

**Morris Jeff Community School (MJCS)
Board of Directors Meeting**

**Monday, April 8, 2019 5:30 pm
211 South Lopez St.
Library (2nd floor)
MINUTES**

Members Present: Shannon Williamson, Blaine LeCesne, Missy Sparks (arrived at 5:41pm), Lisa Amoss, Brandy Smith, Bill Payne, Maria Newman Carerre, Keyana Scales

Members Absent: Dwight Barnes (prearranged), Leslie Lawrence(prearranged)

The meeting was called to order at 5:31 pm.

I. Review and consideration for approval of Board meeting minutes

Blaine LeCesne moved to approve the minutes. Maria Carerre seconded. No discussion. No public comment. Motion carries unanimously.

II. Morris Jeff Principal's Update

We noted a shift in numbers for the high school students during discussion on item III.

Superintendent Lewis noted that there might be some historical funds to refurbish buildings on the registry. We will wait and see what OPSB will do about the Clark campus and then pursue funds. Later this month, Patricia will attend a meeting about facilities. We are also looking at the old site of John F. Kennedy. Missy Sparks is working on advocating for this as well. Another possibility might be McDonough 35 but there are some facility concerns and there are others who have an interest in the property. Blaine noted that so many of these conversations seem to happen in a roundabout way instead a systematic, equitable process. Patricia suggested that we schedule a meeting with our school board representative to discuss this further. Maria Carerre suggested we add the council member as well. Blaine LeCesne asked that if we secured the Kennedy site, where would the funding come from to build the building. Patricia indicated that she is not sure that OPSB would have to raise or prioritize funding. Missy Sparks asked if there were any remaining funds. It seems that there is some confusion about how all the FEMA funds got spent when several major projects (like Clark and Kennedy) got completed.

Lisa Amoss noted the Feria was a great celebration of school culture and accomplishments.

III. Finance Committee Update and Approval of Statements

The financial statements for February and March include a significant increase in revenue. The MFP funds increased due in part to a one time increase from OPSB related to taxes. The other

The Morris Jeff Community School mission is to offer an education that is a source of freedom and possibility for children, permitting them to develop their talents fully, become effective citizens in our democracy, and attain the foundation they need to excel at high school, college, and beyond.

Please call (504) 373-6258 for assistance accessing the board meeting.

part of the increase is due to the updated census information. Jared has a meeting to follow up with some of the new changes for the MFP that will impact us positively. Jared will provide an update next month. We also have an increased revenue due to our high cost grant reimbursement. We have title 4 reimbursements out but need to submit an updated budget to get the reimbursement. Currently you will notice we are underbudget for custodial expenses. This is due to outstanding invoices from the Clark campus. Additionally, the electricity costs are under budget as well but these costs were incurred in the repairs and maintenance categories.

Next month is the last meeting of the school year, so we must approve the 2019-2020 budget at the next meeting. The board will receive a copy of the budget the week of April 29, 2019 and the annual budget hearing will be May 6th at 5:30pm.

Bill noted that we need additional high school students to relieve some of the budget pressures. Ms. Perkins indicated that the culture is already built in the upperclass students and they can accommodate additional students in those grades. The great thing about expanding the high school is that we can add significant number of students without having to add staff. We anticipate that we will easily fill those seats and this will alleviate some budget pressure.

Brandy Smith moved that we approve the April finance reports. Maria Carerre seconded. No further discussion. Rachel Nicolosi, a parent, asked when the budget would be available to the hearing. Jared indicated that the budget is available upon request 10 days before the budget hearing and will be at the budget hearing. Motion carries unanimously.

IV. Governance Committee Update

The governance committee met via teleconference and discussed a review of the committee structure. It seems that the Community Engagement Committee may be redundant to other committees and professional staff member. The governance committee approved that is moving that forward.

Shannon Williamson commented that the committee was originally formatted before Crystal Daspit was in her role as communications director. Many of the committee functions are redundant to her job description and the pattern was starting to seem that the burden to call the meetings and set the agenda was falling to her. It's clear that this is professional function rather than a board committee role.

