Minutes

MeANS Board of Directors Meeting

**Thursday, 10/21/21** **from 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm**

**At the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences School building**

**13 Easler Drive**

**Hinckley, Maine**

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

Staff Members Present: Matt Newberg, Angela Hesketh (zoom), Abigail Skrabak, Christine Sullivan, Danni Best, Jayden Palmer (Student), Grace Hilmer (Events Coordinator), Emily Parker (BerryDunn), Preston Kinney (Berry Dunn)

Board Members Not Present: Jesse Wechsler, Robin Cyr, Dana Doran

1. Board Chair Call the meeting to order (Cheryl Bulmer) 4:34
2. Additions/Adjustment to the Agenda
   1. Matt wants to add disciplinary action to the agenda. It may require a board vote. It will be addressed during action items.
   2. Cheryl wants to talk about board member resignation during info sharing. Will not require a vote.
   3. Shannon will need to leave early.
3. Public Comment: no public comments
4. Student/Staff presentation
   1. Grace, Outreach and 504 coordinator, sees her position as bridging the gap between high school, and post-secondary options. Wants to broaden the scope of what is available to the students. And also see to invited community come to MeANS. The past 3 weeks MeANS worked in Intensives, and wanted to show pictures from Harvest fest.
   2. The 9th grade did farming, agriculture, and specifics of Maine farming. They harvested 400 lbs of potatoes, made a farm stand, and sold spices during Harvest fest. The stand made about $250. They also went to Dostie farm.
   3. The 10th graders studied apples, made cider, carved apples, cooked apple dishes with Snap Ed.
   4. The Juniors studied rivers. They hiked Moxie falls, and studied the history and geography of the Kennebec. They canoed, saw fish hatcheries, saw game wardens stock the streams. They also went to Fort Western, and harvested clay. They finished the intensive by creating a map of the Kennebec.
   5. The Seniors studied environmental concerns Maine is facing now, picked up trash, and made trash art.
   6. The culmination of all the projects were showcased at Harvest Fest. Each group had a station. We sold produce, and rented a wood fire oven, and made pizzas with toppings that were grown in the garden.
   7. Jayden was working the pizza oven. A student would spread out the dough and toppings, and he would put it in the oven. Cooking the pizza took two to three minutes. Jayden has experience cooking and made a connection with the pizza place who let us borrow the oven. The event was on the front of the Morning Sentinel. MeANS is trying to learn what each student likes and brings to school, and use it in their classes to maintain their spark. Learning comes in different ways. We have a lot of products to sell, wreath making and syrup. We want to do a “make your own wreaths” event, and make swags. There will be a Blood Drive on Nov 2 9:00-1:30. Also if you want to donate to the turkey baskets the deadline is Nov 18. That is the day of the last meeting. Also we are planning a maple sugar event in March.
   8. Cheryl welcomes Martha.
5. Berry Dunn – Presentation of FY 2019-2020 audited financial statements
   1. Cheryl introduces Emily Parker and Preston Kinney from Berry Dunn. A big thank you to Angela. The presentation is on pages 21-35. For the financial statement audit we are responsible to express opinions on company’s financial statements. Basic look at transactions and look at risk assessment. We looked at cash, service revenue, grants revenue, expenses, and payroll. We looked further at payroll changes, and what supporting documents were needed in payroll. We gave an unmodified opinion, which is what you want. Because of Federal funding there is a second level of audit. When you spend over $750k of federal money, there needs to be a deeper dive in the spending.
   2. Preston went over the powerpoint. Assets over a three year trend there were two big changes. Property and equipment assets jumped up, which were the yurt and pavilion, and the addition of the busses. There were changes in AP and accrued payroll. In 2019 in AP there was an asset purchase, that is why there is a spike. Haven’t had debt before, but the listed debt is the bus. In unrestricted activity the total revenue increased, but that was due to the COVID relief fund, tuition didn’t change. The expense program increased slightly, due to salary expenses, and buses are quite a large asset addition, and vehicles have a fast depreciation. Typically a bus lasts 5 years. Expenses didn’t have a swing and are relatively low, that’s what you want. Actual program expenses remain consistent. The biggest changes were in instruction and student activity. Transportation costs and salary expenses are included in student activity.
   3. Highlighting disclosures on the financial statements, footnote 2 on pg. 10, 100% of tuition comes from the government charter funding. Page 13, footnote 9, is GWH lease, and operating costs charged. Other footnote is operating grant, employee benefit, Maine public employee retirement. And the uncertainty disclosure is there because we don’t know if there will be any significant impact.
   4. Emily says that the audit would let you know if there is an internal control deficiency, but there is nothing to report. There is a new accounting standard, having to do with revenue and with contract customers. Did not need to make a lot of adjustments to report. If there were difficulties reported, management would need to sign a letter of truth, but there was significant outside communication.
   5. There is a new report called the Yellow Book which reports on weaknesses and deficiencies in financial reporting, and uniform guidance compliance with major programs. This is uploaded to the government and is public. They don’t test every contract, but do specifically covid relief funds. They tie invoices back to details, and we did not identify any problems.
   6. On the special purpose report there were no issues or changes.
   7. All of the reports are in the packet. Mike reviewed the audit with the finance committee. Scott said they had a lot of questions in the committee meeting, but getting a clean audit is great. We also commented on how this audit is making progress on standing beside GWH and not under.
   8. Cheryl B significant adjust, putting together a lump sum amount set fee. this is the best estimate, but having a formal agreement will change that
   9. **Mike made a motion to accept the audit as presented, Cheryl M. seconded**

