



MARS PLANET FOUNDATION

January 20 2025 Meeting Minutes

Board Members	Present	Ambassadors	Present
Beth Ziegler - President	X	Jennifer Antonio	
Sandy Page – Vice President	X	Helianna Galvis-Orr	
Kim Vandall - Treasurer	X	Tricia Holland	
Kelly Dunn - Secretary	X	Robin Parsons	
Jeannie Irwin	X	Lee Ann Riner	
Amy Riggio	X		
Amanda Salkeld	X	MASD Admin	
Vickie Zaccari	X	Dr. Travis Mineard	X
Jennifer DiCuccio	X		
Madelynn Barkley	X		

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 pm.

Meeting Minutes – The Meeting Minutes from January 2026 were discussed.

- ❖ Jeannie Irwin motioned to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Kim Vandall. The meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

Teacher Grant Presentation

- ❖ Mr. Churilla – Unitree Go2Walking Interactive Animal Robot
 - Grant request is for \$3,894.05 for one Animal Robot. The robot will allow for a deeper understanding and application of programming for students. This animal can be programmed to be interactive with AI technology that will allow students to learn about programming on a higher level and be able to work in real time with programming outcomes. This will be used for higher-level learners who earn more STEAM time through PBIS rewards and those students identified as interested in learning more advanced programming concepts. This grant request is for the robot, controller, battery, warranty, and a professional development course for the teacher.
- ❖ Mr. Churilla – CHOMP SAW Cardboard Cutter
 - Grant request is for \$2,021.90 for 9 Chomp Saw units. A Chomp Saw is a safer and more effective tool for cutting cardboard. A majority of the STEAM projects created by the 640 kids in the Centennial School utilize cardboard. Currently, the safest way for students to cut heavy cardboard is with regular scissors that break and can't cut straight lines while pressure is applied. The introduction of the Chomp Saws will make project creation safer, quicker, and easier for all students.
 - Kim Vandall asked Mr. Churilla to explore an extended warranty option.

Teacher Grant Presentation Discussion

- ❖ Unitree Go2Walking Interactive Animal Robot
 - A discussion was held around the cost of one unit. It is available online cheaper, but those are sites that are ordering from overseas companies, which is not permitted by the district. They also do not include the professional development course. Mr. Churilla had researched two US-based companies that specialize in educational products and chose what he felt to be the most reliable company.

- While only one unit is purchased, this will give exposure to bigger programming concepts to those students who are intrigued and ready for this level of education. Perhaps it could also be used by Gifted students in their independent projects.
 - Kelly Dunn moved to approve the Unitree Go2Walking Animal Robot grant as presented. Amanda Salkeld seconded the motion. A unanimous vote for approval was received.
 - Kim Vandall moved to amend the motion to approve by adding the opportunity to add an extended warranty not to exceed an additional \$500. Sandy Page seconded the amendment, and a unanimous vote was received.
- ❖ **CHOMP SAW Cardboard Cutter**
 - A brief discussion among the board was held about the product and the benefit they see in adding this to the STEAM classroom.
 - Vickie Zaccari moved to approve the grant request in the full amount of \$2,021.90. Amy Riggio seconds the motion. A unanimous vote by board members passed the grant approval.

President's Report – Presented by Beth Ziegler

- ❖ Nothing to report

Treasurer Report – Presented by Kim Vandall

- ❖ Waiting for the final number of CHS fees that need to be paid for high school students who qualify for free and reduced lunch. Amount will not exceed \$5,000.
- ❖ The Achieve fund has been funded with a starting \$15,000. Credit cards and checks will be received shortly for the fund.
- ❖ Scoreboard sponsor funds received so far by Goddard School and Vogel Disposal

Scholarship Report – Presented by Vickie Zaccari

- ❖ Application window is open, and a few have been received. Vickie and Jeannie will reach out to school sponsored activity scholarships to let them know how many have been received and encourage them to advertise their scholarship further.
- ❖ Jeannie requested approval for \$8 software to help with uploading submitted files with each application to the redaction software. All uploads for redaction need to be in PDF format. This software will turn all file types into one PDF for easy upload.
- ❖ Jeannie has tried the first applications in the new redaction software and has estimated it will take about 3 minutes per student.
- ❖ Lefcon scholarship will be going through the High School and not Planet Foundation
- ❖ March meeting will be a time to ask for scholarship readers

Fundraising Reports – Presented by Beth Ziegler

- ❖ No new business

EITC Report – Amy Riggio

- ❖ No new business

Technology Report – Presented by Jeannie Irwin

- ❖ Nothing to report

Communications Report – Presented by Jeannie Irwin

- ❖ Eblast and social media posts will go out regarding the advertising of the deadline for scholarship applications.

New Business

- ❖ Jen DiCuccio proposed starting a giving tree program for direct donations around the holidays by setting up trees in local businesses with ornaments that contain options for donating to the Achieve Fund. Donations could be monetary, gift cards, or tangible items in need by district students. Jen requested to be put on the March agenda to make a full proposal regarding this idea.

Vicki Zaccari motioned to adjourn the meeting, which Jeannie Irwin seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:12 pm.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 24th, 2026, in the Mars Area School District Admin building board room.

Respectfully submitted by,

Kelly Dunn