

**Mountain Discovery Charter School
Board of Directors Meeting
Thursday, June 19, 2025, 5:30 PM
Jackson County Library 310 Keener St, Sylva**

Open Session

Welcome – Jen called the meeting to order at 5:37pm

Members present:

Voting: Jen Pearson, Alison Joseph, Tim Black

Ex officio: Billie Clemens, Tracy Wharton, Crim Bassett, David Doughty, Betty MacAvoy,
Michael Crew, Londa Bohl

Reading of Vision and Mission

Public Comment at 5:37pm – none

Approval of Minutes from May 2025 – v

Executive Committee/Co-Directors Report

Co-Director Report at 5:38pm

Testing by Tracy 5:38

- Mostly went well. A few things to work on, especially quick turn around on re-testing.
- Lot of good feedback from teachers and assistants.
- 100% participation – everyone tested.
- 22 kids passed during re-test. Summer usually is 2 to 4 extra passed, so a big improvement.
- Betty working with reading portfolios and working with kids - 81% passing – big jump.
- All but one student passed Math 1.
- Middle school math and reading really good – lots of growth. 4th and 5th did well too.
- Almost all passed Earth and Environmental science

Enrollment by Billie 5:31

- 236 enrolled. Room in K (5 spots), 1 in 1st, 1-2 in 8th.
- New students are excited.
- Pre-screening with K, so it helps assess readiness.

Update on the road work by Crim 5:44

- Option A (based on plans previously discussed) – Will take place while school is closed first week of July.

Capital Campaign by Londa 5:47

- 2 years, 2 million dollars.
- Updating website with information
- Software for logging info on campaign. Donor Perfect (has cost) and Give Butter is free. Going to evaluate and make a decision.
- Working on quotes for website updates.
- Evaluating fundraising avenues.
- Lunches for purchase at school – several fast-food locations in Bryson can work on that.
- JAM concerts and ice cream social.
- Families, faculty, board - current and former – donations and referrals.
- Corporate donations – business will be approached.
- Community event this fall – November 1st at Bridge Park – reserved. Public Kickoff. Food truck, music, silent auction, ticket sales, etc.
- Grants – Swain Co commissioners – speak to them individually, and then to the whole board presentation. Asking for funding.

- Sell bricks, name classrooms/offices, for example.
- Trying to keep the campaign in the newspaper. Teacher profiles, student profiles, programs and activities.
- Civic organizations, churches, etc.
- Will need volunteer help.

Co-Director Survey 5:57

- Co-directors will review and make a plan.
- One clear area for improvement was communication.
- Add for next time – facilities.
- Half page summary to share with staff.
- Will share with co-directors – report for teacher and support staff.

Budget Review by Tracy 6:00

- Working through coding issues that have been off for several years (working through those inaccuracies and budget modifications needed)
- Working through past issues for county billing (5 counties need to be billed each month, and then we need to keep track of which payments were received/missed), and making sure good process is in place moving forward to ensure payment are received.
- Polaris is the accountant – we are working with them to improve and clean up budget.
- Several issues in unexpected increases
 - o A big issue is health insurance. We budget 165K and – we overspent (based on the budget) by nearly 50k.
 - o Custodial services – as we’ve grown the cost has grown and budget probably needs to be increased.
 - o Utilities – need to revise electric, water sewer, waste management, telephone, natural gas
- Currently it looks like large deficit – but it includes trailer and bus purchases. Need to figure out our operational surplus or deficit, removing those capital/infrastructure investments.
- Spending out federal money first, so we can roll over whatever is possible.
- Next month we will finalize. Then we start the audit process.
- Anticipated fund balance – around \$500k approximately
- Tracy headed to DPI in July – budget info with a breakout session for charter schools.
- Vote – approve budget that needs to be submitted to the state - Motion by Alison. Tim second. Motion passes.

Closed Session at 6:43pm

Vote to go into closed session – Personnel issues.

Motion Tim. Jen Second. Motion carried.

Vote to return to Open Session Motion Tim. Alison Second.

Open Session at 6:55

Closing at 6:55

- Next meeting – July 17th, 5:30pm. Sylva Library.
- Adjourn – Motion by Tim. Second by Alison. Motion carried.

**Mountain Discovery Charter School
Board of Directors Meeting
Thursday, May 15, 2025, 5:30 PM
Jackson County Library 310 Keener St, Sylva**

Open Session

Welcome – Jen called the meeting to order at 5:30pm

Members present:

Voting: Jen Pearson, Alison Joseph, Tim Black, Dan Mackey

Ex officio: Billie Clemens, Tracy Wharton, Crim Bassett, David Doughty, Betty MacAvoy,
Michael Crew, Lisa Monnat

Reading of Vision and Mission

Public Comment at 5:31pm – none

Approval of Minutes from April 2025 – Motion by Tim. Alison second. Motion passes.

Executive Committee/Co-Directors Report

Co-Director Report at 5:31pm

Strategic Plan by Billie 5:31

- Met with Londa.
- Getting website updated. Starting to use fundraising software.
- Form for volunteers – in Happenings. Brochures will be available at commencement.
- Next steps – list of previous graduates and their family members for potential fundraising
- First week of October - big kickoff week. Food trucks, music, silent auction. Perhaps Sylva rec park.
- Open separate bank account, perhaps Billie will be primary on that. Keeping all that money separate.

