

Marco Island Charter Middle School
Executive Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 24, 2008

The meeting was called to order and a quorum established.

Members present: Tarik Ayasun, Cathy Cleary, Jim Reinders, Elizabeth Summers, Jennifer Tenney, Jim Young

Members absent: Bill Morris, Joe Hausauer

Also in attendance: George Abounader, Maria Hayden, Michelle LaBate, Ken Fairbanks, Dawn Hollowsky, Monte Lazarus, Sandi Lazarus, John Putnam

Michelle LaBate and Ken Fairbanks made presentations addressing the possibility of a high school on Marco Island. First Michelle LaBate addressed it from the perspective of the school district. Every new public high school needs approval from the State, and approval is based on surveys of buildings, capacity and projected growth. Right now there is 1,588 empty seats among the existing high schools and only Gulf Coast is at capacity. The district has gone from a growth of 10% to 1-2%. The next high school, when there is growth is slated to be at the end of the Vanderbilt Beach extension. Therefore a public high school is not a realistic possibility on Marco at this time. She clarified; however, she was not speaking to the possibility of a charter or private high school).

Ms. LaBate then addressed small high schools. Her concern would be whether the curriculum and athletic and programming choices would be available. For each subject in the public highschools, they currently have at least 4 levels from students struggling to AP classes. If you have too small of classes, it gets cost prohibitive. Currently, they strive for classes with at least 20 students, and Ms. LaBate's concern is that the opportunities for students would be narrowed.

Finally, upon Ms. LaBate's review of the deed to Track K, there are no restrictions that state it must be used for educational purposes. Dawn Hollowsky asked why it was deeded to the school board then. Ms. LaBate explained that instead of impact fees, at the time Deltona was developing the island, it would donate certain chunks of land to certain organizations. They donated land off the island as well, which was traded or sold long ago.

Ken Fairbanks, the principal of Lely High School addressed the board. His purpose was to alleviate misconceptions and present the positive attributes of Lely High School. Mr. Fairbanks went through a pamphlet on "Points of Pride" including the academic success of Lely's students, the awards received by Lely's teachers, the athletic achievements, and the atmosphere and attitude.

Jennifer Tenney commented that she is a Lely alumna and would defend the school forever for the opportunities it provided her. Lely offered a wide range of extracurricular activities and AP classes and allowed her to apply for and get into any college of her choice.

Monte Lazarus commented that he was working closely with an impressive student of the high school and agreed that the opportunities are there.

Sandi Lazarus from the Chamber of Commerce commented on their program of choosing a great teacher/staff member each year and Mr. Fairbanks won this past year for all he does to support the students of the school.

Tarik Ayasun, as a parent of students who graduated from Lely, also talked about the great programs it provided and the opportunities it offered his daughter. He stated that if Marco parents get involved, Lely is a great school.

George asked Mr. Fairbanks to explain 9th grade nation. Mr. Fairbanks explained that they have found that if at risk students are not kept up to speed in 9th grade, you can lose them at that time, and it can lead to drop out. The idea of 9th grade nation is that the same group of teachers teaches the same group of students so the teachers can communicate about the at risk students, and identify them and help them early.

In addition he addressed going from block scheduling to traditional scheduling. The classes will be shorter, which may help with attention span, however, the students will have all 7 classes each day. Homework and testing will have to be spaced out. They will lose a class choice a semester. However, the change is done for budgeting purposes.

Jim Reinders commented that he appreciates the effort of Ms. LaBate and Mr. Fairbanks to get out the information, as well as their efforts for our students.

A motion was made by Jim Reinders to approve the minutes of the meeting on January 28, 2008; the motion was seconded by Tarik, and approved unanimously.

The Bylaw changes were addressed next and Jim Reinders presented consensus changes. The changes were then opened for public comment/

Dawn Hollowsky questioned striking a faculty member. Jim addressed that all faculty are welcome to attend the meetings, however, they have found that it has not been helpful to elect just one representative. Tarik commented that teachers are always asked for opinions and address the board regarding programs, etc.

Dawn asked what is the proper forum to make a presentation to the board. Jim answered that an idea should be run through the principal/CEO first, and then he would present it to the board. Dawn next expressed her concern with parents having a voice on the board and inquired about the committee language change from shall to may. Jim responded that the meetings are open, as are the committee meetings, and it will be up to the board when a committee is needed and who will be on it. Elizabeth Summers added that the PTO is always looking for help from parents. Tarik added that it is our main responsibility to see that the school runs smoothly with enough funds. Cathy added that the board is also supposed to oversee operations and she believes faculty representation may be a good idea. She does not think that complications for committees should stop us from having open doors. Elizabeth added that if a faculty does have a problem, they will present it to George. Jim added that there is a avenue of appeal to the board in the teacher's contracts.

A motion was made by Tarik to approve the Bylaws as amended. The motion was seconded by Jennifer. Tarik, Elizabeth, and Jennifer voted for the motion. Cathy and Jim were opposed. The motion failed because amendment of the bylaws requires 6 of 9 votes. Tarik proposed readdressing the matter at the next meeting. Jennifer stated that she would make the consensus changes and re-circulate the document.

Next the Board was presented the preliminary budget, which will be amended once we receive information regarding funding. The preliminary budget was presented for the main purpose of approving staffing numbers and salaries so that George can offer the

teachers contracts. Jim pointed out that never in the history of the school have we had a shortfall, even this past year we had a surplus, where we could dig into in the case of a shortfall next year due to state cuts. George pointed out that the money received from the state is an estimate. He also expressed concern that the fundraising budget is achievable and suggested looking for another revenue source like selling advertisement in the gym, charging admission for games, etc.. On the proposed budget, George proposed a 2% raise, but no personnel cuts, and cutting overtime unless it becomes necessary to staff the classes that are required.

It was pointed out that our school is not on the school choice list on the district website. Jim stated that we need to have a chat with the district to ensure we are getting our fair share of the funds. Cathy also brought up that we need to make sure we are part of the library share program.

Jim summarized that we are anticipating a decrease in enrollment and a decrease in funding, but we have a surplus this year. However, we have been missing our fundraising targets and if we don't either enhance our revenue or enrollment, we will have a deficit. Finally, he pointed out that these are extraordinary times, and it would not distress him if we had to dip into our surplus next year.

Jennifer made a motion to extend contracts to all current staff with a raise of 2%. Tarik seconded the motion and the motion was approved unanimously. No further action is needed on the preliminary budget at this time.

George requested the authority to rehire the auditors for this year. The expense is approximately \$12,000.00. It was brought up that perhaps we need to look for other bids. Jim will look at the audit contract and we will address it at the next meeting.

Maria asked if a couple of CDs that were with AG Edwards can now be moved to Morgan Stanley under Vince Magee's supervision. Tarik responded that we need to make sure there is only \$250,000 in each bank, and proposed moving some of the MCB funds to Morgan Stanley. Jim said he would get with Maria.

Elizabeth proposed a store like bargain basket as a fundraising idea. Jim proposed that we look into it.

Jim Young proposed that we ask the city to mow the grass for free in exchange for making the field available for its use to save funds.

In addition Jim Y. proposed recognizing the families who have met their 100% commitment and recognize the top 10 people who exceeded hours in the newsletter. Cathy expressed her concern that volunteers are having a hard time meeting their commitment and stated we need to do a better job coordinating volunteers. We need a volunteer coordinator.

Jim Young asked about redoing the soccer field. George explained that they are planning to start as soon as the school year is over. Jim Y. proposed asking the city to help. Jim R. wondered what the city might want in return as we would not want to lose control of scheduling.

The meeting was adjourned.