

# **Madrone Trail Public Charter School**

Jackson County, Oregon

Regular meeting of the Board of Directors

Wednesday, January 11, 2016 at 5:30 pm

Madrone Trail Public Charter School – 3070 Ross Lane, Medford, OR 97502

## **I. Call to order/ Roll call**

Amy called to order the regular meeting of the Madrone Trail Public Charter School Board at 5:30pm at Madrone Trail Public Charter School 3070 Ross Ln. Central Point, OR 97502.

Sarah conducted a roll call. The following persons were present: Amy Gygax, Sarah Trujillo, Jane Higgins, Leann Tourzan, Louise Lavergne

Karen Bailey (Administrator)

Absent- Monica Rathjen, Mark Sievert

## **II. Opening verse**

## **III. Approval of minutes and agenda adjustments**

- a) Approval of December minutes Amy Gygax** Did you get my corrections? **Sarah Trujillo** No **Amy Gygax** it looks like there was a part under the Family Leave Policy that was incorrect **Sarah Trujillo** I will fix that

**Motion approved**

**Leann Tourzan** I make a motion to approve December minutes with corrections  
**Louise Lavergne** I second the motion

**Aye – 5 (Higgins, Lavergne, Gygax, Trujillo, Tourzan)**

**No – 0**

- b. Agenda Adjustments Amy Gygax** I would like to move item g. the Annual Report to School District up on the agenda to item c. All the other items will move down one.

## **IV. Perspective Board Members Interview: Kellee O’Shea Amy Gygax** Here are some potential questions to ask, and then we will vote at the end of the meeting. At the end of questions Kellee can ask any questions that she would like to ask. **Amy Gygax** I am

wondering why you are interested in joining the Madrone Trail Board, and what your understanding is of the role of the board? **Kellee O'Shea** We are so honored to be in this school, and I am interested in helping in any way that I can. Now that my children are older, and in school, I have time and energy to put toward other things. My understanding of the role of the board is something I am still figuring out. I know that it entails some of the behind the scene things that go on. I know right now that we are dealing with some things with the district and it is important to have a strong presence there. I imagine that it will fall into place as I go, and I have served on a school board before. **Lousie Lavergne** How do you feel this ties into your time commitment, because you are back to work, and you have your kids, and working in both classrooms. You are such an asset to our school. That feels good to you? **Kellee O'Shea** Well yes. This time last year I was homeschooling three kids plus running a school in my home, so when my kids come to school here, I have more free time. **Jane Higgins** There are times that we break into committees, so you should be prepared to spend time working on other things. **Kellee O'Shea** I am only working part time and feel that the time commitment is workable for me. **Sarah Trujillo** What do you perceive as the strengths of the school and what do you see as our challenges? **Kellee O'Shea** The strength is the fact that so many parents have come together to create this, and to have a Waldorf school in a public platform. I think our teachers are amazing, and I think a lot of our parents are really on board. Some of the weaknesses that I have encountered is the food culture, and parent education, and parent outreach. **Karen Bailey** MTPCS follows a Waldorf curriculum, what do you know about the Waldorf methods, and what do you find in the curriculum that particularly resonates with your own views on education? **Kellee O'Shea** I started teaching regular kindergarten when my 18 years old daughter was little. Then I moved into special education, because my oldest son has autism, and taught that with an emphasis on that. When my next youngest was into nursery school I learned about anthroposophy, so it has been a little over a decade, that I have been studying Steiner. It was a slow start. It fit well for us as a natural family and I was seeing things in the school system that I didn't like. I found the contrast with Waldorf was huge. Then I started teaching my students as well as my son according to temperament, and sensory systems, and the things that Waldorf just includes naturally. It fit well. Then I started subbing in Waldorf early education in New Hampshire, and quickly realized it was what I wanted for my children, so I have homeschooled since then. I have taught 6<sup>th</sup> grade once, 1<sup>st</sup> grade three times to five different children, and I've done Main Lesson through all the grades, so I have taught the whole span. **Jane Higgins** You have also taken quite a few classes? **Kellee O'Shea** I don't have formal Waldorf education, but I have done a lot of reading, and within preparing for the next curriculum, and teaching many grades at once. When we moved here I started a Waldorf Facebook group to find likeminded people, and now I have a consulting business, where I go in and help people that are trying to homeschool with Waldorf.