Advertising by Tracy 5:37

- New Editor in Bryson – wrote a big article about camping and field trips.
- Today front page – Melissa's bees and garden sale.
- Planning to add stops near Cherokee may help with recruitment from those areas

Camping by Billie 5:40

- Three big ones are done.
- 5th grade doing an overnight with parents in Deep Creek soon.
- One last big beach trip with 8th grade

Enrollment and Lottery by Crim 5:41

- KG still 7 spots
- KG and preschool are down this year overall, so that might be hard.
- 2nd – 1 spot
- 8th – 2 spots
- Others are full with 22-23 kids

SIT Report by Lisa 5:42

- Thanks to Mary Sue Hoag for hard work and volunteering (also she's a substitute teacher and bus driver), did a great job with teacher appreciation!
- SIT egg fundraiser - \$2500 – will be used for improving production equipment at gym.
- Drop off and pick up procedures – Michael working on standard operating procedure, also perhaps speed bump and/or stop signs.
- Last year there was a Kona Ice fundraiser, but this year we are out of time, so perhaps we can do it at open house day.
- End of year staff celebration on last teacher workday.

Finance Committee by Tracy 5:46

- Changes to assistant pay scale. Lots of assistants have degrees (associates or bachelors). Pay scale is much lower than teachers, but assistants do a huge amount of work. Improvements to assistant pay may help with retention and help encourage educational attainment. Sliding scale.
- Assistant – regular scale
- Associates-degree assistants – 6-10 years - \$500 over scale, 11-15 another \$500, 16+ \$500
- Bachelors-degree assistants - 6-10 years - \$2000 over scale, 11-15 another \$2000, 16+ \$2000

- Motion to approve increases to assistant pay as described above. Alison motion. Tim second. All approve.

Strategic Plan by Tracy 5:53

- Surveyor was supposed to come, but they never did – they finally came Tuesday. Waiting for the results of the survey.
- Having a grader come out to look at parking improvement quote. Increased enrollment means more parking is needed.
- We'll get at least 2 quotes. Hope to make progress over the summer

Road Improvements Needed by Crim 5:56

- HMC finally gave an estimate for fixing big potholes
- 16ft x 75ft minimum needed – remove asphalt, add stone, repave. \$8750 quote.
- Other spots around the loop that need help would be an additional \$5820.
- They'll include a speedbump
- Crim has had conversation with the state about becoming state road. Lengthy process. Something we might be able to do with the new building. The state won't be able to fix in time for the repairs we need now.
- Suggestion to do the first part now at \$8750 – address part B when needed.
- Vote to spend \$8750 now – Tim motion. Dan second. All in favor.

Non-material revision to charter by Tracy 6:02

- Exclusionary practice at charter schools. This is starting to be an issue at other charters. Statue – student discipline policy – student with severe infractions could be removed and sent back to home public school. It doesn't really change charter, but we should document it in the charter, to ensure we are covered if we need to exercise this option in the future.
- Vote to add to charter – Alison motion. Tim second. All in favor.

Co-Directors Survey by Tracy 6:06

- The Survey will be conducted tomorrow at 2:30. We'll send individual links to staff.

Closing at 6:09

- Next meeting – June 19th, 5:30pm. Sylva Library.
- Adjourn – Motion by Alison. Second by Tim. Motion carried.

Mountain Discovery Charter School Board of Directors Meeting Thursday, April 17, 2025, 5:30 PM Mountain Discovery Charter School

Open Session

Welcome – Jen called the meeting to order at 5:31pm

Members present:

Voting: Jen Pearson, Alison Joseph, Tim Black

Ex officio: Billie Clemens, Tracy Wharton, Crim Bassett, David Doughty, Betty MacAvoy, Michael Crew

Reading of Vision and Mission

Public Comment at 5:32pm – none

Approval of Minutes from March 2025 – Motion by Tim. Alison second. Motion passes.

Executive Committee/Co-Directors Report

Co-Director Report at 5:33pm

Enrollment Update by Crim 5:33

- A few classes have room (K has 8 spots still. 2 in 1st grade. 2nd-7th full. 8th has 2 spots.
- Ad next week in 3 local papers

WCU Collaboration by Billie 5:35

- Stained playground over spring break
- Working with construction management. Sophomore heading the project (so we should have some continuity). She talked with Billie about stairs and underpinning. If it doesn't happen this semester, maybe in the fall. Student (who is also president of engineering society) is working on a plan for stairs.

Production Night and Talent Show by Billie 5:38

- 2 nights – K-2 and then 3-5. Both successful. Not as crowded and pleasantly shorter program.
- Talent show was also shorter with new format and worked out well.

CPR by Tracy 5:39

- Part of graduation standards.
- Michael is coordinating.
- Free to the school (conducted by volunteers).

Camping trips by Billie 5:40

- 7th grade went to Nolan Creek. They did a good job with camp setup. Outdoor skills classes seeming to be helping with skills.
- Panthertown (6th) next week (Thursday-half day Saturday).
- Hazel creek – May 5th-9th.
- 5th grade doing car camping with parents at end of May (after EOGs).

SIT Report by Michael 5:42

- YouTube channel. Brook and David sent a request about setting up a channel. They are figuring out permissions for video. Examples to post - Recordings of production night and talent show.
- Working on getting van decals. Hope to have those by Fall semester.
- Easter egg fundraiser. Going well. Money will go towards sound system in gym.
- Trying to get 2 AEDs for main campus and gym.
- Mary Sue working on bus driver appreciation day and teacher appreciation week.
- Working on banner for the gym, as a fundraiser. \$300 initial cost, \$250 renewal. Money for banner to support athletics.

