



Approved September 17, 2015
Revised and Approved January 21, 2016

August 20, 2015, 5:30 p.m.

Fort Collins Montessori School Board Meeting Minutes

Present:

Board Members - John Sanderson, President; Lorie Federman, Vice President; Eric Danielson, Treasurer; Nicole Sizemore, Secretary

Ex Officio Board Members - Frank Vincent, Head of School

Community Members - Veronica Estelle

Absent:

Board Members: Emily Paris-McNivon

Ex Officio Board Member - Amber Nipp, Board Faculty Representative

5:30 – 5:35 Welcome and Reading of Vision, Mission and Values

Mr. Sanderson started by reading the mission and vision and then took one element of the values to reflect on. Mr. Sanderson reflected on this value.

Value today: In order to exemplify these values, we must: be compelled by integrity, cooperation, collaboration, compassion and, service to others.

5:35 – 5:40 Review and approve agenda (Vote).

Motion: *The FCMS Board hereby adopts the August 20, 2015 agenda.*

Motion by: Mrs. Sizemore

Comment: none

Seconded: Ms. Federman

Vote: All in favor, Motion passes

5:40 – 5:50 Public Comment - No comments

5:50-5:55 Consent Agenda: Board members will be asked if they wish to discuss any items listed on the Consent Agenda. If so, these items will be moved from the Consent Agenda and placed under Items for Action. Items remaining on the Consent Agenda will be voted on together, pursuant to the following motion: "I move that the Board approve and adopt the recommended actions for the items on the consent agenda."

Mr. Sanderson asked if any members wanted to move items out of the consent agenda for discussion. Mrs. Sizemore asked to discuss the HOS contract item and Mr. Daniels asked to discuss the Teacher Spending item.

- **Board membership process – revised July 16, 2015.** The FCMS board originally adopted this policy in April. The Board President made minor clarifying revisions based on experiences while we were making the most recent additions to the board. The most important revision was noting that the status of the board members (community member or parent representative) is based on their status at the time of election to the board, but if a community member becomes a school parent, their term will end in May and if he/she seeks re-election it must be through the parent representative process.

Attachment: Board membership process ver. July 16, 2015.

Recommended action: *Adopt the Board Membership Process ver. July 16, 2015*

- **Tuition and Fee Reduction Policy.** As the FCMS Administration began trying to apply our newly adopted Tuition and Fee Reduction Policy, they learned that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has issued policy prohibiting the use of the Application for Free and Reduced Price Meals for any other programs in schools that do not participate in the federal child nutrition programs. The Colorado Department of Education has developed Colorado Department of Education has developed a Family Economic Data Survey (FEDS) form as an alternative data collection instrument. We have modified the policy to based tuition and fee reduction on the FEDS.

Attachment: Revised Tuition and Fee Reduction Policy.

Recommended action: *Adopt the revised Tuition and Fee Reduction Policy that reflects the use of a Family Economic Data Survey as the standard for qualification.*

- **Meeting minutes**

Recommended action: *Adopt the minutes from the July 16, 2015 FCMS Board meeting.*

Mrs. Sizemore clarified that formatting changes were made to the draft to be in line with Robert's Rules in how we refer to board members and formatted the document further to make sure there were no odd breaks in the document.

Attachments: FCMS Board Minutes July 16, 2015 FINAL.

Motion: *The board approve and adopt the recommended actions for the items remaining in the consent agenda*

Motion: Mr. Sanderson

Seconded: Ms. Federman

Comments: None

Vote: All in favor, motion passes unanimously

Discussion of Item removed from Consent Agenda:

- **HOS contract.** The contract for school year 2015-2016 (FY2016) is similar to last year's, with a few minor adjustments in language, and the pay increase approved by the board in the FY16 budget.

Attachment: FY16 HOS contract.

Mrs. Sizemore explained she was not part of the board last year and did not know what the HOS work agreement or job description for last year was. She asked if Mr. Sanderson could explain why there was a change from 220 work days to 209 work days. Is this the typical amount of days a HOS works in the district?

Mr. Sanderson explained the changes. The reason that changed was because Mr. Vincent pointed out that he is not paid as well. He took a substantial pay cut when he moved here so it is an acknowledgement of the lower pay. With that lower pay and lower number of days Mr. Sanderson believes it is appropriate because of the size of the school.

Mr. Vincent mentioned we have Jessica Knight on staff so for the summer time it is not as essential to have those work days. She is there in the office.

He agreed to the 220 last year because the first year needed more start up work (facilities and start up). Mr. Sanderson and Mr. Vincent had talked about moving to a lower number of days. Mr. Vincent feels he needs the time and it affected his abilities to persevere last year. Mr. Vincent said this is typically a negotiable thing in a charter school so that is what Mr. Vincent requested.

