



**October 15, 2015, 5:30 p.m.
Meeting Minutes**

Fort Collins Montessori School Board

Present: 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, Facilities Committee; Jessica Johnson, Director of Policy and Legal Initiatives, Colorado League of Charter Schools; Tiffany Kallevik, Director of Member Business Services, Colorado League of Charter Schools; Brian Majeski, Architect, Principal @ urban | rural design Annah Moore, Realtor, Realtec C.R.E.S.I.; Room full of parents and teachers

Mr. Sanderson explained to the audience how the meeting would take place and handed out comment papers for those in the room. Mr. Sanderson asked Ms. Federman to be timekeeper for the meeting.

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

Mr. Vincent read the Vision, Mission and Values.

5:35-5:40 Consent Agenda

Mr. Sanderson asked if any members wanted to pull off items from the consent agenda. No items were pulled.

Motion: *I move that the Board approve and adopt the recommended actions for the items on the consent agenda.*

Made by: Mr. Danielson

Seconded by: Mrs. Sizemore

Comment: None

Vote: All in favor, passes unanimously

5:40 – 5:50 Community Comment

Veronica Estelle commented –Her parent teacher conferences was today and she was very impressed with Ms. Schiller. She shared so many beautiful observations. She has never received that kind of insight into her child.

5:50-6:50 Facilities Special Session

Invited guests:

Jessica Johnson, Director of Policy and Legal Initiatives, Colorado League of Charter Schools
Tiffany Kallevik, Director of Member Business Services, Colorado League of Charter Schools
Brian Majeski, Architect, Principal @ urban | rural design
Annah Moore, Realtor, Realtec C.R.E.S.I.
Ronnie Estelle, Chair, FCMS Facilities Committee

Mr. Sanderson opened this session by explaining that facilities is one of the two main issues faced by charter schools. The other big challenge is finances generally. Mr. Sanderson mentioned the guest speakers and their background. After some introductions, Mr. Sanderson turned the floor over to Veronica Estelle.

Veronica Estelle introduced herself and gave another short introduction of the guests and explained their roles regarding finding facilities.

Tiffany Kallevik and Jessica Johnson began the discussion. They work with charter schools, specifically in facilities search from conception to completion. Traditional school districts are not required to give charter schools land, funding or buildings. Typically charter schools are doing it all by themselves.

- Tiffany Kallevik and Jessica Johnson recommend having a facilities committee.
- Typical challenges: Acquisition (finding suitable space). Charter schools are typically renting the first 0-5 years while saving money to make a capital campaign and then be able to get their permanent facility.
- Funding sources: typical loans (banks), bonds, CDFIs, capital campaigns, fundraising, grants.
- Traditionally for bonds, schools under 400 kids – it doesn't make sense.
- CDFIs; social lenders – they're looking for underserved minorities.
- Tiffany Kallevik mentioned that FCMS is a public entity and that carries a lot of different things you have to be aware of. You are under the microscope a lot. You have to be very diligent about showing that you are taking a duty of care. Veronica Estelle is leading the charge in that sense as well.
- A school our size no more than 15-18% - the amount for facility (financials)
- Jessica Johnson mentioned TABOR requirements and explained a bit of how it works.
- Charter schools need to be creative about how they find facilities.
- Because you are a public entity, you are constantly 'under a flashlight'. Having documentation to back up any choices that you make is important. You want everything to be in writing anyways

- Both Tiffany Kallevik and Jessica Johnson asked the board to be diligent in the projections. The league has worksheets to help with this. You should be conservative in the budgeting.

Annah Moore, Realtor – Introduced herself and gave short background. Gave a quick overview of how the commercial market works. For commercial – typically it would be a 3-5 year lease. She explained what landlords are looking for financially.

Mr. Sanderson explained what TABOR law is.

- Annah Moore, Realtor – Spoke about renovations – even if the school pays for renovations, in the even the school terminated a lease, the landlord not only has to face not getting the rental income but they also need to pay to get the building back the way they need it in order to lease again.
- Proximity to outdoor play is challenging.
- Annah Moore, Realtor, recalls beginning work with Veronica Estelle around February 2014

Brian Majeski, Architect – Introduced himself. His business partner is present at the meeting as well. He is on the board of the Food Coop. It is good to bring architects in early (and engineers). The bigger things are the risks. We need to find those risks and figure out how to mitigate them. Brian Majeski described all the areas he looks at when they go visit buildings. Architecture, Engineering and construction all combined.

