

MINUTES

MISF BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

DECEMBER 16, 2020

7:30 AM-9:30 AM

ZOOM MEETING

AGENDA

- Approve minutes from 9/23/20 meeting
- Audit Report – Cathy Lydon, Redpath and Company.
- Advocacy update and legislative agenda – Chas Anderson, Park Street Public
- President's report
 - * Issues affecting private/independent schools
- *Updates
 - * Development report
 - * Membership report
 - * Program report
 - * School Leadership Conference Survey
 - * Virtual Education Awards
- Finance report: balance sheet, income statement, restricted funds tracking, cash flow, dashboard
- Strategic plan prework and status
- Other business

MINUTES

Those present: Tim Benz, Tim Berner, Mike Brennan, Jennifer Cassidy, Lynn Farmer, Josh Killian, Veena Lakkundi, Joel Landskroener, Anna Lima, Brian Lynch, John McCall, Teri McCloughan, Sumita Mitra, Wyayn Rasmussen, Kate Wollan

Staff Present: Michele Skare

Meeting began at 7:33 AM.

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Brian Lynch, seconded by Josh Killian. Motion passed.

A motion to approve the minutes from the 9/23/20 meeting was made by Mike Brennan, seconded by Lynn Farmer. Motion passed.

Audit Report

Cathy Lydon presented the Audit report; and was pleased to note that, once again, MISF had a clean audit, no issues. A copy of the audit report is available [here](#). Chair requested a motion to accept the audit as presented. So moved by Mike Brennan, seconded by John McCall, motion passed.

Advocacy Update:

We needed to make a change in our lobbying efforts, so that we are now able to work in concert with other private school-supporting organizations (MCC, ACSI, CSI, LCMS). These coalitions have pooled their resources and, as one entity, have engaged Chas Anderson from Park Street Public to lobby for us. We have made it clear to the other organizations that **education** is our sole priority – focusing on transportation, textbook aid, counseling, nursing, safe schools, etc. Because we are presenting a united front based on ALL kids, this is a less costly and better use of lobbying dollars for all.

Chas Anderson joined the meeting to present this year's legislative session agenda. Highlights include: Nonpublic schools transportation program, guidance counseling and mental health services, and safe schools program. A copy of the agenda is posted on the website and available [here](#).

President's Report:

The virtual Education awards was held on Thursday, December 10th. Our partners Dan Flaherty (videographer) and W2 Films (producers) did a great job, and the event was very well done. While we did not require people to register, 125 did, and the highest number of log-ins through the event was 160. W2 told us that there is actually a 2.5:1 ratio of log-ins to actual viewers, so theoretically we reached far more people than we ever have before for this event. We received \$3500 through the attached Donation Box which ran next to all the video presentations. The feedback received on our surveys was wonderful. As to cost: the fee which W2 charged us was nearly equal to the amount we would have paid to St. Thomas for food and venue.

The weekly nonpublic school coalition calls are ongoing. They have evolved from just information going out towards all parties to information being **shared** amongst all. Issues being discussed are quarantining students and staff/issues around that, as well as staffing. For all schools, public and nonpublic, finding substitute teachers is very difficult.

CARES Act is back to the original guidance. The USDE frankly overstepped in trying to modify the terms. The FRL (free-reduced lunch) count is at issue. Many of our schools do not report FRL numbers for any number of reasons, and this has been a learning lesson – that it IS a good idea to report those numbers (especially if future funding becomes available), and schools need to find ways to do that. FACTS, TADS or other tuition management companies would have data that could be used to do that.

In Minnesota, there are 533 public school districts.. To date, 56% - 60% of these districts have applied, so 40% of districts have not even applied (or are able to distribute funds) yet. There are Corona Virus Relief funds (available to public schools only) that need to be spent prior to spending CARES act money, so nonpublic schools need to wait until that happens. The ability to appropriate and allocate the CARES money runs through September of 2022. In talking with our members, we know that most of the elementary schools are trying to stay with in-person learning, while high schools are generally in a hybrid (half school/half remote) mode. We have seen some schools taking extra weeks for remote learning around Thanksgiving/holiday season to allow for quarantining after family gatherings or travel.

Development Report

The first report of the fiscal year has been posted, and as usual there is not much activity in the first quarter. We received \$25K from the Hardenbergh Foundation, and our largest individual donor has already gifted us. We exceeded our budgeted goal for Awards sponsorships, by \$3K for a total of \$53K. We have just submitted our request to the Schulze Family Foundation.

Our next Awards program will be held (virtually) in April. While we are being mindful of the timing, cadence and pace of this event, we are balancing that with the fact that if the event is not held in April we would face a

significant budget deficit. Our constituency is also aware that the Awards are usually held in April/Spring, and the timing coincides with the STEM Grant awards.

Membership Report

Eleven new schools have joined us so far in this fiscal year. Our retention rate was 95.5%, higher than in previous years. Included in the membership report is a list of our 8 Associate members – double the amount of Associate members than we had last year.

Program Report

The School Leadership Conference was held virtually in September; a one-day session, focusing mainly on Social-Emotional Learning. As evidenced by the results of the event survey (posted), attendees thought that the virtual event was good, the content important – but the **experience** of being together as a group is the most important element. We hope to be able to hold the event in-person next year. This event also served as a jumping off point for our four-part Social-Emotional Learning Leadership Series, presented by Paul Bernabei of Top 20 Training.

Finance Report

All financial reports have been posted on the website. Brian Lynch, Treasurer, presented some highlights.

On the Balance Sheet: moving accounts from Bremer Bank to Premier Bank has been finalized. The PPP loan is still showing; we have submitted all documents to Premier for review for forgiveness of the loan. All other line items look to be consistent or stronger year over year, and we are in a strong cash position and have operating reserves of \$126K.

On the Income Statement: Revenues are down, but associated expenses are down as well.

When the PPP loan is forgiven, that amount will appear on the income statement as a positive item under “other income.”

Cashflow outlook is positive, with a year-end amount of \$60K which includes \$3K/month in reserves.

Strategic Plan Pre-work

The next phase in our strategic plan addresses how we can increase our range of support. We need to do some prework in clarifying our message.

We have formed a sub-committee (Anna Lima, Mike Brennan, Teri McCloughan, Tim Benz, Lisa Vosbeek) and engaged Eight Moon Branding/Design Group (headed up by Megan Junius, who is familiar with our work and has spoken at a previous leadership conference) to help us craft our message and strategy before launching our next phase.

Meeting with Eight Moon brought up some very interesting sidebars; including even considering our name, logo and tagline. Over the past few years, we have grown and increased the scope of what we are doing for our members – we want to make sure that our messaging reflects that. More to come in future meetings.

Other Business

Question: Do we have any idea of what the increase in enrollment in private schools is due to the pandemic, and what are schools doing to retain that enrollment? Answer: We do not have any firm numbers, but anecdotally we have heard that enrollment is stable if not growing. We have heard that the Archdiocese schools’ enrollment is up by 4%. We expect to learn more when the MDE Fall report is released early next year.

Suggestion: Perhaps present a spring PD session on how to retain enrollment. The Archdiocese is already considering strategies to retain enrollment specifically targeting K-2.

Adjournment

There being no further business brought forth, the meeting ended at 8:52 AM

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Wyayn Rasmussen". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Wyayn Rasmussen – Secretary

2/22/2021