Finance Committee by Tracy 5:47

- Some of budget and line items (contracted services, transportation, etc.) we overestimated. Books and supplies money is gone, as well as staff development – waiting on funds from fund run and other. Utilities going up. Lot of capital purchases. A few things that helped - salary for speech and OT (pooled and utilized existing staff), grants, reimbursement for technology. Payment from Macon county.
- Over the course of the year, the budget picture has improved. See estimates that were developed at the end of each quarter:

	Projected position for the year	Projected fund balance
Q1	-\$26K	\$453K
Q2	\$31K	\$511K
Q3	\$55K	\$543K

USDA Loan Update by Tracy 5:53

- UCB did not approve us for loan, because existing USDA loan would take priority for repayment. Also we had a few years of deficit. They also wanted to see us doing a capital campaign. UCB may still be willing to fund some; might do building loan if we do land prep out of our own money.
- Also looking back into USDA. Can't start working on that in earnest now because of everything else going on. Not stopping but slowing down a little.

Capital Campaign by Billie 5:56

- Londa will head that up for the school. Goal - \$2M in 2 years. Looking at donors in a variety of ways. Board, parents, staff, etc. Software \$109 month.
- Vote – approve Londa Bowles as chairperson. Alison motion. Tim second. Motion passes.

Facilities Update by Billie 6:04

- Waiting on land survey. Hope to have that done in April.
- Need to wait for now before removing any existing buildings (like the 3rd or art). Parking tight and could be started on soon.
- Gym road – We have one bid. Would like to get one or two more before making a decision.

Federal Changes/Legal by Tracy 6:09

DEI

- Once or more weekly needing to evaluate federal policy or communication for changes.
- Had to sign and upload this week a document about compliance around no DEI. Sufficient guidance about the document was not provided by federal government. Need to sign because we received approximately \$100k in federal funding. Document about hiring practices & admissions, having no demographic or socioeconomic weighting. Document coming from North Carolina about general rules across NC – we are waiting on that.
- Other federal changes – lawyer will help us modify documents to comply. They'll look at family and staff handbook and review/update.

EOG Testing/Retesting Protocols

- Changed based on federal regulation change. Effectively immediately. Used to be that no one could administer their own tests and the person who gives test must be certified. Now they have revised to say this approach is not required, but best practice (stressed so we'll still follow this procedure). New rule - we can retest during school year – this means a little change to schedule, but likely to get more families to do retesting.
- Vote – to change summer program – Plan to test again as soon as scores came back (quick remediation, then retest during school year). Tim motion. Alison second. Motion passes.

ESSER Money

- No longer required to report about COVID money. This was due this month and just received noticed that we don't need to report on that. Very fluid environment.

Closed Session at 6:41pm

Vote to go into closed session – Personnel issues.

Motion Alison. Tim Second. Motion carried.

Open Session at 7:19

Vote to come out of closed session – Motion Tim. Alison Second. Motion carried.

Personnel Actions:

- Vote to approve Alana Gaspard Powers – Tim motion. Alison second. Approved.
- Vote to approve Kestral Welch – Tim motion. Alison second. Approved.
- Vote to approve Supplement for Tammy Powers – Alison motion. Tim second. Approved.
- Vote to approve CFO (Tracy) increase for 7.5% - Tim motion. Alison second. Approved.

Closing at 7:23

- Next meeting – May 15th, 5:30pm. Sylva Library.
- Adjourn – Motion by Tim. Second by Alison. Motion carried.

**Mountain Discovery Charter School
Board of Directors Meeting
Thursday, March 3, 2025, 5:30 PM
Google Meet**

Open Session

Welcome – Jen called the meeting to order at 5:33pm

Members present:

Voting: Jen Pearson, Alison Joseph, Dan Mackey, Tim Black

Ex officio: Billie Clemens, Tracy Wharton, Crim Bassett, David Doughty, Betty MacAvoy

Reading of Vision and Mission

Public Comment at 5:33pm – none

Approval of Minutes from February 2025 – Postponed to next meeting

Executive Committee/Co-Directors Report

Co-Director Report at 5:34pm

Strategic Planning Update – Site Survey by Tracy 5:34

- The board previously approved \$3k.
 - o Two choices for a site survey
 - Phase 1 only \$3500 or
 - Phase 1 and 2 - \$6000
 - o Early April is the timing.
- Vote - Motion to approve extra funding to conduct Phase 1 and 2. Motion by Alison. Tim second. Motion passes unanimously.

Class Sizes and Classes Offered by Grade Level by Tracy 5:42

- Advertising to drive enrollment in local papers. Consideration of a billboard.
- Version 1 – follow current trajectory – Do not double Kindergarten again.
 - o 230 at full enrollment. \$134K surplus. ~\$100K when factoring in necessary bus payment (assuming full enrollment). Perhaps \$70K if we don't fill up completely.
- Version 2 – This helps improve class sizes (capped sizes).
 - o Likely to preclude a bus purchase this year, because no increase in enrollment.
- Version 3 – Most ambitious.
 - o 244 at full enrollment. Need a bus. We will have enough to fill 2 kindergartens perhaps. \$140K to \$175K depending on how many kindergartens we need.
- Vote – Vote for Option 3, if we can drop to one K if we can't get 16 or more for both classes. Motion to approve Version 3, with the option to flex up to 4 students in 2nd or 3rd if Kindergarten does fill to at least 16 each. Alison motion. Tim second. Motion passes unanimously.

