



## Board Meeting Minutes

Desert Sky Montessori

Virtual Meeting

January 19, 2022

Jessica Loukonen called the meeting to order at 6:15pm.

**Present:** Jessica Loukonen, Cara Nowak, John Eskew, David Trexler, Kevin McKennon, Daisy Sexton

**Also Present:** Jodie Borgia, Julia Sutter, Heather Phillips, Pascaline Ocana, Ute-Anja McDonald, Darlene Weaver, Deli Thordarson, Kyle Thordarson (until 6:35pm)

### BUSINESS

- A. New Branding Presentation with Deli and Kyle Thordarson
  - a. Kyle Thordarson is a parent of a child in the Otter class at DSM; Deli Thordarson's husband; graphic designer with his own business for 8 years
  - b. Kyle Thordarson: wanted to visually communicate a desert sky with the new logo using geometric shapes; presented a secondary logo that is horizontal; presented a line logo so that the primary and secondary logos can be used during single-color printing; showed mockups of the logo being used on the website, social media, stationary, business cards, and merchandise
  - c. Deli Thordarson: has been managing the current website a little bit this year and is working on updating the website; would like to launch both the rebranding and the new website at the same time
    - i. Presented the new website design to the board
      1. Would like parents to be able to use the website more often—capable of making payments online, calendar with upcoming events highlighted, subscription to newsletter available (would like to streamline how parents receive information from us with this feature)
      2. Links to social media and Vimeo
      3. Website built on Squarespace
  - d. Deli Thordarson: hopes that the new look will catch people's eyes right in time for next school year's lottery to open; can go live with launching the rebrand after this meeting if everyone is onboard
    - i. The board stated appreciation for the work put into the logo and website and supports moving forward with the rebranding; does not believe a board vote is needed as this seems to be an administrative decision
  - e. Julia Sutter: will be asking the parents who attend this week's PCA meeting what kinds of merchandise they would like to have offered for purchase

B. Jodie Borgia: Head of School Report

- a. Feedback from parents concerning her leaving has been supportive and kind; offers thanks the board for their support, specifically Kevin McKennon for helping with the video and David Trexler for helping with the advertisement
- b. The child involved in the threat incident last month has left the school as our recent late start [due to weather] was the last straw for the parents concerning how poorly public schools are run
- c. Staffing
  - i. Amanda Olson's class will be staffed by Sophie Barttels and Louise Wilson through February
- d. Covid updates
  - i. No longer contact tracing indoors if children are masked—larger schools are overwhelmed trying to keep up with this
  - ii. No official need to quarantine if the children are in school and masked when an exposure happens; if unmasked when an exposure happens (mainly lunches), it is considered a high-risk situation and will be contact traced
  - iii. When a child tests positive, Jodie Borgia will be sending an email outlining the minimum requirement for quarantine as well as a best practice scenario; choices are different for vaccinated and unvaccinated children, but testing through the school will be offered to both even though it is not required
- e. Academic testing began today with language; math testing will begin next week
  - i. Language testing is proving a struggle for the younger children; will be meeting with the teachers to get a plan into place to help these children catch up
- f. Succession planning
  - i. Has scheduled time with each member of the leadership team on a regular basis so they can learn the information they will need for next year
  - ii. Plans to train the new HOS
  - iii. Will have May, June, and July to work with Heather Phillips if there are any gaps to fill
- g. Hopes that half of the children at DSM will be fully vaccinated soon
  - i. Heather Phillips: a majority of the younger children that are catching Covid at DSM are not great at wearing their masks
  - ii. Children who have tested positive for Covid should not be tested again for 90 days according to the health department

C. Julia Sutter: Business Director Report

- a. Audit
  - i. Created her own system this year; did not receive any management remarks for the first time
  - ii. Filed without an extension; taxes are currently being filed
- b. Would like to start talking to Jodie Borgia and Heather Phillips about staffing and enrollment for next year for the budget; will keep the board updated throughout the process
- c. Thank you emails were sent to everyone who donated to the fundraising campaign
- d. Beginning to plan for the move
- e. Inspection report for the new campus