Mr. Sanderson explained it doesn't mean much during the year (the reduction in days) Mr. Sanderson pointed out (and he wants this on the agenda for the next meeting) we wanted to get this contract in place and associated with the contract is going to be a set of specific mostly quantitative goals that we are going to develop for HOS and Mr. Sanderson and HOS will work on that. Mr. Sanderson welcomes input from the rest of the board. These will be a relatively discrete set of goals but that are measurable (enrollment, parent satisfaction, some academics, finances and so on).

Motion: *That FCMS Approve the FY16 Head of School contract amended on section 5.4 to read 209 days.*

Motion: Ms. Federman

Comment: none

Second: Mr. Danielson

Vote: Motion passes unanimously

5:55 – 6:05 Enrollment (Presentation by Head of School and Vote)

Attachment: Current Enrollment as of 8-13-2015.

Fort Collins Montessori School

April 15, 2015 enrollment numbers to accompany the FY2016 budget.

| Max Enrollment | <u>Current</u> | | Waiting | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| 2015-16 | | | | | | |
| P3-10 | P-3 F= 2 | } 3 | 5 | P-3 F= 2 | } 5 | 1 |
| | P-3 H= 1 | | | P-4 H= 1 | | |
| P4-14 | P-4 F= 13 | } 16 | 15 | P-4 F= 7 | } 8 | 10 |
| | P-4 H= 4 | | | P-4 H= 0 | | |
| K-16 | K-F= 13 | } 14 | 16 | K-F= 20 | } 20 | 19 |
| | K-H= 2 | | | K-H= 2 | | |
| Cap: Primary = 40 | Total 35 | | 36 | Total 32 | | |
| G1-13 | G1= 13 | 13 | 14 | G1= 7 | 12 | 8 |
| G2- 17 | G2= 17 | 17 | 16 | G2= 6 | 7 | 8 |
| G3- 11 | G3= 11 | 11 | 11 | G3= 1 | 1 | 2 |
| G4- 6 | G4= 6 | 6 | 6 | G4= 4 | 4 | 5 |
| | G5= 0 | | | G5= 0 | | |
| | G6= 0 | | | G6= 0 | | |
| Cap: Elementary = 47 | Total 47 | | | Total 18 | | 25 total |

**Numbers in RED are the numbers given by Jessica Knight. These are the numbers as of 7/16/2015.*

**Numbers in BLUE are the numbers given by Mr. Vincent. These are the numbers as of 8/20/2015.*

As of 8/20/15, the breakdown for preschool is as follows: 3 yr. olds (3 full day, 2 half day), 4 year olds (13 full day, 2 half day), K (13 full day, 3 half day).

Mr. Sanderson explained enrollment drives everything. It is very important and at the same time all school administrators struggle with balancing classroom populations but it is extremely important in the Montessori element because of the mixed age context. And within that mixed age context we need to have a close balance around the ages.

Mr. Vincent explained that most families of 3 year olds don't want to go to a preschool program 5 days a week. At some point, maybe in a week or so, we need to move on to getting 4 year olds instead of 3 year olds. We are getting a little more interest for 3 year olds right now and because the environments weren't set up before and people want to see the place before signing up for the school.

Mr. Sanderson explained to board members who were not here last year that last year they saw an increase in enrollment after the school opened. So we could wait a bit here too.

Mr. Vincent gave the new enrollment and wait list numbers. Mrs. Sizemore mentioned that there was some discrepancy between the numbers of enrolled and the caps per class.

Mr. Sanderson said he had made an Ad Hoc decision to give Frank flexibility in filling open elementary spots; Mr. Sanderson consulted with Ms. Federman. He mentioned the questions should have been discussed with the entire board.

Mr. Vincent made an enrollment decision based on priority requirements as listed on the website. Mrs. Sizemore asked if sibling priority should be extended to students applying for the public side of FCMS if the sibling they were basing the priority on was a preschooler. Mrs. Sizemore referenced the PSD meeting where the PSD board was concerned that people would have priority because they are paying in preschool. The PSD Board thought this would make it unfair for families that could not afford to send their kids to preschool but that still wanted to attend the public part of the Montessori charter school. Mrs. Sizemore was concerned about the appropriateness and legality of the process.

There were questions regarding why it would be different if the sibling was in preschool or in the public part of the program. It was agreed all around that the process did not seem clear and that we needed more information to make sure the enrollment had been done properly.

There was some discussion as to how sibling priority worked (upwards, downwards, or both). There was some discussion as to what language was on the website regarding enrollment during open enrollment (December 2014). The enrollment page on the website at the time of the meeting did not clarify how sibling priority worked in regards to the discussion at hand. Mr. Sanderson will contact KC Terry to see what information had been on the website during open enrollment.

