

**Monocacy Montessori Communities, Incorporated (MMCI) Board of Trustees
(BOT) Wednesday, April 24, 2024 @ 7:00 p.m.**

**Virtual Meeting: meet.google.com/fcv-mjvy-utv
Join by phone: 1-346-808-1766 PIN: 378 965 061#**

MEETING MINUTES

1. Meeting Called To Order: 7:02 p.m.

Tara Dunsmore: All right. It is 7:02 we will call this meeting to order.

2. Welcome/Introductions 7:02 - 7:05 p.m.

Tara Dunsmore: All Let's do. quick introductions I think we all know each other at this point. I'm just going to call out the names of everybody that I see that is here if I miss you and you are on the board, please speak up and let me know so we can make sure that you are recorded as being here.

Attendees:

Amee Lewis, Amy Dorman, Carlo S., Courtney Blanchard, Denielle Heavey, Involvement & Communications Chair, Jan Francis, Jessica Lawrence Wujek, Kelli McIntosh, Lynn Dutrow, Marilyn Horan, Marisa Maldonado, Megan James, Meggan Sombat, Carlos Gomez, Paul Gouge, Molly Carlson, Bob Weiland, Ryan Lewis, Sarah Cramer, Tara Dunsmore

3. Community Comments 7:05-7:10 p.m.

There were no community comments this month.

4. MMCI Officer Reports 7:10 - 7:30 p.m.

- MMCI President Report - 5 minutes (Tara Dunsmore)
- BOT Treasurer & Assistant Treasurer Report - 5 minutes (Barbara Litz, Kelli McIntosh)
 - MMCI Financial Report 3/2024 (access restricted)
 - MMCI Finance Summary 3/2024

Tara Dunsmore: All Next up is the president's report. So, I am going to start by making sure that everyone sees that we have changed the format of the agenda a little bit for tonight's meeting. Jan and Megan and I were talking about some ways to try to shorten these meetings and maybe not spend as much time getting kind of sidetracked.

So, the goal here is that we have moved all of the committee reports to the end of the agenda and they will be attached as an appendix to the agenda into the meeting minutes, but we are not going to go through each committee report one at a time and talk about it. When you submit your reports, please be sure to note in your report if there are items that are for discussion or vote by the entire board and they will be added to the agenda as discussion topics.

But if they are not called out as needing discussion or votes, we won't talk about them at the meeting. So the goal is that we will save time if something is already on the agenda. Then there's no need to talk about it in committee report again.

The other piece that we did add was an opportunity for each of the officers to give a quick update for anything that's going on in their respective areas. So, I am going to start and I don't think Barbara is here. I know Kelli's here, but Kelli was not at the meeting today with FCPS so I'm going to give the president's update and the treasurer update all at the same time.

It is all about our funding situation with FCPS and what that means for schools. So, I want to talk about that briefly. We did have a follow-up meeting today with FCPS. I know that Amy Duvall was there for mmci, I believe that Marilyn and Amy Dorman were also there. So, Marilyn, please feel free to speak up if I missed anything important, but the general purpose of this meeting was to go back through the funding formula that they presented to us a few weeks ago and just refine some of the points we had about how they were coming up with these numbers.

So, to give everyone a very quick brief overview previously the school district would get their lump sum from MSDE and then they would distribute that however, a lot of times they would divide it evenly between the schools. Sometimes they had their own formula for how they split that money up between all the different schools the way that it works now, they are required to put 75% of the money they receive directly to the schools for the students meaning that they can keep up to 25% of those funds with the district to pay for a lot of those wide expenses.

Now each student has a base level PPA that will follow them to whatever school they go to then on top of that there are added layers of funding that will be added per student. So, there's different funding levels for students who are what they call Farm Students which means eligible for free and reduced price meals. There is a funding level for students who are English language Learners or Multi Language Learners. There are certain schools that have more than a certain percentage of lower income populations who receive an additional funding amount.

