



Board Meeting Minutes  
May 10, 2016

Meeting was called to order by Chair Lobel at approximately 3 pm.

Board Attendees-Steve Lobel, Chris Carle, Felice Schulaner, Bill Johnston (via phone)

Guests-Neil Phillips, Shannon Rohrer Phillips, Joel Erby, Cindy Cavallero Day and Mitzie Hensen

Chair Lobel called for a motion to approve the minutes of the March 8, 2016 Meeting. Motion was made and seconded and voted for approval.

New Property Report by Cavallero-Day in which she described the two phases of the project, Phase 1-Current Facility and Phase 2-New Property and Planned Construction. She provided an overview of the process to select Fawley-Bryant as the architectural firm for the project from the four firms that submitted proposals. A team assessed all firms and made the determination based on the presentations and a referencing process. Key elements of the decision were the cost of the bid and the long and positive relationship the firm has had with Manatee County Schools.

Chair Lobel asked for a motion to ratify the selection of Fawley-Bryant without a current financial commitment. The motion was made, seconded and voted for approval.

Six construction firms were asked to present bids on Phase 1. The list has been narrowed to 3; Willis Smith, Halfacre and Tandem Construction. This phase will require VMA to file for Middle School permits, rapid response, for administrative approval of two cottages on the current site. For fundraising discussions, Chair Lobel recommended the team use the full cost per cottage (brick, mortar, personnel, furnishings and equipment) of approximately \$65,000.

Next steps for VMA team are to evaluate bids from construction manager for Phase 1. Decisions on Phase 2 will be independently assessed based on specific bids associated with that phase.

Given status of project and fundraising, new school opening likely delayed until August 2018.

### **CEO Report**

Neil Phillips presented the CEO report. He referenced the “wonderful” Shine On event on April 29 and expressed gratitude for all who contributed to its success. He gave an update on the Charter School Growth Fund relationship, noting that they continue to be supportive of VMA and have offered to fund a fellowship for Principal Erby at their Relay Graduate School.

Next he shared perspectives on challenges facing the school in the areas of morale, campus climate and academic performance. In communicating his concerns, he shared that he and the entire team will all be personally engaged in understanding and addressing the issues.

## **Principal Report**

Principal Erby reported that the next FSA testing results would be available on May 23 or 24<sup>th</sup>. He shared data on MAP testing, with declines in grade level reading performance in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades and declines in math scores in Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grades. He is working to understand correlation of scores to FSA results. As one tool to address deficiencies, he shared use of I Ready to diagnose areas of deficiency in lowest performing students in Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. He is estimating cost of use the tool with all students.

There are a number of faculty openings for next school year and Principal Erby will interviewing over the summer. Board member Schulaner volunteered to help with competency based skills training.

A Parent Leadership Forum was held with VMA leadership meeting with parents to get feedback on VMA. The team thought the session was highly informative and that it presented an opportunity to engage and involve parents. Due to the positive response, similar sessions will be scheduled quarterly.

## **Student and Family Services**

Rohrer-Phillips shared that current student enrollment is 107. She is busily recruiting for Kindergarten, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades for the next school year.

Current challenges in this area include the capability of faculty and quality of support people in the school. A grant from Manatee Matches to fund a full time social worker should be highly impactful given the issues being encountered including an increase in the number of homeless children enrolled.

Working on expanding Two-Gen initiatives, recognizing the parent engagement is an important contributor to positive student outcomes.

Lastly, Rohrer-Phillips invited all in attendance to a book signing at the Aldstadt Gallery in the Rosemary District. The book, Visible Narratives, depicts students and their families and was created by Karen Arango and Rohrer-Phillips as a way to showcase members of the VMA family.

## **Finance Report**

Louis Parker reported that the school project an end of May cash position of \$205,707 with year-end cash at \$127,000. This assumes current run rate of expenses and no significant fundraising efforts.

## **Development Report**

Mitzie Hensen reported that Shine On exceeded expectations for both attendance and financial results. In addition the Kotok/ Schlesinger event at Pomona introduced the school to a number of new donor prospects, some having already made contributions. Tours and other engagement have followed as well.

## **Governance**

Chair Lobel suggested that the Board focus on expanding its ranks. A process for increasing the number of board members, to broaden networks and skill sets, will follow.

There being no other business before the Board, Chair Lobel adjourned the meeting at 5:20 pm.