

GRS Board Minutes
August 25, 2008

Great River School
School District #4105



***Engaging intellect, shaping character, building
community***

MISSION

Great River School, an urban Montessori learning environment, prepares students for their unique roles as responsible and engaged citizens of the world.

GOAL

Great River School is the public school of choice for highly motivated students.

VISION

Great River School is a place where college bound students are excited and inspired to learn. Great River School encourages students to ask complex questions and seek new and difficult challenges. Great River School combines academic and social experiences in a culture of civility and trust through peaceful practices. Great River School is a place where students feel safe to express and challenge themselves. Every student at Great River School is a valued member of the community. The exceptional Great River staff teach teamwork through cross-country travel, experiential learning, drama, the arts, and micro-economic ventures while helping students set individual academic goals.

CORE VALUES

Great River School believes in the following:

- Montessori Education
- Community, Interdependence, and Sustainability
- Civility, Grace, and Courtesy
- Diversity
- Growth through Challenge

***Education should no longer be mostly imparting of knowledge,
but must take a new path, seeking the release of human
potentialities.***

Maria Montessori

**Great River School Board Meeting
August 26, 2008**

6:30 pm – 8:30pm

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Introduction of Interim Director and closing comments from departing Director
3. Consent Agenda.
 - A. Approve July Meeting Minutes
 - B. Approval of contracts
3. Search process for permanent Director
4. Update on expansion planning process
5. Board membership status; recruitment for another teacher member; committee liaison approach
6. Meeting dates for 2008-2009
7. Reports from Standing Committees:
 - A. Finance Committee – Cory Olson
 1. SBS Summary
 2. Summary Income Expense Statement
 3. Balance Sheet
 4. Fund Balance Estimate
 5. Cash Flow Analysis
 6. Check Register
 7. Check Register Resolution
 - B. Personnel Committee – Tom Carrigan
 - C. Building Committee
 - D. Fundraising and Development
 - E. Nominations Committee
 - F. Parent Involvement/School Support Committee
 - G. Strategic Plan
8. New Business
 - A. Use of school building in summer 2009
6. Adjourn at 8:30 pm

Members Present: Judy Plante, Tom Carrigan, Angela van der Puije, Andrea Martin, Aaron Drevlow, Kira Donnelly, Mark McGregor, Paulette Zoe, Candy Husemoller, Mary Gantenbein, Andrea Christensen, Cory Olson
Linda (community member)

Called to order 6:30 pm

Introductions around the table.

Introduction of Interim Director and closing comments from departing Director:

Aaron has known Andrea for many years and could not think of a better person to step in as our interim director. He can not think of a more seamless handoff. Aaron is confident in the team that is here and agrees that change should be embraced. He has spoken recently with Alan Stache, former finance director, and Alan continues to follow GRS and is impressed. Aaron thanked the staff and he really enjoyed working with this team. Alan is still willing to help Great River if needed. Aaron would also like to be able to help Great River along the way. He would like to stay involved. The most important thing is what he has learned about Montessori. It changes you like Santa Claus, once you learn about it you can't go back. One of his roles at Stillwater will be to get small schools up and running. He is looking forward to the challenges he will face and he thanks Great River for affording the learning opportunities.

Judy welcomed Andrea and explained the process of finding the interim director. According to bylaws, the executive committee does have the ability to make decisions in an emergency. This was such an emergency. We will have a more inclusive process for the long-term director position, more staff, community and board involvement will be an integral part of the process.

Andrea has followed GRS progress from the beginning. She and Aaron have worked together in the past. Very happy to be here, it is the end of the second day. It feels like a really good fit for her and will be a good transition because of the way things are set up. Andrea was welcomed by the board.

Approval of Board meeting minutes

June 18, 2008 Board meeting minutes were approved by the board in the interim between the July and August meetings.

Search process for permanent director

Candy suggested we contact the previous director search committee members. Tom Carrigan and Judy Plante will meet and create a process by the September board meeting. Tom does work for a recruiting firm and they have hired heads of schools in the past. Judy reiterated that it is the board's job to hire the director. Non-board staff input, community engagement and board members tasks will be delineated. Mark has also been a member of search committees for the director of a school.

5. Board membership status:

Dave Melvin has resigned from his teaching position. We need a teacher majority board and must find a teacher board member prior to the September board meeting.

Committee liaison approach: the by laws allow us that as long as board member is on the committee, a non-board member may chair the committee.

6. Meeting dates for 2008-2009

7. Reports from Standing Committees

A. Finance Committee Update: Cory Olson, Treasurer
The assets for fund balance growth is right where we need be.

Revenue: miscellaneous local resources
We are off to a good start with revenues
\$775 – dues membership for Montessori organizations

Sp Ed – purchased services: July: Sp Ed Directors

Lease and Maintenance: \$10,000 for parking lot and money for carpets – this will be paid back through charter school development

Money towards fall trips is gen ed budget lines

Missing invoices were accounted for.

