or large endowment. Board members will be asked to attend coffee meetings with potential donors. A package of marketing materials will be put together for use in soliciting donations.

Facility:

- A. Current Facility:** Roman and Irene will meet with Ed Swift (property owner), Scott Beebe and others on April 10 to discuss possibilities for expanding school space at Williams Street. Roman has spoken with two modular companies and will submit a comparison of their offerings. Jim Voight has been identified as the contractor who will estimate the buildout for the modular and head up the permitting process with the city.
- B. Future Long-Term Facility:** The building at 2303 US 1 North will not be pursued as an option. Irene said the building has serious parking deficiencies that will not allow for intensive use. Jean said a list of potential sites should be presented to the county for feedback on connection costs.

Director's Report:

- A. Parent Education:** A hands-on workshop called “Are You Smarter than a Fifth Grader?” will be held on May 8. Parents will have an opportunity to use Montessori materials. A New Family Orientation will be held on May 31 and repeated in August. Board members are encouraged to attend and communicate to new families the importance of commitment to the Montessori method and the parent contract hours.
- B. Classroom Reports, Upper and Lower Elementary:** Upper Elementary students will work on a collaborative project on the molecule with John Depreter. The Upper Elementary students will have a presentation by a representative from the Whitney Lab about right whales. Kayleigh Berry, a student in Lower Elementary, had a sibling die. Judi will attend the memorial service on behalf of the school. Denise Faulk said she heads up the district’s Crisis Skills Team and offered to send appropriate materials to assist Judi and the other teachers support the student and her family.
- C. Administrative Needs:** Judi asked the Board for support in urging families to work on their contract hours. Two families have not completed any volunteer hours. Jean will send a letter and Roman will follow up with phone calls.

Personnel

- A. Needs and Recruitment:** Judi has a good lead on an Upper Elementary teacher. She will do a Skype interview as a first step. There is another potential teacher, currently Montessori-certified in primary and willing to complete her elementary certification at her own expense.
- B. Evaluations – Review and Progress:** Evaluations are ongoing.

Other DOE/SJCSD Requirements: Nan will attend an Audit Planning workshop in Gainesville. There will also be a review of the district audit completed by McGladrey and Associates last year.

Strategic Planning: Jean will prepare “front material” to accompany the Strategic Plan, including the mission statement. The goal is for the Strategic Plan to be sent out to parents prior to the Parent Survey, to be conducted in May.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Action items:

Board members will research enrollment guidelines used by other public Montessori schools for discussion at the May 14 meeting.

Judi and Heather will decide on the Art Show location.

Jean will send a press release about the Art Show to Renee Unsworth for the *Compass*.

Roman and Irene will meet with Ed Swift, Scott Beebe and others to discuss possibilities for expanding school space at Williams Street.

Jean will send a letter to parents re: contract hours.

Roman will follow up with phone calls re: contract hours.

Nan will attend an Audit Planning workshop in Gainesville.

Jean will prepare “front material” to accompany the Strategic Plan.

Minutes submitted by Carrie Morgan, Secretary.