

MINUTES

MISF BOARD MEETING

SEPTEMBER 19, 2018

7:30 AM-9:30 AM

CHRISTIAN HERITAGE ACADEMY, LAKEVILLE

AGENDA

- Review and approve agenda
- Review and approve minutes from 6/20/18
- President's report
 - * Development report
 - * Membership report
 - * Advocacy update
 - * Program report
 - *STEM Education Conference
 - * School Leadership Conference
- Governance report
- Strategic plan update
 - * New objectives
- Finance report: balance sheet, income statement, restricted funds tracking, cash flow, operating reserve funds
- Audit
- Other business

MINUTES

Those present: Tim Benz, Tim Berner, Jennifer Cassidy, Tom Delich, Josh Killian, Randy Kroll, Joel Landskroener, John McCall, Teri McCloughan, Sumita Mitra, Wyayn Rasmussen, Kelly Regan

Staff Present: Michele Skare

Meeting was called to order at 7:38 AM.

The Chair introduced Sumita Mitra, newest board member, to the group. We remember and acknowledge the passing of Doug Hennes, who was to have joined the board this year. The Chair also recognizes the 2018-19 Officers: Josh Killian, Chairperson, Teri McCloughan, Vice Chairperson, Wyayn Rasmussen Secretary, and Randy Kroll, Treasurer. All members introduced themselves to the group.

Motion was made by Randy Kroll, seconded by Teri McCloughan, to approve the agenda as written

Motion was made by Joel Landskroener, seconded by Joel Jennifer Cassidy, to approve the minutes from the 6/20/18 meeting as written.

President's Report:

The summer has been a busy time for us with staffing transitions, STEM Leadership Conference, and membership renewal. Lisa Vosbeek, our new Director of Development and Programs. It has been a smooth transition. She is a good fit with the rest of the staff (important in a small office setting), and is a good inquirer and always seeks to understand the “why” of how we do things. She has had to hit the ground running at this busy time of year: STEM conference planning, finding sponsorships for both the STEM and School Leadership Conferences, and getting ready for the upcoming grant writing season.

Membership renewal is going well, and we will begin following up this week with schools that have not yet renewed. Some schools renew their membership using title funds from the district; those checks usually come in mid-to late-September, or even early October. Only one school has confirmed that they will not be renewing, but there is the possibility that they would come back to membership if we could find a donor to sponsor them. One school, St. Paul Preparatory, with their international student body, has closed. The program itself will continue through partnerships with Hill-Murray and Bethlehem Academy.

There have been approximately 20 school leadership changes this year - which has been a trend for the last two years. We track these changes, and add schools undergoing a leadership change to our High Priority List. We continue to build “anchors” within schools - teachers, business managers, even secretaries - so that others in the school besides just the president or principal know about MISF and what we do. We also work with partner organizations such as MNSAA, LCMS and individuals who have connections to follow up with these schools.

Tim and Lisa have had conversations with two organizations about forming partnerships.

St. Mary’s University has been engaged with us in the past, through Awards event, newsletter, and STEM Conference sponsorships. They reached out to us wanting to talk more broadly about the things we are doing and how they could further partner with us. We are looking at them as a potential year-long sponsor (for the Lunch & Learn Seminars, for example) - and how an agreement like that would work. They are strong proponents and fans of MISF, and have indicated that, going forward, their plan is to work with fewer organizations, but work in a deeper manner with them. We have given them a proposal, and are waiting to hear from them.

We are also in discussions with Thrivent Financial - a connection made through Joel Landskroener. These have been good discussions about family offerings for schools such as financial planning workshops, and sponsorships. They are a sponsor of this year’s School Leadership Conference. For both Thrivent and St. Mary’s we want to make sure that any kind of partnership agreement is a reciprocal one, and beneficial to both us and them.

Development Report

We applied for a Bush Ecosystem grant in May and were declined in July - the third time we have applied and been denied. On the first two applications, we applied through the education sections of the grant - this time, we tried going through the leadership/professional development side. Our contact gave us feedback saying that our grant proposal was strong - there was nothing wrong with it at all. We will try again in 18 months when they request the next round of LOIs.

