

MeANS Board of Directors Meeting
Thursday, 9/16/21 from 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm
At the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences School building
13 Easler Drive
Hinckley, Maine

MeANS Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Thursday, 9/16/2021 from 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm
Maine Academy of Natural Sciences School Building / ZOOM meeting combined
13 Easler Drive, Hinckley, Maine
Room

Board members present: Cheryl Bulmer, Sally Beaulieu, Scott Byrd (Zoom), Mike Muir (Zoom) , Cheryl Mercier, Anna Perkins, Whitney King (Zoom), Kim Patnode (Zoom), Dana Doran (Zoom)

Staff Members Present: Matt Newberg (later), Angela Hesketh, Abigail Skrabak, Christine Sullivan, [Danni Best](#)

Board Members Not Present:., Jesse Wechsler, Robin Cyr, Shannon Webber

1. **Board Chair Call the meeting to order (Cheryl Bulmer) 4:39pm.** We have a quorum
2. Joining the meeting is a candidate who is interested in joining the board. Martha Harris has been an attorney for 44 years. Served on local school boards for 18 years, and the State Board of Education for 10 years. The board members introduced themselves.
3. **Additions/Adjustment to the Agenda:** No adjustments were made.
4. **Public Comment:** No public comment.
5. **Student/Staff presentation:** No presentation.
6. **Consent Agenda: (*Action requested* by Approval of Consent Agenda)**
 - a. Board Meeting Minutes from 8/26/21: *a copy of the updated minutes was emailed out, and the board member packet was adjusted. The updated packet is what will be voted on.*
 - b. Finance committee Minutes 8/26/21: Let Cheryl know if there were adjustments.
 - c. Head of School report: Matt is not currently present.

Cheryl M. moved to approve consent agenda, Anna Perkins seconds. Scott Byrd asks to reserve some time for Matt to do his Head of School Report. Head of School report will be moved to info sharing.

Call to Vote

Whitney King: Aye

Mike Muir: Aye

Cheryl Mercier: Aye
Sally Beaulieu: Aye
Scott Byrd: Aye
Cheryl Bulmer: Aye
Anna Perkins: Aye
Kim Patnode: Aye
Dana Doran: Aye

7. **Action items:** Will move on until Matt gets here.

8. Information sharing

a. **ESSERF 2 and ARP funding- large bus (Matt and Angela)**

- i. Angela explained that in order to receive the funding from the grants, the Head of School has to send it in and then we work on invoicing. Matt submitted the application, however there were a couple of adjustments requested before approval. The grant covers the bigger school bus, 2 years of maintenance, and gas. It should be fully approved either tomorrow or next week, confident that the state will approve. Cressy is still holding the bus for us. ESSERF has \$149,000, and ARP has \$335,000. Title grants have specific guidelines on what you can use the funds for. ARP is COVID and learning specific funds, ESSERF 2 has a deadline of Sept 2023, ARP has a longer deadline.
- ii. Cheryl M. states ARP is specifically for Special Education, and the deadline goes through Dec 15 2023. It's possible the bus could be funded for ARP or Title 1, could be used for displacement for covid and districts. It also could be used to for students that need day treatment.
- iii. Angela says we have to be creative in using the funding that has been approved. Scott says some of this money can be used for placement that may come from COVID, because we have 70 IEP students. Cheryl agrees. No other questions.

b. **Year financial update and audit progress update (Angela):**

- i. Angela just got off the phone this afternoon with the auditors. Because of COVID they have to be remote. It's been going well, there are only 2 items that are pending, one is because they recently received it and haven't had a chance to go over the information. The other item needs documentation from Matt or Christine. The audit is still on target, aiming for beginning of October for final review.

- ii. One additional item that has been brought up. For federal funding that we have received, it was estimated at \$700k. We received a little more than we anticipated, so that means a little more audit work.
- c. **Review and discussion of the Charter 4 Year Performance report and Spring Monitoring report (Matt) and Updates from Head of School:** Renewal, where we stand is September 30th, we are gathering students to speak on our behalf. We are reaching out to families, students, and alumni. The meeting info is in the newsletter. The site visit went well, 8 parents were on the zoom call, and ten students that represented all grades participated. They received our submission, and we won't get feedback until after the 30th.
 - i. Cheryl B, Mike and Scott joined the one-hour meeting with board members and the review team. It was an upbeat meeting. Mike said they defended the notion that the Threshold expansion was previously approved. Matt clarifies that what Mike was referring to was Threshold in the spring of last year. There is a need for the Threshold program in Washington County. In looking at a rural grant and spreading the Threshold program to other counties, we brought it to the Charter Commission to give them a heads up. However they came back saying we need to submit a formal expansion approval. And we don't meet 3 out of 4 of the criteria for the approval, which is surprising. It has been the plan to expand the Threshold Program from day one. We will respond back to the Charter Commission. We haven't met our enrollment criteria, which is one of the criteria listed for the approval. They sent us a letter saying we will consider expansion; however, Matt has not responded yet. Scott mentions that we did get approved for expansion 4 years ago, however we never acted upon that. Matt confirms that is correct. There is wording in that document that is conflicting, it mentions Threshold going to other counties based on need, but also it says that it must stay within a 30 mile radius. Interpretation of wording is up to the discretion of the commission. There is previous language specifically stating Threshold expanding to counties that have need for the Threshold. The argument is that we were going to expand the program the entire time. Cheryl states that it is our hope to start the process of expanding this fall, but may not happen. Matt will respond to the charter commission. Sally mentioned the commission has granted charters to so many schools in the area, Jeremy did sort of allude to understanding that concern. Matt states he doesn't understand why they are having us jump through hoops.
 - ii. Cheryl would like "school statistics and performance" as identified by the charter commission to be considered as a goal, as we go into goal setting.

