

Southeast Alaska Friends of Montessori Board Meeting

April 1, 2015. 5:10pm – 7:00pm Montessori Borealis Classroom

Approved Meeting Minutes

SEAFOM Board Members Present: Stephanie Kohlhase (SK), Lupita Alvarez (LA), Abe Levy (AL), Annabel Rondeau (AR), Cory Crossett (CC), Rebecca Stenson (RS), Lynnette McNutt (LM, by phone), Jeffrey Loftus (JL, 5:20-5:40 by phone).

SEAFOM Board Members not present: Catherine Fritz (CF).

SEAFOM Members Present: Geoff Kirsch (GK), Callie Conerton (CCo), & Kristin Garot (KG)

1. **Establish Quorum:** Quorum established.
2. **Review Minutes from December 3, 2014 Meeting:** AL moved to approve the minutes. CC seconded. Minutes approved.
3. **Membership Update & Nominating Committee (CC & AR):** CC and AR will meet to ensure membership list is updated. Membership year runs from June 1 to May 31 annually. LA suggested that an email be sent to as a reminder to members to renew membership. Memberships can be renewed online. AL recommended that members also be reminded about the membership cycle. If one becomes a member in April, for example, his or her membership will still expire on May 31. LA agreed to put updates on the SEAFOM website.
4. **Treasurer's Report (AL):**
 - a. **Review of 2014-2015 adopted budget and status of revenue/expenditures:** AL reported that SEAFOM is slightly under-budget yet most expenses and revenue has materialized as expected. Overall, SEAFOM is in sound financial standing.
 - b. **Profit and Loss Spreadsheet:** AL reviewed this.
 - c. **Creation of Finance Committee:** AL requested that a finance committee be created to assist the treasurer in helping to prepare the annual budget and review interim funding requests throughout the year. AL, LA, AR, SK, and RS agreed to join. RS made a motion to include those members in the finance committee. CC seconded.
5. **Review of Contracts for Teacher Training 2014-2015 School Year (SK):** SEAFOM currently has two elementary teachers in contract for AMI Elementary Montessori Training. One teacher who attended the Orientation to Adolescent Studies last summer will be paying back a portion of the scholarship due to an interruption in the contract. This will be paid by June 1, so this funding can be reallocated. SEAFOM also funded a Spanish contractor, a music contractor, a Micro economy contractor, and three Creative Expressions contractors, to date.
6. **Program Liaison Updates:**
 - a. **Juneau Montessori School (GK):** Juneau Montessori School (JMS) is moving forward on the plans to build a new fence for the school to create an outdoor classroom. JMS is underway with obtaining an As-Built Survey. They have quotes and are ready to order fence materials when they are certain about the dimensions of the site. They will submit an invoice to SEAFOM when the survey is complete. On other topics, JMS is anticipating

between 9-12 kindergarteners. The pansy sale is also underway, and they could use some help. SK said that an email could be sent out to SEAFOM members to recruit volunteers. Wendy Zirngibl is the coordinator for pansy sale fundraising efforts.

- b. Montessori Borealis Site Council (KG):** Montessori Borealis (MB) Site Council will be looking for new members this spring. This spring they have worked on outreach efforts to recruit diverse families to apply for MB. They have completed bus placards, postcards, posters, and made several other recruitment efforts to target a wide cross-section of Juneau.

- 7. Catherine Fritz SEAFOM Kindergarten Scholarship Committee:** SK reported that applications were provided at parent teacher conferences. JMS is expecting 9-12 kindergarteners next year. SK requested one other person to join the kindergarten scholarship committee. CCo said that she could join the committee. This committee now consists of Shauna Murray, Stephanie Kohlase, and Callie Conerton.

- 8. Website Development/Forms Update (LA & SK):** SEAFOM website is: www.seafom-friendsofmontessori.org. The following forms have been updated and made available to the website:
 - a. SEAFOM Membership Form
 - b. 2015-2016 Teacher Scholarship Application Form
 - c. 2015-2016 General Funding Requests
 - d. Interim Funding Requests (requests outside of regular budget timeframe)
 - e. Pre-approved Professional Development Reimbursement FormOther responses: AL recommended that the SEAFOM budget be made a direct link on the website. LA said that she would like to include quotes and/or testimonials from teachers and kindergarten parents that SEAFOM has helped support to highlight the importance of this non-profit organization. SK requested that documents and forms be updated bi-annually, in August and January. SK also requesting that SEAFOM meeting dates get posted on the website, as well.

- 9. Marie Drake Renovation Planning Update (KG/SK):** A committee of teachers, administrators and district personnel has worked with architects to create a plan for the facility. The next step is to complete a cost estimate. The process has been stymied by House Bill 64 through the Alaska State Legislature that would halt all school-based state reimbursement projects for five years.

- 10. Montessori Borealis Additional Classrooms Update:**
 - a. Children's House (LA):** LA submitted a \$25,000 grant proposal to the Rasmussen Foundation, and she expects to hear back between mid-April and mid-June. In the meantime, she has gathered all necessary documents for licensing. She is researching materials for the classroom, yet is waiting to order these until she has organized shipping arrangements to reduce costs. Alaska Marine Lines has agreed to barge materials for free. This is moving ahead according to the timeline. When LA provides receipts/invoices, SEAFOM will reimburse, per budget allowances.
 - b. Lower Elementary Classroom (LA):** Materials for the lower elementary classroom are being ordered with the Children's House materials. A committee of teachers, including CC, AR, and Mary Jane Tenney have been researching needed materials.

