

## **VMA Board Minutes of July 10, 2018**

Present: Chris Carle, Alicia Chalmers, TJ Chitekwe, Bill Johnston (phone), Steve Lobel, Christine Schlesinger, Roberto Villanueva

From staff: Neil Phillips, Shannon Rohrer-Phillips, Louis Parker and Cindy Day

Steve Lobel as acting chair opened the meeting at 3:00 PM

A motion to approve the minutes of the May 8, 2018 was made by Chris and seconded by Roberto and unanimously approved.

Neil opened the schoolhouse report by discussing the recent “A” FSA grade that the school received. The unanimous sentiment was that this is a remarkable achievement and the culmination of a lot of hard work by many people. The recognition of the achievement by the SUNs has been great to witness, as evidenced by Chris’s grandson's cartwheels. Press coverage has been positive and ABC 7 had a live feed from the recent Celebration event.

The Board observed that the news has created a unique opportunity to leverage the momentum quickly both on student enrollment and fundraising. The team was encouraged to aggressively market enrollment at community events. In addition, a suggestion was made to approach significant prior donors, and in particular donors who have been waiting for results, and solicit ground floor legacy donation opportunities. We must leverage this grade both short term and longer term , however emphasis was made to strike while the iron is hot!

Suggestions were made to develop printed materials for recruiting and better signage that highlights the A grade achievement and these efforts are underway. We have already recruited a couple of new students and more can and should be expected. Enrollment for the new school year stands at 95 students. We usually receive an influx just before the school year starts.

Neil informed the Board that Mary Luisa submitted her resignation resulting from her husband accepting an opportunity in San Antonio. The Board was appreciative of all of Mary Louisa’s contributions in making the school a success, including her leadership in implementing iReady and preparing teachers and students. In addition, she was helpful in liaising with school district staff. While sad to see her depart, the Board wishes her and her husband well on their next chapter in Texas.

Given the proximity to the start of the new school year, Neil determined that it would not be feasible to recruit a new principal. As an interim measure, Neil will promote Tiffany to Assistant Principal managing the teachers and for Louis to spend more time in the schoolhouse acting as the day-to-day operating officer. Names of possible interim principals were suggested . In addition there was discussion about how to utilize Lori White and her skills and expertise to both mentor Tiffany and continue the momentum. There was also a concern about potentially losing credibility on commitment to education with donors and parents if a full time Principal role was not filled. Suggestions were made to emphasize that the current solution is interim and

that a search for a Principal will be undertaken at a later date. The Board also requested that Neil provide a definitive organization structure and job descriptions for all administrative roles.

Discussion followed on the new state regulations regarding the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public School Safety Act. The Act is applicable to charter schools and needs to be implemented for the new school year. A qualified armed School Resource Officer will need to be hired and estimated cost could range between \$40,000 - \$50,000 up to \$110,000. A job description from the Manatee School District was reviewed. Louis mentioned that there is a current part-time employee with a Military Security background that might be a good fit. In addition, the Veteran's community will also be reached out to for potential prospects. The Board mentioned that it will be important to understand the details of the regulations and implications on coverage for absences, etc. The Board emphasized that we needed to be in compliance at the start of the school year. Shannon mentioned that she knew of contacts that would likely be receptive to funding. She and Louis will approach those sources.

Shannon provided her Development report. She brought the Board up to date on development plans resulting from the A grade including a VMA-mazing party last week. Carter Group has been officially hired and will start the 22-month campaign immediately. VeraCruz is wrapping up their work and will present to management their comments on financial management and operational opportunities. While not intending to extend their contract, we can call back on them as needed as we begin the campaign.

Shannon discussed the migration of data information and the transition to Donor Perfect is complete. She and others will continue to learn how to better utilize this system. A 2018/19 goal of raising \$1.1 million for continuing operations has been set and some early gifts in the new year were discussed. Plans were shared to explore a grant proposal to the Clara Elizabeth Jackson Carter Foundation. Shannon finished with a discussion of our efforts with Two Gen and other organizations, such as collaboration opportunities with Women's Resource Center and UnidosNow.

Louis presented the financial update. He reviewed current cash position and observed that VMA was in its strongest cash position at this time of the year. Given the strong position, no financial issues should be encountered during the summer slowdown. Louis mentioned that year-end financials should be ready around July 20<sup>th</sup>. A draft will be distributed to the Board and the Finance Committee would meet soon after. The planned salary adjustments will take effect in July/August and no other changes were considered for now, other than recognizing the need for potential adjustment for Tiffany for the Assistant principal role.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday Sep 11th from 3 to 5:30 PM. Extra time has ben allotted to cover a review by SRS, our accounting services provider.

Neil thanked Steve Lobel for his service to VMA both as a champion of Saturday Success as well as a past Board chair. Numerous board members also commented and Neil reminded us that it was not just Steve, but the entire Lobel family, whose love for VMA has been wonderful. A plaque was presented to Steve with gratitude.

Meeting adjourned by the now retired Mr. Lobel at 5:15 PM.