



**Above:** At a special board meeting Sept. 1, candidates for Monument Academy's vacated board seat detailed their qualifications and answered questions. From left are Roxanne Branch, Alex Freed, Michael Geers, Karen Hoida, and Christopher McKinney, with Sarah Dorman attending via Zoom. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

the board vacancy until June 2023. Geers is an attorney in Colorado and Washington, D.C., who has a personal family law business in Monument. He has extensive experience on boards, served as a legislative analyst, and worked in both the Navy and Coast Guard. Geers will be sworn in at the October meeting after successfully completing a background check.

**Board considers mill levy override**

During the Sept. 8 public comments, Holly Rollins introduced herself as a former MA parent whose children attended from 2010 to 2012. She thanked the school for providing a stellar experience for her two children that promoted academic readiness and character development. She was on the MA board from 2011 to 2014, serving as president in 2014, and knows that it has limited resources to generate revenue for the school. The secret sauce is the teachers, she said, and they are grossly underpaid. The board doesn't have a lot of ways to address this, she not-

ed, but pointed out that MA is included in the D38 mill levy override (MLO) ballot initiative and urged the board to consider this option to address teacher compensation.

At that same meeting, the board went into executive session "to develop positions relative to negotiations concerning District and facilities development and ballot measures as it pertains to Monument Academy." The board returned after about two hours, and Graham reported that the board was cognizant that the district and community have an interest and hoped that the board would take action on the MLO. He said the board planned to meet with the district and reconsider the matter at the next board meeting. Board member Emily Belisle said the board wanted to have a comfortable level of detail and wanted to explore with the district how the money is to be shared with MA and do its due diligence to best serve MA's interest.

**Highlights**

Board meeting highlights include:

- The board spotlighted Kara Giroux, Tina McLellan, and Julie Ritschard, noting that they picked up registrar duties after MA had twice hired registrars, one of whom resigned after a few weeks and one who was not able to move to the community. Giroux, McLellan, and Ritschard were nominated by the executive staff for helping MA prepare for the school year, but they were unable to attend the board meeting due to their workload.
- Clinton asked Holmes about the status of the modulares that were approved in January to help with school overcrowding (<https://www.ocn.me/v22n2.htm#ma>). Holmes said he had one bid that was over \$100,000 and was trying to get additional bids but still expected the cost to be more than the original estimates. He conceded he could have done more over the summer and noted that MA had contracted for only four classrooms rather than



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