

**MINUTES**  
**VSWEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**WEDNESDAY, September 15, 2021**  
**VIA [Zoom](#)**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Gregory Schneider (GS) – President

John Tanner (JT)

April Sauer (AS) – Secretary

Danielle Martinez (DM)

Dan Franks (DF) – Treasurer

Nellie Grossenbacher (NG)

Kerstin Kubina (KK)

**MEMBERS ABSENT: None**

The President, Treasurer and Secretary were present, and a quorum was reached.

**GUESTS**

Invitees of the Board:

Frank Mirizio (FM)

Michelle Kratzer (MK)

Members of the public present via Zoom/Registration through Google Forms:

- Barb Cunningham
- Nicholas Casura
- Riva Figueroa

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- Megan Young
- Alexa Vigenser
- Jessica Salyers
- Blayne Goodman
- Scott Edwards
- Helena Moriarty
- Sami Rank
- Heather Sullivan
- Deb
- Tammy
- Laura Heaney
- JJ
- Jessica Salyers
- Gina Limesand
- Stesha Larson

### **OPENING VERSE / INTRODUCTIONS**

Meeting was called to order at 6:34pm. GS welcomed the public to the meeting, read the opening verse, and reviewed meeting procedures.

The Board members introduced themselves along with FM and MK.

GS Provided an overview of the agenda.

### **BUDGET AND FINANCE**

#### **Sustaining Fund Fundraising Update**

NG One of the ideas I've been tossing around with FM is building a marketing piece with the community to sign on as monthly donations. Maybe with a theme, having an 18-month projection with goals to target. There could be certain line items to designate where money would go to. If we list specific items, we think we can get better engagement. We're hoping to start that around Michaelmas. We want to use a QR code which is very helpful. A part of that would also be to get animal care back as a line item budget, so we may ask for someone to sponsor an animal. Right now, animal care doesn't have a line item, so we need to work toward that as it's a huge part of Waldorf curriculum.

GS DM, did you want to add on to that?

FM I would tell you NG and MK and Laura have been talking with me, and a big goal of mine is to increase the high school, so I'd love to spruce up the high school by adding a patio or picnic tables. An area that would be really nice and attractive so the kids will want to be out there. I do have some money for that, but I'd like to raise some money for it as well. This 8<sup>th</sup> grade class

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has 27. If we can get 23 to stay we'd be well on our way to get to 60 in the high school next year. I've been talking with these ladies, and we're on the same page.

GS It sounds like we want to increase enrollment in the high school and do some improvements to the high school. Would those go hand in hand with those monthly donations?

FM Yes, we think that would help our high school grow.

GS I love the idea of sign ups for monthly donations, especially with smaller amounts as it fits more in people's budgets. The routine of that would be helpful. And it can be built out. Is the idea to work with Melissa Sutton on it, or is this separate?

NG I think that's a question for DM, but I'm confident I can work on that marketing piece for this. I think once the community sees that we had a fundraiser, captured the money, and that corral shows up that we're starting to change, and things are starting to move. I think the community will see that we're moving forward. I think Melissa Sutton will help us more with large scale donations. As FM was saying regarding the high school, we want to solicit companies like Home Depot and Lowe's for materials donations and have Hector do some of the work like laying pavers. We also want to check in with some businesses to help us with the labor. GS, did you see the marketing that went out for the corral last week?

GS I don't think so. I was a world away.

NG I'll email it you so you can see it.

AS I've previously created paperwork for continued donations, so I'd be happy to send that over if you'd like. You can use it or not use it. I always think it helps to have a template. Also, I want to make sure we're getting staff on board to make sure donations are regularly going through. There was an issue with that previously as the donations weren't automatically going through each month. NG mentioned QR codes, and I wanted to thank Laura Heaney and Deb Pawlo for their help this past month. I recently worked with them to create the QR code for the class materials donations. The teachers handed them out at their parent nights and explained what they were, and it made a great impact. I looked it up to see how we are doing this year as opposed to last year. Our report last September, which includes July and August, was \$9800 total for class materials donations, and this year for July we brought in \$4600 and for August \$9600 with a total of \$14275, and we have a good amount already for September. So those QR codes work. They are so convenient, and I hope we use them more. Again, thanks to Laura and Deb and our teachers for seeing that through.

GS Something else to think about is tracking all of these donations, so we can start building a database to contact them and send them updates and eventually sending an ask for contributions.

NG The QR code goes straight to the donation page, and it's capturing the information we're looking for.

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DF We'd have to extract that information from PayPal in order to get that information.

NG That's tracked on the website.

MK You fill out a form when you make a donation on the website, so that information is tracked,

GS Yes, but I'm looking for a quick way to get information regarding our donors. I think we need to pull that information like DF was talking about.

DF That should be free to do that as it should be pretty simple.

GS Will you contact NG and DM about that?

DF Yes, I can do that.