**Leann Tourzan** As a Board member, coming up on the renewal of our charter that will be next spring, and seeing how passionate you are, how could you approach our parent body in a way that could ignite a new sense of urgency? **Kellee O’Shea** I think I would just need to know what that jurisdiction meant, how pushy could I be? As long as I have a full scope of what I am allowed to do, and what is needed, and then I could figure out how to ask for it **Karen Bailey** How about a Parent Education Committee? **Kellee O’Shea** I would love that. I came to the Medford School District. They wanted to know about our data. I felt that I was happy to tell them about my experience with both my sons and how Waldorf met them both, on different ends of the educational needs spectrum. **Amy Gygax** Do you have any questions for us? **Kellee O’Shea** What is the job description, and what is the time commitment. **Amy Gygax** You can do a one or two-year commitment, although, two years if preferable, because it does take time to get the feel for how things are going. The Board is not involved in the day to day operations of the school, we delegate that to the director. The Board is in charge of the financial oversight of the school, we go over the monthly expenditures, and we approve the budget that Karen comes up with. We approve any expenditure over \$5000. The Board has legal oversight of the school. We make sure that we stay in compliance of the regulations and laws. We also take care of the policy aspects. **Louise Lavergne** There is also a financial commitment, we are asked to participate in the fund raising, auction. **Amy Gygax** We are still trying to define our role as fundraisers, and what our commitment is as a Board. There is also a time commitment you should be aware of. **Karen Bailey** You also have to have clear boundaries with other parents, that there are some things that you cannot share with other parents, or let others expect that you will take their issues before the Board on their behalf. If there is a conflict, say, with a teacher, and you had knowledge of it, and it came before the Board, you would have to recuse yourself. You also make a commitment to the vote of the Board.

- V. Approval of consent agenda** **Karen Bailey** We have a few checks that have not been cashed. We are doing well financially **Amy Gygax** Does anyone have any questions **Karen Bailey** There was a question last month about some checks that were written out of the payroll account. There were a few paychecks that were calculated wrong, and Tracy had to write the checks out of that account to correct them.

**Motion approved**

**Sarah Trujillo** I move to approve the expenditures for December 2016 **AmyGygax** I second the motion

**Aye – 5 (Higgins, Lavergne, Gygax, Trujillo, Tourzan)**

**No - 0**

**VI. Discussion Items:**

- a.) **Book Study Jane Higgins** I am interested in reading Living a Spiritual Year, but not sure it is the right choice as a Board book. I look for something that will give us things to do as a Board. **Amy Gygax** We have done Partnership of Hope, but could do it again, since we have so many new members. It gives activities, and goes through the stages of a Waldorf school and what things come up in different times. **Lousie Lavegne** I was interested in Forming School Communities because it seems to speak to what we need the most direction with right now. **Amy Gygax** That was the one that I had a little trouble finding, it might be difficult for us to get the copies that we would need. **Karen Bailey** I have used Partnership of Hope as a book to read with the entire school community, with certain chapters going to faculty, some to parents, and some to administration **Amy Gygax** I have thought it would be nice to publicize our book to the whole community so that others could read along with us, and see what we are discussing. If people wanted to join our discussion they would be able to, but even if they didn't, the value of us all being on the same page would be great. **Leann Tourzan** Maybe when we are done we could host a discussion. **Amy Gygax** It sounds like we all are in agreement that we should go with Partnership of Hope. We can read the first chapter for next time.
- b.) **Medford School District Site Visit Report Amy Gygax** They gave us an idea of what the district wants from us, as we look forward to our charter renewal. I have heard on a couple different occasions that if we were asking for renewal now, there might be a question. We need to get these things straightened up. I feel like they are doable things. We need to figure out how to get some data about how our students are doing from year to year, and tracking them, and giving that to the district. That is our challenge. **Jane Higgins** We have been doing work samples every year. They get filed, are not being used in the best way. Maybe we should be doing that twice a year to show the changes. All teachers are asked to do it, reading, writing, and math sample, and usually a speaking sample depending on the grade level. It is a rubric, it is a lot of work for each student. What needs to happen, is they need to be used in a productive way, instead of just being filed away. I also added things to make the information valuable to me and my parents. We did it on request of the former educational director of the district. We need to figure out how to compile that data so that it is measurable for the district. **Lousie Lavegne** So each class would have a chart. **Jane Higgins** I would do a reading section, maybe a math rubric twice a year, and writing. **Amy Gygax** That is something that the faculty and director need to figure out, do we want to do that, and what works best. Not something for the Board to decide. **Leann Tourzan** It could use some research, because there's what is useful to the faculty, and there is what we need to do to show the district, and learning how to show it to them, they want our info, but compiled in a way that is easy for them to understand **Jane Higgins** I believe they would be happy if they could just see higher participation, and higher scores. **Leann Tourzan** We can do

