

Laramie Montessori Board of Trustees
Regular Board Meeting – Minutes
Location: Laramie Montessori Charter School
Laramie, Wyoming

February 23, 2023
6:30 PM

I. Opening (6:35 pm)

Mission Statement: “The Mission of Laramie Montessori School is to support the development of the whole child through an authentic Montessori environment that honors the child’s intrinsic motivation to learn and supports each individual’s unique intellectual, physical, social and emotional development.”

A. 15 Second Montessori Moments:

- Charter School Day at the Capitol (Jeff) – impressed with the confidence of the LMCS students in engaging with the legislators that came in during the school visit to the capital building.

B. Roll Call: All present.

C. Approval of Agenda: Shawn moved, Rich seconded – approved. Passed unanimously.

II. Minutes [DEFERRED UNTIL AFTER AUDITOR INTRODUCTIONS AND SHARING]

- A. Approval of Minutes, Board Meeting, January 26, 2023: Megan moved to approve the January minutes as corrected (Shawn caught a typo in the year – 2022 will be corrected to 2023) be approved, Rich seconded. Passed unanimously.

III. Audit Presentation by Grooms & Harkins (Karessa Atkins)

- a. Grooms & Harkins produced a “clean” (unqualified) opinion of the LMCS financial condition
- b. Overview and explanations provided – no specific questions were asked

IV. Audience Communication I

A. Teacher Representative (Heidi):

- a. Reading program – all kids will receive three books.
- b. Ms. Jenny in Upper Elementary is starting to talk to the kids about moving up to Middle School.
- c. Moving ahead with the semester and looking forward to spring break.
- d. Mr. Eli has started a jump rope program for heart health.
- e. Mr. Jeff added that next week is a dress up week and the students are excited to participate.
- f. Normam also noted that there was an engineers day and the kids made catapults with popsicle sticks.

B. Open Communication:

- a. N/A

V. Monthly Financial Report

A. Financial Statements for December:

- a. Norman made this also part of the financial committee report. There was some fraud on the LMCS credit card, so he has dealt with that with the bank and has made a new procedure for checking on balances regularly. The fraud amount was about \$2500, not yet refunded, but he and the bank are working on it.
- b. Norman prepared and shared a minor maintenance budget report (one-page handout). Will likely run a small deficit this year (\$233.85). Norm will talk with Megan Hayes about whether to carry this forward or not to the next year's budget.
- c. Will change how the Title funds line is reflected in future budgets to align with financial reports.
- d. Megan moved to approve the financials, Rich seconded. Passed unanimously.

VI. Reports

A. Director's Report:

- a. No real changes in enrollment and none expected through the end of the year. But there are some possible new preschool enrollments coming. Have already started pre-enrolling for preschool for next year. The main effort for new enrollments will begin in April. Jeff will keep the Board updated as this moves forward.
- b. Any and Jeff reviewed teacher feedback documents in preparation for annual evaluations. Jeff thinks it will benefit the teachers by helping them to conduct some initial self-evaluation prior to a conversation with Jeff on where they want their development to go in the future (trainings, professional development, etc.).
- c. Made some changes with "Build Community Relations" with respect to the Charter Schools Association. Jeff, Emily, and Makena participated in training on how to advocate with legislators in case they were called to provide input on the bill advancing through the legislature. On Charter School Day at the capitol, Jeff felt there was a lot of positive talk with legislators on charters. Not much negativity from anyone he encountered. The legislators were very impressed with our LMCS students and what they were hearing from our students on what they are learning at Laramie Montessori. Jeff and Ms. Jenny are thinking about making this an annual or biannual activity with the students. May not go during the budget session years.
- d. On the bill: As of this past Tuesday, it was in committee in the House, but no perceptible fear that it would not advance out of committee to the full House. No suggested amendments that would have a big impact on charter schools generally or on LMCS. Still provides 100% ADM that will come to the school without the district taking a cut, unless the school makes a deal with the district to provide a cut for services the school receives.

Still would include 100% reimbursement for transportation and special education, which is what we currently get. The bill would impose a cap on the number of charters in the state, but not clear yet (until we see the actual wording) for how long this will be in place or what the cap amount may be (numerical, percentage).

