

Coastal Montessori Charter School

Board of Directors Meeting

Monday, February 26th, 2018 ~ 6:00 PM

BOARD MEMBER ROLL CALL

The following members of the Board were present:

Ryan Fabbri, Patricia Gadek, Dr. Cathy Scott, Scott Steffen (via telephone), Lesley Steedly, and Rachel Tomovski

The following Board members were absent:

Gene Mannella, Jason Hendrix, and Stella Mercado

Also in attendance:

Dr. Nathalie Hunt, CMCS Director
Emily Topper, Coastal Observer
Kristin Alford, CMCS Parent
Joe Pittman, CMCS Music Teacher
Lynn Thurlow, CMCS Assistant Director

CALL TO ORDER

Chair, Dr. Scott called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

COMPLIANCE WITH FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA) and THE READING OF THE MISSION STATEMENT

Chair, Dr. Scott read aloud the FOIA statement and the CMCS mission statement.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments at this time.

APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY MINUTES AND THE AGENDA

Mr. Fabbri made a motion to accept both January's Minutes, and the February Agenda (previously circulated.) Ms. Gadek seconded the motion. The Board VOTED unanimously to approve both the Minutes and the Agenda, and the motion passed.

DIRECTOR REPORT

Dr. Hunt compiled a list of her responsibilities and shared them with the Board. She reviewed the history and identity of the school from its inception to present, and highlighted the goals that were reached in phase one. Her overview included the following points:

- CMCS began with a vision to make Montessori education available to all students
- Certificate of Incorporation was submitted and approved in 2011
- CMCS opened with 140 students and next year, will be at capacity of 260 students in grades 1-8
- Teacher autonomy
- Highly qualified staff (all but one have state certification and Montessori training)

- Developed sponsorship program for training with sponsored years of training
- 15% Special Ed, 13% Gifted and Talented, 13% Free and Reduced lunch
- 70 students on waitlist
- MMUN program
- Community Partnerships with CCU, Optimist Club, Georgetown Chamber of Commerce
- Addition of a band program for grades 5-8
- Commitment to field experiences for elementary school and overnight experiences for middle school
- Addition of a recycling program and service
- Fundraising for playground, garden beds
- Partnership with PTO for flag pole, lunches, etc.
- Optional lunch service through agreement with GCSD

Dr. Hunt went on to identify some “identity challenges” CMCS is facing, going into phase two:

- Contracted services including: Special Ed, Transportation, Food Services, Testing
- Discipline
- Shared Personnel
- Billing for maintenance and repairs – whose responsibility
- Accreditation
- Teacher Certification
- Charter Renewal – in two years
- Legislation for equal access to facilities funding
- Salary expectations – currently use an Employment Agreement with Director discretion, as opposed to a Lock Step Schedule
- Umbrella question: What does it mean that the District serves as the Local Education Agency for CMCS?

Dr. Hunt reported that each staff member has completed an “Intent to Return” form for next year, though some have expressed a desire for a new role.

Dr. Hunt told the Board that the accountants suggest that a comfortable range for salary expenditures is between 50 and 65% of the budget. CMCS currently spends 65% on salaries. Dr. Scott requested clarification regarding the process Dr. Hunt uses to determine staff salaries, in order that the Board be better able to support her as it responds to inquiries. The Board will look for an explanation of what she looks at and what she bases her numbers on at the next board meeting. She was asked to provide specific examples, without names, rather than generalities. Dr. Hunt has spoken with the Accountants about changing the Budget Report to be more sensitive to teacher salaries and allow for discretion. Chair, Dr. Scott informed the Board that Mr. Gene Mannella has agreed to speak at a faculty meeting. He will present how the budget works. Dr. Hunt pointed out that \$9-15K per teacher is allocated for training, and to date, CMCS has put nine teachers through training. \$35K is reserved each year for professional development. Travel expenses are also covered. These opportunities should be noted when considering

salaries. Furthermore, great strides have been made to “even the playing field,” and Dr. Hunt is compiling research to present to the committee. She assured the Board that teachers are her number one priority and she is intentionally communicating their worth to them. She also asked if this is an issue which would be appropriate to bring up with the District as part of the Memorandum of Understanding discussion. Chair, Dr. Scott believes that it is, and asked that she email the Board her suggestions. Dr. Hunt told the Board that she wishes to seek counsel from someone who is very knowledgeable of charter law. Ms. Thurlow inquired as to the date of the MOU meeting. Chair, Dr. Scott responded that the Board has reached out twice, and received no response from the District.

BUDGET REPORT

Dr. Hunt reviewed the Budget (previously circulated) with the Board. Mr. Fabbri inquired as to why so much has already been spent on substitutes this year. Dr. Hunt informed the Board that teachers have ten PTO days, which can be taken for either illness or personal time, and they are choosing to take advantage of their days.

Mr. Fabbri raised the issue of using the Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP) for the school's reserve funds. The school now has a significant amount of funds on deposit after the drawdown of the USDA loan and we should take advantage of earning interest as a source of revenue. The Board will hear Mr. Fabbri's thoughts and experience on the matter, and put it to a formal vote at the March meeting.

Dr. Hunt reported that when she asked the Accountants about the new budget, she was told that it is not due to the Board until March, even though in past years, it had been provided in February. She said they are currently working on it and she asked that they get it to the Board well in advance of the First Reading.

Dr. Hunt informed the Board that the property adjacent to CMCS was purchased by the District for \$387K, and that there is \$421K remaining in funds for CMCS from the Bond Referendum.

Chair, Dr. Scott reported that the District has provided CMCS with a security person at no cost to the school. The situation is currently indefinite. Ms. Kristin Alford suggested we put something in the school newsletter about it, and send emails to Dr. Dozier to thank him.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Fabbri moved that the Board go into Executive Session to discuss a personnel issue. Ms. Gadek seconded the motion and the Board VOTED unanimously to enter into Executive Session at 7:17 PM. All guests and Dr. Hunt were excused.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION and MEETING ADJOURNED

Ms. Steedly moved that the Board return to Open Session, and there being no further business to be transacted, adjourn. Mr. Fabbri seconded the motion. The Board VOTED unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rachel Tomovski
CMCS Board Secretary