- Veronica Estelle went to the Colorado League of Charter Schools' Summit.
- Started with 4 facilities from the work that the realtor, the architect and Veronica Estelle had outlined.
- PSD – went through this list. PSD is more than happy to help with information regarding flood zones, modular, etc. They have not agreed to let us use the Fullana Center. PSD has been clear that they do not extend help regarding use of facilities to charter schools.
- Mr. Sanderson explained PSD will most likely include a bond measure, they have opened the door to the possible participation of charter schools. PSD has invited us to be part of the planning for that ballot initiative. There is no guarantee that we will be on the measure, but we may be coming back to you, parents, later to ask for support.
- Jessica Johnson from CO League of Charter Schools explained that legally, PSD has to invite charter schools to be part of this. It is very important to get together and mobilize your community.
- Commercial Lease – the realtor sends Veronica Estelle, every month, the commercial listings in town. Veronica Estelle works through it and chooses which could work for us. We also need to consider previous uses of potential buildings/locations (toxic chemicals).
- Temporary arrangements: CSURF (CSU realtor foundation). They will not lease Elderhouse to us.

- PVHS (Poudre Valley Health Services) they were willing to lease. Veronica Estelle got in on the ticket but it wasn't feasible because of the amount of renovations it would have taken.
- City of Fort Collins – we have a number of parents that keep an ear out for us. We are putting our name on the trolley building.
- Churches – the facilities committee formed a sub-committee and they've visited about 50 churches in town. Lori Nitzel discussed church search committee searches. We do have a short list of churches that will work. The problem is that non of them will fit the entire school.
- Veronica Estelle thanked the church committee (by name)
- Purchase – long term, either purchase a building or purchase land and build around. We have a couple of things here, promising things, but we have to work out the finances.
- It has been prudent for us financially being in a church. Our lease here is \$50K a year. Total facilities percentages is somewhere about 12% for us in the 1st 2 years.
- We are looking at potentially splitting the school the next 2 years. PreK and Kindergarten will go to another church. Elementary would stay here. Veronica Estelle described a potential church; she has been working with all different departments and agencies for this facility.
- We need to hire a financial analyst.
- We need to work with a planning consultant to build a master plan.
- Veronica Estelle finished her presentation and moved into the Q&A part of the session.

Q&A Session

- Veronica Estelle - had a question for Jessica Johnson and Tiffany Kallevik – she wanted to understand the labor issue – Jessica Johnson and Tiffany Kallevik explained some Labor restrictions.
- Parent question: Is anyone soliciting landowners for land donations? Veronica Estelle answered that we have not done this yet. Although free land can be great, free is never free.
- Architect recommended creating a site committee.
- A parent that has a GIS degree volunteered to help look through properties and be part of a site committee.
- Jenn Cicora – asked if we have to stay within the City of Fort Collins. Veronica Estelle said that we are we are looking to serve the North part of Fort Collins. We don't want to locate to the South. We want to try to stay Central to North Fort Collins.
- Mary Fisher – asked if we had you looked at old hotels. Realtor responded that all commercial properties that come on the market have been looked at.
- Laura Dustin – asked about if anyone had contacted the Coloradoan. Mrs. Sizemore answered that we have had a story run in there before, the person that was in charge of the Education Section Montessori educated and the board had discussed running another article in a previous meeting. Veronica Estelle added that if anyone wanted to write a story, they should let her know and she will pursue it.
- Parent question– are there any new developments that we could get in on? Veronica Estelle answered – Bucking Horse, not long after we submitted our application, they met with the developer and they were very interested in FCMS. The only place on the site they were willing to locate the school was within 300 feet of the massive power line and

power station and the site was already developed. It wasn't right. Over time it was going to be \$25/sq.ft.

