



**Board Meeting Minutes**  
Desert Sky Montessori

62968 O.B. Riley Rd

Bend, OR 97703

March 15, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 6:17pm.

**Present:** Jessica Loukonen, Cara Nowak, John Eskew, Dave Trexler, Kevin McKennon, Daisy Sexton, Jenna Wazny

**Also Present:** Heather Phillips, Deli Thordarson, Luke Racine (until 6:42pm), Scott Anderson (until 6:31pm), Linda Ly Taylor (7:00pm arrival, until 7:10pm)

**OPEN FORUM**

Scott Anderson: concerned about the errors in his and others' paychecks recently at DSM and would like for the board to take action so this will not happen again: was overpaid because of the way Bill Alsdurf Jr set up payroll and was told to be prepared to pay the amount back to the school, which was panic-inducing; his child was also only signed up for dental insurance—which was unwanted—and not medical insurance—which was wanted; would like for a system to be put into place that would insure these types of errors will not happen again—suggests multiple individuals be responsible for going over salaries, insurance, etc, with a fine-toothed comb, perhaps multiple times, and perhaps having this job outsourced

**BUSINESS**

A. Financial/Treasurer Report

a. Luke Racine: Most of the numbers are steady from the month prior

- i. Year to Date: Student Investment Act funds have come through, which has caused the cash balance to rise; salaries, payroll, and school supply costs are up
- ii. Year Over Year: this year's lack of Covid funding accounts for nearly the entire amount of change
- iii. Budget to Actual: total expenses are higher than budgeted; moving expenses were less than budgeted; total revenue is exceeding budget by 5%
  1. John Eskew: the board budgeted for a loss for this year due to the amount of one-time expenses expected; would like to start thinking about next year: the budget will be tight as there are not many areas available for cuts

- a. Suggests upping enrollment and thinking of other revenue sources, mainly fundraising
      - i. Jessica Loukonen: thinks a plan for fundraising outlining timelines, etc, should be made during the summer
  - iv. The audit is in its final stages, with a few outstanding questions to be answered

B. Heather Phillips: Head of School Report

- a. March is Social-Emotional Learning month: the impacts of the lack of social-emotional learning are being felt at DSM, especially since Covid
- b. Staffing: have had a lot of illness, but have a wonderful group of substitutes currently available; would like to plan a fun staff night; would like to start planning for next year's contracts: have learned that renewal letters should be offered today, but there is no budget in place for next year; would like to figure out some additional systems around hiring, salaries, insurance offered, etc
- c. Enrollment is steady; healthy waitlist currently; there was a good turnout for the final informational night
- d. Deli Thordarson is continuing to work with the BLP's IT [Information Technology] team concerning switching to Clever
- e. The Middle School Task Force met with Susan Andree about the development of an adolescent program
- f. DSM's charter renewal has been approved by BLP; BLP seems very excited about the possibility of DSM developing a middle school
- g. Cara Nowak: wonders if it would be helpful and possible for the board to have an initial budget for the following school year approved each February to help with the contract renewal letters
  - i. John Eskew: it would be possible to have the budget available by then
  - ii. Deli Thordarson: having renewal letters out by March 15 is a requirement by law
- h. Deli Thordarson: DSM is switching to Clever to use the district's licenses to the programs, thus saving DSM money; the issue is merging DSM's previous student progress onto the district's Lexia program—DSM students cannot access this program again until this has been fixed

C. Linda Ly Taylor: Grants

- a. Have a few huge grants that are coming up soon, covering funding for infrastructure, new construction, staff, and salaries; need budgeting numbers to apply for some of these
- b. Jessica Loukonen: thanks Linda Ly Taylor and Darlene Weaver for their hard work on securing grants
  - i. Daisy Sexton: would like to know how much time they are spending on this
    - 1. Linda Ly Talyor: researching is a huge part of what is done; personally averaging 5 hours per week researching and/or writing grants
      - a. Jessica Loukonen: would like for DSM to afford to hire a professional grant writer to help, but do not have the budget for this currently

D. Deli Thordarson: Business Director Updates

- a. Plumbing: some repair work was done on a toilet

- b. HVAC system: filters were replaced; one of the heat pumps froze and will need to be rechecked
- c. Gutters need cleaning and downspouts are completely full—there's a bid out for this work
- d. Working on collecting this year's resource fees; last year's invoices are still being sorted, as some families were not billed for the entire year
- e. Discovered lots of payroll discrepancies: some staff had not been paid enough, some staff had been paid too much; medical and dental benefits had not been set up correctly—all seems to be correct now
  - i. Daisy Sexton: suggests a reminder is sent out for staff to double-check their first paycheck stubs each year
  - ii. Deli Thordarson: PERS [Public Employee Retirement System] has also been done incorrectly—will be creating all new reports from November of this year until present day; these fees will come out of the budget all at once; concerned that the previously budgeted amount will be short since part-time employees were mistakenly not included in this
    - 1. Heather Phillips: thinks employees should also be given access to their PERS accounts to double-check their balances

2023.03.15.01 Daisy Sexton moves to approve the minutes from February. Jenna Wazny seconds. The minutes from February are approved by unanimous vote.

E. Jessica Loukonen: Board Chair Update

- a. Parent night has been scheduled at AVID Cider
- b. Board minutes have been printed and are available in the office per policy

F. Heather Phillips: Expansion Committee Update

- a. Susan Andree's visit was wonderful and informative; would like to gauge family commitment to a middle school program, perhaps with a presentation followed by a survey
- b. Could contract with Susan Andree in June to develop a program—would take about 16 weeks to complete; need to explore and research program materials also
- c. Discussed exploring modular options or leasing another site
- d. Discussed focusing the program on a CTE [Career Technical Education] module: would rely on partners within Central Oregon's community sharing their time and expertise; lots of funding/grants available for CTE in Oregon
  - i. Dave Trexler: CTE aligns with a Montessori-based middle school, which is focused more on the development of the child rather than classic education
- e. Heather Phillips and Deli Thordarson are thinking of aiming for a middle school opening in the 2024/2025 school year

G. OSBA [Oregon School Boards Association] Policies

- a. Jessica Loukonen: would like to get these to OSBA next week
- b. Edited policies: discussed and made agreed upon changes; Cara Nowak to clean up redundancies amongst policies

2023.03.15.02 Cara Nowak moves to appoint Heather Phillips as Head of School. John Eskew seconds. Heather Phillips is appointed as Head of School by unanimous vote.

H. Renewing Secretary of the Board's Position

- a. Cara Nowak: is willing to stay on as secretary, but would like to begin transitioning the position to someone else during this year

2023.03.15.03. Daisy Sexton moves to renew Cara Nowak's term as Secretary of the Board. Kevin McKennon seconds. Cara Nowak's position as Secretary of the Board is renewed by unanimous vote.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:13pm.

**Recorded by: Cara Nowak**

*Minutes approved at 4/19/2023 Board Meeting*