

Minutes from VMA board meeting of 1/9/18

Present: Alicia Chalmers, Chris Carle, TJ Chitekwe, Bill Johnston, Steve Lobel and Roberto Villanueva

Absent: Christine Schlesinger

Staff: Neil Phillips, Shannon Rohrer-Phillips, Louis Parker, ML Berges and Cindy Day

Meeting called to order at 3:01 PM. Minutes from meeting of 11/14/17 approved unanimously with motion by Chris and second by Steve.

Principals report from ML Berges and Neil Phillips showed headcount at 97 and a net loss of 1 student (5 losses and 4 new enrollments) as we resume the school year. Attendance numbers are at a strong 94%, up from 91%. Team is shooting for a 96% goal.

The charter renewal process has been completed and the final report expected in the March timeframe. Remarks have been glowing and the interviews were excellent.

Q2 iReady testing will begin mid-January and be completed by the end of the month with a report due in early Feb. Fountas and Pinnel testing is roughly 60% complete and shows that 80% of the tested students are on track for 2 years of growth. Ms Berges will attend two professional development sessions and will share her findings with the teaching staff. Final iReady testing begins the 2nd week of April and lasts about a month. B scores are possible.

Neil met with each member of the staff and queried them on how things are going as well as their long term aspirations, particularly as teachers. Neil received some constructive criticisms and was happy with the exercise. The major complaint was about the facility which a new school house would solve. 8 police officers from the sheriff's department will begin mentoring our boys.

Based on the strong academic performance in the 2016 – 2017 school year, VMA will receive a \$9,600 bonus from the school district. Neil is working with the staff to determine the most appropriate method of distribution to the staff.

Roberto has been concerned about our technology and will lead an effort to upgrade. He is also looking at ways to make the site bilingual to attract more Spanish speaking parents.

On the development front \$388,593 was raised in the 2nd quarter compared to \$211,139 in the prior year. In addition to that were pledges of \$192,724. Charlotte Perret's \$150,000 challenge match was instrumental to the successful quarter. \$198,910 of funds were raised (collected funds + pledges) in response to the challenge grant,

ranging in large donations to many smaller donations in just 5 weeks' time. Charlotte's \$150,000 match is on top of an initial gift of \$100,000 in November. We cannot thank the Perret's enough for their generosity.

Voss and Associates have completed the first phase of their study by interviewing staff and stakeholders. Communication by the school is being studied and messaging needs to be enhanced. This study was sponsored by David Kotok and Christine Schlesinger and will be highly valued as we continue to grow the enrollment at VMA.

Updates were given on the Impact dinner and the upcoming Shine On events.

Shannon raised the issue of retaining Carter Group to do a feasibility study of our ability to do a Capital campaign. A 4-month study would begin shortly and hopefully lead to an additional year-long campaign to raise the necessary funds to build a new schoolhouse. The cost of the study is estimated to be \$30,000 and Shannon will raise additional funds to cover the cost. She has already raised \$10,000 toward this. After much discussion a motion was made by Bill and seconded by Alicia and was voted unanimously. The study will include interviewing both staff and large donors to the school.

David Kotok approached the school about the possibility of conducting a study of the School's parents on the impact of maximizing tax benefits in the new tax bill. The proposal would provide funds to provide tax preparation for parent participants. Data from the tax returns would be provided for the study on a confidential basis. There was some discussion on how best to safeguard privacy and the potential workload impact on staff to organize and administer the program, especially with other major tasks such as the Carter Group study. The sentiment was that we needed to reluctantly pass on the offer.

Louis covered the cash flow, with \$227,056 of available cash as of January 4, 2018. Discussion for future financial success was mostly centered around enrollment and the economies of scale. We must increase headcount at VMA and Ms Berges and other staff will be concentrating their efforts on this as the year progresses. A discussion about our visibility at other events was discussed and work will be done by Cindy and others to ensure this.

Cindy brought up increasing the size of this board and having a capital campaign committee ready for a possible campaign beginning later this year.

Meeting was adjourned at 5 PM.