

MINUTES

MISF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

SEPTEMBER 9, 2020

7:30 AM-9:30 AM

ZOOM MEETING

AGENDA

- Review and approve minutes from 6/17/20 meeting
- President's report
 - * CARES Act—ESSER/GEER Funds
 - * School reopening
 - * Issues affecting private/independent schools
 - * Renewals
 - * Updates
 - * Development report
 - * Membership report
 - * Advocacy update
 - * Program report
 - * STEM Conference
 - * School Leadership Conference
 - * Education Awards – postponed indefinitely
- Finance report: balance sheet, income statement, restricted funds tracking, cashflow, dashboard
 - * Audit
- Strategic plan prework and status
- Other business

MINUTES

Those present: Tim Benz, Teri McCloughan, Joel Landskroener, Josh Killian, Brian Lynch, Wyayn Rasmussen

Staff Present: Michele Skare

Meeting began at 7:32 AM.

Motion to approve the minutes as written made by Wyayn Rasmussen, seconded by Brian Lynch motion passed.

President's Report:

During the last 3-4 months, we have written the case for our existence. In addition to our own member schools, nonmember schools (some very small) with no connecting body have come to us needing assistance with questions and issues.

CARES Act:

This is a very frustrating time for everyone, including the MDE, as there are many questions and not a lot of answers forthcoming. The USDE guidance was very unclear, and this has not been handled well. This has led to strained relationships between nonpublic schools and their districts (that are also confused and frustrated.)

Tim is meeting weekly with the nonpublic ombudsman at MDE and attends a weekly call with the Commissioner along with other district leaders and superintendents.

School reopenings:

Happy to report positive news so far. Enrollment levels are good, and COVID rules and protocols are being followed.

Ongoing issues:

There are still ongoing issues with administration of student transportation, nursing, special education, and guidance counseling (nonpublic pupil aids) due to schools within the same district using different learning models – in-person/hybrid/distance only. Services must be the same for nonpublics as for publics.

Membership renewals:

Renewals came in quickly after invoices were sent on 6/1/20; they have leveled off now. On 9/1/20 reminder invoices were sent.

Development Report

The Development Report is posted. Highlights include:

There was a strong finish to the fiscal year, including many increased/new grants including WEM Foundation, Hardenbergh, and Boston Scientific.

We were declined for the Ciresi-Walburn Foundation grant and will set up a follow-up meeting with their executive director.

Noted a gap in revenue due to deferred sponsorship revenues.

Our summer intern, Molly Johnson, was wonderful – very helpful with the STEM conference and other special projects.

Xcel and Schulze have been very responsive and pushed grants out very quickly this year, which has been helpful.

Membership Report

The membership report is slightly inflated at this time of the year, with new schools and schools that have and have not renewed all included. We are currently at 161 schools. Second invoices were mailed this week.

We have 8 new schools so far this year, including Our Lady of Grace in Edina. The new schools are from all over the state, which is good to see. The fact that we are doing all PD virtually right now means that they are easily accessible to all schools, not just those in the metro area.

We are tracking about 40 leadership changes in both member and nonmember schools. When member schools get a new leader, we reach out to them in introduction. We will coordinate an "MISF 101" on Zoom for both new and current members – a refresher on who we are/what we can do for schools.

We are beginning to take a closer look at schools that have not yet renewed. Some of them are required to renew, because they received a STEM grant or are in the second year of their new member incentive deal. Some schools are utilizing their Title funds to pay for their membership, which always takes a little longer with money coming directly from the LEA. We anticipate that, by the end of September, we'll be down to about 8-12 real stragglers with whom we will follow up.

Advocacy Update

The Governor will call a special session this week to extend the emergency powers, but otherwise there is not much going on at the capitol with the election just 45 days away. Most of our advocacy time has been spent with MDE, keeping in close touch with the commissioner and other departments. MDE hasn't made any comment about the nonpublic schools reopening. All of our schools have been following all COVID guidelines and protocols, and to date we have not heard of any major outbreaks. The MDH has said that it really is a matter of not if but WHEN outbreaks will occur; they have been very helpful with any questions we or the schools have had.

Program Report

The STEM Conference was held virtually this year, with about 120 attendees. While it was successful and received good reviews, everyone looks forward to being together again in person.

