

**Mulberry School Board of Trustees Minutes
Meeting, October 20, 2021**

This meeting of the Mulberry School Board of Trustees was called to order at 6:32 p.m. via Zoom.

Voting Trustees Present

Nicole Loventhal
Fatosh Hacigumus
Timothy Wood
Cheri Goodman
Gretchen Nakamura
Bill Pfahnl
Jack Christin
Malika Adam

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Non-voting Trustee Present:

Kara Riordan (Head of School)

OPEN MEETING

The board approved the agenda for this meeting as amended.
The board approved the minutes for the September 15, 2021, meeting.
Bill volunteered to be timekeeper for the meeting.
Malika volunteered to be meeting note-taker in Jack's absence for the first half of the meeting.

Nicole provided the board with an update on the Magic of Mulberry fundraising campaign planned for Fall 2021. As of October 21, 2021, there is 100% contribution from the Board of Trustees.

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Cheri reminded the Board members that have been on the board since last year to submit their self-evaluation form and return back to her via email.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Governance

With a motion by Nicole and a second by Bill, Gretchen was unanimously elected to a new 2-year term provided she is willing to serve. Gretchen agreed to stay on board for the rest of the school year. Motion approved.

With a motion by Nicole and a second by Bill, the board elected Tiffany Coletti Kaiser to a one-year term as trustee. Motion approved.

With a motion by Nicole and a second by Bill, the board elected Michelle Coddington to a one-year term as trustee. Motion approved.

As it stands, there is a 50/50 board representation of parents and non-parents. To keep a balance of Board perspectives, it is a best practice for parents to comprise no more than 50% of the Board. The Board agreed to keep this in mind as we continue to search for new trustees.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Finance Committee

Fatosh provided an update of the October financials and budget-to-actuals. Due to tuition inflow and Magic of Mulberry's progress, we are on track to budget. Currently expenses are tracking below budget due to administrative expenses timing issues and lower payroll expenses as we have 2 open positions. Rent (including deferred rent) is on track to scheduled payments and facilities expenses is tracking to budget.

Fatosh walked the Board through the budget to actual analysis. Variances for Maintenance and Property & Use Tax were discussed. Further investigation is needed to understand what our maintenance contract covers and why taxes are over budget.

Bill recommended we include a column for the difference of budget and actuals-to-date. He also recommended we implement a formal reconciliation process for the budget to actuals to ensure items are not mis-posted or mis-coded. Kara to discuss this process with Deepti.

Gretchen Nakamura joins

Administrative and HOS Reports

Kara reviewed key topics in the reports sent to the Board. Her key points are:

- Enrollment initiatives: The next virtual Open House will be on October 21 and the town of Los Gatos is having an event at Belgatos Park on October 23.
- Leadership / Networking: Deanna is leading a new group in BADA (Bay Area Admissions Directors) for schools that have only one person on their admissions/enrollment teams.
- Magic of Mulberry: The goal is \$150,000 with the current total being \$101,200 (including corporate matches). There is contribution from 100% Board of Trustees, 88% Faculty and Staff and 29% Student Body. The Letter to Alumni and "Friends of Mulberry" will go out this week.

- Health and Safety update: To date, we have not had any shared COVID cases on campus due to the robust safety plan and communication. There are individual communications with parents answering Q&A, bi-weekly calls with the County Health Department and Department of Education and bi-weekly check-ins with the State Health Department in place.
- Communications: We are continuing to release the Weekly Buzz and ongoing communications about safety and health. We are regularly updating the all-school communications, Staff and Parent Portals / Google Sites and school calendar.
- Operations: We have supported finalizing the tech agreement for 2021/22, on-going maintenance of campus and ongoing fire drills scheduled for the end of October. There is continuous work with the recess team to provide a safe environment and continue to manage / support JK and Kindergarten Extended Care and staff. We are coordinating and schedule school photos and preparing for the Harvest Festival & Halloween celebrations. We are also working on getting a virtual author visits back to Mulberry.
- Marketing – with The Point Collective: Postcard retargeting print runs from Oct-April, large format banner will be installed on the fence along the field and updates to website will occur as needed and SEO. We will continue to use Google Ads, targeted social media ads, Google My Business and Referral Bonus for marketing purposes.
- Marketing – in house efforts: Posts to Facebook and Instagram occur 2-3 times per week. We are in the process of creating a new YouTube Channel and researching alternatives to Bonfire including planning to release more spirit wear on Bonfire.

