

HIGH DESERT MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, March 20, 2019 @ 5:00 P.M.

Star Peak Room

2025 Silverada Blvd, Reno, NV

MINUTES of MEETING

Board Binder Available Upon Request

Members Present     Doug Whitener  
                              Terry Fowler  
                              Bryce Ganes  
                              Scott Hernandez  
                              Reid Riker  
                              Linda Aaquist  
                              Amanda Baldwin  
                              Max Haynes

Also Present            Principal Rhonda Turnipseed  
                              Assistant Principal Tamra Hopkins  
                              Bookkeeper Adista Elmer

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairperson Terry Fowler called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. with a quorum of eight board members.

2. Public Comment

NONE

3. Chairman's Report

Chairperson Terry Fowler stated that the board could benefit having more formality in the way the board processes information. Chairperson Fowler asked the board to participate in an exercise for the discussion of enrollment issues later in the meeting. Chairperson Fowler reminded the members that the board only speaks when it votes. In order to collect a more focused and comprehensive set of data, Chairperson Fowler asked the board members to write down the information that they need to better understand enrollment when the enrollment projects were presented. Then, before the

April board meeting, the board would have the requested data provided prior to the meeting, to reduce discussion time and bring all members up to speed. The goal of the exercise is to provide a more quality discussion and allow the board to process the information more quickly.

Chairperson Fowler will call an additional public comment before the board goes into closed session.

4. Adopt the Agenda

**Amanda Baldwin moved to adopt the agenda with adding an extra public comment between the principal update and closed session. Linda Aaquist seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

**The adopted agenda is attached to these minutes as “Exhibit A.”**

5. Approval of Minutes for February 27, 2018 and Board Retreat Minutes for March 6, 2019.

**The board retreat minutes will be available to approve at April’s board meeting. Linda Aaquist moved to accept February 27, 2019 board minutes as presented. Reid Riker seconded the motion. Motion carries.**

**The approved minutes for February 27, 2019 are attached to these minutes as “Exhibit B.”**

6. Primary Rate Increase

Max Haynes previously asked Sherri Jordan to evaluate whether scholarships could be provided to low income families impacted by the rate increases discussed at the board meeting on February 27, 2019. Ms. Jordan stated that, with the number of students to be added to the extended day programs and the additional staff to accommodate those students, Ms. Jordan does not believe that the school can offer full scholarships. However, she believes it may be possible for the school to offer partial scholarships. Ms. Jordan stated that the school could offer \$100.00 to \$200.00 in monthly scholarship for the current families that would be impacted by the rate increases. Specifically, Ms. Jordan feels the school could offer \$150.00 partial scholarships to ten current families. Mr. Haynes added that a scholarship program could be part of the capital campaign. Doug Whitener suggested that a committee be formed to specifically analyze scholarship issues. Such a committee would be comprised of a PTO members and a few board members. An agenda item will be added to the agenda for the April meeting to discuss scholarship-related issues.

**Max Haynes moved to approve the 2019-20 primary rate sheet as presented. Amanda Baldwin seconded the motion. The motion carried. The rate increase and scholarships will be an action item at the next board meeting in April.**

**Rate sheets are attached to these minutes as “Exhibit C.”**

## 7. Enrollment Projections

Stephanie Turner introduced herself to the board and asked the board to review the new enrollment procedures. The procedures are being updated to account for new statutory requirements. The changes to the procedures were approved by Stacey Cooper, the school's liaison with the Washoe County School District. The new statutes override the school's charter. The most substantial change is that siblings are given preference above all other categories, which means that a sibling of a current student could bump a student in our primary program who is progressing to kindergarten. This change will not impact the school this year, but it could present an issue in the future. The second most substantial change is that students living within Washoe County are given preference over students living in other counties, because the Washoe County School District schools are our sponsoring authorities. The primary program procedures otherwise remain the same, which is first come, first serve.

Chairperson Fowler asked Assistant Principal Tamra Hopkins how enrollment impacts student achievement. Ms. Hopkins replied that the school expects the students to have established some form of self-direction when they enter into a Montessori classroom. The younger the students are when they enroll in the school the better. The more that the school retains students who have a Montessori foundation the better the school functions. Ideally, school enrollment has a pyramid shape. The primary classrooms have the youngest students. As these students progress, student attrition increases, leading to fewer students advancing into the upper elementary and adolescent programs. When enrolling new students into the program who are without a Montessori foundation, the class take longer to normalize, and teacher time and effort is expended on these new students to integrate them into a Montessori classroom. Montessori-based self-direction is best learned at a young age.

Chairperson Fowler asked board members to write down their questions regarding enrollment, as well as any data points that would be helpful for the board to better understand the enrollment issue. Further, Mr. Fowler asked that the board do some independent research prior to the April meeting to facilitate a quality discussion.

