



Heartwood Montessori School grows community by empowering children through respect, independence, and discovery.

BOARD MEETING Minutes

August 18, 2021

Attending: **Kate Murray, Stephanie Malone, Emily Erickson, Ricardo Curley, Caitlin Hargarten, Keith Johns, Corinne Ivanca, AmberJean Hegge; two community members**

Consent Agenda (7:00-7:05 p.m.)

Approve last meeting's minutes (July 21, 2021)

Open Table (7:05-7:20) Reminder that open table items requiring a vote will need to be tabled to next month's agenda and/or require a special session.

Parent concern about vaccination for staff - vaccines are not currently mandated but this is an ongoing discussion. Discussed some of the possible testing options on the market currently. May want to plan on Vault testing. At this time pre-k is not included in the MDE/MDH testing plan K-12.

Director Updates (7:20-8:00):

- Status of fall programming
 - Moved into pods.
 - 20 kids in full day
 - 16 in school day
 - 13 in half day
 - No one currently on waitlist
 - Fully staffed
 - 1 New staff hired to support the Lead Teacher.
 - 1 Summer staff will stay on for the school year.
- Licenser visited as planned **Went well overall**
 - Discussed potential Toddler Community **Walked the space with Director and gave the go ahead/clear from licensing standpoint if we want to do this**
- Operational items
 - Status of fall 2021 enrollment

- ProCare
 - Pilot program **Launching at start of school year**
 - Three tablets-purchased **Family donated three tablets (one for each classroom); we will need to make sure to send a donation receipt.**
 - Will want to have a coordinated communication plan that comes from the Board and Director. **Director is also sending an FAQs doc; pilot group has shared that it's been easy to use and fairly straight forward**
- Update on EXHS
 - Communication planning for families once we have concrete information
- Grants update with Ricardo
 - **Board approves to have Ricardo Curley to join the Board**
 - **Emily and Ricardo met to go over possible grant options; Ricardo's expertise is supporting Emily in applying for grants.**
 - **We need to make it easy for us to apply to many grants**
 - **The nearest deadline is at the end of September is through the Caplan Foundation for Early Childhood as well as Parent Aware**

Board Strategic Discussion & Work: Top four strategic priorities for the next 3-6 months, as identified at our Strategic Planning Meeting on 4.17.21 (8:00-8:30)
Strategic meeting this Saturday 8.21

Health & Safety Protocols/Planning for Fall

- Delta and emerging variants are posing a new level of risk for unvaccinated people, and some vaccinated people are being affected as well.
- CDC has updated guidelines (MDH updates in progress). All staff and students, vaccinated or not, should wear masks inside.
- Outdoors: masks not yet recommended, but unvaccinated people (aka kids) should keep distance when possible.
- Kate has been working with Emily to update our plan from last year. Best advice is to stay the course for most of it, but also need to look at ventilation/air filtration, regular testing for staff (at least for unvaccinated, maybe for all). **We will also open windows as much as possible to help with air circulation.**
- We have received a grant from the State as a critical service. The money has mostly gone into savings. Kate suggests we use some of it to buy several HEPA filter units, quality masks for staff and students who need them, and potentially rapid antigen tests.
- Kate helping to draft communications for families ahead of the start of school and for newsletters that will touch on masking and other mitigation strategies. **Family and student behaviors and communication on a consistent basis will be important as we**

embed mitigation strategies. We need to have a clear approach to ensure policies are followed. We also want to make sure we have support systems in place for our families so they can navigate policies.

