

**Comox Valley Montessori Society Minutes**  
**February 18, 2015**

**Present:**

Rosanne Gerritsen	Sarah Ritchie	Carmen Costantino
Michelle Burry	Dan Costain	Amelia Valmorbida
Cheryl Adebar	Katie King	Amanda Lausoontornsiri
Gord Weber	Amy Criss	Sherry Turnbull
Lisa Wilcox	Korina Rushton	Tina Bocalon
Skye Myrbo-Hill		

1. **Call to Order** - 7:32 pm

2. **Introductions**

3. **Adoption of the Agenda** - Michelle B made a motion to adopt the agenda and Amy Criss seconded. Agenda adopted.

4. **Review and adoption of minutes from January** - Michelle B. made a motion to adopt the minutes from January and Gord Weber seconded. Minutes adopted.

5. **Reports**

5.1 **President's Report - Sarah Ritchie**

- School-wide Movie Night - Feb 27th - Sarah and Korina are organizing the movie, Big Hero 6. They are planning on selling pizza, hotdogs, popcorn and are going to raffle off the movie at the end of the night.
- Spring Break - The fundraising team will be sending home the Usborne fundraising information over Spring Break. Kids read, get sponsored and then have a chance to buy books for themselves with a portion of the profits. The school will get the remainder of the books.
- Grace & Courtesy: Skye was asked to get flowers for secretaries for helping out for K registration.
- Transition from Montessori to High School - David and Shelly Schorno will be invited to a CVMS meeting so we can get feedback from them on how grade 8 is going.
- 2014 Montessori Review - Carmen initiated a meeting for March 5th between Dan, Cheryl, Allan, Michelle and Carmen to discuss changes that were made to the program as a result of the review. They would also like to discuss where the program is going.
- Try a Trade - The grade 7's will have a chance to participate in this program.
- Cultural performance - Taiwanese Dragon Dancers on Feb. 24
- Swimming lessons - will happen in June
- Educational Assistants have more funding because of strike and are helping with a few extra things such as supervision.

## **President's Report Continued**

- 1000x5 Program- Families are encouraged to donate their gently used books to the green bin. They will be given to preschoolers as part of a program that is trying to get each child to read 1000 books by the time they enter Kindergarten.
- District Calendar - Parents can give feedback until Feb. 28th.
- Natalie Erikson: A huge thank you to Natalie for all her hard work with PAC and CVMS over the last couple of years. Natalie is moving to Victoria.

### **5.2 Vice President's Report - Sherry Turnbull**

- Sherry is making efforts to find volunteers to help organize the Montessori Tea this year.

### **5.3 Treasurer's Report - Michelle Burry**

- Bank - \$33,356 after payables
- Revenue - \$825
- Expenses since June 1<sup>st</sup> - \$2,303 (less GST rebate of \$863)
- Michelle has a copy of the income statement and balance sheet if anyone wants to see it.

### **5.4 Secretary's Report - Rosanne Gerritsen**

- Thanks to Carmen, Amelia, Korina and others who set up for the potluck in mid February. It was well-attended and enjoyable. Michelle suggested doing another community-wide event in the next few months.
- Quite a few emails from enquiring parents
- 1/2 done editing the CVMS handbook

## **6. Old Business**

### **6.1 Kindergarten Registration - Carmen/Dan**

- Confirmed 33 students registered - 16 siblings, 17 new families
- There is still room for late entrants
- Plan on hiring a new teacher for the fall - Dan stressed that their first priority is to hire a trained Montessori teacher.

## **7. New Business**

## 7.1 Q & A with Dan Costain & Cheryl Adebar – Sarah

- The CVMS' role as a board has changed since SD71 started funding our program in September of 2014. We see the **CVMS' function** as:
  1. **Advocacy** - The CVMS started the program and we feel we need to continue to advocate for the program until we see that it doesn't need to be done. We would like the program kept to the standard that we signed up for.
  2. **Financial obligation**: The board pays for several things:
    - Insurance for our materials
    - Grace & Courtesy Fund is part of the Montessori curriculum
    - New classroom Set-up – CVMS is responsible for that under the agreement with SD71
  3. **Promotion** – CVMS is responsible for Community Awareness and ensuring we have the enrolment to continue to grow the program.
- We will continue to reassess our role over the next 2-3 yrs. We're evolving because of the SD71 funding changes and we need to continue to be a voice for the Montessori Program.
- CVMS has questions about our role within the school that we'd like Administration to address and clarify.