- Building is \$125 a square foot for just a metal building. The realtor explained the cost; she thinks an existing building is the most cost efficient approach.
- Veronica Estelle mentioned she has also talked to churches because they have large plots of land. But again, the utilities delivery and what it would take to install those modulars is more than we can afford at this point. The cost would be about \$150K per modular. We are looking at 7 classrooms real soon. And that's not taking into account space for the administrative duties.
- Ryan Hanon – can we fit two modulars on the east side of the parking lot out here. Veronica Estelle explained that it is not just the cost of the modular. You have to take into account installing plumbing to it. We cannot afford this right now.
- Mary Fisher asked if the code says you have to have a bathroom within a certain distance.
- Xuejin Wang – Inquired about a timeline for next school year. Veronica Estelle explained that timeline and project management is really important. The facilities committee is making a recommendation to the board to bring on a planning consultant to help us lay this project out very systematically with a financial analyst assisting as well.
- Mr. Sanderson explained that our dream permanent facility is not going to happen next fall. We are looking at a temporary arrangement for a couple of years.
- Mary Fisher asked if PSD would have more control over our curriculum if we had more help. The answer was - No – they would have control over the facility but not curriculum.
- Xuejin Wang– Asked about classroom sizes. Veronica Estelle answered – a facility about 17K feet (to fit the entire school up to 9th grade). For next school year we would add 2 classrooms (1 primary and 1 upper elementary).
- Ben Malouf– Asked if we are we more or less guaranteed the spot here.
- Betsy Rinehart– Asked - would next year's plan get us through 9th grade. Veronica Estelle said we could stay here, in our current location, until 6th grade.
- Laura Dustin – Asked/Commented - worst case scenario, we fall back to the other churches on the list.
- Ocean Engen– Asked - is there the possibility to flip flop with the other church? Veronica Estelle said because of all the licensing, etc., this would not work.
- Mary Fisher – asked if we could clone this – have both primary and elementary in the other church.
- Mrs. Sizemore pointed out that kids should be staying with the same teacher for 3 years so this may not work out.
- Mr. Vincent explained that once we get the site, we can get into all that has to do with licensing, etc.
- Katy Spiller – mentioned they have a primary in a nursing home in England.
- Sabrina Stewart– Inquired about an old nursing home in east Stewart. They use it as a storage facility. Veronica Estelle asked her to send the address.

Mr. Sanderson thanked all the guests and parents and asked people put their passion for Montessori on display.

6:50 – 7:00 Financial Report

- **PSD bond committee-outcomes of first meeting and expectations going forward**

Mr. Danielson attended the introductory meeting looking at the bond measure in 2016. PSD is giving charter schools one seat. We need to speak in a unified voice as charter schools. Patrick Albright will be our one seat in the PSD planning committee for this measure. The 4 of them will be meeting probably about once a month. The immediate action items for us – sit down with facilities and know where we want to be in 5 years. We want to start with the big dream picture. We need to know what our current square footage is and number of families projected. We need to know what facilities we need or want in the next 5-10 years. Mr. Sanderson said we are getting there; it requires more work (the document). The committee for the bond measure will be rotating to each of the different charter schools so everyone can see the facilities. Everyone is welcome to come and observe. All can also attend PSD board meetings.

Mr. Sanderson asked Mr. Danielson to share all the document he had shared with Mr. Sanderson. Veronica Estelle and Mr. Sanderson met with Todd Lambert a couple of weeks ago about a different issue, but Mr. Lambert brought up the bond measure during the meeting. Mr. Lambert said two things: event though PSD is required to have at least one charter school representative on the bond measure, Mr. Lambert is going to invite all of the charter school to have a representative. Mrs. Sizemore suggested that instead of having just one representative, the charter schools take advantage of having each a seat but still keep Mr. Albright as our speaker to show we stand together but have numbers.

The less encouraging information was that Mr. Lambert was very clear that the PSD schools are going to have a piece of the bond measure that is huge and charter schools will have a piece that is very small. There might be a bond measure, most certainly mill levy and Mr. Lambert thought that we, as a school, would want to think about a mill levy.

Mrs. Sizemore asked if we could do both. Mr. Sanderson said that possible, that nothing is off the table. Mr. Lambert was inquiring as to what FCMS wanted to do. The mill levy would be on the ballot for next fall. Mr. Lambert will be sending something out to all charter schools, although as of today, nothing has gone out yet.

- **End-of-FY15 status, including audit results**

Sarah Gennie Collazo should have the end of the audit results by tomorrow, next Wednesday at the absolute latest. There will be adjustments to the CDE adjustments/expenses. Once she has those, Ms. Collazo wants to sit down and talk through all of those.

As a board, if we are making spending changes or approving expenses for facilities search, we have to be more diligent about creating an amended budget.

Financials, for the close of last month – no huge concerns when we're looking at where we are based on the budget at this point in the year. Donations is one item we are far behind. Mr. Vincent said we are moving to the CDE reporting system. Mr. Vincent will meet with Ms. Collazo and Jessica Knight every week and Mr. Danielson will come as often as he can. The money that comes from CDE in our grant, we should have a line with '0' in that the CDE is covering now. Mrs. Sizemore asked, regarding donations, if

we could count in-kind donations, we have parents donating many items as well as time as substitutes and extra curricular help. Mr. Danielson said probably not.

- **Repayment of Loans.**

There are new loan repayment schedules that will not crush the school in terms of cash and will begin to pay back the amounts owed.