Bus purchase 6:14

- Moving to the most ambition enrollment plan requires a bus purchase.
- The dealership (where we purchased previously) is holding a bus for us. 2 loan terms to consider.
- We already have a driver (who has been driving the van but will move to the bus).
- Option 1 - Lower payment and longer term could give us more money to work with relative to other strategic plan components. Option 2 – Higher payments, shorter term. We could always make larger pay, pay off earlier, or refinance.
- 5 yr – 7.39% - \$34,415 year. 6 yr – 7.69% – \$30,000K yr.
- Vote – Motion to make the purchase and allow the Co-directors flexibility to decide which term is a better fit. Alison motion – Tim second. Motion passes unanimously.

Summer Program by Tracy 6:29

- Math and reading. Preparing for student re-testing. Needs approval, which needs to be submitted to the state.
- Starts May 5th and runs through June. Summer reading camp (72 hours of reading instruction for K-3 specifically). Tim motion. Dan second. Motion passes unanimously.

Closing at 6:31

- Next meeting – April 17th 5:30pm. Mountain Discovery Charter School campus.
- Adjourn – Motion by Tim. Second by Alison. Motion carried.

Mountain Discovery Charter School Board of Directors Meeting Thursday, February 20, 2025, 5:30 PM Jackson County Library 310 Keener St, Sylva

Open Session

Welcome – Jen called the meeting to order at 5:31pm

Members present:

Voting: Jen Pearson, Alison Joseph, Dan Mackey, Tim Black

Ex officio: Billie Clemens, Tracy Wharton, Crim Bassett, David Doughty, Betty MacAvoy, Lisa Monnat

Reading of Vision and Mission

Public Comment at 5:32pm – none

Approval of Minutes from January 2025 – Motion by Tim. Second by Dan. Motion carried.

Executive Committee/Co-Directors Report

Co-Director Report at 5:33pm

Enrollment Report by Crim 5:33

- 206 enrolled for next year
- 20 spots available
- Lots of kids on waitlists for all grades – will be full at 206
- 3 more weeks of open enrollment – lottery to determine who gets those spots (perhaps lottery for all grades except 8th)

Lunches by Billie 5:35

- Helpful conversations with colleagues at other schools.
- Lot of work and cost associated with expanding lunches.
- Co-directors suggest postponing the idea for now. This is largely because we would need to hire someone (additional salary) and lots of associated paperwork and logistics.

SIT Report by Billie 5:43

- Quick previous meeting.
- Mr. Mathew asked for funds for a second radio for the outdoor team. 2 radios would be for both trip leaders (one in lead and one in sweep). A second radio has been ordered, and they are learning how to use it.

2025-26 Calendar by Tracy 5:39

- There is a General Statute governing calendar hours; although some of these statutes don't apply to charter schools. Instructional time (part A) includes only hours when students are assigned to a teacher and doing instruction. Co-directors are looking at regulations and other schools. Proposal to dismiss a little later to expand hours. Any years we don't exhaust adverse weather, that also counts as instructional time

- Vote – motion to approve a slightly later dismissal time. Alison motion. Tim second. Motion passes unanimously.

Class Sizes by Tracy 5:52

- 3 scenarios – low, middle, and high on enrollment and revenue. High would bring in most potential revenue, but would cramp facilities, transportation (need another bus – either growth scenario might need another bus)
- Decision needed before lottery

Strategic Plan Update by Billie 6:17

- No matter what, we need to operate, keep things safe, so the plan needs to be realistic in terms of timing and campus construction logistics.
- 2 months in summer won't be enough for full construction.
- Engineer came out to campus this week (Charlie – worked with us on gym previously).
- Current thinking - Taking out units that currently house 3rd grade and art. Leveling that spot and adjacent parking lot. Hoping for 8-classroom unit (L shape), or a 10-classroom unit (we'll keep it below 12 because of sprinklers).
 - o Internal movement to accommodate - 3rd would go into Social Studies. Social Studies would float through the other classrooms and middle school teacher planning would be in office space (to free a classroom). We could open the new building in the 2026-27 school year. Then a year or two later replace half of the trailers with the next modular unit. Charlie's company will work on site readiness and project management.
- Parking and transportation around campus will be an issue.
 - o Instead of big parking lots, there is a working concept for several small parking areas around the loop.
- Modular units – 8-10 rooms plus bathrooms. Received quotes on 6, 8, 10 and 12-unit buildings. 12 – unit will require sprinklers – which are expensive (75k), so we'll likely stick between 6-10 units. 6 unit – \$531K, 10 unit - \$815k
- Tracy working on a loan. Business loan for commercial construction - \$1.2-1.4m loan (will cover everything from building to infrastructure). 12-15 months interest only. 15-20yr term, mid-6 to mid-to-upper 7s interest rate. \$20k a month approximately.
- For example/reference we can look at Invest Collegiate Charter and Franklin Innovation Charter
- Vote to hire contractor for land survey. Motion for \$3K for site survey – Alison motion. Tim second. Motion passes

Gravel on the Gym Road by Crim 6:45pm

- Water is draining down the middle of the road so it's causing erosion. Contacted person who works on roads. . The problem is that the drain is higher than the road. Two different types of gravel are needed. One on the road, and one on the parking lot. 12 loads of gravel plus spreading. Will require a little maintenance (that we would pay someone for). \$15k. How long will it last? Last a lot long if we maintained.
- It's worth asking DOT if we can become a state road. There is a process to that. A district engineer would be involved.
- Paving company coming out to give a cost estimate for patching holes. Can we ask them for an estimate to pave?

