

Washington Montessori Open Session Minutes

Recorded by: Sharon H. Main

Date: October 7, 2011 – Fall Retreat

Attendees: Board of Trustees members and ex-officio members

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| ✓ Lisa Lawless(Chair) | Katrina Briley | ✓ Jane Hardee, Faculty Rep |
| ✓ Rachel Midgette (Treasurer) | ✓ Treva Maxwell-Anderson | ✓ Dori St. Amant, MPTO Rep |
| Jerry Vick | ✓ Darwin Woolard | |
| ✓ Jason Williams | ✓ Steve Jones (HoS) | |

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| Call to Order | 11:15 am |
| Mission Statement | Darwin Woolard |
| Privilege of the Floor | <p>Jessica Adams, Teacher - Read letter from JoDee Anderson, Teacher Assistant. Letter requested that job descriptions be updated and put in writing so that duties of faculty and staff are clear and clarification on a comp time system. See enclosed letter. Jessica then read her own letter. Requested for classroom sizes to be reviewed again when budget is discussed. Currently have 28 students per class would prefer to have 24. Asked that adult mentors be included in the total number since they are added to the classroom for some students who need extra accommodations. See enclosed letter.</p> <p>Dori St. Amant, MPTO Pres. and parent – Read letter. See enclosed. Discussed class sizes. Feels that there are too many students in each grade level classroom and too many students going to encore classes at the same time. Also, spoke to reinstating Sandy Kennedy’s benefits and adding teacher assistants to the training bonus policy. Would like to see teachers more involved in the decision making for the school.</p> |
| Special Guest | <p>Tom Williams from Acadia, WMPCS’s accounting service, presented. See enclosures. Discussed where the schools funding comes from. Spoke that we are not the only charter school concerned about class sizes and space. WMPCS did what was expected when told that there would be a deficit and planned accordingly. When budget came in it was more funding than expected but extra students had already been enrolled to ensure enough funding for the school year. Tom spoke very positive about the current financial state of WMPCS and that the administrative staff is very knowledgeable of their jobs. ADM (Allotted Average Daily Membership) sheet discussed. ADM is the maximum amount of students the school can enroll in a year and receive State funding for. NC gives the same amount (\$3,322.57) for each child served in the EC program regardless of disability. NCVPS fee was assessed to every school to create and fund the Virtual Public School system. DSSF (Disadvantaged Student Services Funds) gave \$57 per child to help with disadvantaged students. PMR (Principals Monthly Report) report is submitted to DPI to calculate actual funding based on actual ADM. Funding is based on enrollment as of the 20th day of school. If child doesn’t come until the 6th day the school only gets 75% state funding. The school does not receive state funding for students enrolled after the 20th day but does receive local funding. Some EC funding follows exceptional children (EC) enrolled after the 20th day as long as they were on another public school’s membership list. EC children that are enrolled after the 20th day from homeschools or private schools do not have EC money that follows them. Risk pool is additional state funding that is applied for on a case by case basis for exceptional children who need support staff such as mentors. Some State grants are available for additional funding such as Title I funding which is based on the school’s poverty level. WMPCS has qualified for Title I in the past but currently does not have a high enough poverty level. Retrieving State funding is a lengthy process done on a monthly basis. Acadia requests monies and it takes 4 days to get money pulled down into WMPCS accounts. State money can only be kept in WMPCS bank account for 3 days. Monies must be invoiced and payroll calculated exactly. At the end of the month the State can come back and take the money back but the school doesn’t lose it. The money goes back into the schools allotment. Money not spent by the end of June is lost. Local funding discussed. Local revenue is monies given by the counties for students enrolled at WMPCS that reside in their county. “Fines and Forfeitures” are included in</p> |