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Timothy Wood joins

- Head of School report: There are huge data surveys for both CAIS and NAIS called DASL (Data Analysis for School Leadership). This is an online tool independent schools can use to find actionable data related to all aspects of school operations. We will be able to leverage the tool to run benchmarking reports and look at trends. Kara recommended our Board members to leverage this tool when are doing our individual committee work.
- Timothy is the coordinator for the CAIS accreditation. The first training is on 10/25 to train 5 board members.
- Enrollment – Middle School Strategy: The “All about MS” meeting is scheduled for November 15 where 2-7 grade parents and parents who have expressed interest if

not yet enrolled will come together. We will survey parents after the meeting and plan to outreach-to-build external pipeline.

Fatosh Hacigumus is excused
Jack Christin joins

- Enrollment – Preschool: Half day room will go from 20-22 with the enrollment goal being 24 students. Full day room requires further review and adjustments before adding more headcount.
- National enrollment action roundtable (NEAR): The NEAR forum is held by NAIS and led by two HOS colleagues in Bay Area. The purpose is to network and solve shared problem between independent nonprofit schools.
- Hiring / HR: HR consulting group will focus on compliance, policy, handbooks. HOS will take a more active role in recruiting and hiring. We are budgeted for additional headcount of 3 positions and are actively recruiting. The Grade 2 aide has been hired and HOS is working with Musical Theater colleagues to explore a partnership for one show and 1:1 meetings with 3-4 additional candidates for Music / Drama instructors. There is a curriculum and instructional coaching for new faculty.
- Teaching and Learning: MAP testing is administered for Grades 2-8 and results were reviewed for formative information to adjust content and skill pacing. There are fall goal setting meetings held with parents' grades JK-4; 5th to 8th; these are in process. Faculty meetings are held weekly and two per month are grade level collaboration, one is all elementary and all MS and one includes All.
- Development: There is an in-house / admin running MoM. Currently, no interest from job posting for Development Coordinator. HOS has thank you calls to each family who has donated and targeted reach outs to capacity donors / alumni. Bill kicked off Strategic Development Committee meeting with two new members; action plan has been reviewed.

Summary of Trustee webinar

Jack provided an update of the latest Trustee webinar. The webinar was hosted by Lynn Wendel (Consultant to Independent School Boards). Key takeaways include:

- We should recruit good trustees and set clear attainable goals every year
- The school leadership should identify long term goals and ensure there are resources to achieve them
- When recruiting trustees, we should lookout for a mission fit, engage with them and be clear of expectations

- Committees and board should work together: it's important to get a sweet spot of trustees who are engaged and ask questions without turning it into a long-winded conversation
- Tip: don't vote on recommendations when they are brought up, wait until the next meeting
- It's important to set board calendar meetings with clear objectives
- For the next 1-2 year horizon, we should prioritize enrollment and DEI

Nicole reminded the Board about the confidentiality of matters discussed and action items during these meetings. All information is to be kept confidential unless explicitly stated otherwise.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 PM.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Motions Approved:

Agenda for this meeting approved.

September 15 2021 minutes approved.

Gretchen Nakamura was re-elected as Trustee for the rest of the school year.

Tiffany Coletti Kaiser was elected as Trustee to a 1-year term.

Michelle Coddington was elected as Trustee to a 1-year term.

Future Agenda Items:

Determine who will attend the next Trustee webinars below

- November 18: Chair Roundtable (current or incoming board chairs only)
- January 13: Critical perspectives on institutional sustainability