Shannon Williamson moved that we dissolve that Community Engagement and Communications Committee. Missy Sparks seconded. Lisa Amoss indicated that at one time that committee was working on building relationships with the neighbors. She asked if there was still a need for that at this point in our time in the neighborhood. Patricia clarified that like all schools we receive complaints regularly, but we have lots of positive movement. All the

The Morris Jeff Community School mission is to offer an education that is a source of freedom and possibility for children, permitting them to develop their talents fully, become effective citizens in our democracy, and attain the foundation they need to excel at high school, college, and beyond.

Please call (504) 373-6258 for assistance accessing the board meeting.

neighbors agreed to let us block the street for Feria, several of them come to Feria or fish fries. We are gaining notoriety in the community and will continue to maintain that dimension. Julie Thibodeaux noted that this community outreach piece will be on our radar if the high school moves to a new location. Maria noted that our two campuses really bookend Mid-City and we have a lot of opportunities to build relationships. Motion carries unanimously.

Bill Payne noted that in May we have a full agenda as we need to approve a slate of officers, reconfirm members whose terms are expiring, sign up for committees and approve the budget. Jared commented that he has a potential candidate to take Brandy's role. Jared and Julie will meet with him this week and refer to the governance committee next week.

Bill Payne indicated that Richard Perque resigned from the board today.

V. Give NOLA Day

Julie Thibodeaux indicated that there was a great cocktail party to support the inclusion fund that raised about \$11,000. The event highlighted our school's diversity. One of the Boh Brothers executive attended that event and has asked to tour the school which is really positive for us.

Give Nola Day is May 7th and we're so excited. Our goals include 100% staff participation. To accomplish this we are providing breakfast on Give Nola day and will have donation stations set. If we get 100% donation there will additional incentives. We are also hoping for 100% board participation, and double the number of donors. We sent out postcards to every donor in the database announcing that all of our Give Nola funds will support athletics. The high school students will write thank you notes to all previous donors. You can schedule donations a week ahead so we will advertise in the carpool line and walk up. We can't plan an event this year because of testing dates. This year, we are asking board members, grade leaders, and room parents to be ambassadors to reach out to their networks. Lisa Amoss asked how we should refer pledges to be included in the board match. Julie indicated that you or they can email a pledge to her. We are also doing a philanthropy lesson with the high school in conjunction with Give Nola Day as well. Finally, if you donate \$30 or more you can get a school magnet. We're so excited to have this opportunity and sending a personal touch.

VI. Open Public Comment Period

Rachel Nicolosi, president of the family partnership, gave an update for MJFP. The Feria was really excellent and it helps us to pay for teacher appreciation events, and other items. The next fundraiser is at Bayou Boogaloo. Rachel mentioned that if you know of any fairs or festivals where we can just show up to run the booth with parent volunteers. MJFP is reworking their bylaws you can check them at the Pelican Press. The changes are really reflective of MJFP supporting what's already happening at MJCS instead of coming up with their own activities.

The Morris Jeff Community School mission is to offer an education that is a source of freedom and possibility for children, permitting them to develop their talents fully, become effective citizens in our democracy, and attain the foundation they need to excel at high school, college, and beyond.

Please call (504) 373-6258 for assistance accessing the board meeting.

One challenge is supporting the high school booster club. They are working through the logistics of how to best support that. They are actively recruiting new members for their leadership team as they are working on diversifying the leadership team to reflect the make up of the school.

Bill Payne raised the issue of creating a process to streamline public comments for efficiency in meetings. Shannon Williamson indicated that we need to consult the open meetings laws for clarification on the policy. It's unclear if boards can limit comment content to agenda items or if the imposed structure can only limit time and order. Lisa encouraged a time limit imposition. Ultimately more research needs to be done and a comment policy drafted for approval.

VII. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 6:40pm

The Morris Jeff Community School mission is to offer an education that is a source of freedom and possibility for children, permitting them to develop their talents fully, become effective citizens in our democracy, and attain the foundation they need to excel at high school, college, and beyond.

Please call (504) 373-6258 for assistance accessing the board meeting.