Closed Session at 6:58pm

Vote to go into closed session – Personnel issues.

Motion Tim. Alison Second. Motion carried.

Open Session at 7:23

Vote to come out of closed session – Motion Tim. Jen Second. Motion carried.

Closing at 7:24

- Next meeting – March 3rd, 5:30pm. Google Meets.
- Adjourn – Motion by Tim. Second by Jen. Motion carried.

**Mountain Discovery Charter School
Board of Directors Meeting
Thursday, January 23, 2024, 5:30 PM
Jackson County Library 310 Keener St, Sylva**

Open Session

Welcome – Jen called the meeting to order at 5:34pm

Members present:

Voting: Jen Pearson, Alison Joseph, Dan Mackey, Tim Black

Ex officio: Billie Clemens, Tracy Wharton, Crim Bassett, David Doughty, Betty MacAvoy

Reading of Vision and Mission

Public Comment at 5:35pm – none

Approval of Minutes from November 2024 – Motion by Tim. Second by Dan. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes from December 2024 – Motion by Tim. Second by Dan. Motion carried.

Executive Committee/Co-Directors Report

Co-Director Report at 5:35pm

Re-Enrollment of Current Students by Crim 5:35

- Has been open for 2 weeks.
- 165 re-enrolled. Need around 200. Still waiting on 35. Cos making personal phone calls, reminding those who are late.
- Open enrollment starts February 3rd. Will remain open for 6 weeks.
- Lottery to fill spots. Date will be set soon.

Strategic Planning Update by Tracy 5:37

- Strategic Planning group will meet tomorrow to discuss timeline and plan.
- Modular genius – we’ve spoken with in the past, but their first visit to campus is planned for tomorrow.
- They did quite a few schools in Asheville.
- They can haul old trailers away.
- Cos will call those schools and get feedback from them on that contractor.

Trash Structure/Issue by Billie 5:43

- On hold pending strategic plan discussion.
- Bears haven’t been as active because of winter.

Facilities Updates by Crim 5:44

- American Homeplace doing gutter replacement work for \$300+ after some help from WCU.
- Winter Weather
 - o Some concerns about water (freezing pipes) and electric cost because of extreme cold.
 - o Trouble with heat in art and 3rd grade. Both fixed now. Bought nice space heaters. Kids haven’t been too cold, but facilities put to test with cold.

SIT Report by Betty 5:48

- SIT met twice since last board meeting.
- Working on drop off and pick up times, perhaps to expand to 3 spots for drop off.
- Working on stop sign for students at crosswalk.
- MDCS swag available for purchase – t-shirts, hoodies, and stickers.
- 100th day of kindergarten scheduled for Wednesday, Feb 19th.

- Change to production night schedule. K2 now Thursday March 27th and grades 3-5 on Thursday April 3rd. Fundraising will take place on those nights.
- Working to purchase signs for MDCS vehicles. “Enroll Now” magnetic signs for buses and vans. They are reviewing quotes.
- Working on potential make up days for too much missed school for inclement weather. Ideas include an extra day (Easter Monday or teacher workday after spring break) or extended Fridays. Likely not needed, but trying to plan in case.
- Mary Sue working on teacher appreciation week and bus driver appreciation day.

Snow Make-up Day by Tracy 5:52

- Make-up days are not needed currently.
- We still have 65 hours of snow time built in left.

School Start Time Discussion by Tracy 6pm

- Do we need to start school 15 minutes earlier or extend, or is the day alright as currently scheduled?

Lottery Date by Crim 6:11pm

- Planned for Friday, March 28th at 10am

Finance Committee

Budget Update by Tracy at 6:12pm

Finance Committee Audit by Tracy 6:12pm

- Net position of 84K – total net position decreased because of low enrollment and increases to staff. Seeing positive results of staffing with MAP testing.
- Fund balance of \$454K. Decrease of \$276 compared to prior year. Mostly because of capital – 5th and 4th grade trailers. Playground, 15-passenger van, Architect fees. ADM decrease resulting in about \$50k less than planned. Construction loan in 2019 still paying for the gym and school buses. Buses will be paid off next month (which accounts for \$48k annually). Enrollment has increased about 10% per year for the last several years (possible again if we get full enrollment). Long-term debt for gym and pension. No real surprises, but we need to re-focus on building reserve.

Mid-Year Budget Update by Tracy 6:27pm

- Looking at all items especially where we have spent more than 50% at the halfway mark. Overspent on supplies and materials, as well as utilities (Tracy had already modified budget based on previous utility bills). Tracy has worked with Carter and she’s really understanding it much more thoroughly and already prepping for next year.
- Budget outlook for the year has improved. As of December, surplus almost \$32K and anticipated total position close to \$512k.

Closed Session at 6:35pm

Vote to go into closed session – Motion Tim. Dan Second.

Open Session at 6:49

Vote to come out of closed session – Motion Tim. Dan Second.

Closing at 6:49

- Next meeting – February 20th, 5:30pm. Sylva Library.
- Adjourn – Motion by Tim. Second by Dan. Motion carried.

