



City Garden Montessori School

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time

Wednesday September 2, 2020 at 6:30 PM

Via Zoom Webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89785080078?pwd=Y1g4U0htVGYYZ1ZFUjhVMW1yaENSZz09>

Passcode: 465967

Directors Present

A. Beasley (remote), D. Smith (remote), J. Dixon (remote), J. Fouse (remote), J. Sharp (remote), L. Fathman (remote), M. Gleason (remote), S. Deuanepenh (remote), S. Haigler (remote), S. Harris (remote), S. Shelton-Dodge (remote)

Directors Absent

C. Schell

Directors Arrived Late

S. Shelton-Dodge

Guests Present

C. Huck (remote), C. Isom (remote), D. Blank (remote), D. Flores (remote), D. Fox (remote), G. Ritter (remote), J. Achtenberg (remote), J. Martinez-Woods (remote), S. Sanchez (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Call the Meeting to Order

D. Smith called a meeting of the board of directors of City Garden Montessori School to order on Wednesday Sep 2, 2020 @ 6:32 PM.

The meeting was live-streamed via Facebook and Zoom webinar.

Christie gave the Land Acknowledgment, and there was a respectful moment of silence.

B. Record Attendance and Guests

C. Mission Statement

Sherita recited the Mission Statement.

D. Introductions and Public Comment

There were no public comments (with one Attendee in the webinar).

II. Action Items

A. Consent Agenda - Approve Minutes from June 2020 Meeting

L. Fathman made a motion to approve the minutes from Board Meeting on 06-03-20.

S. Harris seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

B. June Financials

A. Beasley made a motion to approve the June/FYE financials.

S. Haigler seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

C. Virtual Education Delivery Policy

There were questions and recommended changes to Section 1 of the policy. The policy was deferred to the Governance Committee to review, and to consult with academic staff to ensure that it appropriately addresses their needs.

D. Approval of Expenditures

J. Dixon made a motion to approve the list of expenditures over \$5,000 for FY21 that had previously not been approved by the board.

S. Deuanephenh seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

III. Information Items

A. School Updates

General Update (Christie)

- There was much due diligence regarding our health and safety protocols. We would like thank SLU for their help with this.
- We decided this year to provide all school supplies to our students. We distributed 137 Chromebooks so far, with 75 on order and due by mid-September. We also distributed 45 hot spots to families and staff who needed them for internet access.
- For in-person staffing, we have hired additional staff, including a school nurse.
- We will begin surveying staff, families and students in the next few weeks.

Academic Update (Crystal)

- Teachers prepared for the start of school with PD, which included workshops in:
 - Trauma Intervention
 - iReady assess tools
 - Montessori virtual learning programming and tools
- There are 45 students on site - 25 Pre-K and 20 in grades K-6

- We are serving ~ 170 students virtually
- There are 9 weeks of lessons planned so far

B. Academic Dashboard

Christie shared a dashboard that has been used by Lee Montessori in Washington, DC to provide the board with a template. The board will need to determine what type of data they wish to be tracked by our dashboard tool. An immediate suggestion was to add discipline information.

C. Board Goals and Board "Road Map" for 2020-21

Board Goals

The board goals that the Executive Committee proposed were discussed. Donna asked that any additional recommendations be sent to her so this final version can be adopted at the October meeting.

Road Map

This is a tool designed so that the board gets an advanced view of what items and votes will be addressed in this year's board meetings. We will be adding to it as items come to our attention.

D. Building Project Update

The board discussed the phases of the project and the financing being sought by market incentives and capital fundraising. It is estimated that the entire cost of the project will be around \$15 million.

E. Development and Communications Update

S. Shelton-Dodge arrived late.

Deb Flores shared this year's development and communications plan. She also unveiled the new City Garden website. A special thanks to Cassidy Flynn for his amazing work in the design and implementation of our new website.

F. Questions and Comments

G. Reflection: Meeting Agreement

H. Included in Packet as Reading Materials

IV. Closing Items

A. Adjourn to Closed Session

S. Deuanephenh made a motion to adjourn the general meeting at 8:50 PM and move to Closed Session.

M. Gleason seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

J. Fouse	Aye
D. Smith	Aye
M. Gleason	Aye
S. Haigler	Aye
L. Fathman	Aye
S. Deuanephenh	Aye
A. Beasley	Aye
J. Sharp	Aye
S. Shelton-Dodge	Aye

J. Dixon	Aye
C. Schell	Absent
S. Harris	Aye

B. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
D. Fox



City Garden Montessori School

Minutes

Special Board Meeting

Date and Time

Wednesday August 5, 2020 at 6:30 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83120521093?pwd=UUFEWWJST3VtT0lSeFhPc1lYcER5UT09>

