

Meeting House Nursery School Board agenda  
**Wednesday October 16,2024; 6:30 - 8:00 pm**  
**Staff Lounge/Courtyard E**

In attendance: Kevin P., Nate A, Casey S. Whitney N., Rahel A, Calvin F., Claire H., Jamie N,  
Dawn G, Devon and Mo

**Called to order at 6:37 pm**

1. Approve meeting minutes from September
  - a. Motion to approve: Nate
  - b. 2nd: Whitney
  - c. Vote: all in favor

2. Reports:

Executive Director Report-Devon

Enrollment has pretty much stayed the same. Resources and subs have been in the building for sicknesses and parent teacher conferences. Devon is looking for time to get into the classrooms now. Right now all classrooms are all doing well, one 2 year old classroom needs a bit more attention but staff is making it work. Board asks how to help and take off Devon's plate but there really isn't anything with which the board can help. Having a resource teacher and supervisor in the PM has been really helpful with filling some gaps. Facility updates: Room 4 received some damage to their outside wall in the last big storms. FUS has a history for pushing the repairs out. Anything on the playground is our responsibility: looking forward, there will need to be some tree trimming. MHNS also pays to treat the Elms on the playground, which was done this past year. We do not have a new contact/liaison person at FUS since Monica's exit. Financials: GHC insurance went up 19.65% this year. Devon did update the new budget with these numbers coming in. We go through a brokerage for coverage. Finance committee has picked a day to meet and will talk about the budget. Claire has joined the committee. Contracts: Devon is working on OCCFR; the contract and reapplication for the program (needed every 10 years), is laborious. We have no reason to believe we will not be renewed. Office: working through long term ideas about how we use ProCare and how to make it most efficient for us. *Questions about Room Parents for Devon* - communication about asking for them has not been happening. Posting on the doors doesn't seem to be working. They can pull together playdates and then again for teacher appreciation. Teachers may call on them for help in the classroom or in prep for the classroom. Music: No movement on the music teacher front. Calvin shared a contact for music (Juli Johnson; 414-419-8802) NAEYC Conference: Staff will be leaving for the NAEYC conference next month, staff is excited for the opportunity. Report will happen in December.

Special Events/75th recap/What to do about the PNO-Whitney/Casey

It was SO GREAT!! Whitney's dad did a great job with photos. Around 350 people came to the event. 27% alumni, 63% current families, 10% staff and families. Sent around

1000 postcards and got around 400 back. About 22 QR scans from the alumni postcards. 5 FUS staff and families. Favorite part was seeing alumni connect with teachers.

The Special Events committee asked the board to consider the following before discussion at the meeting:

*Below is some of the context we are thinking about for this event. We hope this will be helpful for other new board members and save time at our meeting by setting up the discussion background in advance:*

- **Low Attendance:** *Our understanding is that since before Covid, there has been a decline in the amount of people attending PNO, with mostly board members and staff making up the attendees last year. Some reasons we have heard are lack of childcare, too much going on, cost with tickets and babysitter, attending during the week is more tricky than on weekend, some would rather just donate than attend an event, no interest in additional social events, etc.*
- **Direct Appeal:** *Prior to the last 5 years, PNO was a main fundraiser for the year. Now things have shifted so that most fundraising is done via direct appeal in winter and through larger family donations.*
- **Auction/Raffle:** *Traditionally the silent auction was a key part of fundraising for the PNO event. However, since the pandemic, small business donations have been harder to find and this takes a significant amount of work to put together. In an effort to include more people, last year the silent auction was switched to be a raffle for a handful of items instead and anyone could buy tickets. The thought behind this was that you didn't have to attend the PNO to participate and it seemed more equitable that there was a lower entry for people to win (i.e. you could buy 1 raffle ticket and win vs. having to be the highest bidder).*
- **Last Year:** *The PNO event last year was held on a Thursday evening at a brewery with small apps and desserts. The benefit to this was that it was manageable to plan and tickets to the event were pretty affordable since there wasn't much cost to recoup to ensure break even.*

