

## **VMA Minutes May 9, 2017**

Present: Philip Brown, Chris Carle, Bill Johnston, Steve Lobel, Christine Schlesinger, Felice Schulaner, Neil Phillips, Shannon Rohrer Phillips, Cindy Day, and Louis Parker.

Absent: Alicia Chalmers

Meeting started at 3 PM.

Approval of minutes of the 3/14/17 Board meeting and telephonic Board meeting of 4/11/17. Motion by Phillip Brown and seconded by Christine Schlesinger. Vote unanimous.

### **Report by Neil Phillips**

FSA testing is in its last week with only 4th Grade ELA remaining. Could have the 3rd grade raw numbers later this week but there will not be a final school score until June or even July. Students were positive and enthusiastic after their tests but this is not necessarily an indicator of the scores. There was 100% attendance for testing. Third grade provides retention numbers for the district and is likely the reason why scores will be available earlier.

Discussion about staffing needs was followed with the need for a permanent 2nd Grade teacher as job has been filled by a temporary hire who has not met the school's standards for performance.

Neil discussed the 4 founders' decision to recommend K-5 for the school year beginning this fall. Discussion was had with the school board and their reaction seems positive. A motion was made by Philip Brown and seconded by Chris Carle to start the 2017/8 school year with K-5<sup>th</sup> grade offered. The plan to roll out this information to parents and students was brought up with numerous concerns about how to inform possible 22 students and their parents. Parents could likely have three different reactions to this move:

- Some likely to leave anyway (estimated to be 25% of impacted students)
- A group that should be okay with a decision of VMA not having 6-8th grades and not needing a lot of assistance with choosing a new school (estimated to be 25% of the impacted)
- A group who will need the most help from VMA staff in deciding what and where their children should attend in the upcoming school year (estimated to be 50% of impacted students)

Several of the teachers and staff will assist with this roll out. There was a great deal of discussion as to the order in which the roll out should take place and the Board recommended a detailed and choreographed communication plan and emphasized timeliness in communication. A letter from Neil will be sent to parents and phone calls will follow immediately.

Shannon mentioned that the school would continue to offer Success Programs to parents of departing children as part of a concerted "Bridge Concept" connecting all where possible. Peg and Cedric would also be used to meet with the principals of new schools chosen and act as

mentors where needed for the first year of this transition.

The Board asked Neil for an update on re-enrollment and recruiting. Neil indicated that a more detailed report would be provided in next month's Board meeting. Given the growing demographic, focus should be made to encouraging recruiting more Spanish speaking youths and that Diego Velasco (4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher) would be an invaluable asset. Concern about Mary Louisa's absence over the summer was raised and its potential impact on recruiting. The ideal stretch enrollment goal would be 120 students with two K and 1<sup>st</sup> grade classes each and one 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade class each, all consisting of 15 students per class. Enrollment has suffered over the last two years with the low grades on the FSA. The high number was 130 enrolled early in the 2015/16 school year. A better grade hopefully will change things and as parental decisions are generally made later in the summer, this could help as well. The Board emphasized to Neil that a detailed recruitment plan needs to be developed quickly to serve as a road map to focus efforts this summer.

### **Report of Louis Parker**

Louis Parker presented charts of both cash flow and monthly expense run rates. Current projections indicate that the School will complete the current fiscal year in a positive cash position. The Board requested that Louis share more granular financial projections of cash position between the end of the fiscal year and the beginning of the school year, provided no additional funds were generated in the summer. This information was requested to be provided as follow-up to this meeting.

Louis was asked to provide budgets for enrollment numbers of 70 (worst case) to 120 (best case) in the next Board meeting, with a most likely scenario somewhere between 100 and 115 students.

### **Report of Shannon Rohrer Phillips**

Shannon provided a spreadsheet on the Shine On event with rave reviews for the two co-chairs as well as staff and volunteers who gave generously of their time. A bottom line in excess of \$305K with a few checks continuing to roll in and expenses of less than 15% (20% was the target) were lauded by all. A fall event, possibly a luncheon was mentioned. The generosity of those who offered matching gifts and those who offered dinners was recognized. The ability of the auctioneer to get people to pledge funds for the match was praised.

Shannon commented on the success of 2Gen and other programs and better communication of all of these events was requested by the board. Cooking classes with Realize Bradenton and the Van Wezel event with the 2Gen parent theater troupe's production of "Breaking the chain" got rave reviews from Christine and outsiders as well.

Shannon went over existing requests for grants as well as potential new ones and all commented on the need for a part-time grant writer.

### **Report of Cindy Day**

Cindy provided some names of possible board members and concern over filling our two departing Board members. Cindy also advised that we also need to revise our committee structure and update names on all committees. The Board and Neil agreed that focus needed to be put on attracting new Board members, particularly individuals reflecting the school demographic..

Meeting adjourned at 4:50 PM

NEXT MEETING IS JUNE 13, 2017 AT USUAL PLACE AT 3 PM.