- i. Jenn Limoges recommends we speak to the landlord about the townhall building needing a new roof, exterior painting and caulking, and a falling-down shed that might need to be completely removed
- ii. BLP will be taking care of the mold found; will ask about reassurance this has been done
- iii. Water was found underneath a building, but the inspector couldn't find where it was coming from; installing a vapor barrier might be a good idea
- iv. Kevin McKennon: would like for the rodent problem to be added to the list to talk to the landlord about
  - 1. Julia Sutter: we currently have a \$4000 per year contract with an exterminator who comes out to OWC monthly; BLP has also said that they will replace the netting where they know rodents have entered the building before
  - 2. John Eskew: thinks that rodents will always be an issue, but it will be our responsibility to fix it
- v. John Eskew: would like for BLP to be asked for documentation for when the mold was first taken care of, as it seems to be a reoccurring issue; urges us to remember that we are tenants: we can talk to the landlord about not being on the hook for replacing the roof or the siding, but it would be a conversation, not a negotiation
- vi. Ute-Anja McDonald: suggests that we take pictures of any problems so that if we move out in 5-10 years we will not be held liable
- vii. The board agrees we should go back to Jenn Limoges and the landlord to have a conversation about these things and would like to have a list of what fixes/improvements BLP will be doing before they move out

2022.01.19.01 Cara Nowak moves to approve the December minutes. Kevin McKennon seconds. The December minutes are approved with a correction in spelling by unanimous vote.

2022.01.19.02 Jessica Loukonen moves to renew John Eskew's term as treasurer for 1 year and his term as a member of the board for another 2 years. Kevin McKennon seconds. John Eskew's term as treasurer is renewed for 1 year and his term as a member of the board is renewed for another 2 years by unanimous vote.

#### D. John Eskew: Treasurer Report

- a. We are in good shape overall
- b. Should not expect to get ESSER funds next year
- c. Salaries and benefits are up from last year because of the timing of payroll (2 payouts this December vs 1 payout last December) and because DSM has needed more substitutes this year
- d. Audit: "unrestricted asset" is our reserve; we must keep \$50,000 in there, but we are expecting to be at \$150,000, which is up an extra \$50,000 from last year; this will help with the move, needed construction on the new campus, and salary changes; hopes it will be enough; urges us to be cautious with this reserve
- e. Need to look at class sizes for next year so that we can make a solid budget; need to know this information before making any salary offers

- i. Jodie Borgia: thinks that the ideal numbers are 40 square feet per child for a Montessori classroom—which would give us 140-150 children—but will talk to the teachers to get their opinions on this
- E. Jessica Loukonen: has begun to hear parents talk about middle school expansion and would like for the board to start thinking about creative ways we could make this happen; thinks it is the next step after moving to a new campus
  - a. Jodie Borgia: believes the first priority is to make DSM have a high-quality K-6 program, and thinks small spaces are not conducive for a high-quality program; will need to have teachers to run the program and to make the program; would need the right group of children and parents to open a 7<sup>th</sup> grade—thinks the 5<sup>th</sup> grade group this year would be good candidates for this
    - i. Pascaline Ocana: offers to reach out to her group of 6<sup>th</sup> graders from last year to see what their experience has been with switching to middle school in 7<sup>th</sup> grade
- F. Jessica Loukonen: heard back from Sara Herb [OSBA] this evening regarding policies we will need to have in place to conduct some of the hiring interviews for the new HOS in executive session; writing those policies should be completed in the next 2 weeks
  - a. Has spoken with Rose Archer [a member of DSM’s founding board who hired Jodie Borgia] about interviewing strategies and questions; has some interview questions suggested by Sara Herb; would like to have some questions from Jodie Borgia and Heather Phillips that are more Montessori specific
  - b. Have received 5 applications from Indeed so far; 1 applicant has reached out to Jodie Borgia
  - c. Jessica Loukonen, Cara Nowak, Jodie Borgia, and Heather Phillips will begin to look through all the applications soon
- G. Daisy Sexton: wonders if it would be possible to reopen the preschool on the new campus
  - a. Jodie Borgia: hopes that the new HOS will have a feel for middle school and that Heather Phillips could push for a preschool program, which she thinks needs to be a priority for a Montessori classroom

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned to executive session at 7:40pm.

**Recorded by: Cara Nowak**

***Minutes approved at 2/16/2022 Board Meeting***

