



Lowcountry Montessori School

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time

Thursday July 22, 2021 at 5:30 PM

The mission of Lowcountry Montessori School is to provide an authentic Montessori education building a foundation for lifelong learning.

Directors Present

A. Thompson, G. Alexander, J. Dameworth, J. Ephland, L. Young, T. Vande Burgt

Directors Absent

K. Recchia, S. Boggs

Guests Present

A. Horn, M. Watkins, S. Fox

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance and Guests

B. Call the Meeting to Order

T. Vande Burgt called a meeting of the board of directors of Lowcountry Montessori School to order on Thursday Jul 22, 2021 at 5:30 PM.

C.

Reading of the Mission Statement

D. Approval of Agenda

Approval of the Agenda

Motion to amend the Agenda – Add Camera Discussion #H

- Jeannine
- Amanda

Approval of the Amended Agenda

Motion – Tom

2nd – Jeannine

E. Statement of Compliance with FOIA

Statement of Compliance

- Agenda posted 24hrs ahead of meeting

II. Director's Report

A. July Update

Director's Report

- 360 Students in Power School
- 107 on waitlist
- Hired music/theater teacher – start end of August
- \$488k app for funds
 - Applied to:
 - PT Counselor position
 - Y2 & Y3 for Music/Theater Teacher
 - Lead guide/asst guide for primary
 - Raise for teachers
 - AMS conference – March 2022
 - Change two days on the calendar
 - Turn into district for approval
 - March 18th – off (AMS conference)
 - March 25th – ½ day
 - 12 days – Houston Mont. Training
 - 4 days in November
 - Another 12 days next summer

NOV – Certification

III. Committee Reports

A. Governance

B. Facilities

No Meeting this month

Martha's Notes:

Facilities Update

Center corridor double door replacement:

It was reported to me since last summer when I took over facilities that the 4 sets of double doors in building 2 and 3 needed replacement due to not functioning properly for multiple reasons including astragal bar never being installed causing AC leaking and gap between doors, did not meet proper pressure ADA requirement since first inspection following construction, door manipulation can allow for easy break in, and door hardware not matching security hardware properly for proper functionality.

Since then I solicited a generalized quote to see what we were dealing with to replace doors from the contractor who replaced all the interior doors we did last summer. The quote totaled 33,324.84. This would require a long, extensive process involving OSF inspections, of which I started the process. We contacted Liolia to have this included in the existing building upgrades/repairs. I then went back and forth with OSF and Liolio and was getting different information as to whether or not we needed approval if we replaced doors like for like. Liolio who deals with OSF on a regular basis said we do not have to have approval. OSF was telling me we had to have approval. After Liolio reached out to OSF directly, they reported that if we were just changing out the doors and not replacing the door jams, then we did not need approval. I contacted ESPY and got their door rep to come out to take a look. She said that there was no reason to replace the doors, that everything we were needing could be fixed by getting a hardware contractor to come and make adjustments. Since then I have had 3 hardware contractors come out and take a look. 2 of them are under the impression that we can accomplish what we need by making some modifications to the hardware, 1 of them thinks we need to replace the doors with fiberglass doors or we will not be able to get the 5 lbs of push pressure to meet the ADA requirement. That is the MUCH more expensive way to go. Where we are at right now, is I am waiting for quotes to come back from the 3 hardware/door contractors. A scope of work was created and sent to all 3 contractors for the hardware adjustments.

Grounds maintenance:

We hired an in-house grounds maintenance employee to replace our contracted landscape company. We did this for multiple reasons. Our landscape practices are not typical to normal standards. Typical landscape maintenance uses herbicides/chemicals to help control weeds and makes less work for a company. We have chosen to not use harmful chemicals at our school to promote a healthy environment. We also allow plant diversity to (weeds like dandelions and other non-acceptable to society) as part of our curriculum to teach natural progression in landscapes and promote a more sustainable environment for wildlife. This brings in a more diverse variety of wildlife to our campus for better plant and animal studies. These permaculture practices are also crucial for

rebuilding our soil, which was initially stripped clean, as well as creating a healthier ecosystem.

Because we are doing a permaculture style landscape, it has made it very difficult for the traditional landscaping companies. What they perceive as a weed, we have specifically planted there or allowed it to grow naturally. They have cut down multiple plants that we have purchased and taken the time to plant even though we put cages around them and pointed them out. In addition to not understanding our needs, we have had general problems with them not showing up, or doing significantly less than they are contracted to do. I have walked with them many times to show them and have had to ride them constantly. Now that we have switched over, our campus is being taken care of significantly better. It looks more beautiful than it ever has. We are able to work very closely and train our employee to understand what we are moving toward and how to achieve that through maintenance. I was able to raise money through the bookfair sales to purchase most of the equipment needed for the grounds maintenance besides the zero-turn mower, which we were able to get through local equipment shop that sold us an older commercial grade one that he had just completely refurbished and put a brand new engine in that has a 3-year warranty. He also gave us several things like gas cans, extra keys, 2 cycle oil, etc. as well as said he would help us with our service learning program by supplying engines and parts for students to repair and allowing us to use and tour his shop. These are the kinds of relationships we are hoping to achieve with our community, and also what I have been working towards.