- iii. Charter Renewal public forum is 4:30-6pm on Sept 30. Let Cheryl know if you will be there. Kim said she believes she can make it.
- d. **ESSERF 2 and ARP funding- large bus (cont. report from Matt)**: We were approved for the ESSERF grant that includes service and maintenance for the bus for 2 years (2023). We were also approved for \$9,000 for professional development, and have a contract with Ann Ervin for classroom management. Also approved for \$5,500 for laptops for key program folks, that need a little more processing power.
- e. **Current enrollment**: 173, 59 Threshold and 114 day students, and 7 on Threshold waiting list. We are down a teacher, and only have 5 Threshold teachers. We try to keep it to a 1 to 10 ratio. We are looking for creative ways to serve the extra students.
 - i. No applicants for the Math teacher, no applicants for threshold teachers. we are just not seeing people applying. We want to take these Threshold students but don't have capacity. We have some students that are really challenging, 70% of Freshmen now have an IEP.
 - ii. Cheryl M. states schools are hiring teachers everywhere. Scott says hiring is thin we should look at some informal networks. Whitney says if the applicant pool is thin that we need to change hiring practice. Do we use recruitment? How competitive are our salaries?
 - iii. We are still seeing students coming to MeANS wanting one on one staffing. We are still bumping into marketing issues. Matt received an email that thought we were Good Will Hinkley. We are not capable of helping students one on one on that level. It would be detrimental to just take everyone coming knocking on our door, even if we don't reach enrollment. The teachers started off the year excited, but Danni has had the most suspension in the first 3 weeks than any of the 4 years she's been here. Some behavioral, some people are just having anxiety. We are short handed to begin, but last week one person was home due to COVID, one staff member had a family emergency. We may have had to cancel school if there were any more teachers out. We don't want to spread too thin, but also don't want people to walk.
 - iv. Sally asks if we ask the students we accept questions that echoes the school's mission. In her old school they had criteria, however they became a team that didn't meet that criterion. Can MeANS say what it means to be a student here during the enrollment process? Matt states that he would love to hear what others think. Matt believes we can't articulate that we have certain criteria, we possibly could get in trouble. A good

practice we can do, is at enrollment express what makes a successful student.

- v. Sally says the public's perception of a MeANS student is not accurate. If anyone on the board wants to help with marketing that would be welcome. A family from Arizona had a preconceived idea of what MeANS was. The website does not reflect what we are.
 - vi. Other positive news, we did find our second math teacher through word of mouth. He is part time, but will cover upper level math students. We are interviewing for an ed tech tomorrow. Our driving situation has sorted itself out.
 - vii. Anna asks if they have changed teaching certification? Matt says they have made it better for emergency certification, but we are also able to hire people provided they are “uniquely qualified.”
 - viii. Any other questions for Matt? Scott asks that the report mentions a Harvest Fest. Matt says Grace is the community outreach coordinator, and her goal is looking for every other month to have parents come to campus for different events. Looking to display apples and syrup 3pm to 5pm. Scott says it would be nice to have board members present. It will largely be an outdoor event. Grace will create a flyer and send that out to everyone.
- f. **Gala update:** Cheryl got a call from Art, the chair at Good Will Hinckley, about an update on the gala. It will be in person, but 10 tables of 6 spread out. People will ask to mask unless eating. Believes it's 5:30-8:30, Oct 16. There are 6 tables available, and they want as many MeANS and Good Will Hinckley board members as possible. Would like 5 MeANS and 5 Good Will Hinckley so all tables could have board members. Auction funds from this gala will be going to boarding for MeANS students. Tickets are \$100/person, \$600 a table, we have bought one in the past and filled it with teachers. Only opportunity to talk about this before the gala.
- i. Whitney asks if vaccination will be mandatory, if not it would severely limit the people going. Matt says that was discussed and strongly encouraged, but not specifically made as a requirement. He is happy to share that it is encouraged by our board. Whitney mentions we are the highest COVID numbers.
 - ii. Scott asks if Art wants board members at different tables would we buy a “table” and then be placed elsewhere? Cheryl will ask about how it will be coordinated. Confirmed that it's Saturday, Oct 16th, 530-830pm. Scott is happy for the board to get a table, and also to buy a ticket. Kim would be happy to buy a ticket, but being cautious so won't go unless everyone is

vaccinated. Cheryl will follow up about the vaccination, but please update her if you will be going.

iii.