The Board looked at the website and what is currently there regarding enrollment. The Board also looked through the charter to see if there were more details.

The board concluded the following:

- The Enrollment Policy must be updated because there is some ambiguity.
- The Enrollment Policy has to be consistent.
- We need to reconcile the language in the policy.
- We need to consult the attorney if we will rescind that offer.
- We need legal advice before any further action is taken.

Action Items:

- We need to revisit our policy - that should be reflected in a policy document that we all agree on and it is translated faithfully to all other places (handbook, website, etc) and in the revisiting there are 2 issues we have to reconcile 1. We cannot give preference to a public student based on a preschool sibling and 2. We don't want to give preference to an older sibling because that becomes pedagogical problematically.
- Mr. Sanderson will try to get in touch with Bill Bethky – he will send a note tonight – if in his opinion we will get in big trouble if we don't rescind our offer (or do).

No action was taken on this item.

6:05-6:20 FCMS curriculum vs. Colorado Academic Standards: report and implications (Presentation by Head of School and Discussion)

Mr. Vincent said that the teachers have developed the co academic standards and did a comparison with Montessori materials. Anywhere there were no Montessori materials for those standards they inserted activities that would fill the standards (done primary and lower elementary) Mr. Vincent said they would review the curriculum information in January.

This information is not on the website because we paid people to do it and if someone wants to see it we can select who we share it with them. Mr. Sanderson said that it was conflict of interest and had to be disclosed. Mr. Vincent did not see how it was a conflict of interest because they are employees. Mr. Sanderson explained that it was that very same reason that made it a conflict of interest. Mr. Sanderson has no doubt that the teachers were a perfect choice in selecting who to do this work, but that it needed to be disclose in the conflict of interest clause because the teachers are employees and we paid them to perform a work. Mr. Sanderson wants to disclose that. Mr. Vincent said he did not know how we would disclose it. Mr. Sanderson explained that annually in the charter we commit to a conflict of interest disclosure. The staff needs to fill these out again and put that information in there. Mr. Sanderson was very clear that we need ot disclose that and all board members and employees should fill those forms out to make them current this year. He explained that any employee performing work outside of the scope of what they were originally hired to do, if there is a financial gain, then it has to be disclosed.

Action item: Get Conflict of Interest forms completed (Frank needs to get from teachers and staff and disclose the Colorado Academic Standard Alignments).

6:30 – 6:50 Financial Report and Annual Audit (Mr. Danielson, presentation; guests are Sarah-Gennie Collazio, Conscious Accounting LLC, and John Cutler, John Cutler & Associates, LLC)

Consent Agenda Item Moved Here:

Teacher spending. This item is a part of the revision to our financial policy that we need to make soon. This specific element needs clarification so that teachers know how much discretionary funding they have available for the classroom.

Recommended action: *Establish classroom discretionary spending policy—to be later incorporated into the broader FCMS Financial Policy—as follows: “Each teacher shall have \$500 allocated for classroom purchases to be spent at his/her discretion. Purchases must be preapproved by the Administration, and should be made with a school credit card, purchase order, or check obtained from the Office Manager. All purchases must avoid taxes where possible by using FCMS’s tax exempt status. Receipts for all purchases must be turned into the Office Manager.”*

Mr. Danielson recommends that he board set a budget for the year. Mr. Danielson believes it seems like an overreach of the board to allocate specific amounts to each teacher. We have a budget line item of \$2700 for supplies. Mr. Danielson recommends that we leave it to the HOS to approve spending. Teachers will submit proposals and HOS will approve.

Mr. Sanderson said we need to revisit the draft financial policy. He will get together with Mr. Danielson and HOS because a final financial policy needs to be in place. At that point they’ll revisit the guidelines that HOS has to live within. There will be additional question as to how we strike the balance. Financial governance is part of our, the boards’, work but we don’t want to be too prescriptive.

No action taken on this item.

Financial Report and Annual Audit Discussion:

Mr. Danielson was going to make a call to John Cutler but since our items have gone longer, we were not able to reach Mr. Cutler at his office. Mr. Danielson will call him and ask for an overview of the entire auditing process.

Mr. Danielson met with Sarah-Gennie. Primarily she will work with the audit and staff. In terms of Financials for July – no concerns, just a few clarifying questions. We need to close transactions the 10th of every month. Mr. Vincent says she has to agree to it because we cannot operate the way we have in the past. They will talk to Sarah-Gennie to make sure financials are done following an earlier deadline – this will allow us to have financials available with enough time before our meetings.

Attachment: July 2015 monthly financial reports.

State law requires that we conduct a financial audit each year. After a quick review of FY15 and current financials, we will learn how the audit will be conducted and what to expect.