Painting/Maintenance and cleaning:

Last year since we had a tight budget due to covid and low enrollment, we had decided to put off the normal painting maintenance. Originally building 2 and 3 were painted with cheap contractor grade, flat paint. To save money each year we have only ever done touch up to the walls and painted very little whole walls. That meant we needed to switch over to a better paint for the whole rooms and switch to an eggshell. Because they used eggshell over flat paint and only rolled out walls to the height of arm's reach, there were areas that flashed really bad. The walls were getting very beat up and looked very dingy. Since it was not in the budget to paint a whole building and we were already moving forward toward painting, we decided to move forward with a portion of the painting to satisfy basic expectations. Our maintenance employee and myself painted all the trim ourselves in the classrooms. We had a quote come in at \$4,900 to do all 8 classroom walls in building 3 which was the worst. This was important to do because teachers had removed and packed up things off their shelving with the expectation of paint happening in their classrooms. Teachers have already had a tough year. I did not want to have to make them do that, and then put everything back for no reason, just to do it all over again next summer. I have done some of the additional offices myself that was not in the budget for the same reasons. We will continue to do as much of the painting as we can ourselves throughout the year. We will use the same contractor to do the powerwashing and paint the areas on the exterior that must be painted to prevent rotting. We have moved most of the furniture through the school and are in the process of waxing all the floors. Carpet cleaning will be done hopefully next week or the week after. We are

also in process of the normal summer cleaning including light fixtures, walls, trim/doors/windows, blinds, etc. Things are coming along steadily. It is a tremendous amount of work, and we are always short staffed in the summer months. We will get it done though.

Networking:

I believe it is very important to continue networking our school with local community organizations and businesses. This has been a large focus of mine as well as beginning to write grants, etc. So far I have established relationships with Randall's Lawn Mower Equipment Rentals who donated several items mentioned previously as well as continually helped us. We recently have developed a relationship with Spring Island Community who allowed us to bring some of our highschool out there for a first ever field trip to their community gardens as well as their nature center. They were very impressed with our students and invited them to come back and do their service learning working in the gardens and nature center as well. Some the members then came to our school for international night and were hugely impressed. They are excited to work with us in the future and already have ideas to help our campus become more sustainable. They have helped other organizations with projects like this. So this is an exciting opportunity. Espy Lumber is another company that we are developing a relationship with. They recently donated over \$2,000 of lumber for us to eventually build an equipment shed that will double as a nursery/outdoor classroom. We are in the planning stages for this and will give an update as we get closer to it.

C. Academic Excellence

- Academic Excellence – Amy
 - o Service learning – middle school/hs
 - o ½ day on Friday's – then service
 - § Animal shelter
 - § Nursing homes
 - § CAPA
 - § Restore
 - § Help of Beaufort
 - § Spring Island Organic Farm
 - o Teacher reflective practices
 - o Purchasing transparent classrooms
 - § Increase parent ed program
 - § Elementary level
- Inclusion Model – Becky

D. Fundraising

- Fundraising
 - o Pavers – selling them?

IV. New Business

A. Survey Monkey - Send at EOY

- Survey Monkey – send @ EOY
 - o Add BOD to submit questions
 - o JAN
- § Re-enrollment forms – what like/what needs improvement
- § 8/10/2021 – Open House
 - Open House 4-7pm
 - Need pics
 - Table for BOD to recruit additional people to join
 - Jeannine/Lari – 4-5pm
 - Tom – 5-6pm
- § Also for staff – what needs imp/what like
 - o Tom
- § Submit questions for next board meeting
- § Amy to look for SM Staff Questions
- Martha – Survey for each child

B. School Van

- School Van
 - o Greg – Jacob's Law
 - o 11 seats/ 1 driver
 - o No luggage carrier on top
 - o Amy to recheck requirements
 - o Greg – Statute
- § Charge for field trips - \$5 to cover maintenance
- § 10/11 kids - \$60k/yr
- § Lottery/pool? For who gets to go? Financial need 1st
 - o Riverview does it
 - o Beaufort Cty won't help
 - o Hobbit Hill said "no"
 - o Palmetto Breeze said "no"
 - o Purchase with grant money

C. Board Training

D. Outside Pavillion

- Outside Pavillion
 - o Moving slower
 - o Arch designing
 - o \$35k donation
- § Start that construction
- § Needs drawing

§ Needs donator's board approval

§ Primarily for middle school

o Starting weekly meetings

§ Tuesdays at 4pm – Zoom

E. Intro of Possible New Board Member

- Discussion

o Intro of possible new board member

o Jennifer Poole

§ Motion – Tom

§ 2nd – Amanda

F. Graduation Fees

- Graduation Fees – Tom

o \$150

§ 2 tickets to Waterfront Park

§ Admission fees for additional people

o Financial support provided for needy

o Amy – reach out to last year's grads to donate caps and gowns

G. Cameras

V. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

T. Vande Burgt