

**MCCPTA**  
**Board of Directors Meeting**  
**Minutes of the Board of Directors meeting on November 1, 2007**  
**in the Auditorium of the Carver Educational Services Center**  
**FINAL**

**Attendance**

*Officers:* Jane de Winter, Kay Romero, Liz Wheeler, April Keyes, Dale Ryan, Stacy Menendez, Ted Willard

*Committee Chairs:* Steve Augustino, Carol Falk, Tracy Fox, Beth Kennington, DeBora King, Pam Moomau, Ellen Paul, Sharon St. Pierre, Sharon Schulman, Patti Twigg, Linda B. White, Elisia George

*AVPs:* Kate Savage, Ellen Schaefer-Salins, Jim Keenan

*Cluster Coordinators:* Karen Smith, Sonya Leaman, Donna Pfeiffer, Linda Kuserk, Dawn Trahern, Laurie Halverson, Janette Gilman, John Hall, Andrea Bernardo, Carol Faulk, Laurie Berthiaume, Diane Dickson, Dawn Dolan, Lee Ann Doerflinger, Fran Simons, Paul Morrison, Juan Johnson, Brenda Martin

**Call To Order:** 7:39 pm by Jane de Winter, President  
Board of Directors Delegate Cards Given Out

**Changes to Agenda:**

- Approval of October Minutes
- Add Listserve Policy Discussion – new business
- Add Nominating Committee Report – committee reports
- Add April Delegate Assembly Topic
- Add Learner's Permits/Provisional Licenses

*October Meeting Minutes & Amended Agenda Approved by voice vote at 7:44pm*

**Officer Reports**

*Treasurer's Report* – Bonding & Liability insurance paid today (\$11,000). Director's and Officer's Insurance local quote not received yet from Feldman Insurance. Waiting on this before sending out locals' insurance invoices; did not want to send out 2 invoices. If D&O insurance quote not received within a couple of weeks, she will go ahead and send out invoices excluding that item, with another bill following.

*President's Reports*

*Vending Machines* – Contracts have been centralized. No more signing bonuses have been given and the schools' commissions have been cut in half because company believes that revenues will be lower once the official MCPS vending rules are enforced by all (limited hours of operation, limited types of products that historically have had lower profit margins – i.e., water & juice instead of Coke & Pepsi). If anyone wants to call the company representative directly to discuss this issue, ask Jane for the phone number.

Jane has requested that Cluster Coordinators get a list of programs that schools will NOT be able to offer without the additional funding – many schools had received approximately \$12,000 per year in past bonuses and commissions combined.

Patti Twigg, Paint Branch HS Cluster Coordinator, passed on comments from Paint Branch High School principal that the retraction of signing bonuses was never directly communicated to the principal by Larry Bowers nor the vending machine company. Jane noted that the companies had notified other high school principals directly as early as a year ago about the change. One way that Paint Branch used the money was for AP exams, to reduce the cost to needy families. Mrs. Twigg noted that the schools would need some type of

compensation to make up for this loss. There is also a concern about WHEN schools will be receiving the revised commission amounts. Jane will talk to Larry Bowers for information regarding payment schedule.

Three letters sent to MCCPTA: 2 from BOE & 1 from MCPS.

1. From Board of Education – In response to September letter Jane sent referring to the requirement that Principals must be invited to Cluster visits, recalling an incident in the Einstein Cluster concerning Heath Morrison. They suggest meeting to have a brainstorming session about format and how they can get more school participation. MCCPTA members should try to come up with ideas and pass them on to Jane. She heard that there is a concern with some PTA's about frank discussion with school principals present. It is possible that neither principals nor MCCPTA members would feel comfortable speaking openly in front of each other. Nancy Navarro would like to meet with MCCPTA about issues between principals and parents.
2. Aggie Alvez sent a book entitled, "Beyond The Bake Sale"; there is a breakfast being held 8:30 – 11:30 on December 20, including one of the authors, inviting all community stakeholders. MCPS is willing to host 10 MCCPTA members to this breakfast. A useful "What is your school type?" survey is in the book – Jane wants to send this out to PTA Presidents to gauge the response to take back to Nancy Navarro for school feedback.
3. Calendar – In response to Jane's letter asking for consolidation of stakeholder meetings into one meeting. MCPS/Robin Confino has stated that there are only 2 meetings currently, which is an appropriate amount – first is with the parents, second is with the Executive Leadership Team (ELT), which includes the union representatives. MCPS has a separate meeting for parents because Mrs. Confino felt that in the past parents were not being given a real voice in a more consolidated meeting; the separate meeting is to make sure more parents are involved and that they are heard. This format will not be changed, unless MCCPTA is given a place on the ELT.