whatever we need for our own information for our students, but it might be that we need to just suck it up and participate in the standardized testing as much as we can without compromising our core values, because we are dealing with the Medford School District **Amy Gyax** I think the faculty will just need to decide. **Karen Bailey** We talked about it today, and when you look at improved participation in state assessments, we were at 30% opt out rate last year. I feel that will be something easy to improve upon, if we hit 25% opt out, it would be an improvement. We can do all of these things. Fiscal and Organizational Viability is something that Tracy and I have taken up, and she has been doing great with that **Amy Gyax** I know that it is great that we can just improve a little bit, but I think it would be good to focus on trying to improve more, the more we improve better. **Louise Lavergne** Is there something that the teachers can do to help oarents feel like the testing will not be traumatizing? **Jane Higgins** Sometimes tests are traumatic for kids, I have some issues with that. I have some kids that do fine, and it's no big deal, but for others it is difficult, and this test can be a lot. It's not for all. I think we have to leave it up to the parents. **Leann Tourzan** Should we have a panelor discussion where parents can come and hear what the situation is. That if your child has a temperament, where they can sit through these tests and they are fine, it would be valuable to the point of our charter. Keep them aware of what is coming from the district. There are parents that might not understand, and are opting out to be rebellious, but if they knew, it might be different. **Sarah Trujillo** In the past it's been presented as an option, that there is not negative consequences to opting out. **Jane Higgins** Parents do have the right to opt out, and I am concerned with that. As a Board, we should be concerned with how our kids are actually doing and if they are learning, I am not an advocate of jumping through hoops to appease someone. I want to know if my kids are going to be ready for high school. It is not about me wanting them to just do great on a test. They do great, but it is such a minor part. How can we as a school know we are doing something of value. How do we know our students are learning? And do we feel good about that? If you are doing good teaching they are going to be okay. **Louise Lavergne** Could we offer some kind of stress management for the kids? I have worked with some kids in public school. It would not be something they would have to do, but could be helpful. **Jane Higgins** Stress is not always the issue. It is the long screen time, and difficulty with the test. I know that my kids do better writing vs. keyboard. That is not all, but some. WE are not teaching to the test and I hope we never do, but are we teaching what our kids need to know out in the world. Why are they not doing well on the test? Is it because we are not teaching to the test, or because we are not teaching well. **Louise Lavergne** Is it they are not used to working on the computer **Jane Higgins** It is probably that too. **Leann Tourzan** Do we have to option for paper tests? **Karen Bailey** Smarter Balance is a calibrated test, so if you

