

Marlboro School Board meeting Approved minutes submitted by Lissa Harris, board clerk.

Monday, June 29, 2020

Attendees:

board directors; Lissa Harris, Dan MacArthur, Douglas Korb, David Holzapfel, Celena Romo (9:06).

others: Wayne Kermenski, Marlboro School Principal, Seth Andrew, Founder Democracy Builders (joined at 9:26), Stacey Birdsell, board member, Democracy Builders (joined at 9:12), Adrian Seger, Marlboro Town Resident (joined at 9:17)

Meeting called to order at 9am:

Dan presented a quote for structural analysis and estimate of costs: \$1200  
Dan made a motion to accept the proposal, David 2<sup>nd</sup>, motion passed.

Doug asked about a college building update. Wayne explained that the art building would not be ideal for classrooms. And there are other exterior factors that would not be conducive to a school atmosphere. The Serkin Building would be a better temporary option.

Doug gave an update to members of the public and asked if they had any questions. Adrian asked why this meeting was being held and if it was warned. Douglas explained that the board felt it was imperative to meet after the Thursday's board meeting in response to some new information. The emergency meeting was warned prior to the meeting start.

Dan asked Seth about what is encumbered in the Marlboro Music Festival lease. Seth said that the Gander building is being used by the festival and that they are building another structure for their next season, which will free up the entire Gander building for future use. Apple Tree will be used by the festival. Currently, the festival is storing pianos in one of the cottages on Music Way. Seth suggested using Gander to store pianos just for the year.

Celena proposed that the school utilize Serkin and surrounding buildings, would be a better fit mainly because of the loop access. This would be a one year solution to covid restrictions while the board explores longer term options.

Seth said that Serkin is currently being used for broadcasting space. Seth said that there are 3 rooms in Whittemore that could be used as classroom space, but not for a long-term solution. Celena said there are also adequate bathrooms and that the buildings could be used as is, without any major changes. Seth explained that the auditorium and the dance studio will be used everyday when students are on campus. The reason why he proposed the 4 buildings below the road (Snyder block) was because he doesn't see a use for those buildings. Seth said that while he is open to further conversations about Serkin and other buildings, he doesn't see that as an

opportunity for September. Celena asked about having Gail, Wayne, and Aaron Walsh do a walk-through to see if the use of some of those classrooms in Persons and Whittemore would work for short-term use. Doug said that it would be a lot of work to move classrooms for just one year. David agreed that the disruption for teachers would be immense. Celena explained that her proposal would keep Pre-K, K, and Primary at their current location. Seth explained that having the elementary school on the campus long-term would have to be beneficial to Democracy Builders (DBF). Seth said that a short-term lease, with the school covering the overhead, might look similar to the music festival contract, which would be \$80,000-\$100,000 for the year, although the music festival does their own capital improvements. The idea of the dollar a year lease that was proposed at the last board meeting would include a longer-term plan, a lease deal or a lease to buy deal. Dan asked Seth if he has an estimate of what he thinks that portion of the buildings would cost. Seth replied, approximately \$3-5 million as was estimated in the board's original estimated cost for renovation and bond proposal.

Lissa asked about DBF's potential student, parent, and family feedback channels in response to some of the recent accusations put forth by a Facebook group Black N Brown at Democracy Prep. She also inquired about how DBF will address pathways to success for students. Seth said that Democracy Prep was located in the most dangerous zones of NYC. The model was to keep the space safe. For many community members the choice was between a dangerous school or charter. Seth said he looks back on some of the structures and doesn't love them. Seth also told the board that there are things written in those anonymous FB posts that are not true and that at the time the school considered themselves at the forefront of trauma informed care, they thought they were doing well, now Democracy Prep is run by Natasha Trivers, a woman of color. Seth also said that complaints and criticism are a part of leadership.

Seth explained the feedback loop for 2020 includes designing an institution with parents- design team process –this is being built in response to the accusations from DP systems.

Doug asked about how DBF might continue the legacy of student governance at Marlboro. Seth said that DBF is not a direct democracy.

Stacey added that they are making sure they're designing a program for success. A robust mentoring program with people of color, having clear outlets for when student are not experiencing success. And that they're finding the ways to help students have a voice and how they participate with each other and be culturally responsive. They are consulting with Karen Gross – trauma informed care Southern Vermont College, as part of the design process.

Adrian expressed concern about Seth's ambitious approach. He said he came in with an open mind and yet, the initial research turned up some baffling issues. Adrian questioned Seth's trustworthiness based on past questions and the accusations on the FB group. Seth said that a legal document will protect all of us moving forward. David and Celena questioned whether or not Adrian's concerns were board business.

The board will reconvene on Wednesday to discuss before moving forward. Celena asked Chris Medina to ask the state about waivers in order to guide Banwell Architects. Banwell will look at Snyder building block on the campus to determine viability.

Celena motion to adjourn, Lissa 2<sup>nd</sup> – meeting adjourned at 10:32am.

Link to full recording: <https://soundcloud.com/user-303049479/62920-malrboro-school-board-meeting>