

Minutes of the Menlo Park City School District Council

January 8, 2021 Via Zoom

In attendance

Katie Rottier, Julia Molise, Christine Goudey, May Matsui, Azadeh Rasmussen, Katherine Bicer, Kathryn Brottem, Christa West, Vidya Kagan, Marianne Badawi, Erik Burmeister, Sharon Burns, Willy Haug, Linda Creighton, Kristen Gracia, Theresa Fox, Sherwin Chen, Carrie Chen, Paige Arata, Sarah Thayer, Katherine Bicer, Andrea Nudd, Alison Matthews, Tricia Mulcahy, Krista Rosa, Cassandra Lopez, Victoria Dorward, Casey Wilke, Parke Treadway, Marites Furman.

8:45

Call to Order

Katie Rottier

Katie calls the meeting to order and welcomes the group.

8:46

Treasurer's Report

Christine Goudey

Chris presents the treasurer's report and described ways in which she has streamlined the role.

8:49

Approval of [November Meeting Minutes](#)

Julia Molise

Julia moves to approve the November, 2020 meeting minutes. Chris Goudey seconds and the minutes are approved by unanimous vote.

8:50

Nominating Committee Update

Julia Molise

Julia presents the slate for the One Community Co-Chairs for 2021-2022 and calls for nominations from the floor. Julia moves to approve the slate of Jessica Gilmartin and Tricia Mulcahy and Chris Goudey seconds. The slate is approved by unanimous voice vote.

8:51

Speaker Series

Vidya Kagan

Vidya reports that the speaker series has been a great success. Over 200 people have participated virtually in each event. The January 6, 2021 Color of Law event had over 200 participants with a moving, engaged discussion. There will be another opportunity to see this presentation on January 15. [Here](#) is the link to the Speaker Series page.

8:56

Superintendent Update

Erik Burmeister

Erik introduces Marites Furman who is the new Chief Business Officer who will talk about the departments she oversees. She will also talk about the planning for the replacement parcel tax for Measure X. Measure X was passed to create a temporary financial stop gap.

Marites provides a structural analysis of the budget for the next five years. Measure X will expire in 2024. By the time of the expiration we will no longer be in compliance with the reserve policy. A parcel tax of \$600 would be able to mitigate the deficit spending. The superintendent presented this at last night's board meeting.

Erik Burmeister reports the following:

- The cuts we intend to make are not crazy. We are trying to create a balance by increasing revenue thus avoiding deficit spending.
- We would even settle for a long-term and evergreen parcel tax combined with some structural changes so that we can maintain fiscal solvency in a period in which we are likely to have a bit less uncertainty about enrollment. For comparison, we have increased enrollment by over 50% over the last 20 years.
- Because we are in a period of great uncertainty we need to find the right replacement parcel tax. We are now at the end of a four year runway and we no longer have room to breathe. We will need to have this parcel tax on the ballot in November 2021.

9:16

School Board Update

Sherwin Chen

Sherwin reports that we have a new board. Francesca Segre is the new board member and David Ackerman was re-elected. He will be starting his 5th year on the board. Sherwin the new president and Stacey will be rotating out of the presidency. The Board is committed to keeping the schools open. We may be entering the darkest period -- so far we have only had to pull 6 cohorts out but things may change. There have been NO cases on on-campus transmission.

In this climate, personal behavior and choices become more and more important.

Sherwin reports that it is going to be a huge lift to get the parcel tax going. The tax will have a $\frac{2}{3}$ minimum requirement for votes.

9:20

District Directory Update and Discussion

Theresa Fox

The Directory is live for all three elementary schools. We will need to do that at Hillview as well. This will not take the place of a district directory. Parent Square is a young company gaining huge traction. There have been some growing pains with Parent Square through which they are working -- including messaging features and how to opt out of the directory.

9:25

One Community Campaign Update

Azadeh Rasmussen and Katherine Bicer

Katherine and Azadeh report that the financials are tracking to date. All organizations have completed their goals.

- 56% of pledges have been filled as of this week
- \$58,000 remains in benevity
- 12 new families donated in December

They are working with the team to negotiate this year's Memorandum of Understanding. The hope is to have the MOU signed by mid-winter break.

9:30

MPAEF Update

Sarah Thayer and Paige Arata

Paige and Sarah are excited for the new OCC Chairs.

They have sent out the save-the-date for the online auction from March 10-15.

They are still looking for COVID-Friendly bundles to use as auction items.

Ben Wang is working with the team to create a new feel for the virtual Run.

Carrie Chen reports that they funded 21 Jeannie Richie grants this year, encompassing teachers from all schools including the VA.

9:42

Principal Updates

“COVID Learnings”

Oak Knoll School

Kristin Gracia

Kristin reports that making school work for kids has meant being capable, flexible and creative. Useful tools have included rolling white boards and voice amplification. The teachers and staff have been flexible, creative and capable owners. They have learned that they can make school happen in any landscape or terrain. In the end it is all about the staff they hire. She shares the presentation created by the 5th Grade.

Victoria Dorward, PTO President, reports that she has learned that school is truly integral for everyone. The school’s leadership has been very grounding for the families.

Sharon Burns

Encinal School

Sharon reports that the whole world has opened up to the students via zoom. Online resources are more available. She gives the example of the 4th Grade involvement in the Run for Salmon.

Chis Goudey, PTO President, reports that the community involvement has been incredible. They raised the necessary funds and they didn’t lose the quality of the events. They are working on a fun Valentine’s event. They were also able to raise over \$12,000 for families in need at Encinal.

Linda Creighton

Laurel School

Linda begins by thanking the parent volunteers.

Laurel had a staff meeting on Wednesday and talked about social justice standards. They are focusing on how to keep math strong in this environment. One of the great elements is having small groups. In small groups, students are more comfortable asking for help.

Cassandra Loftus, PTO President, talks about the overarching themes of flexibility and adaptability. They will adapt many of their traditions to this new normal -- Including a pop up read-a-thon.

Willy Haug**Hillview Middle School**

Willy observes that “constraint can be a gift.” We are forced to think more creatively. Also, because of the less instructional time, we can reduce the cognitive load on the students and focus on priority standards. Other gifts include the elevation of voices within the stable cohort and the sense of community the cohorts bring.

Alison and Tricia, PTO Presidents reflect that the smaller groups have been great. Also the community has really come together. Spirit Wear has seen over \$10,000 in sales. The community is incredibly supportive.

Theresa Fox**Virtual Academy**

Theresa reports that they are really depending on parents more than ever. Also it’s tough for the kids in the VA to connect with peers. They are working on building in time during the day for social engagement. The HRPs are doing a great job with this.

Katie Rottier concludes the meeting and remarks that this has been one of the most engaging and positive meetings she’s attended in a long time.

10:15 Adjournment**Upcoming Meetings:**

- March 5, 2021
- May 7, 2021
- June 4, 2021