Question: Were there any other possible reasons that our grant was denied? Perhaps because of our private and/or faith-based members? No, because Bush has previously funded individual low-income Catholic schools (same schools that GHR is interested in).

In the grant pipeline report under “Misc Grant” we are showing \$43K, which is a yet-to-be-filled bucket. Lisa is developing and good prospect list

Question: What percentage of our budget comes from individual donors? Approximately 10%.

The \$15K STEM grant in FY19 YTD is from the Schott Foundation - an extra grant awarded to us.

Lisa has broken out the donor, corporate/foundation/organization, and sponsors into three separate categories on the report, so we may better track true donations/philanthropy from event sponsorships.

We discontinued using Foundation Search at the end of our 3 year contract. It is not a good fit for us, and we didn't use it enough to renew.

Membership Report

We ended FY17-18 with 157 schools, 34,717 students.

Membership renewal is ongoing. We do not remove members from the list until we are notified that they will not be renewing or if, by the end of October, we've not yet heard from them. We are in the process of sending second invoices right now.

A list of schools that have not yet renewed was distributed. Of the 26 schools on the list: one renewed just yesterday, two are paying with title funds which should arrive in October, 8 schools have to join because they have received a STEM grant or have registered for the members-only School Leadership Conference. Seven have new principals and are on our high-priority list. Tim is touching base with the rest of the schools in the coming week.

Six new schools have joined since June: Minnetonka Christian, St. John's in Norwood Young America (didn't renew last year, but came back with a new principal this year) Holy Trinity in Winsted - a former legacy member who left 2 years ago, had a leadership change, and has now returned, and Stella Maris Academy in Duluth with 3 campuses. Cynthia Zook, the Catholic schools superintendent, has joined MISF as an Associate member.

Advocacy Update

We budgeted to hire a lobbyist this year, and have been in touch with Shep Harris. He would be our "feet on the ground" at the capitol, tracking items like textbook funding, transportation, pupil aids, etc. He walks both sides of the aisle very well, which is beneficial for us.

Tim has attended two meetings of a nascent coalition being formed through OAK and the GHR Foundation - bringing groups together to develop a broader, stronger school choice organization. Other groups are the MN Business Partnership, Ed Allies, OAK, and MN Comeback. This coalition would be in addition to OAK, which will still take the lead on Choice issues, but others in the coalition will help support them. It is good to have MN BP involved, but there is an issue in that they are in favor of school vouchers (not all of our schools are) and there is a testing requirement with vouchers. Discussion: Academy of Whole Learning parents/members are eager to meet with OAK and other school choice organizations to tell their story. Tim and Wyayn to meet offline.

Discussion: Once Tim gets a clearer picture of what the session/tax credits will look like, he will push information out to our member schools to be shared with their boards and broader communities.

Program Report

Results from the STEM Conference were very positive, although we were down in attendance this year. We have sent a survey to past attendees from the last 2 years to discover reasons why they did not attend this year. 44% of all attendees this year were new attendees. The STEM Advisory Committee meets in October; part of their

discussion will be about what we need to do to advance this conference to the next level - perhaps partnering with other organizations like CSCOE and MNSAA on a larger conference.

Governance Committee

The Governance Committee will meet at the end of October. There are three spots on the board that can be filled for it to reach capacity. If board members have names/ideas/suggestions, please forward them to Tim. A survey will be sent to the board of directors to source possible new candidates.

Strategic Plan

Our current strategic plan was approved one year ago - on September 20, 2017.

We held our staff retreat at the end of July, and Brandi Olson joined in with us for part of the day. We would like to keep Brandi engaged and working with us going forward. She helps us in our ongoing work on strategic priorities. When we sometimes don't know if we're where we should be on a goal or objective, she helps us see what we've accomplished and when work still needs to be done. Her guidance has been most helpful.

One item was moved to the "Done" list - #9, Make MISF debt free, with the retirement of the note payable in June.