### *Q1. In regards to communication with teachers (in light of recent job action) what are the rules surrounding who can contact whom and under what circumstances?*

- We would like the CVMS and PAC to follow the same rules and operate the same way. For example, if PAC were putting on an event, their board would approach Admin with a question of “Can we have this event? If so, would the teachers be willing to participate? Admin then would request that the teachers participate.
- We would like to be CC'd on communication so that we know what's going on and so that we can help support.
- The second issue that admin has regarding communication is when parents talk to parents instead of talking to their classroom teacher.
- Michelle would like admin to make it clear to teachers that most or all of the financials are going through admin now, however Grace & Courtesy is going through CVMS and teachers can feel free to contact Michelle about that.

### *Q2. Regarding classroom visits by parents interested in the Montessori program - We feel that*

*late entry students and parents would benefit from experiencing a Montessori classroom before committing to the program to see if Montessori is right for their child. We understand that your policy is not to allow classroom visits. We would like to know if that is your philosophy or is that a district-wide policy?*

- Dan: We're the only school with a Montessori program, so it's just me.
- Cheryl: We don't encourage school shopping within class hours. Schools aren't a business. We're after consistent educational environments, whether it's Montessori or French Immersion, etc. If it happened on occasion, it wouldn't be too disruptive - but if it's an open door policy, then it could.
- Admin not in favour of teachers deciding if students are a fit for the Montessori program. They feel that our program is a Choice Program, publicly funded and therefore, everybody is a good fit.
- Currently, parents who are interested in the Montessori program: Admin talks to them about the program, gives them materials, directs them to resources, gives them a tour of the building, shows them where Montessori classes are, gives parents' information to a teacher and asks the teacher to call them.
- General Discussion about classroom visits, and how best to spread information about the late entry policy.
- Idea: Have a Late Entry Information Night – general agreement.
- Dan: Discusses possibility of having a Montessori teacher visit other schools to speak about the program for late entry. We need SD approval. Suggests this be put on upcoming meeting agenda with Alan.

***Q3. What is the cut-off for late entry into Montessori?***

- Dan: Currently, it's Grade 4. Down the road, there might be a chance to speak to grade 3 parents about late entrance options – and starting the program in grades 5, 6 or 7. Right now, it's done on a case by case basis. There are exceptions to the rule.

***Q4. The CVMS has always played a role in advertising and would like to begin promoting on Montessori websites and publications (out of our budget for promotion). Our aim is not to interfere with HR in this matter, only to direct interested applicants to the SD HR department.***

- Dan: School District feels it's a conflict. This is something to talk about with Alan at upcoming meeting.

Q Regarding donations to the CVMS: Can I still donate money to the Montessori Society and have it be used by the society?

A: Yes, money can still be donated to the society. If the CVMS decides to spend a specific amount on something specific, we would transfer the donation to the school district. Then the district would send it back to school admin to be spent.

Q: Are we still spending the same amount on materials this year as we had in the past?

Dan: We received \$20,000 from the school district. We've allocated \$2,000 per class. Once that has all been ordered, I intend to ask Allan, Can we give more money to each teacher or shall we put that money towards a new classroom?

## **7.2 Marketing/Community Events – Sarah**

- Suggestion to add a position to the board - Marketing or Promotions. We might not need the positions of Shutterfly or Purchaser anymore. Sherry volunteered to do this job.
- Suggestion to contact Julie Niven, of Learning Journeys Montessori Preschool. It would be great to keep her in the loop. Check to see if she is getting our emails and on our FB pg. Rosanne will contact her to find out and invite her.
- General discussion and expressions of frustration about the lack of parent volunteers. A suggestion was made that we send out a firm email asking for more sweat equity, especially because donations are not required anymore.
- Suggestion that we ask parents to commit to volunteering.

## **7.3 Communication - Sarah/Carmen**

- Suggestion made that when it's possible, that more than one person talk to admin at a time when there are important points to discuss.
- General discussion about having admin at meetings
- Sarah will email Dan about meetings

## **7.4 Voting – Sarah**

- Sarah thinks that people should be voted in as opposed getting in by acclamation.
- Michelle asked for clarification on which positions were up for reelection. Sarah said that in alternating years, the treasurer/president and Secretary/VP get elected. This year we'll need to vote in a treasurer/president. Last year the Secretary and VP positions were voted in. They are a two year term.
- Suggestion that the outgoing president should stay on the board for one additional year to assist the new board.

## **7.5 Shutterfly - Sarah/Korina**

- The board feels that we don't need this position anymore and we would like to encourage teachers to take it on themselves

## **7.6 Fundraising - Sarah/Carmen**

- Tea meeting - 4 people showed up plus one brand new parent
- Rosanne is the Volunteer Coordinator and anyone interested in helping can contact her.
- Date is May 24<sup>th</sup>, Sunday

## **8. Meeting Adjourned- 9:04**