Our formula is hard to calculate from year to year because our population can change from year to year. So, this year we might have 27 Farm students for example, but next year we could have 50 or the year after that. We could have 20. So, it makes it difficult to budget. We do have our base level that we know every student gets so we can budget with that. Additionally, we only receive funding for our Pre-K students who meet the tier one income level right now, which means that their family income is below of

the federal poverty level. So again, those numbers can fluctuate from year to year? So, it's really difficult for us to project very far into the future.

So, the bottom line, is that next year both schools had budgeted for expecting between a two to three percent increase in our funding year over year. Next year CCM will be receiving about a four and a half percent cut to their funding or not cut but decrease to their funding from what they had this year. Which means it's going in the wrong direction and MVM will have a nine percent reduction from what they were expecting and what they had for this year is significantly less than what we were expecting for next year.

We will have to recreate all our budgets and look at to make some decisions. We must look at all our staffing levels. We must look at every little line and every detail and determine if there are any places that can be cut and if not, do we have enough money to sustain?

We are as fiscally conservative and lean I think in our staffing and our programming is already running at a skeleton staff compared to a traditional FCPS school. So, there's not really many places there where we can say we're being excessive over here; We should make a cut. We offer the programs that we're required to offer, we try to give our kids the best possible education that we can with less money because we're also paying for our facilities on top of everything else which other schools do not have to come up with funding for facilities.

There's going to be a lot of things happening in the coming weeks and it's going to be an all hands-on deck kind of situation. I feel like a broken record sometimes when I say that I really need everybody to step up and to help and to volunteer when I ask, who's available to help with this or that but if I've never said it before or you've never heard me or you haven't been able to step up before now is the time if you want to have a school in five years especially if we want to have a Charter Schools continue in Frederick, and we want to be able to continue to offer this free Montessori Education for our kids and for all of the kids coming in the future.

We realized that not everyone can afford to donate the same amount of money, but everyone has the ability to fundraising; So, I say if everyone were to donate \$250 for each of their students, we would raise over \$75,000 this year per school now if you have three kids and you don't have 750 dollars laying around what you is reach out by Facebook, grandparents, family, neighbors or co-workers. There are ways to raise money. There are a lot of options out there in addition to donating money.

If you are a plumber guess what we need plumbers, we just spent at MVM I think twelve hundred dollars or something to have plumbers come out and unclog all the sinks. There are things that we need. So, there's a lot of ways that you can contribute financially that are not just writing a check. But if you can write a check, please do because we need every penny we can get. In addition to fundraising, we need people who are willing to volunteer.

We need volunteers for everything from showing up in the morning for car line, right for doing things like running the book fair, volunteering in your school's library, whatever that is to all the way to joining the leadership teams and being willing to make decisions. Even if you don't get it 100% right be willing to sit back and read back through past board meeting minutes or go through the bylaws.

I have one year left as president. Somebody will have to take my place, we currently have somebody for both schools as VP for two years, but we have a vacancy for assistant Treasurer we potentially have a vacancy for treasurer, but I'm not positive about that. I think Barbara needs to at least scale back right now. She's been trying to be Treasurer and Finance Chair. We need a finance chair for CCM who can do the budgets because right now your Vice President and your principal and our MMCI Bookkeeper are basically trying to do the budgets for CCM because we don't have a finance chair and we don't have anyone who has been keeping up and maintaining those budgets.

On the B.O.T. we have a vacancy for each school for a parent trustee. So, every one of our parent trustees should be taking on some kind of professional responsibility on the board whether that be leading a committee or leading a work group. We should be stepping up to help with different things that pop up for different special projects. Whatever it is that you can bring to the board that is sort of the point of being on the board. So, if you are on the board and you haven't yet found that kind of place that you feel like you fit in, please let us know because we will find you a place. So again, there's a lot of things that we need volunteers for one of those things that we need volunteers for immediately are members of an advocacy committee that we desperately need to pull together as quickly as possible.