11. 2015-2016 Funding Requests (Provided by CF, presented by SK):

- a. Overview of Teacher Training Requests:** Three teachers have requested scholarships to become trained in AMI Montessori: two adolescent teachers and one elementary teacher. A request has also been made to set aside funding to train a toddler teacher, yet a specific teacher has not been identified at this time. SK clarified that SEAFOM's role is to provide scholarships to train teachers interested in Montessori, yet they are not able to offer or ensure employment in any way. LA recommended that SEAFOM consider funding a teacher to attend Children's House Training in subsequent years.
- b. General Funding Requests:**
 - i. Montessori Borealis:** SK reviewed the funding requests in detail. These included: classroom materials, contracted support positions, professional development Montessori training, and student recruitment funding. These requests were tiered according to priority.
 - 1. Contracts:** AL raised the question about contractor pay. He noted a difference between hiring contractors and employees, which involves who is in control of the work. SEAFOM is hiring contractors, and lump sums are more indicative of contracts rather than wages. MJT recommended that wages, even if calculated as lump sums, should not decrease for previously contracted individuals. CC noted that self-employment tax is high, which is a downside to contracts. SK mentioned adding clauses in the contract to include specifications about work, pay, and liability. GK recommended SEAFOM contact Paul Grant, a local attorney who could help clarify these questions. It was agreed that the Finance Committee could further investigate the best approach to contracts and pay.
 - 2. Classroom Materials:** AL asked about the timing of the spending for classroom materials, since this upcoming budget funds would not be available until June 1. KG clarified that MB will be doing an initial order of materials this spring using the funding set aside from the current budgeted amount, and the request for materials for the upcoming budget year will be used throughout the 2015-2016 school year. The estimate from the Montessori Northwest training institute is a cost of at least \$30,000-\$35,000 to outfit a Montessori classroom. MB staff have written grants to help provide funding as well as submitted funding requests to SEAFOM. LA asked if the approved \$10,000 set aside for Children's House administration under the current budget could be used for materials rather than for administration. AL said that SEAFOM could not repurpose this funding to a different line item without the vote of the membership. AL recommended that this request be put on the agenda for the next meeting. SK added that this could not be decided with a proxy vote.
 - 3. Professional Development Montessori Training:** SK asked whether the \$10,000 requested for assistant training for support staff was enough to cover the costs of this. KG said it may not be depending on the arrangement of the trainer and the timing of the event. SK is hoping to provide local teaching assistant training with Sharlyn Smith within next year's school budget. This could provide training for teachers, para-professionals and even parents from all programs. KG asked about

providing stipends to support staff, since the training may be a two-week, full-day program in the summer. SK responded that if SEAFOM is covering the cost of tuition, that they cannot pay the attendees as well. She asked if the Juneau School District could cover stipends, and KG said there is no funding available for this. LA recommended that MB look into offering credit for the training through the University of Alaska. Professional development funding was also requested in the amount of \$2250 to send MB teachers to AMI Refresher courses and other professional development opportunities.

4. Music: KG clarified that the request for music contract was for supplemental music instruction before and after school. Funding for instruments was also requested, which would be start-up funds to purchase violins for the JAMM program. Funding would be matched by JAMM if MB is accepted into the program. If MB is not accepted into the program, then MB would like to use the funds to purchase more instruments for the middle school band. SK reported that CF wanted to communicate that funding for instruments would not be higher on her priority list to fund since it is not part of an authentic Montessori curriculum .

5. Other comments: SK noted that, in the past SEAFOM provided an unequal distribution of funding to MB, yet now that SEAFOM is receiving a greater percentage of funding from Hidden Treasures, the responsibility is more broad. KG said that now that MB expands as a Juneau School District (JSD) entity, the specialist designation will increase, and JSD will cover a bit more, such as middle school P.E. and music. SK clarified that historical SEAFOM funding priorities are for teacher training and Montessori materials. LM commented that SEAFOM should also consider the limitations around fund raising with a private vs. a public school system.

c. Juneau Montessori School (JMS): GK explained that the cost of the fence has been more costly than they had originally thought. They would like an outdoor space that will meet the school's needs. They are looking into different fundraising projects through the Juneau Community Foundation. The current request to SEAFOM will cover this year's expenses, and they anticipate that the fence can be funded over the course of three years.

d. Overview of expected available budget and status of review: The Finance Committee will meet to further discuss these requests and make a budget recommendation to the board at the next meeting.

12. Next Meeting (Annual Membership Meeting): Scheduled for May 9, 2015 at SK home, 10753 Horizon Drive. New members and officers will be elected, the final 2015-2016 budget will be approved, and the meeting schedule will be set for the upcoming year. The meeting will be a potluck to be held at 3:00PM. RS will send an email reminder with details.

13. Attachments: 1, 15-16 SEAFOM Budget Plan