Meeting ID: 831 2052 1093

Passcode: 056480

Dial in:

312-626-6799 - OR - 646-876-9923

Directors Present

A. Beasley (remote), D. Smith (remote), J. Fouse (remote), J. Sharp (remote), S. Deuanephenh (remote), S. Haigler (remote), S. Harris (remote), S. Shelton-Dodge (remote)

Directors Absent

C. Schell, J. Dixon, L. Fathman, M. Gleason

Guests Present

A. Mogaji (remote), C. Huck (remote), D. Blank (remote), D. Flores (remote), D. Fox (remote), J. Martinez-Woods (remote), S. Sanchez (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Call the Meeting to Order

D. Smith called a meeting of the board of directors of City Garden Montessori School to order on Wednesday Aug 5, 2020 @ 6:32 PM.

Christie read the acknowledgement to the Illiniwek people, and to those in our community and around the world who have been impacted by the current pandemic. She asked that we

also honor those who have been killed by racial violence with a respectful and brief moment of silence.

B. Record Attendance and Guests

C. Mission Statement

Sysco read the school mission statement.

D. Introductions and Public Comment

Donna welcomed our newest board member, Sherita Haigler and City Garden Institute Director, Jori Martinez-Woods.

Donna read, and entered into the record, a public comment received from Sarah Holtz Stout, a City Garden parent and an anonymous letter composed on the behalf of some of the members of City Garden's staff.

II. Information Items

A. Review of Fall 2020 School Re-entry Plan

Christie provided a high-level overview of the plan (the full plan was part of the meeting packet), and answered questions about it's development, the resources (DESE, St. Louis City, Department of Health, our legal team, etc.) and the school leaders, both local and, in the case of Montessori, outside the area, whose collaboration helped the leadership team determine best practices and conditions for the re-opening of the school.

B. Review of Model Virtual Education Delivery Policy

This was a first review of the proposed policy, which will be on the agenda for approval at the next board meeting.

III. Action Items

A. Approval of Resolution to Suspend Policy during COVID-19 Emergency

S. Harris made a motion to approve the resolution to suspend policy to align with COVID-19 emergency.

A. Beasley seconded the motion.

At the recommendation of our legal team, the approval of this resolution will give the CEO the authority to adopt COVID-19 emergency policies on a situational and temporary basis during the pandemic, rather than rewriting our standard policies during the crisis. The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

B. Approval for initial financing (bridge loans) to begin construction on 4209 Folsom

S. Deuanepenh made a motion to approve the bridge loans for 4209 Folsom under the terms provided, and to authorize the CEO or other officers of City Garden Montessori School to obtain and execute the loan up to the amount stated in the terms.

J. Fouse seconded the motion.

To begin the work at 4209 Folsom before we have the full financing. This was done so that the building renovation would be completed by the start of the 2021-22 school year. The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

IV. Updates

A. Questions and Comments

B. Reflection: Meeting Agreement

We created room for all voices.

V. Closing Items

A. Adjourn to Closed Meeting

S. Haigler made a motion to adjourn to closed session.

J. Fouse seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

M. Gleason	Absent
L. Fathman	Absent
J. Fouse	Aye
S. Shelton-Dodge	Aye
S. Haigler	Aye
D. Smith	Aye
A. Beasley	Aye
J. Sharp	Aye
J. Dixon	Absent
S. Harris	Aye
C. Schell	Absent
S. Deuanephenh	Aye

B. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 7:51 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
D. Fox

Documents used during the meeting

- Board comments8.5.2020.pdf
- City Garden - Resolutions for Catalytic Holdings Loan.pdf
- Secretary_s Certificate - City Garden Montessori School - Catalytic Holdings.pdf

Please share this comment with City Garden's Board of Directors

Your comment will be read and entered into the record for the August 5, 2020 Special Board meeting.

Email address *

shstout@gmail.com

Please give us your name. *

Sarh Stout

What would you like the board to know today? *

Good event, board and administration,

I wanted to write a brief comment to the board tonight to follow up on some of the questions that I had regarding the school opening. Thank you for the hard work that has gone into this. It is not an easy time for anyone, and I know you have put a lot of work in this summer. Some of the questions that I asked in the family survey were answered, while others were not. I think that both families and staff need additional answers to know if it is safe to return and how safety will be considered. The following are the questions that were not fully addressed, along with a few others that I have thought about since my first writing. I hope that the board and administration will strongly consider being transparent about these things before the start of school.