In order to beat this funding cut is to Advocate to the state. We have the right to have those decisions changed and to have the formula changed. There are multiple different levels of advocacy that are happening right now. It is not just Charter Schools every school in the county is experiencing a funding cut and then we received the budgets from the county and the County Executives budget doesn't even fund schools at the level that the Board of Ed requested for us to be funded. We need people who are willing to show up to those meetings and speak out.

There is going to be a need for a letter writing advocacy specifically for Charter Schools. We're not asking people to show up and just say hey, it's not fair, you're not funding Charter Schools; You have to give us more money. We have very specific asking points and talking points that we're going to be working on that are very specific to Charter Schools. There's been Statewide advocacy meetings happening with different Charter operators. We need people from both schools that are willing to attend those meetings and then report back to the board.

They are planning a town hall meeting in the next couple of weeks. Please show up because by then we will have more plans for you. We'll have more information. The next board meeting is on May 1st. I know that there are a lot of Work and there's a lot happening right now where people are working to come together with all sort of what we would like the message to be at that board meeting from the charter schools in Frederick County and how we want to relay that message. Our goal is not to be adversarial because that doesn't help anybody. There's a work session at three o'clock on May 1st. and then there's the board meeting which is usually at 7PM. They haven't put the agenda out yet so we don't know yet where we'll need bodies and it's all virtual too.

If you're interested in getting involved, please contact Meggan and she can get you connected with the group that we are trying to work on putting together. We're still trying to figure out our ask is of what we are going to ask the Board of Ed and what we need them to do to help us. I do think that they want to help us because their goal is not to ruin the charter school programs and Frederick County. Their goal is

not to cut funding for any students, but they are also following State mandated changes in the way the funding is happening. So, it's a multi-layered thing.

I wish I had more details that I could share but we are still literally figuring this out day to day. We are working around the clock on budgets and trying to figure out what we need to present and what we need to put together so that we can share more with you and that pretty sums it up as far as finances go. We don't have any money.

Marilyn Horan: I double everything that Tara just said and also we're preaching to the choir. You all are the ones that always come but you have to talk to the people that you see when you go to the Ballenger Creek Park on Fridays or wherever you meet others. We've always been really good with money because we've had to so that is going to seriously have our schools open for one or two more years. When you look at the numbers, you will absolutely see that it will not go past that if something doesn't change. You must go talk to other people.

You need to get others to show up also, not just here. However, in those Board of Ed meetings respectfully and as Tara said that we'll put together some messages and it's okay to say the same thing two or three times because that's how people really understand and if they hear it more than once they will pay attention.

Tara Dunsmore: It is literally our job to advocate for the schools and to speak on behalf of parents, but we need to do a better job of encouraging and educating the rest of the community on the things that are happening and helping encourage them to get involved. All right, next up. We have Vice President Carlos. I Amy Duvall submitted a report so we will have Carlos give us an update.

- **MMCI Vice President Reports - 5 minutes (Carlos Gomez-MVMPCS, Amy Duvall-CCMPCS)**

Carlos Gomez: We have the contract for the elevator situation going on. We believe we have figured it out. So that's great news for us. We signed the contracts for both Sushi and the architect. And we've had a situation with all. Amy's report is restricted, and it will not be presented publicly.

- **Secretary Report - 5 minutes (Jan Francis, Meggan Sombat)**

There were no evotes for this month.

Meggan Sombat: Nominating Committee will be having an MMCI Event. Not a fundraiser it will be a time for us to get engaged and to invite incoming family members.

5. School Updates: 7:30-7:40 p.m.

- CCMPCS - 5 minutes (Nikki Burgee/ Marilyn Horan)

Marilyn Horan: We are in our favorite time of year which is testing. I actually started last week with our Spanish assessments for our MSE kids. Those are the 8th graders that have had Spanish from since sixth grade. And Marisa probably thinks I am over the edge because every day we want to see how everybody is doing and then we started with lower elementary today for mcap but basically aside from that we're getting ready to go camping and getting things ready for the eighth grade middle school dance.