Mountain Discovery Charter School Board of Directors Meeting

**Monday, December 9, 2024, 5PM
Google Meet**

Open Session

Welcome – Jen called the meeting to order at 5:01pm

Members present:

Voting: Jen Pearson, Alison Joseph, Dan Mackey, Tim Black

Ex officio: Billie Clemens, Tracy Wharton, Crim Bassett

Reading of Vision and Mission

Public Comment at 5:02pm – Thanks from a community member

Approval of Minutes from November 2024 – Delayed to January.

Executive Committee/Co-Directors Report

Vote - Calendar Approval at 5:07

- Motion to approve Alison. Tim second. Motion carries.

Vote on Funds for Trash Area Protection from Bears by Billie 5:08

- School got a quote from carpenter who previously did deck work for us.
- Quote \$3500 but he thinks that is on the high side.
- Vote to allot up to \$3500 for this project – Alison motion. Tim second. Motion carries.

Open Session at 5:10

Next meeting – January 23rd – 5pm at Sylva Library.

Closing at 5:10

- Adjourn – Motion by Tim. Second by Alison. Motion carried.

**Mountain Discovery Charter School
Board of Directors Meeting
Thursday, November 21, 2024, 5:30 PM
Jackson County Library 310 Keener St, Sylva**

Open Session

Welcome – Jen called the meeting to order at 5:32pm

Members present:

Voting: Jen Pearson, Alison Joseph, Dan Mackey, Tim Black

Ex officio: Billie Clemens, Tracy Wharton, Crim Bassett, David Doughty, Betty MacAvoy, Lisa Monnat, and Michael Crew

Reading of Vision and Mission

Public Comment at 5:33pm – none

Approval of Minutes from October 2024 – Motion by Tim. Second by Alison. Motion carried.

Executive Committee/Co-Directors Report

Co-Director Report at 5:34pm

Parent Volunteer Day by Billie 5:34

- Thrilled with turnout. 17 families. Kids helped, too.
- Leaves blown, gutters, fences stabilized (along with bank), parking lot, stairs, cleaned awnings, hedges and bushes.

New Partnership with WCU by Billie 5:36

- Betsy Aspinwall (son JD in kindergarten) is WCU Dean of Students facilitated
- One of the fraternities is going to stain and seal playground.
- Sororities might be able to contribute to fundraising.
- She has connected them with Chris Cox in Construction Management program. He sent a student out to talk about fixing stairs. Took lots of photos. Stairs, underpinning, and gutter on art building.
- Costs offset perhaps too.

WCU Block Interns by Tracy 5:41

- 5 students requested specifically to come to MDCS (more than ever) because of good reputation the school has developed with WCU and internship program

NC Smile Program by Billie 5:42

- NC Smile program connection made last year.
- Swain Co schools shared our info with them.
- Offering 2 days of dental care in January.
- They will file Medicare and Medicaid paperwork directly.
- Offering X-rays, sealants, cavity fillings, and cleanings.
- Getting signups and cost out to students and families.

Lunch Discussion by Billie 5:44

- Talking to Jennifer Brown – western regional area for federal lunch program, who reached out to see if we are interested.
- This is an involved process, which will take about 9 months.
- Idea – lunches catered by Swain co schools.
- We will likely need to go pick them up.
- This could provide lunches for students qualified for free and reduced lunch. We're at 53-55% qualified for free and reduced lunch.
- We'd pay Swain and then file for reimbursement with federal government.
- Would probably require an employee 20-30 hours.
- After a year, there is a program that could potentially extend benefits so all students could get a free lunch.
- Clear benefits, but drawbacks include cost and complexity (including process, professional development, transportation, etc.)
- May discuss further at January meeting.

Bears in the Trash by Billie 5:52

- MDCS having trouble with trash disposal.
- Trash is supposed to be picked up every day, but they don't always come and that creates problems.
- COs out to person who installed new portable. Plan to get a platform, sturdy tall fence with additional cans, in an area that is lockable after school.
- It would be a big deterrent for bear activity.
- It would also improve the aesthetics because trash would be more concealed.

SIT Report by Lisa 5:56

- Exhibition night – successful.

- Now they are working on calendars. Calendar survey. Tracy worked up lots of different mock-ups. Have narrowed to 3 options. They will vote for preference after Thanksgiving. Looking for Board approval in December.
- Asked for help with Cheer Team for uniforms. They asked the cheer team for proposal – likely to be a cost share.
- Working on holiday party for staff.

Drug Testing Policy for Bus Driver by Tracy 6pm

- Michael got updated info from company who does testing. No real additional work to do. Voting to approve the paragraph provided by attorney. This is standard and people who do this kind of thing are already informed and careful.
- Motion by Alison. Second by Dan. Motion carries.

K-2 Class Sizes by Tracy 6:10pm

- In light of the pause on the strategic plan for now
- Kindergarten has 17 now but would go to 22, same with 2nd grade.
- Discussion about estimated budget and class sizes.
- Trade off on cost and teacher/student experience.
- Growing EC numbers, provide an additional complication.
- Larger sizes mean more portables needed sooner.
- For families and staff, lower class sizes seem like a higher priority issue than aging facilities.

Upcoming School Events

- Parent Volunteer Day by Billie 6:06
 - o Schedule for 10/26 from 10-2
 - o First day in several years. Happenings projects listing.
 - o Priorities - Parking area and pavers on stairs.
- Exhibition Night by Billie at 6:10
 - o November 7th.

