

MINUTES

MISF BOARD MEETING

DECEMBER 11, 2019

7:30 AM – 9:30 AM

ST. CROIX LUTHERAN ACADEMY, WEST ST. PAUL

AGENDA

- Greeting from Todd Russ, President of St. Croix Lutheran Academy
- Legislative Update from Shep Harris, MISF Lobbyist
- Review and approve minutes from 9/18/19 meeting
- President's report/updates
 - * Development report
 - * Membership renewal
 - * Nonrenewal list
 - * High priority schools
 - * Program report
 - * School Leadership Conference/survey results
- Finance report: balance sheet, income statement, restricted funds tracking, cash flow, dashboard
- Resource Development/STEM update
 - * STEM program overview
 - * Grant pipeline and prospect review
 - * Action items
- Other Business

MINUTES

Those present: Tim Benz, Tim Berner, Jennifer Cassidy, Lynn Farmer, Josh Killian, Brian Lynch, John McCall, Teri McCloughan, Wyayn Rasmussen, Kelly Regan

Those present via conference bridge: Mike Brennan, Veena Lakkundi, Michael Lamb, Joel Landskroener

Staff Present: Michele Skare, Lisa Vosbeek

Meeting was called to order at 7:31 AM.

Greeting by Todd Russ, President, St. Croix Lutheran Academy

Legislative Update

Shep Harris, MISF Lobbyist, provided an outlook for the 2020 legislative session. A summary document was distributed and will be posted on the board web page. Highlights:

Because this is not a budget year, there will be a short session which will run from 2/11/20 through approximately 5/18/20.

Committee deadlines will be mid-March through mid-April, with a spring break during the week of 4/6.

The House and Senate are both up for election, and some retirements have been announced. Look for some “gotcha” votes around education, transportation, guns, abortion, family paid leave, etc.

This is a bonding, not budget, year. There is an approximately \$1.3 billion dollar surplus from the November biennial budget forecast. They will wait for the February forecast, and then begin working on how to spend.

The MISF agenda will be to wrap up what was started during the last session: nonpublic pupil funding for security expenses and mental health counseling. MISF/lobbyist will serve as a resource to elected officials involved in E-12 education public and fiscal policy.

Each year, approximately 3000-4000 new bills are introduced. Shep will monitor these bills, and note those which will concern/effect nonpublic schools.

MISF/lobbyist strategies are to work in collaboration with other private school groups (MCC, JCRC, MAIS) on our top two priorities, recruit chief authors and introduce legislation and lobby committee members, meet with MDE commissioner and Governors office, neutralize opposition from education advocacy groups (MASA, EdMN, MSBA, etc.)

Suggested actions for MISF board: Identify legislative candidates from MISF schools and ally organizations, invite legislators to tour schools, utilize those key relations with legislators, leaders, administration officials.

Also provided was a list of members of the House Ed Policy and Finance committees, and the Senate Education committee.

Question for Shep: Will there be any pushback on Charter schools this year? He believes not. There has been more focus on the authorizers of charter schools to have all details in order prior to opening a school.

Question: New York was dealing with the “Substantially Equivalent” issue, which would seem to empower public school administrations to have authority over private schools. We don’t see anything like that happening here in Minnesota, and the issue has died down in NY as well.

Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes from the 9/18/19 meeting as written made by Jennifer Cassidy, seconded by Josh Killian. Minutes approved.

President’s Report:

Tim and Lisa attended conferences for three groups to which many of our member schools belong: MNSAA, LCMS (all workers), and WELS. During the course of these conferences they interacted with 64 schools, some of which are not currently members. It was good to note that some of our members were bringing their colleagues to our booth to introduce them to us.

We held two well-attended Lunch & Learn Seminar/Webinars this fall, one on social media and one on the new science standards. We see that good content drives good attendance.

The 990 report is complete and has been distributed to all board members for their review. A copy is posted on our website.

We have changed our credit card processing vendor from Heartland to PayPal. This will result in a yearly savings of approximately \$2000.

We had been using RBC financial planning to help us with our retirement planning, but have not been satisfied with the customer service we have gotten from them, so are looking to change vendors.

Canopy IT Services (our provider) conducted an IT equipment audit and has recommended that in FY21 we purchase new laptop computers and a new server.

Tim has been reappointed to the Nonpublic Education Council (of which he is chair). New members of the council this year are Emily Dahdah from the Archdiocese and Haidee Todora, president of Rochester Catholic Schools.

Tim has also been invited to serve on the Catholic Community Foundation Development/Marketing Committee, and just attended the orientation session.

We received an email from Jim Hield of the WEM Foundation, notifying us of a \$20K grant, affirming their commitment to nonpublic education and telling us that they value what we do for schools.

Development Report

Hard copies of the Development Report were distributed. Highlights include:

Tim and Lisa met with Tammy Davis Cownie, the new President of the Hardenbergh Foundation. A grant request was delivered at this meeting for \$25,000 in General Operations support. Jeff Peterson, the former president of the Foundation remains on the board as a trustee. Notification will come in December.

Boston Scientific Foundation - \$20,000 grant, for the STEM Community Partnership (Science from Scientists (SfS)). Jessica Aleshire from Boston Scihas joined our STEM Advisory Committee.

Tim met with Paul Verret, the fund advisor for the Katherine B. Andersen of The Saint Paul Foundation. The fund provided a \$50,000 General Operations grant to MISF in 2017, and indicated they would consider funding again in 2019. We will be submitting a letter to them.

Membership Report

Membership dashboard, current member list, high priority schools list, and nonrenewing schools lists were distributed.