*Some questions to consider:*

- *Do you think a weekend is preferable to a weeknight due to schedules and childcare?*
- *Is alcohol availability important?*
- *Why have you attended or known others to attend PNO in the past (is it just to support the school/fundraising, is it only because you were on the board and felt like you had to, do you like the social aspect?)*
- *Would you be more likely to attend if there was an activity like trivia, music, adult magic show, or having it at a bowling alley, etc.*
- *Would you be more likely to attend if it was semi-formal with a meal, or casual with light food for flexible scheduling?*
- *Going off the above, do you think ticket prices should be kept under \$20/more affordable which would mean the event would need to be simpler. (This question also plays into a larger question for future years of what is the goal of PNO? Primarily fundraising or social? Are we achieving that goal in the best way given our cost/volunteer time constraints and interest from families?)*

- *Would you be open to a more expensive ticket price? Ideas for making this accessible to those who might want to attend but can't afford- sliding scale, suggested donation amounts vs hard amount?*
- *Any thoughts on the raffle/silent auction?*
- *Any other general comments/suggestions for location, vibe, things you have liked/don't think worked well in the past? Any special ideas specifically for this 75th year and celebrating the school's milestone?*

PNO: Polled adults when signing in for fall festival about an adults only event in the spring: 15 current families, 9 alumnus and 5 staff marked that they would be interested. Thinking about re-evaluating the spring event and its purpose. Attendance has been down/decreasing in the past years. Last year the board set up a table and hustled for people to come just the week before the event. Doesn't seem to be a lack of awareness but more of a not wanting to jump through the hoops to get there. Childcare seems to be the biggest hurdle.

Is there something that would draw you (board members) there? Specific fundraiser? Entertainment? Steering toward alumni and fundraisers. Friends of Meeting House for tours. UW Whitewater Orchestra students playing at the event? If at FUS we will have more flexibility with food and drink. Distillery and many other venues will not allow you to bring in music. Liked the idea of raffle tickets for auction items and the accessibility it offers. Is there a way to include children in the event? People feel that the time makes it too late. *Feedback*: Social connect was big for some families that do attend. Some felt having it earlier in the school year to meet families. Do we go more formal or more playful? When thinking of venues, maybe consider ones with a couple of different spaces for people to gravitate to where they are comfortable. Would switching to a Saturday or Sunday evening better? Is there a way to build up the individual community aspect of the event, not necessarily a couple's event. Different types of events may be good for some alumni and the ability to tap into those families that have the capacity to give in a bigger way. We could invite our partners: UW foundation, Numbers for Nonprofit, WECA, etc. This may be a great year to introduce those partners and changes to the event. Use this as a stepping off point to gather the people who will pledge. Question about hosting two different events: perhaps a smaller event for families in the fall to get to know each other and a PNO event for the larger community. Concerns that this would make attendance smaller at each event.

Casey and Whitney will be asking the special events volunteers to see their response to these questions the board was engaging. Casey and Whitney will be meeting with the 75th anniversary committee and special events committee so that they can get feedback from them as well. Important to do a follow-up on the fall festival attendees. Next up will be the direct appeal.

The special events committee will need the board to be the marketing team for leveraging relationships to draw folks into the PNO and other events. Friday, April 11th is scheduled for the PNO, but will need to be moved because there is no MMSD (or MHNS) that day.

3. Long term financial goals for MHNS

Thinking about the sustainability of giving and the potential what the alumni could help get started this year. Need to think through what are the long term plans for MHNS and how do we set a foundation to reach them. This year may be a good year to test those waters and see if the alumni can play a larger role in that vision. And also, why not tap into our education and greater community: UW WECA, etc. If we are gonna fundraise, we need to do it right. Informal event relative low cost. Buying tables at events is their buy in and gift to the organization. Can we roll our greater community into our 75th event this year to test the waters?

4. Adjourn at 8 pm

2nd: Nate

Next meeting: December 4th at 6:30 pm