- We advocate for sending out a stand-alone document that calls out our COVID procedures. As we spell all of this out it will be good to remind our families that children aren't the best at mitigation strategies. We need to make sure that any policies we create are feasible and viable for us to follow as adults.
- Emily and Kate are working on the COVID plan and revising it to share with families so that it's easily digestible and easy to navigate.
- Planning with EXHS is also a safety component we are keeping track of and trying to determine use of shared space will work with EXHS notification tree and collaborating on fire drills, etc.
 - Both schools have a plan to meet on the 1st to go over final details

Communication with our Community

- Planning more communications before school year starts (logistics, etc. from Emily went out last week) plus Newsletter that includes Board letter
 - Ideas from last meeting: New school year family event, discuss more opportunities to connect through the parent-engagement committee, put family/playdates on a calendar.
- Director: Still hoping to send out a survey focusing on parent preferences. Also, meet with staff to discuss options. Looking at maybe late August into Sept for families
 - Historically Heartwood has sent something similar in the winter. Caitlin will send a link to what was used in the past by the Board so Emily doesn't need to recreate from scratch. Emily will likely send sometime this fall (possibly in October so families can get a feel for Procare first)
- Emily will check with staff about communication at end of August when they're back
- Board/Director/Staff opportunities for fall community

Strategic Priority: Continue to strengthen staff compensation and benefits

Action steps:

- Director will present on her research this week, **Director will send a presentation and we will discuss this in depth on Saturday at our strategic meeting.**

Strategic Priority: A clear and transparent view of our finances that allows the Board to make strategic decisions

- Feeling caught up, clear view. Can now move onto assessing use of reserves, budgeting more realistically, etc. **Our financial statement ending July 31st (fiscal year is August 1- July 31) shows a clear picture of our finances and how we have historically spent money, so we can use that information to develop a budget for next year.**

Strategic Priority: Expansion and increased enrollment

Action steps:

- Toddler committee update **Planning to present a full action item/plan at the next Board meeting to gain feedback and discuss next steps**
 - Space sharing
 - Status of doors and fence **(see above for notes on door; everything is on target for both the doors and the fence are currently on track)**
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Operational Board tasks (8:30-8:45)

- Vote on Ricardo McCurley's nomination to the Board **Completed earlier in meeting**
- August 21st Strategic Planning Meeting
 - Kate will send agenda for review
 - **Planning for now to be in person at Heartwood and will have a Zoom option available.**
- Revisions to proposed budget - just adding enrollments to revenue currently
- Parent handbook- up for approval/vote at this meeting
 - Appreciate the input. A few comments to review that involve the parking lot and potential liability waiver
 - **Discussion about pick-up window for extended day and adding language that parents can arrange earlier pick up with the teacher; Keith suggested adding image to end of parent handbook that depicts use of shared space**
 - **Vote to approve handbook, motion passes at 9:16 PM**
- Annual Report - **Tabled until next meeting when Melissa and AmberJean will bring a draft of it to Board**
 - Still aiming to have one out this fall? Need to add financials, and request Board feedback. Most of the Annual Report is done.
 - Could have a 2-year report.
- Google Drive cleanup - tabled for now

August Board Task List:

- Register for Give to the Max Day(?) **We need someone to register us and will need to decide our focus for the campaign. We also need to create a Board matching fund. Melissa, Corinne and Caitlin will work on the campaign together. Caitlin will look into registering us.**
- Vote to approve Employee Handbook updates: **Will likely update this after benefits discussion on Saturday. Emily will update and send via email for Board members to review and vote electronically on.**
- Back-to-School Night (orientation) **Kate and Emily have been working on the content of this. Current plan is for families to spread out around the grounds, then have an update from Emily on the school year and then families will meet with their pods/teachers and**

then a quick walk-through of the space. Date is 9/2/21. We will aim to have a Board member at each pod orientation.

Committee Updates (8:45-8:50)

- Treasurer's update / Finance Committee
- Executive Committee
- Community Engagement Committee (Caitlin, Ashley)
 - Expectations for fundraising goals
- Toddler Environment Committee (Corinne)
- Building & Grounds Committee (Keith)
 - Consider: Soil testing for future (UMN does testing) - Kate can send proposal
 - Request to have church landscaping looked at and review playground
 - Keith and Emily will connect offline on this issue

Add to agenda for next meeting:

Adjourn 9:38 PM