

MNIC ELA Campus
300 Industrial Blvd.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55413

Approved Minutes
ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Friday, June 20, 2008
10:00 a.m.

Membership: Abdighani Ali, Mary Ander, Abdirahman Egeh, Elizabeth Gedatus-Garcia, Rebecca Gutierrez, Vin McMahon, Kassim Mohamed, Janet White, Ron White

Newly Elected Members: Jama Farah, Hassan Hilowle, Kaha Mohamed

Ex officio: Kevin Byrne, Patsy Brooks, Idiris Mohamed, Steven Oates, Chanda Smith

Note: All votes were unanimous unless otherwise stated. Items distributed at the meeting include: Agenda, Unapproved minutes for June 5, 2008; Proposed cleaning contracts.

I. ROLL CALL

Mr. Ron White called the meeting to order at 10:12 a.m. at the ELA Site.

Members in attendance: Abdighani Ali, Abdirahman Egeh, Rebecca Gutierrez, Vin McMahon, Kassim Mohamed and Ron White. Tardy: Janet White (Sabathani ABE Discussion). Absent: Mary Ander and Elizabeth Gedatus-Garcia.

Ex officio and others in attendance: Executive Director Kevin Byrne. Others: Jon Gross (Principal for Circle Sites), Amy Libman (Director of Volunteer Programs and Student Support Services), Jama Farah (newly elected board member), Hassan Hilowle (newly elected board member), Stephen Bosacker (Designs for Learning).

II. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Presented and reviewed.

Mr. White moved to approve the agenda as amended. Ms. White seconded. Carried.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR THE June 5th BOARD MEETING

Ms. Gutierrez moved strike her motion on page 6 in unapproved June 5, 2008 Board meeting minutes as presented. Mr. White seconded. Carried.

Discussion regarding the representation of communications between Mr. McMahon and Mr. Byrne in the June 5 meeting unapproved minutes.

Mr. White moved to delay acceptance of the unapproved minutes until the next meeting. Ms. Gutierrez seconded. Carried.

IV. OPEN MICROPHONE

1. Ms. Libman reported on a \$4000 grant from Compass to create a mural. The students developed the concept or design. Ms. Libman presented a picture of the mural.
2. Becky Hampton starts Monday at ELA as Vista. Promise Fellow starts in August for Circles.

3. a new “Racial Reconciliation Lunch” brought together students from ELA and Circle Sites to share their backgrounds. They discussed about stereotypes and had effective communication. Ms. White reported on how the students brought assumptions about the other groups and clarified through discussion where these ideas came from. Through communication the students learned that these ideas did not match these students’ lives.
4. Internship program will start for undergraduate college students to help in the school
5. Ms. Heidi Skallet helped MNIC students prepare applications for scholarships. The Paige Scholarships - \$1000 renewable scholarship each year if the students continue with community service each year. Ms. Skallet and students attended ceremony. 19 received this year and 10 are continuing to receive the scholarship, up to 3 years since graduating from MNIC. Question about where the students are volunteering – some are helping in local schools, including in MNIC, but may be serving other groups.
6. Ms. Skallet finishes her Vista service this summer. She has done excellent service for MNIC this year.
7. Don Link reported
 - a. That 6 students are serving at MNDOT this summer. 30 students are involved in internships
 - b. Students helped build 11 houses in one week in Mississippi, part of Tree Trust.
 - c. The number of partnerships for MNIC student helps and internships are increasing in number. One example is with the Hennepin County Library: a resource is available to help them develop business plans with translation and formatting helps.
 - d. Online curriculum, Academy of Math and Academy of Reading, for students will be brought into ELA for math and reading. Results in other schools are impressive.
 - e. Don expanded the My SkillsTutor agreement so more students can use it this year. It is a good tool to help students improve their academic skills.
8. Ms. Gutierrez recommended that ELA students need help learning how to use the computer-based tests to understand how they work and how to answer questions. Ms. Libman spoke with the ELA Computer lab supervisor (Dave) about at similar concern. Don reported that a PC Computer lab will be set up for ELA to help with these needs. There is some training and software available to help them learn these things. Ms. Libman suggests teaching these skills and knowledge could be incorporated into the computer labs.
9. Seed money is available from Macalester College to start creating a library at ELA.

A: ACTION ITEMS

1. Contract for Cleaning at ELA

Mr. Byrne presented proposals for the cleaning contract. The Baale Family contract proposal was received – cleaning evenings, weekends and during the summer. A JanaPro proposal came in at less money (cost), cleaning evenings and weekends, but did not include cleaning during the summer.