Finance Committee

Budget Update by Tracy at 6:32pm

- October statement – potential \$16K deficit is down to \$1200. Big factor is substitute pay – one teacher who helps out and rotates covering substitute duties. Not nearly as much in the red as before, in terms of expenditures off budgets.
- Extra ADM has been promised but not yet paid.
- Also, county increases on funding per child. Got a few outstanding checks from Swain and Graham.
- Big news - \$32K for hurricane relief funds that we didn't need to apply for. Looks like it can be used for already hired salary for mental health or emotional support services.
- Ms Lindy went to EC conference in Greensboro and talked to a person from Shining Rock about grant writing. This person is like a consultant – who takes a percentage of successful grant. Shining Rock has been very successful. (KLR Partners – work specifically with charter schools to obtain grant funding.)

Closed Session at 6:41pm

Vote to go into closed – Motion Dan. Tim Second.

Open Session at 6:45

Vote – Co-Director Bonus to match state award - \$1,144. Motion Dan. Tim Second. Motion carries.
Next meeting – December 9th – 5pm virtual

Closing at 6:48

- Adjourn – Motion by Alison. Second by Tim. Motion carried.

**Mountain Discovery Charter School
Board of Directors Meeting
Thursday, September 19, 2024, 5:30 PM
Jackson County Library 310 Keener St, Sylva**

Open Session

Welcome – Jen called the meeting to order at 5:34pm

Members present:

Voting: Jen Pearson, Alison Joseph, Dan Mackey, Tim Black, Gabi Lachney

Ex officio: Billie Clemens, Tracy Wharton, Crim Bassett, David Doughty, Betty MacAvoy

Reading of Vision and Mission

Public Comment at 5:35pm – Michael Crew – suggestion to hold meetings at MDCS campus and solicit topics in Happenings.

Approval of Minutes from August 2024 – Motion by Gabi. Second by Tim. Motion carried.

Executive Committee/Co-Directors Report

Co-Director Report at 5:38pm

Enrollment by Crim 5:38

- Enrollment is good at 217 students. Could use a few middle schoolers. Cutoff for funding in December.

Lunches by Billie 5:40

- Culture has been healthy lunches.
- Increasing push-back since we don't provide lunches, and we have requirements for healthy lunches.
- Handling with individual family conversations – but largely backing off.
- No sodas but otherwise fewer rules.

SIT Report by Lisa 5:44

- 2 meetings since beginning of school.
- There was a parent representative, but she left. Mary Sue Hoag is joining to fill parent roll.
- Looking for other fundraisers beyond pizza.
- Fund Run in October.
- Each class is assigned a month to host breakfast or lunch – hoping to bring this back.
- Work on a clean-up day for school.
- Looking for ways to get parents involved.

Hazel Creek Camping Trip Update by Billie 5:48

- Postponed Hazel Creek because of bear activity site closed.
- Monday 8th grade to go canoeing.
- Matthew will lead hike to Mount Kephart (6mile roundtrip) – October or November.
- Hazel Creek maybe late March or early April (with backup plan in case that doesn't work out).

Variety of New Policies

- Pregnant/Nursing Mothers – 5:51 – Tracy
 - o Accommodations to make sure we ensure fair labor standards
 - o Vote – motion by Dan and seconded by Tim. Motion approved.
- Title VII and Title IX – 5:53 – Tracy
 - o Non-discrimination related to employees and students. Processes for addressing issues.
 - o Vote – motion to approve by Gabi. Seconded by Tim. Motion approved

New Reporting Requirements – 5:56 - Tracy

- How we have to report if we let an employee go for misconduct. This will be distributed to staff and added to handbook

Bus Driver Protocol by Tracy 5:58

- New regulations around bus drivers. Pooled together for drug screening procedures. Federal component to this. Questions - Appeals process? Who does the testing? How much does this cost?
- Vote – should we hold off for now? Yes, we're holding off for now.

Parental Leave by Tracy 6:06

- Should we offer parental leave?
- Potentially money if we opt in.
- Have a threshold for how long they need to work to be eligible - 1040 hours.
- Allows for up to 8 weeks for leave after giving birth. Father or adoption could get up to 4 weeks.
- Now they use their own leave. They would use their own leave first and could use this afterward.
- Downside – once you opt in (for the year) you're in and they won't guarantee funds.
- Now staff get 8 days per year (80 hours) of leave. There have been some examples where the school spread out/fronted pay for teachers in this situation where they needed more.
- Can we tell the track record (i.e., likelihood that state will fund the program?)? It's only a program in its second year, so not really.
- Is there a cap for how many schools can join? \$10M recurring per year, but unclear how many schools will join or how much will likely get spent.
- Vote – Motion to not opt in by Dan and second by Tim. Unanimously vote to not opt in.
 - o Our hope is that we can opt in future years. This is too risky given the high potential cost to the school and uncertainty of state funding.

Bus Changes by Billie 6:28

- Whittier stop used to be small. Now 30 kids using stop.
- Alter afternoon route to drop Whittier first. Whittier moved from 4:10 to 3:35. Much easier on bus driver.
- Week notice. No parent feedback yet.

Discussion around Additional Bus Needs by Billie 6:30

- Full capacity on buses.
- Worried about overflow when sports end or growth next year.
- New bus \$150k.
- Perhaps add double route if there is no bus. That will affect everything from timing, costs, family convenience.
- Bus drivers cost \$38k annually to run 2 buses and 1 van – drivers only.
- We pay about \$29k per year for the bus loan.
- Tracy looking at numbers with difference scenarios – buying a new bus, double route, running 2 vans, etc.
- Perhaps capital campaign for a bus/van.