- MVMPCS - 5 minutes (Bob Weiland/ Amy Dorman, Brandon Sowers)

Amy Dorman: We started Mcap last week. We're all doing Dibles but we're checking our reading progress with our students. So last week we focused on Elementary. We have our move up day scheduled. So the children who are moving up will spend the morning visiting the next level class. So that's happening and then planning our closing ceremony, which is scheduled for June 5th. Carlos did mention we're having our last family engagement night. This one is about cultural work and I'm really excited about that. We have some teachers who were staying behind and It'll be somewhat of a journey where it's not quite a silent Journey, but it'll be a journey from one level to see that spiral in the curriculum.

Tara Dunsmore: We will move on to new business fiscal year 25 budget updates and impacts. Obviously. We already talked about that.

6. New Business: Discussion and Votes 7:40- 8:20 p.m.

- DISCUSSION: FY25 Budget Updates and Impacts (Tara Dunsmore)
- CLOSED SESSION: The BOT will hold a brief Closed Session, as needed, and in accordance with one or more exceptions per the Maryland Open Meetings Act:
 - to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice; and/or
 - to consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation; and/or
 - to consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related to the acquisition

Tara Dunsmore: I moved to go into closed session to consider the acquisition of real property for public purpose and matters directly related to consulting with staff Consultants or other individuals about pending or potential litigation. And consult with counsel to obtain legal advice. Do I have a second?

Tara Dunsmore: Lots of seconds. Okay all voting members. Please vote in the chat. All members in favor.

****Closed session minutes will be in a private BOT Folder and is not available for public viewing. ****

● DISCUSSION/ VOTE: MVM Contract with Bruchey Builders (Tara Dunsmore/ Carlos Gomez)

****Tara Dunsmore presented the contract & answered all questions****

Tara Dunsmore: The first contract that we are looking at is on the contract for Bruchey Builders to move forward with phase two of the MVM project. This is a revised version of the original contract for all three floors, which was what we expected to be able to complete with the remaining financing. However, we were not able to complete that so you can see that they have revised that. They have given us the breakdown of all the costs and the total amount. It's a very long document because they revised it five times. This is the revised bid that got us down to 4.8 million from five and a half million. However, then we had to revise it again so the ultimate bid once if you do the math and you subtract out everything which I did comes out to 3.25 million, which is what we have left in our construction fund. So there is an understanding that we will only complete however much work we can do for 3.25 million. If they're able to find any cost saving. Options then they will let us know and the MVM team will then decide from there if there's things that we want to add back into the project. But for now we are going to stick with the 3.25 million dollar price tag. I just moved a copy of this into the April meeting folder.

So I moved to approve the contract with Bruchey Builders as presented. Seconded by Carlos and All in Favor.

● DISCUSSION/ VOTE: MVM Contract with GTM Architects (Tara Dunsmore/ Carlos Gomez)

****Tara Dunsmore presented the contract & answered all questions****

Tara Dunsmore: The next contract is the contract with GTM Architects. So previously Legacy would do all of the negotiating with GTM. They would make a recommendation to us. And as long as Ellie and I Signed off on it, they would then enter into the actual contract with the Architects. So now that we are no longer working with Legacy. We are able to enter into the contract directly and so what we have here is a revised phase two proposal from GTM. They're asking for a fixed fee of 101,337.50. This is significantly less than the original phase two proposed work because we have eliminated a large part of the project. The good news is that when they went back and did this they cut out more than a third of their fees from two-thirds of what they had were in their original proposal for phase two which was closer to four hundred thousand dollars. So, they have really worked hard to get their fees back as much as they possibly can for us and try to help us save everywhere that we possibly can.

The second and third floor we are going to have to then enter into another contract with them, but hopefully it would still be less than the 400,000 that we originally would have been spending with the original plan. I did put a copy of this in our shared folder in the Google Drive.

Tara Dunsmore: All right.