Mr. Byrne recommends the Baale Family proposal for the cleaning contract. They bring value through their networks in the East African community to MNIC. They also know the facility well and do good work. Ishmael helps motivate students to keep the school clean.

The contract, if approved, will start July 1.

Mr. White moved to accept the contract from the Baale Family. Ms. Gutierrez seconded. Carried with no discussion.

Only one transportation company expressed interest in serving MNIC for bus transportation, the current company.

There will be an upcoming RFP for donated items. This is part of an idea to connect donors of items with the school, through which the school can benefit as these items are sold on the market. A service proposal will be presented in the near future.

B: REGULAR AGENDA

I. INTRODUCTIONS OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS

1. Only two are present today. Mr. Jama Farah and Mr. Hassan Hilowle are present. Ms. Kaha Mohamed is absent.

Mr. Farah is the gym teacher and will be basketball coach for MNIC. He has taught in a number of schools in Minnesota. He was elected to the Board a few years ago but was not able continue serving due to family needs. Mr. Farah was on the Somalia National Soccer Team years ago. Mr. Egeh remembers him then.

Mr. Hilowle has been a teacher at MNIC since the start of the school in 2003. He teaches math and science. He is eager to work together with others on the Board.

2. Mr. White, Mary and Betsy will leave the Board.

Mary arrived

II. Election of Board Officers

Mr. White facilitated and led this time.

Board Chair:

Ms. Gutierrez nominated Mr. McMahon

Mr. Bosacker explained responsibilities of Board offices, Mr. White helped. Signing

Mr. Ali nominated Mr. Egeh

Ms. White Nominated Mr. Ali, he declined.

Mr. Mohamed objects to having a Somali being the chair of the board because Somalis are the majority of the Board.

Ms. White nominated herself to run for Board Chair.

Mr. Farah disagreed with Mr. Mohamed regarding his idea. Mr. Ali is concerned about who is capable to chair the board.

Ms. Gutierrez wanted to nominate Mr. McMahon because he has more experience. He has financial experience and can help grasp financial issues. She respects him for being outspoken. He can be fair and put aside his feelings to lead the board fairly.

Mr. McMahon thanked Ms. Gutierrez for nomination. Mr. McMahon is really concerned about the students and that all sites receive what is needed. He understands how finances are important for the school. He tries to be fair and put aside his feelings after a discussion. He works to learn and pay attention.

Mr. Egeh thanked for nomination. He has lived in many places over the years, which has given him a wider perspective and objectivity. This is where he is coming from to serve as chair of MNIC Board.

Ms. White thinks that looking at the make up of the Board and her experience, she can bring different perspectives. She can be objective to blend the school sections together. She would be a good choice.

Mr. White opened discussion for Board members to ask questions of nominees:

Q: How do you feel about following Robert's Rules of Order?

Mr. McMahon has been on a board and believes he can follow this. He has strength to facilitate and keep discussions respectful.

Mr. Egeh knows how conflicts can affect the environment. Mr. Egeh tends to create more harmony than conflict. He intends to build harmony and collaboration among members.

Ms. White – she can follow the rules. She has been on other boards and is on other boards now. She can follow the order and keep structure.

Mr. Ali commended Mr. White for the good job he has done. This has been a difficult job. He is a kind person and is able to honor. Mr. Ali reported that Mr. McMahon has had conflicts with people on the Board and is therefore not a good candidate.

Mr. Mohamed: The person who is chair of board has great responsibility. The Board needs someone who has experience and understanding of the needs of the populations MNIC serves as well for the needs of the school.

Q: What is your previous experience in running an institution and financial administration?

Mr. Egeh: He chaired an organization within the Somali National University. He established a school in Dubai from nothing to fully established. In his work in Canada, MN and WA he has been involved with schools at a number of levels. He is comfortable with running things. This is about being a Board Chair.

Ms. White: Regarding day to day operations experience for a school [like MNIC], she does not have that experience. She ran an after-school program, for which she managed finance and operations. Regarding operations for MNIC, as Board Chair she can learn and understand how to work with MNIC administration

Mr. McMahon: He comes from a family in small business for over 100 years. He had his own businesses. He worked as a financial broker in Minneapolis. He managed finances for institutions and organizations. He continues to do this for certain individuals. He worked as paralegal in Boston for poor clients. He brings a good deal of skill to the Board. He agreed that being willing to learn is important.

Q: Do the three of you believe you can attend almost all meetings regardless of other issues in your life?

Ms. White: Yes. Mr. McMahon: Yes. Mr. Egeh: generally, yes.