Tom asked how capital development choices were made -
Aaron with Charter School Development Corporation decided what were the most important improvements to be made. \$15,000 still in budget for security (ID scan reader; simple 3 camera surveillance system?)

B. Personnel Committee – Tom Carrigan

Various meetings over the summer. Changes in staff handbook were presented to staff and evaluation forms were completed as far as agreement or disagreement with such changes. The personnel committee then reviewed these changes. The personnel committee operates on consensus with Tom having the ability to make decisions. The staff handbook was approved

The Great River School board has reviewed and approved the staff handbook for academic year 2008-2009.

Offered by: Kira Donnelly
Seconded by: Andrea Christensen

Adopted this 26th day of August, 2008 by unanimous GRS Board vote.

C. Building Committee – Ben Moudry

* expansion planning process

Tom Bailey dropped off a packet from Mark Lenz, our architect. The recommendation is that we get this signed tonight or have someone with legal background look over this.

We do need a contract with our architect before he can move forward. Drawings need to be looked at by the end of September.

Board needs to look at and approve code compliance, program compatibility and budget compliance.

Overall vision is to produce a dream structure that will last at least five years without any major changes.

Judy summarized that our leaseholder has proposed a re-negotiated lease with build out with possible option to buy in the future.

Last board meeting, we approved the letter of intent to continue the discussion with Charter School Development Corporation.

Right now the conversation is at the staff level. Staff will meet with architect to discuss program needs, form and function and possible renovations on the interior of the building. Parent and community involvement will be solicited but we are on a very tight Timeline. This is a short term build out. There is a longer term strategic plan for either staying in this location or other possibilities.

Mark questioned the lack of involvement from parents, students and community. All board members were invited to a building meeting. The meeting took place and yesterday the staff met to discuss the building. Mark suggests that all constituents be involved early on.

The program drives the form of the building. Ben is leading staff discussions on program needs and how the form of the building can meet the required function.

Tom added that we are a little stuck because the pod plan was pulled out unexpectedly. Ben and Tom have done a very good job of pulling these pieces together.

Ben said that drawings have to be done by mid-September. We do have a good architect and do not have time to look further for another architect. MDE and charter school development both approve working with Mark our architect.

Action for tonight: make a plan for how to move forward with contract with the architect.

Judy requested authorization to sign the contract if Kelly Rodieck approves the legal document.

The Great River School board authorized the Board chair to sign the contract with Mark Lenz, Architect upon legal approval.

Offered by: Tom Carrigan

Seconded: Candy Husemoller

Approved by unanimous board vote on this 25th day of August, 2008.

D. Fundraising and Development

Tom presented on behalf of Lydia. Expanded curriculum way ahead of last year. Doing well so far. Roberta Casey will work with the fundraising committee.

E. Nominations committee

Need new staff member to replace Dave Melvin.

F. Parent Involvement Committee

This committee has not gotten off the ground yet. Judy is working with Lydia to communicate with parents on having this start during this academic year.

G. Strategic Plan

No updates. Most updated plan will be put on the website.

New business

1. Use of building in summer of 2009 – carry over to September
2. Calendar and student handbook

The Great River School board has approved the Academic Year Calendar and student handbook.

Offered by: Andrea Christensen

Seconded by: Paulette Zoe

Adopted this 26th day of August, 2008 by 8 in favor and one absention GRS Board vote.

3. Field Trip Board Approval:

Kira brought up the fact that due to the increase of gas and food, we are over budget. We are not over budget for key experiences, we are eating into May Term experiences.

In future discussions we will determine how to deal with other parts of the budget impacted by recent inflation and gas price hikes.

The Great River School Board has approved the Junior and Senior High fall trips for the the academic year 2008-09.

Offered by: Tom Carrigan

Seconded by: Mark McGregor

Adopted this 26th day of August 2008 by unanimous board vote.

Kira moved to adjourn at 8:50 PM.

Consent Agenda
August 26, 2008

C08082601 The Great River School Board approves the July 23, 2008 minutes and contracts for Andrea Martin, Interim Director, Mary Donovan (EA) Melanie Peterson-Nafziger, Zachary Scott, Colleen Straiton, Nelson Inz, and the addendum to the contract of Enrique Garita (no soccer), teachers and staff.

Offered by: Andrea Christensen

Seconded by: Kira Donnelly

Adopted this 26th day of August, 2008 by unanimous GRS Board vote.

08082601 Check Register

The Great River School board has reviewed the check register listing checks written on GRS's behalf from July 1, 2008 through July 30, 2008.

Offered by: Tom Carrigan

Seconded by: Candy Husemoller

Adopted this 26th day of August, 2008 by unanimous GRS Board vote.

08082602 GRS Board Meeting Schedule

The GRS Board approves the following meeting schedule:

Wednesdays, 6:30 – 8:30 on:

September 24

October 22

November 19

December 17

January 14

February 18

March 25

April 15

May 27

June 24

Offered by: Andrea Christensen

Seconded by: Candy

Adopted this 26th day of August, 2008 by unanimous GRS Board vote.