Wyoming Valley Montessori School Board Meeting

13 December  2018

Members in Attendance: Dennis Puhalla, Valeria Sartor, Erik Bielier, Monica Han, Wesley Woo, Salvatore Deluca, James Murphy, and Brian Stanchak

Absent Members: Justin Nordstrom, Eileen Sennett, Adrienne Asbury

Meeting was called to order at 6:10 PM

1. Salvatore Deluca made a motion to approve previous meeting’s minutes. Monica Han seconded the motion. All approved.

2. Dennis Puhalla presented the Head of School report.
   A. The fall learning together program was successful, so there is no need to have a winter one. “The Voyage” was attended by 5 families. The newsletter will be complete by the end of January, and there will be a follow up open house. We have 5 outside applications for next year. The intent to renew forms will be sent in back packs for after the break. The teachers are all renewing their contracts. An email will be sent out for sibling reenrollment.
   B. Completed Events include: Fall festival, Day of the Dead celebration, P/T conferences, Grandparent’s Day and The Holiday Concert.
   C. Two toddlers will be starting in January, raising total enrollment to 127. There is some room in the Primary classrooms. Toddler is at 19, Primary is at 17, Lower El is at full capacity at 30. If the numbers go up, another certified teacher will be needed. Upper El is at 27. There is a potential of having 45 students in Lower El if everyone returns, and 28 in Upper El. Not many repairs have been done. The new windows have had a positive effect on the Primary classrooms. The computer lines are all in working order and there is positive feedback on the new fence.

3. Erik Bieler reported on behalf of Eileen Sennett for the Development Committee.
   A. The Capital Campaign is still in effect. Board needs to finalize on the direction of the campaign. The thought continues to be to tie the fundraising into the expansion of the school. The board is thinking of setting a $50K goal to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the school. Maybe starting a Facebook page to mobilize alumni would contribute to reaching the goal.
   B. The school is looking to have a spring event that differs from the gala, while taking components that were successful. The event needs to be more inclusive, potentially including community members.

4. James Murphy gave the Finance Committee update.
   A. The 403 B plan had a routine required amendment to keep the plan compliant. Wesley Woo proposed to go with the amendment and James Murphy seconded. The board approved the amendment.
B. The finances continue to be stable. Enrollment continues to be the driving force. The budget was set at 125 students, and the actual is 127.

C. EITC – The new administration wants to increase the fee to 5%, and the state is not allowing to write contributions off. The school received $31,000 last week (15K from Fidelity, 10K from NBT and 6K from PNC).

D. Expenses are all in line. The main difference is the annual campaign.

E. The finance committee is not prepared to produce a full budget. The financial aid percentage of tuition may change once we have the full budget. The budget has to be in line with ISM inflation, which is about 2%. The board voted on a 4% increase on tuition to allow more flexibility. James Murphy raised a motion to approve the increase and Wesley Woo seconded. Tuition costs would be approximately $10,300.

5. There was no Committee on Trustees report.

   A. The board discussed the $100K mezzanine expansion project vs. the $1.2M full on expansion.
   B. Chris Kang commented on the purchase of the building across the street, whose price tag is in between the two aforementioned options. What is the right price to attain and make necessary improvements? Chris Kang will contact the agent and see if we should rule out the possibility altogether.
   C. The choke in LE needs to be figured out. Is leasing space an option?
   D. Another option is to hand over our expansion budget to the architect and see what can be done for about $600K.
   E. It would be interesting to have a STEM lab and to tie the fundraising into this.

The meeting adjourned at 7:10PM.

Meeting minutes submitted by Valeria Sartor