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| | <p>local government funding. The fund balance is all saved local funding. State and Federal both revert back if not used. WMPCS still receives State sales tax but that may change. Bottom line cannot exceed fund balance. Federal money is allotted at a set amount. Auditor checks Acadia's work and the results go to the LCG (Local Commission of Government). At budget time, schools use historical data to make upcoming year projections. ISIS is the accounting software that Acadia uses and it is the only vendor that works correctly with DPI's software. Expense codes are fixed by DPI for reporting purposes and each expense item is a 19 digit code. Acadia sends an Excel spreadsheet to the HoS at the end of each month to show where money has been used. ISIS is limited in what you can do with it. As a charter school Acadia is only able to use the charter school download. Rachel would like to see a column added that would be the original budget. Tom can do this quarterly and has done it in the past for year end. Balance sheets are being sent quarterly. Federal money is kept separately. Local money starts coming in about 2 months into the school year. Tom can change the titles on the report but the coding will stay the same. Cash flow was then discussed. WMPCS is financially sound. Tom advised the BoT to be cautious of having too much fund balance. It is a cushion in an unstable economy but can be a concern to parents. Rachel requested an amortization report quarterly. Auditor will supply balance sheet for July. Acadia did one for last March and will do one for September when all the data is in. BoT would like to see a sheet of assets. Tom stated it is a tab at the bottom of the Excel spreadsheet. BoT gets copies of bank statements but there are no statements from USDA to let you know how much is principal vs. interest and payoff. Steve has requested payoff amounts before and has reported them to the Board.</p> |
| <p>WMPCS Current Budget Review and Finance Reports</p> | <p>See enclosure. Steve reported. The CD was moved to Select Bank with 1.24% interest rate. Middle School and Day School accounts were included in the audit. Increase in middle school line is money collected for fieldtrips. Day school amount is up because tuition is being collected since school has started back. New 3-6/Middle School Assistant will be paid for out of day school account. This was cleared by our auditor. Still waiting to collect \$3,400 from Beaufort County from the Sugar Creek lawsuit. WMPCS got approved for Title II funding for \$2,056. This pays for teacher certification and staff development including taking the PRAXIS test to become highly qualified. \$500 was spent to check the air quality in Building #3. Air quality and humidity levels were normal. Recommendations to prevent ceiling tiles from absorbing moisture include modifying the airflow in the attic area by adding drip trays and attic fans. Dessert Aire is working correctly. Darwin asked to add this to November's agenda to fix this problem. Insurance will not cover to have the remaining trees cleared. Cost is \$2,000 and will be done by the same people that did the first clean up. WMPCS has received Washington County's payment of \$1,200 for August which is not reflected on the sheet.</p> |
| <p>Financial stewardship and planning</p> | <p>Investments. See handout. Rachel has prepared a Reconciliation of Accounts for discussion only. Current loan balances discussed. Would like to see a decision made to put the money into investments if we are not going to pay off buildings or use the money in some way. WMPCS must have 3 months payroll in our account as a safety net. Question was raised if keeping this much money would prevent us from getting grants. Current grants that we apply for are not affected. BoT will add to the November board meeting to discuss options for money. Rachel asked that they consider Money market accounts, CD's, purchasing more land, building new classrooms or paying off the current buildings. Monies over \$250,000 per account are not federally insured by the FDIC. Clarification made that WMPCS keeps 3 months operational expenses as best practice but must keep 3 months salary. This is approx. \$150,000 per month.</p> |
| <p>HoS Goals and BoT Goals</p> | <p>1,3,5 Year Goals - Steve discussed. 1 to 3 year goals: Facilities: Pay off 3-6 modular or double up on payments. Class Sizes: Open 6-9classroom next year. Concerns would be how to determine who would go to that class, how many non-normalized students to enroll, and having enough students moving up from 3-6 make it work. Adding a fourth 3-6 classroom is also an</p> |

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| | <p>to repay them per their contract. However, it does benefit the school to have more trained staff regardless if the school pays for the training or not. This could be modified to include not only the assistants but the administrative staff as well. AMS does not recognize the online training so Katrina would like to have the policy reflect that the school would pay for would be AMS or AMI certified. Maria Montessori believed in hands on training of the teachers. Katrina feels passionately about this. There is a difference in the results of center trained teachers vs. online trained teachers. Training all staff in some manner is preferred. Lead or co-teachers should receive training first and then offer to assistants if funding is available. If someone takes on getting the training themselves could the school compensate them? HoS must have the grounds whether or not to compensate them. Lisa Lawless will meet with Steve to draft policy proposal change to bring to the next meeting. Jane spoke to how much the assistants are valued at our school and how important the Montessori training is for them. If the school pays for training it must be approved from a budget standpoint. This is usually done at Spring Retreat. Most training requires at minimum a Bachelor's degree.</p> |
| Preschool | <p>Job Description of the Day School Director: See handout about Day School bylaws. These were repealed and the day school now operates under the same BoT as the charter. Steve will draft a job description and identify support staff. She will be under the HoS and will report to the BoT monthly as is currently practiced. Steve will draft and submit for the November BoT meeting to vote on.</p> |
| Faculty Report | <p>Darwin read thank you note from 9-12 faculty thanking the BoT for the copier and one from a faculty member for the 1.5% cost of living raise that was given this year. Jane thanked the BoT for adding things to the agenda that were concerns from the faculty. See enclosed list of concerns. She then read a letter from Amy Smigel, faculty member, requesting Teacher Assistant and Teacher Interns get the opportunity to receive Montessori Training. See enclosed letter. Jane reflected on part of a personnel contract that she had been given to share but was reminded by the BoT that it could only be discussed in closed session due to personnel laws. Darwin asked if this had been brought to the HoS first. Austin Smigel spoke up from the audience and stated that his wife was bringing this to the BoT because she has followed the process of speaking to the HoS and that this is not a grievance but simply following the procedure in hopes of change. Jane asked about question #3 from the faculty concerns list regarding rates of pay for teacher assistants. This is a confidential matter and will not be discussed in open session. The faculty will not get an answer to this question. Question #5 regarding why salaried employees have to sign in and out each day discussed. This is an accountability issue with funding. WMPCS must have a time sheet for auditing purposes. Comp time then discussed. Steve has given comp time for hours at the Book Fair, 5K Race, and school promotional functions. Jane thanked him for offering comp time because the staff had not had this in prior years. Statement from Dori St. Amant read again regarding staff payment. Stacey spoke to erroneous information in the statement read at the beginning of the meeting. Faculty is not penalized for leaving early if it is planned and they have leave time to cover it. Jane read the remainder of the list requesting benefits be reviewed and fallen trees be removed. Items have already been discussed earlier in this meeting.</p> |
| Google Docs | <p>Katrina would like to know if there are any members still struggling to use this and if they would like to continue. Tabled to November BoT meeting.</p> |
| School Emergency Plan | <p>Steve spoke about having a plan if the school is damaged we have insurance but what would we do in the meantime. Is there a local business or church facility that we could possibly rent? If only one building is on fire all students would move to a building that is not affected until they could be picked up. If the building could not be occupied until repaired then we could secure an agreement.</p> |
| Land for Sale | <p>Land is still for sale. Tax value is approx. \$71,000 for the 15 acres that join us. There are lots of options for our school to use the land but the BoT is not sure there is any urgency. Asbury United Methodist Church would like to partner with us to divide the property. Katrina has talked to Jerry who has offered to do the legal work if we opt to buy.</p> |
| Roof Warranty | <p>We are cleared from USDA to get the warranty in place since we fulfilled our obligation</p> |