Out of a possible 156 schools that could renew:

4 closed (merged into one new school, which has joined and counts as a new member in 20-21)

3 that had leadership turnover didn't renew

1 school leader is doubling as the schools' superintendent and for this year elected to join as an Associate member

1 cited a cost issue

1 had never really been engaged and involved members

The 3 top reasons for not renewing are virtually always: leadership change, member disconnect/not participating, cost/budgetary issue. We offer discounted first year membership and all first time attendees to the school leadership conference receive discounted pricing as well.

Suggestion: could board members who are school heads come alongside new leaders and show them ways to be engaged, value of membership.

Suggestion: Produce a video featuring members (school heads on board), funders, not just MISF staff saying THIS is our value add, this is why MISF is needed. Showing this through testimonials is more impactful. Can also be shown at Awards event. Here is the current About us video <https://vimeo.com/333565000>

Question: Do we know/understand which schools are under financial stress? Do we know their operating budgets? Some of this information is available in the SCOPE study.

Some schools have been using title funds to pay part of their membership. For a school in the St. Paul district, we analyzed how much of their membership went towards professional development; which, in that instance, was 60-66%. The district paid that portion of their dues.

Program Report

The survey from this year's School Leadership Conference was distributed. Ratings were excellent/very good over all. Participants very much appreciate the networking opportunities and relationships that are built at the conference. Example: the new head of school at Pioneers Academy met the head of legacy school Maranatha Christian Academy. Maranatha's head of school is spending time with the new principal Pioneers, giving him advice and guidance as he did to the previous principal. Over 20 first time attendees this year who paid a discounted rate (2 nights for the price of one.)

Finance Report

The financial narrative was distributed at the meeting, and all reports are posted on the website. Items of note:
-School Leadership Conference sponsorships were ahead of budget-Kudos to Lisa for her work in securing sponsors.
-We are switching to PayPal as our credit card processor, and will see a monthly savings of approximately \$200.
-As always, we see a savings on the health insurance line since we budget for all employees and only one is taking insurance at this time.
-We continue to put \$3K/month in reserve even now that the note is paid.

STEM Program Update

We are seeing changes in STEM funding/funders and all areas of philanthropy. Funders are narrowing focus, and grants are being further restricted/designated and narrowed. Funders want to target their dollars to under served/under resourced communities. Some, such as 3M, are seeking out new priorities, directions or constituencies, or wish to restrict grants by region/geographically.

Gen ops support, which we have traditionally received from Schulze, WEM and Hardenbergh Foundations is becoming more rare.

MISF has a history of heavy reliance on a limited pool of funders/donors.

Question: Have we thought of creating programs specifically for underserved communities?

Answer: We now have a partnership with Science from Scientists, which targets under served/resourced schools. Each school is paired with a scientist for 9-10 sessions of curriculum and professional development.

MISF has awarded nearly \$1.2 million in STEM grants over the past 11 years (over 250 individual grants). The money for these grants has traditionally been raised one year in advance. With the change in 3M's funding model, we anticipate a \$100K drop off in funding after FY 20: from \$215.5K to \$115K (this amount takes into account an extra \$15K received from Schott Foundation in FY20.)

In addition to just awarding STEM monetary grants, in 2016 we began building Community Partnerships with organizations like Science from Scientists and The Bakken Museum to provide STEM programming and support to our member schools.

Grant Pipeline

The grant pipeline report and prospect review were distributed. Highlights include:

- Submitted a request to Boston Scientific Foundation, and have contact with a member of their community relations team..
- Were declined by Protolabs/Minneapolis Foundation. We schedule follow up meetings when our requests are declined, to get feedback and see how we can better position ourselves.
- Were declined by Donaldson Foundation, Bloomington. They want to see direct impacts /more targeted focus and employee involvement
- The Carlson Family Foundation grants are now by invitation only.
- We will write grants to these funders: Xcel Energy Foundation (by invitation, due 1/25), Rosemount/Emerson (due 3/1), Schott Foundation (due 4/1), 3M Foundation (by invitation, due 4/30.)
- We have STEM support for our schools secured through Community Partners' grant requests: Wells Fargo/We Share Solar- \$30K, Cargill/Science from Scientists-\$10K, Schulze Family Foundation/Science from Scientists-\$10K.
- Grants from Cargill, Pentair, and General Mills are by invitation only. We need a contact at Cargill.
- Were declined grants from Polymet Mining, RBC, Lanners Family Foundation, Old National Bank Foundation, HB Fuller, nVent, and Ciresi Walburn Foundation for Children. Perhaps need to target specific projects when applying again.

Prospect Review

The list of Development Prospects was distributed. Highlights include:

- US Bank/Gen ops. Need introduction to key employees/trust officers that might be interested in engaging and supporting private education.
- nVent (offshoot of Pentair)/STEM. Grant cycle opens in spring 2020. Need connection and possible employee engagement.
- GHR Foundation. Invitation only, and we continue to develop that relationship. There is a possible opportunity in early 2020, but for project/program only - no operating support.
- Discussion: Have we looked at United Health Foundation? Perhaps support for the mental health/social emotional programming.

Action Items/Suggestions

- Convene a group of teachers/staff, with an agenda around brainstorming, to identify very specific goals and champions for schools' needs.
- Bring a facilitator to the next meeting, discuss ways that the board can help with resource development.
- Send the prospect list around again, asking for feedback: "Who is missing from this list?"
- What do you need from us to tell our story? Elevator speech cards, video (link).

Adjournment

There being no further business brought forth move to adjourn made by John McCall, seconded by Kelly Regan. Meeting adjourned at 9:36 AM.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Wyayn Rasmussen". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Wyayn Rasmussen – Secretary

1/9/2020