

Minutes from VMA board meeting of July 18, 2017

Present: Alicia Chalmers, Chris Carle, Steve Lobel, Neil Phillips, Shannon Rohrer-Phillips, Cindy Day and Louis Parker

On the phone: Christine Schlesinger and Bill Johnston

Meeting started by Steve Lobel at 3:05 PM.

Motion was made by Chris Carle and seconded by Alicia Chalmers to approve the minutes of the June 13, 2017 Board Meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Neil walked the board through the positives and negatives of a C grade stressing that what we really need is a good comparison of schools with similar demographics across the state which will allow us to effectively deliver our message both to donors and prospective students. While a good jump from the previous F grades, staff is still not satisfied and they are convinced that they can get the grade higher.

Discussion ensued about leveraging the grade improvement momentum and returning quickly to prior donors who had taken a pause in giving during the previous grade rating, as well as communicating with loyal donors and even pitching new donors. The Board noted that this would help current cash flow.

The next subject discussed was enrollment. As of this date we have 66 boys returning. We are waiting to hear from another 12, of which 8 are likely to return, 3 are maybes and 1 is likely a no. The recruitment drive is being led by Dawnyelle and Tiffani with a little help from others. Mary Louise has been at Columbia finishing her thesis and as a result unable to help much this summer. Visits to VPK's and community centers, social media and fliers have been used to attract new students. The push for recruitment will continue. A disadvantage this year has been the move of the Parent Choice Office from a more proximate location to Palmetto. Transportation of children is always an issue and will need to be evaluated to determine what level of service makes sense.

Louis shared both cash flow and monthly expense numbers with the board. As always, a bigger cash balance to get through the lean summer months would be a help. Monthly expenses are currently about \$140,000. With conversation going back and forth about donations and accounting needs, Christine made the suggestion that in the future Shannon should present the Development Update in advance of the Financial Update and this was roundly applauded.

Shannon presented her Development Plan Goals for the year starting with a desire to attract 5 "Solar Society" donors currently at donations of 100K and raise them over future years as well as converting another 5 or 6 up to that level from current donors. This will provide a solid base of donations that ensures obtaining the goal. There are plans to spend serious time with our biggest donors and a list was reviewed. Other funds will be pursued from government entities, corporations and annual campaigns like Giving Challenge.

Another big piece of funding comes from events. This year an Oct/Nov lunch will be held. Another event in the Jan/Feb time frame could be held as well. Shine-On will also be held again and hopefully will attract new donors as well. Shannon presented a "team" to help her with this effort and the efforts of Melissa Morsli, Donna Koffman and others were lauded. As of now all these women are helping for free and there are hopes in the future that we can once again have a professional fund raiser on board. Shannon will do the grant writing necessary as well. Cindy suggested to Shannon that she might be able to get funding from the Community Foundation to provide assistance for this as well as to fund software that

could help our efforts become more efficient and effective. Other programs that have helped put VMA on the map like 2Gen will be continued and stressed.

Cindy and Neil discussed potential board candidates. There is a potential slate of 3 – 5 candidates that they and Bill will continue vetting with an objective of having 2 – 3 of them ready for Board approval at the September meeting. The Board provided guidance that the \$10,000 annual “give or get” commitment be maintained, with appropriate exceptions for Board members providing other essential perspectives. The Board also verbally certified that none of them were aware of any conflicts of interests with VMA and certified that all Board members should be reappointed for an additional year.

The Board also provided Neil with their alignment with the upcoming year’s schedule of Board meetings which will move the Budget approval to the May meeting rather than holding a special meeting in June. There was also discussion of possibly holding a retreat session sometime in the fall, which would allow focus on completion of the Strategic Plan and development of the corner property. Louis volunteered to take the lead on the approval of the charter extension which will be required before the end of this school year.

Meeting adjourned just before 5 PM.