- g. **Goal setting for 2021/2022:** Scott: Looking at the summary of board assessment from last year. High level goal last year was financial training, we have not started that. We need to see what that looks like. Threshold expenses are being tracked, but more can be done. HR policies are pretty close to being done, non-financial and non-HR policies are done. The salary matrix needs more work, and so does the fund raising goals.

- i. **Performance reports:** Matt - things that stood out at school level, pg 6 summary table. This is the area we've got work to do if we did want to submit the Threshold expansion. We need to meet on a consistent basis, and have not been met for 4 years. Presents conflict, several teachers are resistant to anything close to teaching to test. NWEA, attendance, graduation the performance framework shows that these are things that need to be worked on. The end of the document talks about considerations for continuous improvement and routine challenge. The head of school report should have these reports. MeANS social worker is working on absenteeism, and is involving students and parents earlier, and increasing achievements. She is also supporting student emotional health, that's what we strive to do. Our advisory meets to help with that, but we need to expand that, bring people in for social and emotional support. The commission mentions a goal is having independence from Good Will Hinckley, but we have done a lot to get autonomy. It mentions "carving down certain contracts." Not sure what decisions we can't make without GWH. Angela got them all the information for financial statements. No big surprises.
- ii. Scott was surprised to see that it was mentioned about being independent from GWH. When we met they said it was better and we were more autonomous. Questions about chronic absenteeism vs daily attendance. It doesn't match up page 11 and 42. Matt states in our efforts for accurate attendance, we are not entirely sure we are getting accurate data from IC. IC works on minutes vs daily. That may not be entirely accurate because it's an export from IC. Chronic absenteeism is easier because it is any student who is absent. Some reasons for absenteeism are because of the extended school year, and covid contributes.
- iii. Mike asks if anyone has noticed about behavior being linked to chronic absenteeism? Danni states not this year, students who have behavior

issues, are coming to school. Absenteeism is more the kids who work on the farm and help the family.

- h. **Evaluation: (Scott):** This is the first time that we have done an evaluation. The document is standardized for non profits, some fits well, some doesn't. We have updated fundraising, marketing is a clear deficiency, and understanding financials. Looking to evaluate every two years coming up, and looking to use it to drive goals. Link to airtable and strategic plan in chat.

- i. **Break out meetings for goal setting: Zoom group and In-Person group**

- i. We did have a unique year, on top of dealing with crisis, it's been hard to plan long term goals. We did a good job, we did have a leadership team, we know we want to have goals and expectations, but how should we do it? Discussion topics: what are 3 or 4 things that committees can flush out for the next meeting.
- ii. Mike states recurring issues seems to be marketing and recruitment. We need to be out in the community, let people know what the school is. We got a lot of help from the government, but that might not be the case moving forward.
- iii. Martha will participate on zoom
- iv. **In-Person:** Anna suggests legal training for board, legal aspects of the board. Art said that the joint committee needed to focus on more board training. Sally, like that idea, need to set a goal for a percentage of board members trained, possibly similar to what teachers do for annual training.
- v. Recruitment for board we are at 12, may be at 13. Total 15, would be good to be able to not have to struggle to get a quorum
- vi. Marketing is trickier, but grant writing might be an easier possibility, collaborative grant writing.

- j. **Back together**

- i. **In person,** training the board annually for legal training, also general training for what it means to be a board member. Charter commission has done that in the past, but is looking for new training, joint council with gwh, different avenues.
 - 1. Board recruitment, getting talent.
 - 2. Development for collaborative grant writing
 - 3. Talked about Marketing
- ii. **Zoom:** "What it "means" to be a board member
 - 1. What is our story? Whitney asks how do we tell the story of student success? How do we do that qualitatively and quantitatively, more excited about the qualitative stories.
 - 2. How do we measure that, maybe not NWEA metrics.

3. Danni is so well connected with the students and alum, some work in the solar industry how he started at MeANS. The charter commission is interested in creating their own metrics.
 4. Possibly could record the public hearing, but could have permission issues.
 - k. Establish overarching goals, and then write about them in committee, if committees can meet before October meeting.
10. Prep for next meeting – **Friday, October 21 at 4:30pm: it should be Thursday, this is when we have an update for the audit**

11. Adjourned 6:32

Kim motioned to approve; Cheryl M. seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

Whitney King Aye

Mike Muir: Aye

Cheryl Mercier: Aye

Sally Beaulieu: Aye

Scott Byrd: Aye

Cheryl Bulmer: Aye

Anna Perkins: Aye

Kim Patnode: Aye

Dana Doran: Aye