Cheryl Mercier aye,

Kim Patnode aye,

Whitney King,

Mike Muir aye,

Sally Beaulieu aye,

Anna Perkins aye,

Scott Byrd aye,

Cheryl Bulmer aye,

**Motion Carries**

1. Consent Agenda: (***Action requested*** by Approval of Consent Agenda)
   1. Board Meeting Minutes from 9/16/21
   2. HR committee Minutes 9/23/21
   3. Finance committee Minutes 10/4/21
   4. Head of School report

**Mike Muir moves to accept the consent agenda, Cheryl M. seconds. There are no questions.**

Cheryl Mercier: Aye

Kim Patnode: Aye

Whitney King: Aye

Mike Muir: Aye

Sally Beaulieu: Aye

Anna Perkins: Aye

Scott Byrd: Aye

Cheryl Bulmer: Aye,

**Motion Carries**

1. Action items
   1. **Election of new board member:** **Cheryl M. nominates Martha Harris, running through 2024. Her resume and Letter of Interest is in the packet. Membership would start immediately, because we are not at full membership. Second from Mike Muir.**

Cheryl Mercier: Aye

Kim Patnode: Aye

Whitney King: Aye

Mike Muir: Aye

Sally Beaulieu: Aye

Anna Perkins: Aye

Scott Byrd: Aye

Cheryl Bulmer: Aye,

**Motion Carries.**

Welcome Martha to the board.

* 1. **Disciplinary action:**

 There was a behavioral incident discussed. It was decided that a vote for further suspension was not needed at this time. The board is recommending that the Head of School reach out to the school lawyer about next steps.

* 1. **Board member resignation per policy:** Cheryl B. states that it says in the bylaws that if a board member is not at 4 consecutive meetings they are considered as having voluntarily resigned from the board. Since we have not heard from Robin Cyr for over a year, we are considering this as resignation. It does not need a vote.

1. Information sharing
   1. **Updates from Head of School:** We have had two other manifestation hearings. There was a skirmish in front of the building, the manifestation did determine the situation spawned from IEP accommodations. The conclusion was to seek a day treatment program. Christine has been looking for placements. There are local placements, however, that we are hesitant due to proximity issues, making it possible for the students to show up on school grounds. Other issues include expense. This leads to the fact that we have a larger predicament, we have a pretty tough lot. These are not the only students we are having issues with, some started day one with severe mental health issues. We are not equipped because we are understaffed, and we are not a one on one school. The finance committee will get a heads up on the out of district placements.
      1. Kim mentions in talking to the DOE we are not the only school dealing with this. Funding wise we will not be able to handle this. There is State funding available for out of school placements, but unsure whether a public charter can access money. The funding makes it so the school can get the money back two years after the placement occurs. It is confirmed that charter schools are eligible for reimbursement. It doesn’t help in the short term. There is a general misunderstanding that we are not a day treatment program.
      2. Matt mentions that this may be a longer discussion, but our school was listed as a day treatment program on a website. We are also finding anecdotal evidence that people believe we are a day treatment program. Curriculum coordinator is looking into this and trying to help change that misconception. Maybe we need to have an information night explaining what we are equipped to do.
      3. Scott said there is really a crisis, and asks if we can be proactive on the registration end? There’s a huge misconception of who MeANS is, we are going to be seeing this over, the next several years.
      4. If this is not a safe place to be they will leave,
      5. Matt states the solution is the curriculum and the mission. Basically, if they are interested in the curriculum, they are a good fit, if they are not interested, they are not a good fit. We think moving in the direction of project based learning we promote our mission.
   2. **Renewal process:** MeANS is renewed for five years, and the stipulations were not surprising. There were four bullet points that included testing and financial processes.
   3. **Expected enrollment:** the finalnumber for Oct. 1st is 187. Our goa1 was 190, we should feel really good about that.
2. **Other**
   1. **ESSERF 2 and ARP funding- large bus (Matt and Angela):** We did purchase the bus, we contracted out Ann Ervin, and we are waiting for decent laptops. Not a lot of people applying for the positions, and we are understaffed, but we are heading in a positive direction with the curriculum. Whitney asks about the disciplinary aspects of this school year, and how the morale of the school is? Matt agrees It is an urgent need. About this time this year, a sister and brother withdrew and they cited a bunch of reasons, but the issues with the fellow students was one of them, and they were potential ideal MeANS students. Several reasons have to do with the out of control nature of the student body. We need to hope marketing will get the word out for new enrollment.
   2. Kim said she spoke with a friend at an elite private school, and they are having the same out of control behavior. We have a marketing issue. We are going to see students in hospitalization for years. Scott states that this has been a problem for MeANS that predates the pandemic. On a note about staff, we can’t afford any more resignations, so we are giving a bonus this Monday.
3. **Goal setting for 2021/2022:** In the board packet, on page 16 on the quarterly board goals of the Charter Commission, they state a few of the goals that mirror what we stated for goal setting, and they are putting together some training. Some things on the agenda were building a curriculum, board recruitment, tourism for board recruitment, and performance framework revisions. Scott says to move goal setting to the November meeting, but it might be difficult to do that together, so maybe we should do them at committee meetings, and then report out at the meeting. He will get together with the committee chairs, Sally, Mike, and Kim about the goal setting. Next Board meeting is Nov. 18.
4. Prep for next meeting **– Thursday, November 18 at 4:30pm**
5. Adjourn Cheryl M. motions to adjourn, Sally seconds.

Cheryl Mercier: Aye

Kim Patnode: Aye

Mike Muir: Aye

Sally Beaulieu: Aye

Anna Perkins: Aye

Scott Byrd: Aye

Cheryl Bulmer: Aye,

**Motion Carries.**