get one right, you go to a harder question, and if you get it right it goes easier, so paper would not be an option. **Jane Higgins** No, Smarter Balance is not like that, iReady is. **Leann Tourzan** What are the tests, and how often do we have them? **Jane Higgins** iReady is three times a year, and Smarter Balance is once in the Spring. It is a lot. **Leann Tourzan** Are we talking about five hours? **Karen Bailey** Smarter Balance is ten hours per student. It is a big window of time. **Amy Gygax** I don't like the idea of having to jump through hoops either, but having been at these recent meetings with the district, it is the balance of do we just through the hoops so we can still have our school? I am not a fan of standardized tests, I don't think it reflects what students actually know, but I think it's clear that having more participation is something that we need to do. We need to figure out a way to encourage those families that are not having issues with negative impact to the children to not opt out just to not agree with testing. We need to get the message out that this is something the district is asking of us. The more students we have, the better our scores. **Jane Higgins** I would like to have a lawyer look at that, because I believe it is a parent's right to opt out. **Amy Gygax** We can have a lawyer look at that. I don't agree with testing either, but it is part our contract that our scores need to be at a certain level for us to keep our school open, that our kids do as well or better than kids in regular district schools. In the past, I think it has been understood by the District that it takes our students a little longer for test scores to reflect the learning. Now it doesn't feel so friendly **Louise Lavergne** What if we looked at other places to secure a charter? **Karen Bailey** We have to ask the district first, if they turn us down can seek a state charter. It is not necessarily easier, but I also believe that universities can offer charters. **Louise Lavergne** I think we should be looking at other options parallel to the district, to be in a place of strength to know our options. **Karen Bailey** The newspaper is doing a story on it, I did an interview, because Teresa was there Monday night, and she asked to interview me. She asked what we need from the district, and I tried to emphasize that we need more support, and training and that we are part of the district, not separate. I would like to know the other principals and be integrated into the system. **Leann Tourzan** We do need to remember our core values, and not be pulled into doing things that compromise that, to keep our charter. If we are impacting the whole district, and they feel like getting rid of us would benefit the rest of the district, they may not be willing to help us. **Amy Gygax** We should not be coming from a place of fear, but try to find a balance, and acknowledge that we are a public school and there are things we are going to have to do. They gave us things to improve and if we can do that, we will be in a good place. **Jane Higgins** They also say that they want standardized and objective measures and that can be done without the testing, and we can look at other ways to assess. **Karen Bailey** I would focus on student growth. Philosophically, we are supportive of assessment that shows individual student

growth. That is data that gives teachers useful information, and shows us in our best light. **Jane Higgins** We have talked about doing computer assessments, that we could provide to show valuable data for us and the district. We could do math and writing. **Amy Gygax** Doing something like that would be huge, they really want data. If we can find ways to do that. **Louise Lavergne** If we can deliver a lot of data for the older grades, it might be easier to overlook the younger grades. **Amy Gygax** They do acknowledge that timing is different, and that older kids do better. **Jane Higgins** We need to tell our own story well. There was one Board member that seemed positive toward us, and she said that they could look for those grades of our graduates, and see that our students excel in high school. **Karen Bailey** We should follow up with Michelle Zendel and see if they are doing that. We don't have access but if they do, it would be helpful **Amy Gygax** It should be something they do yearly. **Jane Higgins** The other item was Professional Development, which is something we can do on in-service days. We could use a binder for each grade with core curriculum. Since teachers do new grades each year. **Amy Gygax** It will be important for us to document all these things, to make it clear, that we have done all the things they have asked of us. Many of the things on this list are things we are aware of, we just need documentation. **Karen Bailey** Tracy and I have started a binder with standard operating procedures, and check lists to ensure that we are doing all we need to do. **Leann Tourzan** Back to the testing participation, when are the dates for testing? Have parents already opted out for the year? **Karen Bailey** Not yet, if they want the form they must come and talk to me. I have made a statement in the Friday Update, and newsletter, but I feel comfortable to have a conversation with each family, and help them decide. **Amy Gygax** I agree that we should talk to a lawyer. Although, we want our school to be here, we want to support people's right to protest standardized testing. In the big picture of our country the more people that opt out, the sooner it can change. Karen has contacted a lawyer that will come to our next meeting, and we can have an executive session. We have several questions to ask, one is the piece about denying admission in kindergarten students. It is within our charter that we can do that, but a lawyer can tell us definitively. That will help us, and the board has already done some of the things they asked us to do. **Karen Bailey** I plan on following up with Michelle Zendel, and asking her advice to get her as an ally. She has made blanket judgments, and I am going to try to help her see that we can work together to be successful **Amy Gygax** It is part of her job to make sure that we comply, and as she learns about us, she can help us succeed. **Karen Bailey** Do you want to talk about the preschool thing? I know that it is legal to charge tuition for preschool, but this has been a pilot program, and I want to bring it before you all to decide if it is something we want to continue. We need to rethink it for next year. **Amy Gygax**