Robin Confino is the MCPS staff member overseeing the yearly school Calendar. Her comments were as follows: that MCPS is making great efforts to listen more to parent input, that there is no mechanism for parental feedback after the calendar is tweaked and reviewed at the school system level at this time, and that she would like to look into holding an additional community/parental input meeting after the school system meeting. Ms. Confino is looking into it.

PTA members are being asked to write letters to Dr. Weast and the Board of Education urging the incorporation of 2 things that have been tentatively scheduled into the 2008-09 preliminary calendar: Tuesday start date & ½ day on the day before Thanksgiving.

Important Note from MCPS: They cannot give us dates for Spring Break until Maryland Dept. of Education releases test dates.

### *MCPS Budget Meetings*

In the past, MCPS funding has been increasing because Thornton Aid was increasing (was being phased in), but now it is not due to fiscal pressure from the state; this has greatly affected the MCPS budget. It has been noted that more money will be needed from Montgomery County than has been given in the past. Any new initiative that is introduced to MCPS must be offset by cuts somewhere else in the budget.

Dr. Weast would like to forgo his annual budget presentation in December. Governor Martin O'Malley has proposed excluding the inflationary increase in Thornton this year and in future years tying the increase to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) with a cap of 2.5% per year – under this change, the funding received by us would actually be larger than if the Thornton increase is kept tied to the Implicit Price Index and getting GCI.

Our delegates should be advocating for this situation; it's a better financial deal for us in the long run.

*Blue Book* – SUMMIT HALL, GERMANTOWN, WHEATON WOODS are the only PTA's without any information for the blue book. Do these locals even have PTAs? Cluster Coordinators need to follow up with these schools and help them establish or assist their PTAs.

*Convention* – There are 2 reasons that we need to have as many members as possible at convention: Mandatory State PTA Liability Insurance, whereby all Maryland local units will be required to use one insurance company chosen by the MD PTA, and the Council Bylaws amendment, in which MD PTA has changed the council bylaws to require that a majority quorum (more than 50%) of BOD members of the council will be required to be in attendance to conduct official business of the council. Jane believes that the insurance issue will be discussed on Friday. On Friday, it will be important to have many MCCPTA members there, for the bylaws issue will have to be added to the Convention Agenda and there needs to be a 2/3 vote to add an item to the agenda to even ask for a change. We need all members who can make it to come to the convention – one from each local?

*Committee for Montgomery Breakfast* (Friday, December 14 at North Bethesda Marriott Conference Center, 7-9:30am) – MCCPTA has bought a table that seat 10. We will have seats available so contact Jane. Keynote speaker is unknown at this point.

Also, we will have seats available at the MLK Breakfast (on MLK Day – January 21<sup>st</sup> at the same conference center).

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

*High School Graduation Venues* – Sharon St. Pierre

Clarification: A high school with more than 500 graduates automatically has access to a larger venue. Those very close to 500 may appeal for large venue status – however, the school will need to pay the difference in cost for the bigger venue.

Four schools are eligible for Comcast Center as the venue, which are Blair, Sherwood, Magruder, and Wooten. Wooten has decided not to hold their graduation at the larger venue. These schools will pay \$5000 to go to Comcast Center (capacity-14,000). All other schools, by default, will be going to Constitution Hall (capacity - 3,700) unless they choose another venue such as Strathmore (capacity-1,800), Showplace Arena (capacity – 4,500), etc. They will have to submit a special appeal to MCPS and will likely go to one of the venues that have been used before – these schools will not be paying any money for the graduation facilities. They are supposed to be using a community input process to decide where they want to go. The schools have been given funding allotments and any overage that might result from choice of venue will have to be paid by the school in question.