The School Leadership Conference will also be held virtually this year. We are watching as registrations are coming in now. There will be a "Zoomception" held on Monday evening, and two 90-minute sessions on Tuesday. The fee for the conference is \$85, and the conference is for members only.

As a follow-up to the Leadership Conference, MISF will be hosting a 4-part leadership series by Paul Bernabei of Top 20 Training. The series is free for members, and \$75 per session for nonmembers.

The Education Awards event has been postponed; the University of St. Thomas notified us that they have canceled all scheduled events for the remainder of the year. We will look at alternatives.

Discussion: Would it be possible to use a third-party vendor to produce a virtual awards event? This is a definite possibility. We already have sponsors secured; costs would be about the same. Tim and Lisa will investigate further.

Finance Report

The finance report is posted on the website.

The virtual audit took place yesterday. We anticipate having the final report in time for the December board meeting.

The narrative indicates that there are some variances, including some deferred expense items and grants that were received earlier than projected. The PPP loan is still showing as a liability but will eventually come off the books. In discussion with the bank, we will wait until the end of the 24-week period. We anticipate that the full amount of the loan will be forgiven.

We have never accessed any of the money in our reserve account (and we continue to add \$3K/month to the account.) In this fiscal year, we can determine how we will handle that account going forward, now that we have 3 months' worth of funds.

Our income statement looks very good, with 3 new grants and increases in other grants. Some of our program expenses are up but have been covered by the increased income. At the time of this report, we were moving our accounts from Bremer Bank to Premier Bank. We anticipate that all money will be at Premier Bank by next quarter.

The cashflow report shows us in a good position. Debbie continues to monitor our cash flow closely. As mentioned previously, we are recognizing positive income from the fast turn-around on membership billing.

Office space: We are currently looking at 2-3 spaces which we toured last week. Move-in dates are 10/1 or 12/1.

STEM Consultant: We are reducing the consultant contract significantly, due to the restructuring of our STEM funding. We will still use consulting services for conference planning, the LOI/grant application process, and professional development session planning.

Question: Would we consider renting space from a member school? While it wouldn't be a conflict of interest, the optics might appear that we are more closely aligned with that school/governing group.

Question: Will the office remain in/around St. Paul, closer to the Capitol? We are actually looking for space in the Edina/Bloomington area. With our lobbyist, Shep Harris, doing much of the "boots on the ground" work for us at the Capitol, it's easier for Tim to anticipate/plan trips down there (rather than running in/out at the last minute.)

As mentioned previously, the audit work was done yesterday, and we have no reason to believe that there will be any issues to report.

Strategic Planning Update

Veena Lakkundi will be leading us in the next phase of our strategic planning: Resource Development.

Phase one of our strategic plan was the membership journey: moving members along through their membership process and ensuring there was a strong plan for member engagement. Phase two will be looking at resource development:

What is our message to our philanthropy partners?

The prework will look at how we put our message together. First – Tim and MISF staff will write up some bullet points of the work we have done this year: acting as a conduit to the MDE, working with funders to push COVID micro-grants out quickly to schools, disseminating information on the CARES act, ESSER funds, etc. These points will be forwarded to a subcommittee, which will write a cohesive message and then decide how to deliver this message to potential partners and grant making organizations.

Veena pointed out that, due to concerns about the events/unrest over the past summer, many grantors and organizations are creating platforms and initiatives with a lens toward ESG (Environmental, Social Responsibility, Governance.) Our challenge is to find out where we fit: How can we be the vehicle that is the conduit into our schools in those areas, and how do we form new partnerships with granting organizations?

In summary: the first step/prework is: staff gathers bullet points and turns them over to the committee who then refines the messaging.

Aside: Veena aptly stated that “Our Mission has been pressure-tested” over the past few months.

The Executive Committee will make a recommendation to the full board at the September meeting to enter into our next phase of strategic planning: Resource Development and will present the process for moving forward.

We anticipate that the prework can be done within the next 60 days. In 2021, planning will move into the next phase: how best to use the message.

Adjournment

There being no further business brought forth, the Chair asked for a motion to adjourn. So moved by Joel Landskroener, seconded by Josh Killian. Meeting was adjourned at 8:46 AM



Wyayn Rasmussen – Secretary

10/27/2020