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| | on the debt for the roof. It is now up to McClure to let us know if they are going to warranty the roof since they have still not been paid by SEVAC. Firestone is the manufacturer of the roof. |
| Self-Perpetuating BoT Seat | BoT has received 4 applications. Katrina, Steve and Rachel will hold interviews. This will fill Dr. Denny's unexpired term. Katrina will research the length of the unexpired term. |
| BoT Governance | It is important for the BoT to assess themselves. Katrina shared handout from Joel Medley, Director of the Office of Charter Schools. She wants the BoT to create their own Code of Conduct and would like this to be signed annually along with the Conflict of Interest. Rachel discussed a website that offered guidance to charter schools. BoT would like to have information before the meetings so that it can be read and reviewed before the meetings. Katrina will work on the Code of Conduct and will bring it back to the BoT. |
| Blue Print Marketing Tool | This is now the marketing tool taken from the blueprint. Rachel reported on this as the designer. She has completed it and would now like to see it used for a year and then reviewed as to how helpful it is and if any modifications are necessary. Rachel has one correction she will make and then she will email it to Sharon. |
| Marketing Plan | Skipped |
| Committee Guidelines | Lisa Lawless reported. See handout. Three committees formed initially, a long term planning committee (5 to 10 year goals), marketing committee (rebranding), and facility committee (building and grounds). The BoT will determine if a committee is needed. A BoT member will serve on each committee. Advertising in the FYI will be done to get members. Discussion held to determine committee member selection and how committees will be formed. The BoT sponsor will be responsible for setting up the committee and determining the members. Do this as a one year trial. If it is successful it can be added to the Parent Handbook. Darwin would like to have a finance committee. |
| Marketing Plan HoS Evaluation Process | Returned to Marketing Plan. New logo with eagle flying and sun in background is nice. Would like to now redo website. Has some parents and faculty that could be a good resource. Rachel does not mind helping out with this. Concerns discussed. Katrina would like to have the BoT meet in closed session with Mr. Jones before the evaluations are completed so that questions can be asked and answered. This should tentatively happen at the May BoT meeting with the evaluation results being shared in closed session at the June Meeting. Discussed what is appropriate for open vs. closed session. Treva Maxwell-Anderson joined the meeting. |
| Spring Retreat | February 24 th - 26 th . Rachel will check into getting the same house as last year. Identified those who attend. BoT members come. Stacey is invited because she works closely with the budget and the retreat contains a lot of budget issues. Sharon is clerk to the BoT and does the minutes. Dale and Jen are invited on an as needed basis depending on their skills. The public is invited because it is an open meeting. |
| Public Comments | Jessica Adams - Asked that the school really investigate the land purchase. Austin Smigel - Based on his research, WMPCS should not pay more than \$4,000-\$5,000 per acre. Russell Lilley - Spoke about committees and how having too many can cause them to start working against each other. Would like the committees be broad in what they can do but also be a help to Steve and not make his job harder. Ginger Gardiner - No merit raises are given only raises for job description changes. She wants the BoT to remember this when they redo the Preschool Director job description. |

Motion made by Darwin to adjourn at 5:44pm. Jason 2nd. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted by: Sharon H. Main
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Accepted
Washington Montessori Public Charter School