Tara Dunsmore: I moved to approve the contract with GTM Architects. Seconded by Carlos and All in Favor.

• DISCUSSION/ VOTE: MVM Construction project approvals (Tara Dunsmore/ Carlos Gomez)

Tara Dunsmore: I put in the discussion / vote construction project approvals. So the discussion that I have for the board is that previously for phase one Ellie and I were signing all of the change orders or anything that came up in the midst of the Project based on the resolution that was signed by the board when we bought the building that gave us the authority to sign all documents related to it, but we feel like for phase two those votes and resolutions no longer apply. There are new contracts and its different amounts. The scope of the project has changed. So, we feel like there's a lot of things that are different however, we will need to have some authority to be able to make decisions in the construction meetings with the builders and the Architects.

When things come up and there's a lot of things that pop up where they might say, hey, we found this electrical issue and we think that you should do it this way instead of this way and it's a change of \$10,000 and they put a piece of paper in front of us and we look at them and we say, Okay, because we're not electricians and we don't know so we're trusting them right as our Builders and we're signing them. So, I would really like to hear from board members what your thoughts are on whether there is a way that we could give the Authority for Carlos and to sign these documents. I'm thinking maybe with a second signature from another member of the board so as a check and balance to make sure that we are vetting all of the decisions that we're making but also have some ability to make decisions that are time sensitive.

I don't think I'm going to ask for a vote tonight because I want to think through this a little bit more so if anybody has thoughts on a way to structure it, please send me an email and let me know and I'll try to kind of get my thoughts together and we can all send something out for us to work on.

• DISCUSSION/ VOTE: MVM Elevator Maintenance Contract (Carlos Gomez)

Carlos Gomez: We had an issue with an elevator, and we called the repairs in; they took over eight days to get back to us. We reached out to see about getting some other quotes and I reached out to FCPS to figure out who they use for repairs. They are in a contact with Eastern elevator. Technically, we are all covered under Eastern but we would like to have our own contract since we are part of FCPS and we own our own building, so they were able to give us the contract.

Tara Dunsmore: Looks like it's \$500 a month. Is that what I'm seeing?

MMCI MVM VP Carlos Gomez: Yes, for the one we looked at. It is \$250 per elevator.

Tara Dunsmore: Okay.

Carlos Gomez: The majority of the staff were saying that we best spend the \$250 and have the service calls included because if we would have done lower that had not included service calls if we had one service call for over four hours we would be costing more money than it would be for the \$250.

Tara Dunsmore: It's also easier for budgeting purposes if we know what to expect instead of it always being up in the air.

Carlos Gomez: Yes, and the service call does include more features than the \$160. So, the \$250 for each elevator was the better way to go.

Tara Dunsmore: Perfect, all right. So, with that information I moved to approve the contract with Eastern Elevators as presented. Do I have a second? Meggan second. Any questions for Carlos?

Tara Dunsmore: All right, members, please vote in the chat.

All members were in favor.

• DISCUSSION/ VOTE: Donorbox Fundraising Platform Fees (Tara Dunsmore)

Tara Dunsmore: I am going to skip the donor box fundraising platform fees because even though I asked Meggan to put it on the agenda, I then forgot to pull the information that I needed to present. So basically, the donor box is the platform that the MVMPCS has been using for fundraising for a few years. The platform that CCMPCS has been using had lower fees, but their service is no longer being supported and so we have to transition CCMPCS to another platform. My recommendation to the CCM team was that we move CCM to donor box, which is what MVM is already using because it has a lot of tracking capabilities and Amy O'Connor already knows how to use it. So, it would be a really easy transition. I did talk about it with the CCM webmaster and she was in agreement with my plan.

• DISCUSSION/ VOTE: FY24 Fundraising Promotion (Meggan Sombat)

Tara Dunsmore: Based on Meggan's presentation to the B.O.T., I would like to put in a motion to approve the spring 2024 fundraising campaign which includes up to \$2,150. I put it as presented because they think in that way you don't have to specify it's already specified in The Proposal. I like to say everything as presented. Because it's less for me to type and we had a second by Carlos and also by Paul. Any further discussion?