- e. Facilities meetings will occur on March 8th. There is a specific formula the state uses to allocate space, preschool does not count in the formula, but Jeff will talk with the state about options for expanding existing space in the coming years (modular units, etc.).
 - f. LMCS has done emergency drills including one lockdown drill that included closing blinds assuming an external threat to the school or students. We have not done a drill to practice an inside threat and Jeff is working on how to create a protected environment to do it, as it's scary for students and looking to the board for input and advice on how to handle this. Jeff will reach out to other principals for advice too. He will report back to the board prior to any action taken.
 - i. Rich asked if there is good data on training versus not training. He doesn't love it and advised we prepare families and their children before it happened.
 - ii. Shawn asked if there might be any benefit in involving the parents directly in a walk through scenario practice perhaps as an evening activity outside of school to help kids be less scared
 - iii. Amy suggested asking the UW Early Childhood Education Center to see what they do since they are likely on top of current research on this topic.
 - g. The School's PD line item is more than budgeted this year because Jeff wanted the teaching staff to go MECR training together. He is planning to reach out to the Friends of Laramie Montessori for additional resources to cover the cost. One staff member has asked about specific training this summer from MECR and Jeff may send additional people for training this summer depending on the budget and available support from FLM.
- B. Committee Reports:
- a. Finance Committee: Has met regularly. Will be looking over the next couple of months at whether we can have a broad summer program again, or if we need to pare it back to a more traditional summer school for those that need it.
 - b. Development Committee: Has not formally met, but will be meeting soon. Jeff reported that he will be attending tomorrow a workshop on federal grant writing.

VII. Old Business

- A. Afterschool program updates and support: Norman will be hearing back soon with guidance on the most important elements to include in a proposed program if we choose to move forward with a proposal.
- B. Full Title application updates: Jeff has been in contact with Les Koch, the Title I Program Manager. He has also met with Heidi on what LMCS needs to include in the template required. They are compiling the proposal and will submit later this spring. LMCS could be a Full Title School by next school year.

- a. Rich asked about any activities LMCS isn't currently doing. Norman responded that we need to host an additional Title Night and collect feedback on how it went from the parents that attend. The Title Coordinator has said this is the biggest piece we need for documentation. Jeff said this will probably take the shape of some sort of activity event and then a parent-focused information sharing with kids engaged in other structured activities (a play, a concert, etc. as a family draw). The Statewide Title Form doesn't ask us to document names of attendees.
- b. Emily asked if we gain Full Title status, will we have it in perpetuity? Jeff said we don't have to reapply, but we would have to continue to document that we are complying with requirements and expectations of a Full Title school.

VIII. New Business

- A. Board member identification and recruitment: As we are one board member shy of our goal, Emily has been meeting with and trying to recruit parents and community members over the school year to fill the vacancy. Carter Parks, a parent of an pre-school student expressed interest in an appointment to fill the seat until May elections. Carter submitted statement of interest on February 22 that was shared by the board and discussed during this meeting. It reads,

My name is Carter Parks and I'm interested in participating on the Laramie Montessori Charter School Board. I'm a business owner an software engineer and for the past 18 years, I've called Laramie my home. My oldest son, Charlie (3) is in the preschool classroom and my youngest, Oliver (2) will eventually be in the preschool. Over the years, I've learned about the Montessori philosophy from my wife Callie who was a former primary classroom assistant, head of school and teacher at MCHL, and current member of the FLM and MEECL boards. I am eager to ensure that my children and the children of our community have access to a rich Montessori education and hope that by serving on the board, I can help continue the amazing work that's already been done.

Consensus of those present (full Board) was that we appoint Carter to the board, as this is in keeping with the ACSD1 guidelines on filling vacancies. Rich moved and Megan seconded that we approve the appointment of Carter Parks to the Board to fill the sixth spot and be in place during Megan's maternity leave. Passed unanimously.

- B. Proposed Annual Meeting Dates 2023: Emily would like Jeff to come back at the March meeting with a proposed date. Norm noted that the next Title Night is March 9th, but that's too soon for this annual meeting, so Jeff will propose a couple alternative dates at our March meeting.
- C. Need to find someone to chair a nominating committee. Emily proposes to ask Jana. All were in favor.
- D. Executive Session:
 - a. Rich moved that the Board move into Executive Session according to Wyoming State Statute 15-1-105 to discuss personnel matters. Megan seconded. Passed Unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION ON PERSONNEL MATTERS (Minutes kept separately from public record)

IX. Audience Communication II

N/A

X. Adjourn

A. Amy moved, Megan seconded the meeting be adjourned. Passed by consensus.