### Financial Update

GS Shared his screen to show the Profit and Loss for July-August 2021. We're doing pretty well. We've got tuition coming in for the private program. We've had a tax credit donation, and our state and federal money. Our expenses are mostly salaries. That brings our expenses to 497k. Net operating income at 42k. Our net income is at 16k, which is in the black. I think we're well positioned to have a good academic year based on what we're seeing. Shared screen to show the Balance Sheet. Total assets 2.6 million. Total Liability of 1.5 million. Total Liabilities and Equity 2.6 million.

### Enrollment Update

FM This week we lost 5 kids. Some families moved. Within two days, we got 5 more coming in for Monday. We have some people on waitlists, and people are doing tours. We are at 286.5, and we have a kindergarten kid enrolling, so 287 would be our total. I want to be at that number on the 40<sup>th</sup> day. October 6<sup>th</sup> is our 40<sup>th</sup> day, and we need everyone to attend.

GS That sounds like good news for turbulent times.

AS Mentioned the excellent work Crystal Lee is doing to automate things and stay on top of enrollment. Her report was very specific and full of good news and ideas. So thank you to Crystal for your work and your reporting.

FM It's always nice when you thank your sister.

AS And I love you, Crystal!

### **COVID-19**

#### Update

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GS There's still some lawsuits pending regarding mask mandates. Yesterday there were some oral arguments made, and the court will take it under advisement. The court said they'd issue the news before the date the mask mandate would go into effect. So things may change before our next meeting on October 6. Depending on the way things look, we may consider an emergency meeting to address it, but we may not need to do anything. It's a moving target, and we're trying to stay on top of it. That's the limited information I have on that litigation right now and how it impacts our school. Any questions I can answer, I'm happy to.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

### Update

GS Any highlights you'd like to share with us from your report?

FM Our new system of pick up and drop off is working very well. It's taking less than 10 minutes to get everyone in and out. We allow 45 cars to come into the lot at quarter till, and that helps the long line go down. We're happy with how that's going. We're not perfect; we need to stop cutting through the median, so I sent out a message about that. But kudos to pick up and drop off. On a Covid note, kudos to our parents who are staying on top of Covid precautions and contacting myself and Deb, Crystal, and Bonnie. They're keeping kids home when sick, waiting to test them as needed, and I appreciate the caution they're taking. I commend our parents, and we thank you for being cautious. Huge thank you to our parents who threw the bake sale. I have to laugh because I keep hearing how I need to get the candy out of my office because Waldorf kids don't eat a lot of sugar, but the only items leftover in the bake sale we're sugar free. As you know we have some things coming up. Town Hall is Monday at 5pm, and Dr. Darian is coming to be on the panel. I'm trying to get another teacher, and obviously the board will be represented. The high school is taking a trip to California. We rented a charter bus, which is great for liability reasons. The cost went up, but we had some great donations from parents that helped us out. We want to take field trips, but I don't want to put anyone in harm's way. Two weeks after that we have parent teacher conferences. I posted that on ParentSquare. It's important for parents to meet with teachers. We have the half day so we can fill those timeslots from 12:30-5pm. Please sign up and choose one of those spots so teachers aren't out so late.

NG The sign up for Parent/Teacher conferences, is that on ParentSquare?

FM Teachers will reach out to their own parents to start that sign up. It's not for a few weeks.

## **BOARD PROCEDURES**

### Town Hall

DM Are we zooming for the Town Hall? Is that an option?

GS No, we're doing that in the garden and away from Wifi. Unfortunately, it will be in person only unless someone wants to come and live stream it. Laura Heaney, if you're listening.

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DM Can we consider for the next Town Hall a different day of the week/time? I think Monday is hard for many.

GS To your point, I'm open to other dates/times for Town Halls. Sunday afternoon was our last one, and people said it was a bad day/time.

DM Yeah, it was an awkward day/time.

GS I think that's why it's important to make these Town Halls regular. That way if you miss it, it's okay because you have another coming up.

DM Are we considering having people asks questions ahead of time?

NG I think we should send out a survey or questionnaire to the public so we can have those ahead of time. I think it's just a good thing to do anyway to check in, especially since we don't have public comment right now. It came up twice two meetings ago, that we want to hear from the community regarding masks and voicing opinions about some other things. I think since we have a time limit on the Town Hall, it will help to know what they want to know ahead of time. And also, I think it's important to have Parent Council involved as well.

GS We always add a line telling parents to contact us, but other ways are helpful too. Regarding Parent Council, yes, FM and I have been discussing having MK with us, have you checked with her?

FM I've been with her for three days and haven't asked her about it. We can ask her now. MK, will you be able to be there and sit on the panel?

MK I plan on being there, and I'm happy to be on the panel.

GS Yes, to the survey. I think that would be great. I think it's great to know what some of the questions will be ahead o time, but I don't also want to turn a Town Hall into a presentation. We had that happen at a previous Town Hall, and the community didn't care for that. I'm fine soliciting "Tell us what you're thinking about," but I don't want to present only on those questions. I want to have a dialogue with those attending.