Motion: *We approve re-payment of the loans entered into on March 19, 2014 between Lori Federman and the Fort Collins Montessori School and on March 27, 2014 between John Sanderson and Fort Collins Montessori School. Repayment will be made per the schedules prepared by our Board Treasurer and agreed to by the lenders.*

Motion by: Mr. Danielson

Seconded: Mrs. Sizemore

Comment: Mr. Sanderson and Ms. Federman recused themselves from voting.

Vote: Mr. Ericson and Mrs. Sizemore are in agreement, motion passes.

7:00-7:25 Head of School Report

- **Enrollment update**

Mr. Vincent read the current enrollment numbers. We had some students in and out just recently. We are looking at the likelihood of being full by Thanksgiving at the primary level. We have a couple more planning to enroll. There has been a surge of 3 year old interest, not sure why. There are three 4 year olds that are in process of enrollment. Mrs. Sizemore asked if we were doing anything to reach out to three year olds.

- **Marketing plan to promote enrollment for fall 2016, which includes an additional Primary room Report on after-school extra-curriculars program**

Mr. Vincent expressed that the best way to find out how to market to parents is to ask the people who are in the school how they found out about the school. Jessica Knight and Mr. Vincent will put together a survey of currently enrolled parents, including what factors parents feel are most important in choosing a school. FCMS participated in the 'Be Ready Fair', FCMS will be participating in 'Treatsylvania', FCMS did open house events, FCMS is inviting parents to come to parent education nights. Mr. Vincent also mentioned the following events: Kites in the park, 4th of July parade. Mr. Vincent is going to PSD principal meetings because it keep FCMS out in the public school mind. FCMS will continue doing tours. Mr. Vincent said we need to continue these – there are 2 things that are really the most critical parts of the marketing work. Parents seeing the facilities, the tours, their understanding that we know what we're doing and then the other thing is, also, as we transition to another facility additionally we are going to have to make sure

people are comfortable with that. The other part of the marketing plan is parents telling other people that we are here.

Mr. Sanderson added that If FCMS was going to be part of the PSD marketing materials, they would need that information now. Mr. Sanderson asked Mr. Vincent to reach out to PSD.

Mrs. Sizemore asked about advertising in the Recreator. An ad has already been created but the ad space was not renovated. The artwork is there if they need it.

- **Annual report (status and plans for completion)**

Mrs. Sizemore asked if she was back on this project. Mr. Vincent said that he would send materials over for Mrs. Sizemore to look over once he received them.

Mr. Vincent asked if he could call over Jessica Knight to speak about extra curriculars. Mr. Vincent reported in extra curriculars. Jessica Knight expressed that the money that they take in from extracurricular fees is not a revenue, that we have a surplus because of the before and after care program. Jessica Knight said that the revenue from before and after care helped bring in the extra curriculars. Jessica Knight showed the board numbers on the revenue/expenses

There needs to be a new line item to pay the extra curricular providers. The money cannot come from the 'consultants' line item because that would have to be a program offered to everyone in order to qualify for that line item expense.

7:25-7:40 School Accountability Committee Update

Annual Goals - The School Accountability Committee has drafted annual goals for Frank Vincent, Head of School, and has solicited input from Board members on these goals.

Motion: *The FCMS Board adopts the Annual Goals for our Head of School.*

Motion by: Ms. Federman

Seconded by: Mr. Danielson

Comment: Mrs. Sizemore asked if there was a timeline attached to these goals. Ms. Federman said they were attached to the next survey, so by next open enrollment. Mr. Sanderson commented that last year they had performed the HOS evaluation late in the year. This we are probably sending out the parent survey in early February.

Vote: All in favor, passes unanimously.

7:40 – 7:55 Enrollment Policy

Mr. Sanderson has not been able to get our attorney to look at it. Mr. Sanderson spoke to Mr. Vincent and Jessica Knight about it for about 2 hours. Mr. Sanderson thinks this is much better; it is much clearer. We don't have our legal review of it yet. Mrs. Sizemore asked if we could call a special meeting to pass this. Mr. Vincent and Mr. Sanderson talked about Open Enrollment 1

and Open Enrollment 2 and Mr. Sanderson doesn't think it'll work but our attorney should be able to confirm. Mr. Sanderson is still thinking about this one.

Mr. Sanderson proposed that we don't make a motion on this tonight but if on reflection over this version you have any more comments, please let Mr. Sanderson know and he will let us know when he hears from the attorney.

7:55-8:00 Conclude meeting

Motion: *The FCMS Board moves to adjourn the October 15, 2015 board meeting.*

Motion by: Ms. Federman

Seconded: Mr. Danielson

Comment: None

Vote: All in favor, passes unanimously.