**The enrollment projections discussed during this agenda item are attached to these minutes as "Exhibit D."**

## 8. Approval of February Cash Disbursements

**Max Haynes moved to accept the February cash disbursements as presented. Doug Whitener seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

**The February cash disbursements are attached to these minutes as "Exhibit E."**

## 9. Approval of February's financials

**Reid Riker moved to approve the February financials as presented. Amanda Baldwin seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

**The February financials are attached to these minutes as "Exhibit F."**

## 10. 2019-20 Tentative budget

**Reid Riker moved to approve the 2019-20 tentative budget as presented. Doug Whitener seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

**The 2019-20 tentative budget is attached to these minutes as “Exhibit G.”**

## 11. Updated Financial Policies

### **Tabled until April’s board meeting**

Scott Hernandez and Max Haynes had a brief discussion regarding the school’s policy related to the use of federal funds. Mr. Hernandez drafted new language to clarify the federal grant procurement section, which is the sole remaining issue. Mr. Hernandez added a clause that clarifies that when the school utilizes federal funds—either from federal grants or that are otherwise received from the federal government—the school will follow the federal procurement policy. Mr. Hernandez further added a clause that states that when no federal funds are used, the school shall utilize a procurement method permitted by relevant governing law. Mr. Haynes stated that it does not say clearly what our financial policy is to be compliant, but Mr. Haynes is fine with it. Mr. Hernandez expressed a preference for a dynamic policy that will adjust to regulatory and statutory changes, so the board is not constantly amending the financial policies. Mr. Haynes asked the board members to read the financial policy one more time and to be ready to vote on it at the April meeting.

## 12. Building Update

Max Haynes stated that the school has received two letters of intent. One of the letters of intent was received from Honors Academy Charter School at full price, and Mr. Haynes verified that it has the funds to purchase Orovada. The second letter of intent came in at full price from Note-Able Music Therapy. Mr. Haynes met with the executive director and her staff and, while Note-Able would be a great neighbor and addition to the local community, it does not currently have the funds. Note-Able is in the middle of a capital campaign and may have the money in six months. However, there is the possibility that Note-Able could purchase the lot. Note-Able is looking for a single donor to put up the money to clear our debt on the vacant lot. Red Hook would like to work with Note-Able, but they are currently working with Honors Academy.

Red Hook is an investment company that works with established charter schools. Mr. Haynes is waiting on a proposal from Red Hook to purchase the three-story building and would immediately provide funds to remodel the three-story building. Red Hook also guarantees that the remodel of the three-story building would be completed before the school would have to move in. Red Hook would project manage both buildings simultaneously for a cost. The school could purchase the building back in three years from Red Hook with a return that is agreed upon. Mr. Haynes would like to hold an emergency board meeting on either April 10<sup>th</sup> or April 11<sup>th</sup> and have Red Hook present to the board.

### 13. Governance Report

Doug Whitener stated that the Governance Committee has focused on increasing the size of the board. The board currently has eight members.

Doug introduced Claudia Castaneda-Flamenco to the board as a possible board member. Ms. Castaneda-Flamenco has close ties to the Hispanic and Native American communities and has experience in the non-profit sector. Ms. Castaneda-Flamenco learned about the school, because she was asked to come help with our Hispanic parents with immigration and other issues. This resulted in Ms. Castaneda-Flamenco presenting to large audience of people from the entire Reno area. Since then, Ms. Castaneda-Flamenco also has volunteered at the school.

### 14. Principal and Vice Principal Update

**Attached to these minutes are Principal Rhonda Turnipseed's report as Exhibit "H."**

Principal Rhonda Turnipseed and Vice Principal Tamra Hopkins completed 13 hours of continuous education credits at the AMI USA Refresher course. Principal Turnipseed informed the board that parent conferences are underway, and both teachers and students have been busy with Steam Fair projects. Ms. Turnipseed stated the school will hold a meeting regarding a proposed 1-6<sup>th</sup> grade classroom. Ms. Turnipseed stated that such a classroom would follow the plane of development, and the proposal was vetted by staff and discussed at parent conferences. There is a parent meeting scheduled. Ms. Turnipseed added that the National Center for Montessori in Public Sector is observing the school from April 16, 2019 through April 19, 2019. Max Haynes graciously offered a room for the visitors to stay in to keep our costs down.

### 15. Public Comment

**NONE**

### 16. Executive Session

**CLOSED SESSION TO DISCUSS PRINCIPAL RHONDA TURNIPSEED'S EVALUATION.**

### 17. Back in Session

The board consensus is that Principal Rhonda Turnipseed is doing a great job and the board is very pleased with the decision to hire her.

**Linda Aaquist moved to approve Principal Rhonda Turnipseed's evaluation. Bryce Ganes seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

### 18. Public Comment

**NONE**

**19. Adjournment and Future Agenda Items**

**Max Haynes moved to adjourn. Doug Whitener seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

Future agenda items:

Financials

Lunch Program

Building Update

Financial Policy

Scholarships/Committee