

Wausau Area Montessori Charter School Governance Council

Minutes of December 5, 2023 Special Meeting

Attendees:

Alisia Jones	Julie Schell
Bethany Stookey	Kate Schuster
Casandra Feidt	Tiffany Rodriguez Lee
Casey Jensen	Tyler Berg
Chris Dietsche	Josh Viegut
Dana Moore	Sharon Schonert (Nexus)
Elizabeth Channel	Sharon Gould (Nexus)

Dawn Dietche
Christine Geimer
Bruce Trueblood
Kim Cruz-Urbe
Christina Vega
Cary Lobner
Lisa Riehle

Virtual attendees:

Molle Bartletti
Katelyn Hills
Jackie Peter
Melissa Polebitski
Amy Bergstrom
Taylor Breyer

1. Call to order & Welcome

6:03 called to order

2. Public comments

No prepared public comment. Guests were invited to ask questions and offer insights and opinion throughout the meeting.

3. Approval of previous meeting minutes

- Chris moved to approve the November 28, 2023 meeting minutes; Casey seconded. The motion passed unanimously with no discussion.

4. Review of November 28th Meeting

Summary presented by Tiffany (see meeting minutes from November 28, 2023).

5. Council Discussion – Advantage/Challenges

- Option 1 – Renovation/Addition from April 2022
- Option 2 – Renovation/Addition update (Elizabeth & Nexus)
- Option 3 – Wait for WSD BOE consultant and potential future restructuring

Climate and culture at Horace Mann

Elizabeth met with Dr. Phelps this past week to discuss concerns raised by staff and council.

- Unkind and dismissive comments/behavior of the HMMS staff towards Montessori staff.
(ex: "This is the 6th grade work room", "Haha...I guess you are just stuck here", Montessori staff have greeted HMMS staff with words and smile only to be ignored.)
Response: A conversation with the HMMS staff and follow up email will be provided to review the expectations for our collaborative nature within this school building. We will actively work on culture/climate.
- Not being able to reserve space within the building before HMMS.
Response: Provide the Montessori calendar to be input at the beginning of the year.
- Lack of access to Allied classrooms for learning.
Response: Our AD students will be able to use any room not in use.

Additional note: this includes Family and Consumer Science rooms, Woodworking and manufacturing rooms, piano room, etc.

- Need for explicit instruction to homerooms to talk about the co-existence of two schools in the same building and expectations on how to be respectful, interact, and/or behave in our shared space.

Response: This has not happened, but a great idea in which to follow through with the HMMS staff.

- With the updated WSD Board of Education decision, we are requesting additional space in the "6th grade wing" for the upcoming years. It is important that our classrooms are in the same area together for cohesiveness.

Response: Room 148 will be provided for us next year.

- Perception that because our school is smaller, we have to work around HMMS schedules.

Response: refer to calendar response

- Possible need to adjust school hours (8:30am-3:30pm) to better meet the needs of our school.

Response: This impacts several factors and needs further review (Encore teachers' schedules, space availability)

Dana shared gratitude to Elizabeth for laying the relationship groundwork with Dr. Phelps.

Casey asked for clarification on room 148 – this will be utilized for our second E2 classroom needed in the 2024-25 school year.

Cassandra questioned reserved space and exterior grounds when impromptu needs arise. Elizabeth will circle back with Dr. Phelps on this topic. Chris asked that the HM schedule is shared with Montessori in advance.

Cassandra questioned if the homeroom discussion with the middle-school students is enough to keep students where they are supposed to be. Elizabeth will follow-up with Dr. Phelps to discuss any additional remediation efforts.

Discussion of school options

- Referendum originally earmarked \$5.3 M for Montessori.
- Josh noted that Nexus provided new estimates for the remaining work and costs are all up approximately 20%.
- The Horace Mann work (without Montessori) was sent out for bids today, December 5, with intention to start construction in the late spring of 2024.
- If we stay at Horace Mann, intention is to start construction on our area in the fall of 2024 (starting with any exterior work and completing interior work over the summer).

Additional needs have been identified since that the referendum drawing was created. The governance council was not interested in pursuing the original referendum mock-up.

Elizabeth presented a revised option (Option 2) utilizing the full space of the current sixth grade wing for Montessori classroom and Encore rooms (excluding gym).

Dr. Phelps sees possibility in making the space available. Would require moving the remaining sixth grade teams to classrooms upstairs and the Care program into a portion of the lower level of the current library.

Suggestions and questions raised:

- Elizabeth proposed preserving the current walls. Cost savings could be used toward a playground, etc.
- Kate proposed a dedicated outdoor space for Montessori to include an age-appropriate playground, our raised garden beds and outdoor classroom space.
- Tyler suggested defining the space as separate from Horace Mann Middle School
 - Christine Vega asked if we could add doors to the hallway across from the Montessori bathrooms (toward allied wing) – Nexus will do a safety analysis.
 - Nexus also suggested visual barrier (change in color and/or materials from the middle school area of the building)
- Kim Cruz Uribe suggested that Horace Mann staff could use the bathrooms across from office and that the current staff restrooms in the allied wing could become student bathrooms – keeping the bathrooms in the Montessori dedicated to Montessori use.
- Cary questioned location of lunches – would we continue to eat in our classrooms?
A. Still to be determined, but preference is to keep our lunch separate from the middle school. Christine wondered if we could eat lunch with Care program.
- Chris asked for a comparison of student capacity for in comparison to what we anticipated at Lincoln. The Horace Mann renovation would accommodate 180 students (18 per grade) compared to the 234 students we anticipated at Lincoln.
- Kate asked if the PA system would be separate from the middle school. The PA has recently been updated to a mass notification system so Horace Mann announcements are no longer heard in the Montessori classrooms.

Nexus requested that we prioritize our requests for the space if we chose to proceed with renovation at Horace Mann.

6. Respond to Request from WSD Board of Education (Action Required)

- Dana moved that the governance council present the board with our option 2: An addition onto Horace Mann with updates/revisions to the original referendum drawing. Tyler seconded. The motion passed unanimously without further discussion.

Josh will speak with Dr. Hilts for recommendation on how to present our request to the board (e.g., Elizabeth/Tiffany speak at board meeting, or Dr. Hilts relays our request, etc.)

7. Further Discussion/Action Items

4K program – Action required if we want to offer 4K next year (Kara Rokowski is presenting the 4K contracts for approval to the school board at the next meeting).

Elizabeth noted that there have been inquiries about 4K as we are listed as a 4K-8 school. We are currently not offering what is in our contract. She also noted that Red Granite will be offering 4K when it opens next year (students will attend two days per week).

State requirements cap 4K instructional minutes. Students would arrive with the general Montessori population for 8:00 start, be present for the morning work period, and be dismissed at 10:30 when

kindergarteners transition to Encore. Children's house classrooms would then consist of 9 (max) kindergarten students for the remainder of the day.

It was noted that 4K cannot ride bus with K-12 students. Families would have to transport their 4K students to and from Montessori.

An additional classroom would need to be requested from Dr. Phelps to accommodate this addition for 2024-25. Also, an additional Children's house classroom guide (currently we have capacity for kindergarten at 18 students, we would add capacity for 18 4K students with classrooms split 9 4K and 9 kindergarten; two sections with a total of 18 students per classroom).

- Tiffany moved to move forward with offering 4K in the 2024-25 school year. Kate seconded. The motion passed unanimously without further discussion.

8. Adjourn

- Tiffany moved to adjourn; Cassandra seconded. The motion passed unanimously with no discussion. Meeting ended 8:31.