Q. How can you handle conflict within a meeting?

Ms. White: Initially help people voice their opinions with respect. People have to find a middle ground where people can agree. She will guide any conflict to find what is best for the school. That is where she would guide the conflict.

Mr. Egeh: We solve conflicts based on the purpose of the school. Need to seek middle ground, turn away from differences to focus on agreement.

Mr. McMahon: He does not think there is anything wrong with conflict. It is OK for people to speak honestly and even passionately. There are times where we need conflict to gain more for the school. Handling conflict is to help people speak their minds, respectfully. This is about students in the school, not individual wants, so you have to put your personal wants aside to pursue what is best.

Mr. Egeh countered Mr. Mohamed's idea that the Chair should not be Somali, that having a Somali as board chair can be OK. Mr. Mohamed affirmed that he is not against anyone, but is seeking that we consider what the goal is. If 5 of 9 are

Somali and 7 of 9 are ELA staff. He is concerned that the Board is clear about what its goal is.

Members expressed their choice in how to vote by show of hands: 2 want secret. The rest want voice vote. Verbal wins.

There are 8 voting members. If there is a tie the Board will drop the candidate with lowest number of votes and vote again.

Votes: Mr. McMahon: 4; Mr. Egeh: 3; Ms. White: 1. **Mr. McMahon is elected Board Chair.**

Vice Chair:

Ms. Gutierrez nominated Mr. Hilowle, he declined.

Mr. Ali nominated Mr. Mohamed

Mr. Mohamed nominated Ms. White

Mr. Mohamed served on a board. He expressed how important it is for people to be able to express themselves

Ms. White – she expressed herself well enough for the chair position.

Open voice ballot: Mr. Mohamed: 4; Ms. White: 4

Ms. Gutierrez suggested one of these could serve as secretary-treasurer as a compromise. There were no objections. Mr. Mohamed accepted as Secretary-Treasurer. Ms. White accepted as Vice Chair. **By consensus the Board accepted Janet White as Vice Chair and Mr. Mohamed as Secretary-Treasurer.**

Mr. McMahon assumed the role of acting Board Chair. Mr. White sat down from the Board.

III. AWARDS FOR SERVICE TO RETIRING BOARD MEMBERS

1. Kevin Byrne presented a certificate of gratitude to Mr. White for his hard work and great service since the founding of the school. Mr. Byrne expressed that there may be many opportunities for him to support the school in the future.
2. Mr. Byrne showed similar awards for Mary and Betsy.

IV. SUMMER MEETING/TRAINING

Mr. Byrne explained that Board training is required by statutes. Mr. Byrne suggests that the Board have a workshop in later part of July to provide training and to attend to some board business. Ms. Gutierrez suggested a Friday AM time. Mr. McMahon will be away from the Twin_Cities during July and asked if the time could be in mid-August. Ms. Libman suggested the Board have a regular meeting in July for business and have training later. Mr. Bosacker explained the value and kinds of training that would benefit the Board. Ms. Gutierrez would like to have training before the school schedule starts. Ms. White would like to have this after summer school ends.

Ms. Gutierrez proposed Saturday July 19th. Board Development Day from 10AM to 2 PM.

Mr. McMahon suggested having a session in the summer, and then have quarterly training after that.

Mr. Ali left the meeting. No decisions were made regarding Board training.

V. DONATIONS

Mr. White has a business GlobalValu. GlobalValu helps non-profit organizations by selling donations (to the organizations) for a fee. Mr. White proposed to the Board that with an agreement his company would take donations to MNIC (e.g. office furniture or

other items), sell these and provide cash for what MNIC would not want to keep. The donor can then receive a tax deduction receipt. Mr. White's company would provide documentation to the donor regarding value of donations. It is possible for MNIC to have to pay taxes on this money if a certain total is exceeded. This money could be used to help the school for sports teams, or science lab, etc. Oversight responsibility should be in place to ensure all is done properly. GlobalValu would provide documentation for all aspects of the transactions within its responsibility. Mr. White proposed the school send out an RFP to locate similar agents to help the school solicit and process donations into cash for the school. Most agents will not solicit goods for a school, but charge around 1/3 of value of goods as a fee. Some agents would do this. The school could assign responsibilities and liabilities appropriately to this kind of company. The school can decline proposed donations.

Mr. Egeh moved that the school create an RFP to identify companies or agents who would solicit and process donations into cash for the school. Ms. White seconded. Carried.

Mr. Farah left the meeting.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

None

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 12:15 PM

Submitted by Stephen C. Bosacker.