Strategic Planning Update by Tracy 6:40

- No movement on the USDA Loan.
- The group is not meeting yet.
- No way at this point that we are making a January deadline.

Finance Committee

Budget Update by Tracy at 6:42pm

- Full ADM will be available now, since the legislative session extension of that funding. Tracy working on rebuilding the budget and having some challenges.
- Deficit from last year. Billie, Carter, and Tracy worked through it.
 - o Total deficit - \$276K.
 - Total capital spending \$227K.
 - Operational deficit - \$49,606.
 - Missing students last year (not at capacity/projection) accounts for operational deficit.
- Redoing the budget will help with accuracy moving forward. About \$750K in reserve.
- Main Title I grant approved. 2 more grants we are waiting to hear about. Still looking at new grant opportunities.

Open Session at 6:57

Next meeting – Oct 24th – 5:30 at MDCS

Motion to enter closed session – Tim and second Gabi

Closed Session at 6:59pm

Finances and strategic planning changes.

Closing at 7:32

- Move out of closed session – 7:32. Motion by Dan. Seconded by Gabi.
- Adjourn – Motion by Tim. Seconded by Gabi. Motion carried.

Mountain Discovery Charter School Board of Directors Meeting Thursday, August 15, 2024, 5:30 PM Google Meets

Open Session

Welcome – Jen called the meeting to order at 5:30pm

Members present:

Voting: Jen Pearson, Alison Joseph, Dan Mackey, Tim Black, Gabi Lachney

Ex officio: Billie Clemens, Tracy Wharton, Crim Bassett, Carter Petty, David Doughty, Betty MacAvoy

Reading of Vision and Mission

Public Comment at 5:31pm - none

Approval of Minutes from May 2024 – Motion by Tim. Second by Dan. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes from July 2024 – Motion by Tim. Second by Gabi. Motion carried.

Executive Committee

Co-Director Report at 5:33pm

Mobile Unit Updates by Billie

- Moving along – power, water, deck done.
- Working on alarm and phone and then the unit will be ready to use.

Enrollment by Crim

- Enrollment is good at 224 students. Almost 50 more than last year. New students/families seem excited.

Bus Issues by Billie

- Some concerns expressed about leaving children unattended at plaza, based on people from community who are present during stops. Form for parents to sign if want to leave child unattended. Could form be required each year? Co-directors decided yes.
- Having stops at park and plaza working out great.

Title I Presentation by Tracy

- Under monitoring. Annual meeting at parent drop-in day, but no one came by. Presented to staff. Stakeholders informed and they could offer input to program.

Finance Committee

Budget Update by Tracy, Carter, Crim at 5:50pm

- Starting with final budget from last year. We experienced a deficit (a van, trailer + all associated costs, half of playground, etc.). Total loss around \$250K
 - o Capital expenditures planned at \$163-180K.
 - o Total salary and wages as expected.
 - o Over in books and supplies quite a bit, based on an with Fund Run and when the money comes in,
 - o Really the overage in facilities – re-wire fire alarm, roofs, AC units, custodial, architect for strategic plan - \$49K.
 - o Utilities also over and expect it to keep being high (electric, phones, gas, repairs, water and sewer, etc.).
 - o Technology – Chrome Books (most purchased before COVID) so new Chromebooks needed for replacement - \$5K.
- Discussion about water cost. Triple compared to last year. We'll have to raise utility budget.
- ADM 11 students less than we planned for last year. About \$110K loss by being enrolled at less than planned.
- \$843K final position last year

Current Budget Update –

- At meeting last week - an update - we were told that we could go over planned allotment and get ADM. Now there is uncertainty until November. Waiting to hear.

Executive Committee

Grinder Update by Billie

- Prevent clogs and overflow.
- Conversation with town manager and town engineer. Asked about holding off on grinder because building new school. Not a lot of leeway. Carter presented appeals letter to board.
- Grinder – \$19.5K + installation (so maybe \$40K total).
 - o Discussion – could we pay fines, cleanup, if we don't put immediate grinder in.
 - o Waiting to hear outcome of appeal.
 - o Removed brown paper towel and anything else that could be flushed that isn't toilet paper.
 - o Local attorney could help with this issue.
 - o One question – if we are responsible for clean-up, what might that cost? Waiting to see.
 - o Will put air dryers in gym, just not in trailers.

Gym Doors Update by Crim

- A few doors are not locking when closed and key holes not working. Quote is \$5K. Required for safety, code, etc.
- A vote was taken to approve funds at \$2500. Motion by Alison. Second by Dan. Motion approved.

Grove Facilities Use Request

- Carter has sent a request with lots of background.
- Concerns about it:
 - o Potential costs/liabilities
 - o Alienating members of the community, could lead to enrollment decline
- Request denied. Carter will communicate the decision to them.

Board Self-Evaluation by Jen

- Room for improvement – professional development.
- Dan suggestion – attorney discussion perhaps once a year, with any updates or hot topics, and specific guidelines. Basic legality PowerPoint – perhaps we could circulate or periodically review the document the attorney shared several years ago. It covered obligations and rules.
- Carter will look for document from the attorney.
- NCCAT may have something – Jen will check it out.

Closed Session at 6:42pm

Personnel movement.

Closing

- Thursday, September 19th – next meeting of the Board.
 - o To be held at Library.
 - o In October or November, we'll try to meet at the school for better access by families/teachers.
- A motion was made to adjourn by Gabi. Seconded by Dan. Motion carried.