Items in progress: 2b) 1:1 visits with 20 highest priority school leaders - we met with 14 last year. The remaining 6 have been added to this year's high priority list. Others on that list are all schools that have had a leadership transition in the last year, giving us 27 high priority schools in total. Item 1c) Evaluate priorities and craft quarterly OKRs - We discussed this item at the staff retreat, and determined that, for an organization of our size, quarterly OKRs might be too fast paced. We decided that a quarterly check-in with a 6 month progress report is more realistic for us.

Two items have been moved to the Do Next list: 5) Increase board involvement in fundraising - but now changing the wording to "resource development", indicating that it's more than just raising money - it's also about helping us make connections and partnerships that will help us grow. 6) Increase funding for the STEM program (not just STEM grants). Item 8 on the list: Evaluate and adapt funding model and organizational structure - is closely tied to 5 and 6 - we need to engage the board to help us find more ways to connect member schools - and their communities - to MISF.

Question: Does the STEM advisory committee only decide grants? That is a large portion of what they do, but another goal is also get more students involved, and increase STEM learning. The committee doesn't secure funding - MISF raises funds. Question: Are we under-utilizing that group in terms of funding? What that is not a primary objective of the committee, they definitely be a resource, and many members belong to organizations that currently support MISF/STEM. We should use that group to build testimonials/opportunities/on the ground projects. The committee showcases projects that have gotten grants to encourage other schools to apply and they see this as a benefit. A key objective of STEM grants is to broaden schools' involvement with community (or to have partners in community). We should make sure that businesses know that this opportunity is out there, and our schools' kids could gain real world experience.

Suggestion – A combined session with the board and the advisory committee to discuss ideas around partnerships, marketing, and a STEM Leadership development/component. Idea: There are teachers who could serve as consultants for other schools; "teaching the teachers" how to teach STEM; a mentor who can be a specialist. We could offer stipends to begin that program as another alternative to a project/grant. We can find key leaders that are ALSO in the classroom. The group can think of 4-5 names right now of those who are all-in STEM teachers. Answer: Two years ago advisory committee members offered to become a mentor for schools, but found that

there were not many takers. We didn't follow up to ask why schools didn't choose to do that: was it lack of time, resources, etc.? Perhaps we should offer a project along with a mentor, so as to not create more work for the teacher. Discussion: At past STEM Education Conferences, committee members offered training sessions on how to write a grant. While these sessions were fairly well attended, there was not a noticeable increase in grants written.

Suggestion: We need to put together a committee: What is STEM 2.0? Perhaps use the Brandi Olson model: One session with BIG group, and start narrowing down the process and ideas from that point; and it will be important to find key teachers to participate in that discussion. Tim and Greg can discuss setting up a session like this with Brandi, and will give an update at December Board meeting.

Discussion point/suggestion: Should we start discussing/focusing on the Arts as well as STEM? That is a niche, and can show to the community how our schools are unique. There is potential to get out ahead of this trend, and we should consider it.

Finance Report

The financial reports and narrative were distributed, and these items were highlighted.

June 2018

The note payable was retired on 6/29/18. We had been paying \$2K toward the note while putting \$1K away in reserves every month. Going forward, we will put the entire \$3K into reserves on a monthly basis.

Variances on income statement: On the grants line/Katherine B. Andersen, we received a double grant last year. 3M grant – we received a second grant due to their grant cycle change, so that number appears inflated this year. This variance also shows on the July income statement.

Total assets for current year are \$563.4K vs. \$410.5K last year.

July 2018

Balance sheet: current year shows \$84.7K in accounts receivable, because we invoiced all schools for membership dues. If schools choose not to renew, we will reverse the entries.

Income statement: variance on grants line is due to the timing of the 3M grant (received in June, but budgeted in July, addressed above).

Audit

The exit meeting was held on 9/6/18. It was a clean audit and the auditors found nothing of significance. . Kudos to Tim, and to Debbie for her hard work and careful attention to detail.

Adjournment

There being no further business brought forth, the chair asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. So moved by Randy Kroll, seconded by Jennifer Cassidy. Meeting was adjourned at 9:15 AM.



10/4/2018

Wyayn Rasmussen - Secretary