We can talk about that at our February meeting. We did cover our Annual Report to the district in this.

c.) **Strategic Plan Amy Gygax** Did people have a chance to look at the Strategic Plan and Communications piece and think about that? If we don't think we are prepared for that I would wait until we are. Don't want to keep putting it off, but when I put this on the agenda it was going to be our main point of discussion. IF we are not ready we can table it. **Jane Higgins** I would like to push it off, so that would mean next month. **Amy Gygax** Can everyone come with 3 objectives for the Communication part of the Strategic Plan. Last month we decided in order to come up with a timeline for the Strategic Plan we needed to delve into it more, so we are going to focus on a section each month, starting with Communication. Once we have gone through all sections and have a big picture, we can make a time line how, and when we will accomplish those objectives.

d.) **Board Fundraising Amy Gygax** We are getting to the place where we should come to a consensus on what we want to commit to as a Board for fundraising for this year. Last month we tabled it because we didn't have everyone here, and I don't want to keep putting it off, but I feel hesitant to make a commitment for those that are not here. But I also am willing for us to make a decision tonight if that is what the people want. **Karen Bailey** I've been thinking a lot about it because I have taken the fundraising committee under me, and have not followed through, and we need to get that going. There was a functioning well run Fundraising committee and we need to reform it. Does the Board want to take the lead and form the Fundraising Committee? Would you want to take that separate from Board fundraising? Help us reorganize our fundraising efforts? I need to be approving fundraising, I don't want a committee to have to do that. **Jane Higgins** I don't think a Fundraising Committee would be something that would be a function of the Board? **Amy Gygax** I don't think that is something that the Board would head or take over. That is not our function **Karen Bailey** In some not for profit boards their function is to raise money and they are expected to contribute some amount of money. Eugene Schwartz advocates members of school boards give advice not money. If there was a piece of fundraising it would be helpful. **Jane Higgins** We are sure that we not going to do a capital campaign but we could sponsor the rag doll project Karen talked about at previous meeting. **Lousie Lavegne** We talked about our commitment to the Auction, and raffling off a wine tree. We each bring 2 bottles of nice wine. **Amy Gygax** That can be our commitment, we had also said that we would look for sponsors or buy tickets, so that could be the total of our commitment for the year. **Lousie Lavegne** We can be there selling tickets. I have also been looking at doing a family drama club, where we would sell tickets, and put on a family production. That is an event I would like to bring. **Leann Tourzan** At my