There are 2 main issues: (primary issue) – Feasibility study by departments with the State of Maryland was done for constructing a sports arena that could be used for a graduation venue. The study found that the attraction and multi-use ability of the sports arena would be entirely feasible. Sharon is finding out where the county/state is on the process of going forward with building the arena. At this point, there is no answer. Cost for graduation at possible new sports arena – there is no mention of possible cost associated for graduation (to help pay for the construction of the building).

(secondary issue) – University of Maryland's Comcast has a \$10,000 per day facility fee and \$34,000 for each graduation (we are not privy to information regarding what U of M's actual cost is) (\$25,000 per graduation for P.G. County last year). George Mason, which is also a state school, waives its facility fee but U

of M does not. Sharon is in talks with those at U of M to try to get the fee reduced. There is a sense that U of M does not really want graduations at their facility because they have enough events.

Usually the date and location of graduations are given out in the fall of the school year. At that point, it is very difficult to change the venue because contracts have already been signed. Back in June/July of the prior year is when the schools should be looking at desired location. Constitution Hall is generally easier to change because the contracts are not signed until January.

In last year's CIP testimony, we had stated that we would like to look at more options for sites. This year, we will explore an option of working with Prince George's County legislation to get Comcast's costs down – Sharon will work with Victor to see how to go about approaching the legislature. PG County schools are generally much smaller, however. Sharon should try to get some sort of bill introduced – wait until we know what's going on with the Sports Arena. We could introduce something in this year's CIP testimony about the Sports Arena proposal. Cole Field house is not much cheaper and does not have air conditioning.

#### *Grading & Reporting – Beth Kennington*

MCPS has decided to reconvene the G&R workgroup to discuss issues further –the meeting is to be held on November 19. Beth will attend and report back.

Trending is the current policy in absence of exams. The concern is that there is no reason that trending must be done and has been shown to be inaccurate. A spreadsheet was given to board members explaining what is done. Ineligibility data shows that the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter is the worst in terms of performance by students. The trending sheet shows that the second quarter grade weighs more heavily than the first quarter grade during each semester when calculating grades using trending. The data given out by MCPS invalidates the fact that the 2 quarters should be equally weighed. Also, the higher or lower the percentage within each quarter's grade is not factored in at all.

Teachers do have the discretion to change the grade, but the process is tedious and long, thereby deterring teachers from changing the grade.

**Motion: MCPS eliminate trending in favor of using percentages to determine final grade introduced by Sharon St. Pierre. Motion seconded and approved by voice vote at 9:10 pm.**

Steve Augustino explained that last year, this policy only applied to 3 students. The problem is confined to adjacent grades.

#### *Safety Committee*

Adults Who Host – by Pam Moomau

Brochure-Keeping It Safe introduced (available in Spanish as well). Point is to let adults know that adults who provide alcohol or who have underage parties where alcohol is present will expose those adults to legal liabilities. Shows places to call to anonymously report incidents so that police can check on the situation. Issue is whether we want to endorse this.

**Motion: to have MCCPTA listed as a sponsor on this brochure. Approved by voice vote at 9:15.**

#### *Special Events – Presidents & Principals dinner*

Venue: Looking at North Bethesda Marriott (last year's location), Bolger Center & Hyatt in Bethesda. Hyatt looks to be inconvenient for parking and traffic. At this time, no one has seen Bolger. Concerning Marriott – Costs are up by about 25%. We must raise about \$6000 more to keep the per ticket cost as \$60. Sharon St. Pierre will try to extend contract deadline with Marriott and to visit Bolger.

*Annual Growth Policy* – a final vote will take place on Tuesday, November 6. Council took straw votes last Tuesday. Jane would like to write one last letter to the Council before the vote.

(This information is located on the first page of Jane's report) The consensus is that the policy will change from using the artificial AGP capacity to the program capacity and that they will continue to look at 5 years into the future.

Jane recommends against agreeing to apply the growth test every 2 years (the first year of the CIP). If that were the case, it would mean that capacity levels will be stuck for 2 years.

Fees - A Development Impact Tax is already on the books, however it has not been collected up to this point. The County Council is trying to change it from \$9,000 to about \$20,000.

Schools Facility Payment Threshold – (to date, no developer has had to pay this because no area has hit the threshold) previously was 105% for elem. & middle schools, 100% for high schools – but they were based on AGP capacities which were much higher which didn't take into account class size reductions for Title I schools or smaller class sizes for special programs. At this threshold, developers will have to pay to be able to get permits to build additional housing.