Okay, please vote in the chat and then I just want to add that I think the follow-ups are going to be really important. So, The Proposal is just step one. Right? So, it's going to need engagement. It's going to need people to join the fundraising committee to offer their services. I am perfectly aware that not everyone is in the same financial position, but I am strongly encouraging all parent leadership to please participate.

All members were in favor.

• DISCUSSION/ VOTE: MMCI Grants Policy (Meggan Sombat)

Tara Dunsmore: Create an action item Jan for everyone on the B.O.T. to review this document and to review Meggan's Presentation just to familiarize themselves with the grant process. I'd say let's give it a maximum of two weeks. For everyone to put in their comments, Meggan will have time to reconcile them and then we will either vote or we will vote on this at the next meeting so that we can get this in place because the goal here is that we can actually start getting people trained and start working on grants. And so, we want to get this approved sooner than later, but I think it sounds like people do need time to go through it somewhere.

New Item: Review Grant Process

• DISCUSSION/ VOTE: Appointment of MMCI Assistant Treasurer (Tara Dunsmore/ Kelli McIntosh)

Tara Dunsmore: The MMCI Assistant Treasurer position you all may know Kelli McIntosh will be leaving CCM. Her oldest is finishing up eighth grade and so although her term technically runs through June 30th, 2025, she will no longer be able to continue in her position when she is no longer a parent and so we've been looking for someone to take that position. It was on the ballot in November. We didn't have any candidates. We have consistently advertised that position as being vacant. And finally, we have a volunteer because Megan is a sucker for punishment and she has volunteered to transition from the Secretary role to the Assistant Treasurer role which will work along with her grants and fundraising work that she's already doing at the BOT Level and I think she's been really taking those on with the idea that she might be willing to do the Assistant Treasurer position. Anyway, so with that I don't think we need to have her introduce yourself. We all know Megan already clearly.

Tara Dunsmore: So, I move to appoint Meggan Sombat as the Assistant Treasurer to fill the remainder of the existing term effective July 1st, 2024 ending June 30th, 2025. Do I have a second? Jessica second. Jessica? Are there any discussions or questions for Meggan?

Tara Dunsmore: All right, let's all vote and Meggan. You can't vote abstain that way. You still count for quorum.

All members were in favor.

7. Addendums & Announcements 8:20- 9:13 p.m.

Tara Dunsmore: I would say for everyone to keep in mind that when you submit a report it is for the public record. So, if you have confidential information that needs to be shared that actually belongs in a closed session, please don't put confidential information in your committee reports but instead put a note that you have closed session discussion. And then you email the secretary and you let them know what your closed session discussion is, or you create a confidential email to the B.O.T. Everything is public viewing unless they're marked confidential.

- MMCI Committee Advance Reports and Updates
- MMCI Facilities Committee
- MMCI Lottery Committee
- MMCI Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee
- MMCI Enrichment & Programs Committee
- MMCI Grants and Fundraising Committee Report
- MVM High School Grant Committee
- MMCI Principal Search Committee
- MMCI Nominating Committee
- MMCI Communications & Community Outreach Committee
- BOT Action Items & Follow Ups
- Announcements:
- Upcoming MMCI Business Meetings (usually held at 7PM the FINAL Wednesday of each month): meetings will be virtual unless otherwise noted.
- May 29, 2024 - MMCI BOT Voting Meeting
- June 26, 2024 - MMCI BOT Voting Meeting
- July 10, 2024 - MMCI BOT Quarterly Work Session
- Minutes and Agendas may be found online at <http://mmcimind.org/calendar/>

Tara Dunsmore: All right. So, with that I am going to move to adjourn. Do I have a second?

MOTION: Tara moved to adjourn.

Seconded by all members in favor.

The Meeting was adjourned at 9:13 pm.