kids school there is a board member standing outside selling SCRIP most Fridays. They make some money. Is that something we could do. **Jane Higgins** We do, but it a little behind the scene. **Leann Tourzan** Could we have a board member commit to do that once a month? I could commit to finding that info, and we could find a parent to do it. **Sarah Trujillo** We could do it during Friday Market time. **Amy Gygax** I can commit to the wine tree, and finding sponsors. If others feel we should commit to more I can get behind that. **Leann Tourzan** I was able to find a gold sponsor, for our teachers table. **Karen Bailey** I am close to rolling out the RAG dolls. It stands for Recognizing Authentic Generosity. I have four made, and need to make a flyer. I want to have it ready for my Rotary Club meeting in 2 weeks it would be \$5000 donation to keep the doll for a year, and they can then pass it one to another not for profit, and they will go around the world. **Lousie Lavergne** We are looking for \$5000 donors. **Karen Bailey** Yes, they have trunks, and passports, the donor would keep the doll for a year. The idea being that gift money needs to move to be healthy. My goal is to have Rotary commit to one a month, so for a year, it would be \$60,000/year. They would then go on to make money for other countries. **Jane Higgins** Are you looking for help from the Board? **Karen Bailey** Not at this point **Amy Gygax** Back to the Board commitment. Are we all willing to commit to the wine tree, and looking for sponsors for the Auction? **Leann Tourzan** I think that sounds great for this year. **Amy Gygax** We can each bring two \$20 bottles of wine to your next meeting. **Karen Bailey** I will ask Rotary to borrow the wine tree. **Jane Higgins** We need to organize how we are going to sell those tickets and who will be dealing with that. **Amy Gygax** We can do that at our next meeting. **Sarah Trujillo** I will talk to Julie about how she would like that to work.

- e.) **Eighth Grade Exit Interviews** **Amy Gygax** I have not gotten any. If you have tried a few times let me know and we can send letters. **Sarah Trujillo** I have an appointment to do one tomorrow. **Amy Gygax** I have received five total. Once I get more of them I will pass out a report about it. Next year we have to be more strict with a deadline.
- f.) **2.01.35Board Self-Evaluation** **Amy Gygax** We need to do one, this board has never done one that I know of. The one I sent out to you is one I found from another charter school and edited it to fit our school, just to have something to start with. If people want to email me any feedback, or typos or other things that we need to add. I would like to have one ready for us to adopt at our next meeting, and we can do the evaluation and have results ready for our annual meeting in April. Finalized and approved at our next meeting. Turn in our evaluations at our March meeting, and discuss them our April, and get it in the yearly rhythm going forward. Feedback by January 25<sup>th</sup>.

- g.) **Board Correspondence Thank-you's-** I didn't get any. Remember if you have any next month let me know. **Jane Higgins** We could send one to Tracy and Dayna.

## **VII. Action Items:**

- a.) **Vote on Perspective Board Member: Kellee O'Shea**

### **Motion Approved**

**Amy Gygax** I make a motion to elect Kellee O'Shea as a Board Member for a two-year term. **Sarah Trujillo** I second the motion.

**Discussion: Louise Lavergne** I am very excited that you are here, but I am concerned that now we have five out of eight members that are from Janes class. I think you are an asset and if I need to step down for balance I would be willing to do that. **Amy Gygax** I agree that it would be better to have more balance, but at this point, finding new board members is the way I would like to deal with that problem, rather than have you step down. **Karen Bailey** You don't seem biased toward Janes class, that has never been an issue. **Louise Lavergne** It could be unfair to Jane to have so many parents committed on things outside of class duties. It depletes her source of support. **Amy Gygax** If there was a conflict that needed resolution from that class, it would be hard for so many members to possibly need to recuse themselves. If you are really concerned, and feel the need to step down, it would be great to find a replacement. **Jane Higgins** We all need to continue and look for possible Board members from the outside community. **Karen Bailey** And Jane's term is up this year. **Louise Lavergne** So is mine. **Amy Gygax** You can recommit. **Louise Lavergne** I just want us to be aware. **Amy Gygax** We do need to find more members, but not parents at this time.

**Aye - 5 (Higgins, Lavergne, Gygax, Trujillo, Tourzan)**

**No – 0**

- b.) **Strategic Plan – Tabled**

- c.) **Approve Change to School Calendar – Karen Bailey** We don't have a definite on snow days. Tracy came up with that we have enough hours but we are running by Michelle Zendel and she has not responded **Amy Gygax** So we will table that for now.

**VIII. Informational items: Amy Gygax** I will have Board binders soon.

## **IX. Closing Verse**

**X. Meeting Adjourned**

Minutes submitted by: Sarah Trujillo

Minutes approved by: \_\_\_\_\_

Board President