Moratorium Threshold recommendation by the Planning Board was 135% of capacity, but the compromise is 120%. This is the threshold after which the planning board will not approve building permits.

The payment will become more relevant because now the thresholds will be hit. Estimates of \$1250 per student costs were calculated regardless of which type (elementary, middle, or high school) was too crowded. Now proposed is that the payment is made based on which school is put over the threshold. The amount is based on type of household (comes from Park & Planning). To calculate a per-student cost, they figured that it costs \$5 million to build a new school and the capacity of 740 students. The payment is only going to apply to the number of students over the threshold.

The amounts are only CIP-related, NOT operating budget.

At this point, affordable housing units will be exempted from the threshold payments.

Elementary school moratorium at this point – Kennedy & Einstein Clusters

Payment Threshold – BCC, Blake, Whitman, Rockville, Richard Montgomery, Northwood, Quince Orchard & Clarksburg

Middle school moratorium - none

Payment threshold – Clarksburg

High School moratorium – none

Payment threshold – Wooten & Clarksburg

**Motion - in support of the 120% moratorium by John Hall. Motion rejected, 12 to 9, by raised hands. Jane to write a letter to the Board of Education stating that the percentage is still too high.**

Where do the payments go? The BOE wants the money to go into the CIP budget; MCCPTA is on record as stating that the money to be given to the applicable cluster.

No comment on the recordation tax – Jane to note that we are in favor of MCPS getting more money than is currently stipulated from that tax.

## **New Business**

*CIP* by Steve Augustino

Two things to be posted onto the MCCPTA CIP website:

Request to MCPS about what it would take to speed up the modernization schedule

For Advocacy: Note how much it costs to build a new high school and new elementary school and that there is a 50-year cycle for high school modernization, 76 years for middle schools and 49 years for elementary schools.

At Tuesday night's CIP forum, Bruce Crispell presented data about what is behind the CIP schedule.

For Steve's Testimony: Steve is concerned about what is NOT in the CIP – specifically, the long-term modernization for all of the schools. There is no schedule. We don't have any indication of a willingness to address the new priorities that the county has set. In effect, capacity projects & addition projects take priority over modernization. He would like to see progress on longer-term, broader issues & we would like to see those policies on long-range planning.

The budget is tight, cost of construction increased, funding sources decreased, general obligation bonds went up a bit, taxes are going down, state funding is questionable up to \$40 million. Creates challenges – we can't propose new initiatives and people are not happy about what is coming out of the proposed CIP budget.

Last year, the County Council passed a requirement that all newly constructed buildings must be LEEDS (green) buildings, which adds approximately 8% to construction costs. Overall, construction costs have gone up over 20%. The outlook for future construction is dismal.

Juan Johnson noted that the long modernization schedule would force the CIP budget to be stretched for repairs to older buildings, pushing farther back any future needed projects.

MCCPTA has not been able to make any progress in addressing these issues for at least the past year.

The Planning Board needs to evaluate their existing FACT assessment criteria for deciding which schools get funding before assessing new schools and evaluate if the current formula still relevant.

Capital Improvement Priorities – The Board of Education Critical Public Safety project criteria are seemingly different from MCCPTA (i.e., parents') priorities.

There is a need to find new sources of revenue to fund all projects instead of trying to prioritize existing much-needed projects.

Elementary school security entrances & cameras in middle schools – current policy is that only one door in an elementary school can be unlocked during the day but in a lot of the elementary schools there is no visual connect between the office and the door – MCPS wants to install cameras & the ability to remotely control the doors. They want visual surveillance for all elementary schools; whether they want to make it mandatory has not been decided yet.

Middle school – More security cameras throughout the building and digitize the information sent from the cameras for review.

Dr. Weast has proposed 2 new initiatives for technology modification and security issues: \$19.6M for tech mod & \$1.5M for school security systems.

Steve Augustino will find out more about where the money could be allocated and if this year is appropriate to allocate that much funding for these initiatives.

**Motion approved by voice vote at 10:06pm for presenting two programs at the next Delegate's Assembly:**

6:30 – 7 MRSA

7-8 Transportation Issues

**Delayed until next meeting: PSAT Funding, Listserv issues**

**10:10 pm Meeting Adjourned**