1. How are you deciding which guides come back? I'm very concerned for the guides and staff because they are being put in a vulnerable position. Do they have a true choice in whether or not they come back? Are guides and staff allowed to work from home because of their own concerns about the disease, or do they have to have an extenuating circumstance or medical issue? I believe that we need to live our values of being a different kind of school and not force teachers to come back if they do not feel comfortable.
2. The original document says that you "will communicate to the community as needed" when there is a positive Covid test. That is very vague and there was not additional information in the follow up. I would like to have more details in there about what this means. If a teacher or student tests positive, will all of the families who have a child present in the building be notified? Will the whole class be notified? Just the kids who sit closest to that child?
3. I'm a little concerned about the 15 kids per class. It was mentioned that kids in the top tiers (IEP, essential worker's kids, etc) will be the first to get spots and that others may be considered as well. I would encourage the school to not include others unless absolutely necessary (maybe those who have single parents or financial instability or other risk factors). I am concerned that some parents who just want their kid not to get behind will try to send them when really they could afford to find another option. I don't want to see more space being consumed by those who are privileged enough not to truly need their child to be in person. I am also concerned about children possibly moving from class to class if a teacher is out. That would completely negate the bubble/pod that is needed to keep everyone safe.
4. Will teachers have access to any help with healthcare payments if they become ill due to being in a vulnerable position? Staff should not have to bear that financial burden because of coming to work.
5. While testing is mentioned as something that teachers have to go through to come back to school, why are children not being tested? Children are very efficient vectors and are often asymptomatic. I can speak from experience that a six year old in my extended family had the disease with no symptoms and was at daycare for a few days before finding out that his family was all positive. Both children and staff need to be tested very regularly so that cases can be quickly taken care of.

Thank you again for your hard work,
Sarah Stout

Thank you!



This form was created inside of City Garden Montessori School.

Google Forms

City Garden Board and Administration,

Since the COVID-19 pandemic closed schools in March, City Garden staff has repeatedly risen to the task of providing distance education to our students and supporting our families outside of the classroom as well. Since this time period, the events unfolding nationally have been of great concern not only from the standpoint of educators and school staff, but for us as parents, and members of our own families. The spread of COVID-19 and the risk associated with the prospect of reopening schools has been an issue that has taken center stage across the nation. The St. Louis region has been no different, as already many districts including SLPS have made rapid changes to their education plans to include mostly virtual formats for their students, and large-scale carefully-planned policy implementation after evaluating risk of spread, and infection trends in The State of Missouri. As we move towards the projected start date for the 2020 school year, City Garden's re-entry plan currently includes plans to have students receiving both virtual and in person learning options, cleaning measures, PPE for staff/students, and other deliverables. As of this moment many of us do not feel confident that many of these promises and other staff concerns have been met, and therefore not in support of re-opening the building until the following concerns have been met and addressed to the staff and school community as a whole:

- Testing: Currently within the plan, there is only a requirement for staff to get tested once at the beginning of the year. There are no interval testing requirements.
- There is NO testing requirement policy for students attending the school to present a negative COVID test. The DESE regulations on re-opening do not address this either.
- Instructional staff currently have no verified number of students they will have in their room. There is no information on what staff to student ratios will be. This will need to be remedied with both a virtual and an in-person enrollment process so that staff knows this information.
- The plan is too vague, and it is not clear who within administration will be anchoring or carrying out which parts of the plan, and who staff is to report or direct questions to.
- There are concerns from staff that there will be staff and students in more than just the primary rooms. Without clear numbers of how many people will be in the building, this greatly affects the level of comfort staff has with being in the building.
- We want full staff meetings about re-opening, and not individual piecemeal meetings. We want to hear each other's concerns from each other, and hear Admin's responses as a whole. The current method of doing one-on-one's about this is unacceptable.
- There is no policy for isolating students who are sick.
- There is no plan for backup teachers. Nor is there a testing policy for any backup sub pool.
- There is no school nurse to treat medical emergencies, or dedicated janitorial staff to manage the essential tasks of cleaning.
- Staff is being asked what PPE they need. There is no informed policy or research being done around this, leaving staff to believe they are to fend for themselves or assume

liability for their own health in unsafe working conditions. Staff do not have the necessary medical background to ascertain what kind of PPE makes sense for them.

- Staff are being put into transitional roles without any meaningful guidance, and are left unsupported, leading to a “sink or swim” culture in the workplace.
- The plan in its current form does not mention any policy or process addressing employee health coverage in the event they get sick.
- The phrase vulnerable is mentioned many times but not specifically defined or identified within our school body. (What groups are defined as vulnerable? What about vulnerable staff? Is this term based on living situations, learning needs, children of essential workers etc?)

As a staff, we are calling on the City Garden board and administration to embrace it's own values of equity and inclusion, and engage in real communication and efforts to respond to staff concerns about reopening and the plan surrounding it. Without the above issues being addressed and resolved, this is not a plan that supports the welfare and safety of staff and students.

Signed,

Concerned members of City Garden staff