NG I totally understand. So what I'll do is create a questionnaire that we can send out maybe quarterly to check in. I just feel like we need to open the lines of communication.

GS That's fair.

FM I think the last time we talked about it, we decided on a quarterly town hall. That way we're addressing different times of the school year. For example, I'm sure we'll get a question about the AC in the Grade 1 and 2 classrooms. That's current and very normal as we go through seasons and times of year.

DM Were we settling on who would be present?

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GS I will be there for sure, so there's room for 2 more board members. NG has thrown her name in there. Who else is interested?

DM I am.

GS Anyone else interested? Okay, then NG and DM will be with me on Monday.

### Board Application Timeline

GS We are soliciting now for new board members. AS sent out a letter with the details on that on ParentSquare. Applications are due by October 1<sup>st</sup>. Then we review the applications, start interviews in the first meeting in November and then do follow up interviews and vote at the second meeting in November. Did I miss anything, AS?

AS That's accurate. We also have the informal meeting between a few board members and a some staff and the applicants, but that's a separate meeting not a board meeting.

GS I've decided not to reapply for a second term as the board president or as a member as I have some personal things I need to pay more attention to. So that being said, we'll be down one person, and it's an amazing experience. You'll get to know the school, maybe more than you want to, you get to be a part of the community, and learn about the pressing issues, and most importantly you'll get to see how many people care so deeply about this place. It's bittersweet for me to be moving on, but it's been a great experience for me.

DM I know I missed our financial update, but can I bring up a few points? We're building up a team of 10 to roll out the tax credit push. We want it to be board, administration, teachers, and parents. We want to meet on 9/22 at 8:30am. I want to know if we want to take path 1 or path 2. Do we want to designate a direct need for tax credits or a broad category? Also, we want to have an updated calendar of everything happening so that we can make sure we don't overlap with anything happening.

GS Are you looking for volunteers to be on the committee, or for us to decide the tax credit focus? My take on the tax credit is that it's limited anyway, so a broad category may be best.

DM I think we've been successful when we've tied it to a direct goal. So broad spectrum or a direct need?

NG I like direct need. I think it works better when people know where the money is going to.

AS We've just changed the class materials donations so they go specifically to classrooms. So that money is only going to one place. The tax credit is limited as it is, so I think broad is the way to go so we can designate funds where they're needed. Also, we're back on campus and Parent Council is hosting fundraisers, and we're doing fundraising too. I think those efforts are better suited to designate to specific goals. That way, we can do both—specific goals with fundraising and broad catch all for tax credits.

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GS I pulled up the list again. DM mentioned strings teacher, but the tax credit is limited. That's why I think go broad because then you can figure out where to go with those funds. I know we can use it for extra curriculars, so we could hire a teacher for an after school strings club, but not a full time teacher for the daytime. I know through June 2022, we can raise tax credit funds for capital improvement projects. Maybe it's the high school improvements FM was talking about.

DM Any other thoughts?

FM I would tell you that whenever you fundraise, you stay away from fundraising for salaries. It isn't a good idea because it's only for one year. You won't have quality teachers who want to come to that because their job won't be there next year. I think funds going to capital projects is best. It's my job to expand on enrollment to create more income for salaries.

NG Is capital projects a line item?

FM Yes, those are ESSER grants we're using on Capital Projects. 86% of M and O money is spent on salaries and benefits. We want to add personnel, and we want to give our teachers a raise and improve their benefits every year to keep them. You have to constantly stay on top of that.

DM We wouldn't be deterring anyone to make a selection; we just want to entice them to donate.

NG What did we make previously?

DM Around \$40,000. We had a thermometer on the barn and that was used to keep the excitement going.

KK I think money should go to capital projects. There are a lot of buildings that need repairs and upgrades.

DF I agree because I think that helps everyone.

JT It's one of those situations where you need both. You must maintain your programming. No one wants a strings teacher more than me, yet you have to have the capital improvements. As KK mentioned, there are many building that need repairs. The farmhouse needs a tremendous amount of work. Even the buildings where 5/6/7 are—that's becoming almost 20 years old. I remember when they built those rooms. Little by little things start to fall apart. We need both.

DM Thank you. MK?

MK I know that it's easier to get parents and family members to donate tax credits if I say "This is what we're looking at doing with the money." It's a lot easier when I have something specific to tell them, but it is also nice to have those broad items. Those capital projects are pretty important right now, too.



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DM Okay, I'll make a communication to solicit the 10 and see what we all think.

Approval of Minutes

GS moved to approve the 09/01/21 meeting minutes. DF second. No further discussion. Votes in favor: AS, DM, DF, KK, NG, JT. Abstain: GS. **Motion passes.**

GS moved to adjourn tonight's meeting. JT second. No further discussion. Unanimous vote in favor: GS, JT, AS, DM, NG, DF, KK. **Motion passes.**

**CLOSING VERSE**

AS read the closing verse.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:48pm.

Prepared by AS on 09.15.2021.