6:50-7:05 Annual Report (Discussion, Mr. Vincent and Ms. Federman)

Mrs. Sizemore commented that during the July meeting, Jessica told us Mr. Vincent had been researching different reports. Mrs. Sizemore went home and did the same to know what to expect from the report. From what she has seen, the report other school have are displayed on their websites and are very detailed. Mrs. Sizemore wanted to know if we could we make our more detailed. Mr. Vincent mentioned he had put together this document to see what the board thought of the information that was on there. He wanted to know if the board wanted to see anything else in the report other than the areas they had mentioned prior to him giving this draft. Mrs. Sizemore envisions a 10-20 page document with our mission, vision, values, staff information, highlights from the year, a message from the HOS and an update on the direction the school is going.

Mr. Sanderson wants to know who the audience is and what we are trying to achieve. From his part this is a fully public document and one we have to put our very best face forward and this is the one where if someone wants to know about our school we can hand them a copy and it should have beautiful pictures – it's a marketing/sales item. There is a difference between this report and the SAC report Ms. Federman is preparing with the parent satisfaction survey. We don't post that prominently on the webpage. Have a plan to see this at the next board

Ms. Federman asked Mrs. Sizemore if she could send the board and HOS the best three reports she had seen online.

Mrs. Sizemore shared some of the information she had seen while researching reports. Mr. Sanderson said that most of the information Mrs. Sizemore mentioned is readily available.

Ms. Federman thinks it needs to focus on the inaugural year. Shorter is better. She does think it can be 'beefed up'. At least one page on parent satisfaction survey.

Mr. Vincent mentioned he saw a bunch, from '1 pagers' to lengthier ones. Mr. Vincent mentioned that if he were looking for a school, these were the highlights. That is how he came up with his list. Mr. Sanderson thinks the content is really good but it is very sparse. Mrs. Sizemore pointed out that the mission, vision and values must be there.

Ms. Federman asked if all our teachers had masters degrees. Mr. Vincent said that when the hiring was originally done he was under the impression they all had masters but one does not.

Mr. Sanderson asked about the testing results. Mr. Vincent said all we have are Montessori monitoring

results We don't have the PARC results yet. Mrs. Sizemore asked if DIBELS could be included - Put asterisk under it saying inaugural year, there's no standardized results yet but we do standardized testing. Mr. Sanderson asked Mr. Vincent if he was the project lead. Mr. Vincent said he thinks so. Mr. Sanderson asked when we want this by. Ms. Federman said Ms. Eaton said parents were anxious to see the results of the parent satisfaction survey. Mr. Vincent said that if he were to add more information the report would still have the same look. Mrs. Sizemore suggested we pay someone to do it. Mr. Sanderson asked Mrs. Sizemore if she knew anyone. Mrs. Sizemore said she would personally recommend Alexa Croft, a parent who has already done a lot of work for the school for free. She knows the school and produces great work. Mrs. Sizemore did say that she wanted to make sure it was not a conflict of interest that she recommend a friend. Mr. Sanderson said it was not, Mrs. Sizemore is not receiving any financial benefit from it. It was concluded that the following items should be present in the report:

- Message from head of school
- Message from John
- Mission vision values
- Pictures (must have permission to use)
- We must provide comments – send comments by end of Monday – Nicole will send out 3 links to reports she liked in the next day

Mrs. Sizemore will get a quote from Alexa Croft.

7:05 – 7:25 Executive session (Presentation and Discussion; Guest: Ronnie Estelle, Chair of the FCMS Facilities Committee)

Mrs. Sanderson reminded all about what can go in executive session among the topics are negotiations around real estate and Veronica Estelle is the chair of the facilities committee and she has been doing a lot of work on find a place. Mr. Sanderson explained executive sessions are not part of the minutes. They must be recorded and the recording must be kept for 90 days. Mr. Danielson will be recording it and sending the recording to Mrs. Sizemore, custodian of all minutes/recordings.

Motion: *I move that the FCMS goes into executive session to discuss the status of our facilities search including prospective locations and financing*

Motion: Mr. Sanderson

Second: Mr. Danielson

Comment: None

Vote: All in favor – motion passes unanimously

Out of executive session

Motion: *The FCMS Board approve \$5000 for a new budget item to support our search for our facility.*

Motion: Mr. Sanderson

Seconded: Ms. Federman

Comment: None

Vote: all in favor – passes unanimously

7:25-7:30 Conclude meeting

Motion: *The FCMS Board moves to adjourn the August 20, 2015 board meeting.*

Motion by: Mrs. Sizemore

Seconded: Mr. Sanderson

Comments: None

Vote: all in favor – passes unanimously

Respectfully Submitted by Nicole Sizemore