

MINUTES
VSWEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 19, 2022
VIA [Zoom](#)

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Kerstin Kubina (KK)–President
April Sauer (AS)–Secretary
Dan Franks (DF)–Treasurer
John Tanner (JT)
Danielle Martinez (DM)

Nellie Grossenbacher (NG)
Ben Fong (BF)
Myriah Mhoon (MM)
Scott Edwards (SE)

MEMBERS ABSENT:

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:

Morgan Davis
Sarah Baize
Barb Cunningham
Heather Sullivan
Amy Edwards
Sami Rank
Alison Easter
Addie
Roxana Elixavide
Zoom user
Sarah Young
Deborrah Allen
Chelsea Cascketta
Sophia McCurley
Larry G
Helena Moriarty

Barnaby McGillicuddy
Heather
Bonnie
JJ
Jamie
Peter Rennick
Nicole Goodman
Vincent Slayton-Garcia
Addie Heartkin
W
Tammy/Tom
Megan
Elodyyy
AMCofH Classroom 2
Myself

OPENING VERSE / INTRODUCTIONS

02.02.22 Approved

Meeting was called to order at 6:35pm. KK welcomed the public to the meeting, read the opening verse, and reviewed the agenda.

The Board members introduced themselves along with FM and MK.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE

KK FM, let's start off with the director report.

FM Since we met a lot has happened, but the best news is we had zero positive Covid tests reported today. We've had a lot of positives over the last two weeks, so we're excited to see that there were no reports of new cases. We're moving forward, we're holding school, and our classes are open. We met Monday with the contemplation team. Barb Cunningham hosted for us, and Peter and Joan were there to help us. A team of a parent, community member, and a staff member want to meet with a board member for questions and answers. The new board members could speak with those on the contemplation. I think it's a nice idea. For anyone who wants to participate in that, they can. Of course, it's optional, but that was a good thing this week. A third positive thing is I've heard from the company building the woodshop. Our frame should be showing up soon so we can erect it, then add electrical, AC, etc. The bathroom is having some setbacks with permits. Hopefully by the next meeting we'll have some good news. Student enrollment is at 285 today. I think we'll be at 287 next Monday. That should help us out as we come upon our 100th day soon. And I think that's it for now.

NG Thanks for all your work, especially with the woodshop. Over the 35 kids who were positive cases, how many kids were close contacts during that time?

FM All of EC was out. 4th grade was out with 12. Some other grades were 1 or 2. I couldn't give you the exact numbers because some kids only had to quarantine for a few days because of the long weekend and the new guidelines. But that EC closing was a big one because it's 3 classes.

NG What was the highest day of absences?

FM I think one day we had 98.

NG Okay, thank you.

DF What was the highest absentee or being sent home for faculty?

FM Five over the last 2-2 ½ weeks, but that changes because of the new guidelines regarding previously having Covid.

KK Do we have any plans for the 100th day?

FM Many parents are cautious. They don't want to be a part of spreading the virus. So we don't want to discourage anyone from staying home if they don't feel well, but we will send something out regarding the 100th day as a reminder. We don't want to twist any arms.

PARENT COUNCIL

MK Parent Council was originally going to hold a lunch for the 100th day, but now we'll be moving it to around Spring Break and assess then. Same thing with our S'mores and community

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work day. We'll reschedule those when it's safe. Hopefully in February or March. Our book club is on Thursday nights at 8pm. Parent Council is helping with the duck dock/island. We have the majority of the materials already that were donated. Hector is checking everything out, and he's excited to build it. I think he'll end up doing that himself.

KK Fantastic. Any questions for MK? No. Thank you so much.

MK Our next meeting will be in person in February. It'll be the second Tuesday in the morning.

BUDGET AND FINANCE

KK Shared her screen to show the forecast with budget. Shared her screen to show Balance Sheet December 2021.

DM Is that first document in our emails? I don't remember that.

KK Yes, Monique sent it over, and AS put it in our folder. Okay, jumping in here, we're working with Desert Financial, and they're reviewing our finances to understand our financial position. We're working through all of those things. We currently have three loans, and we're trying to refinance those together. That's going well. I met with them last night, and I'm hoping to hear back from them soon. We should have that hopefully put to bed soon.

DM I've asked for the amortization schedule. Can you send that over?

KK Let me look into that. I'm not sure who has access to that because I know there's a loan that's anonymous.

DM And do we have a proposal from Desert Financial yet?

KK No, not yet.

BOARD PROCEDURES

Approval of Minutes

KK moved to approve the 01/05/22 Meeting Minutes. MM second. The following discussion took place:

SE I want you to know that I will not be approving the minutes tonight because they are inaccurate. This is not a problem of AS's as she is following open meeting law. I missed the three-day window I was given to suggest edits, and as a result my thoughts weren't written as I intended them. The discussion missed some points about outbreaks. The outbreak was never intended to be a trigger for closure rather a nidus to begin a discussion regarding variants, ventilators, the vaccination rate of the community, what ventilation we have, etc. I said that a couple times, and that didn't make it in the minutes. And those aren't my thoughts, those are from the CDC. My intention was never to surrender that decision to the MCDPH.

KK Was the motion correct? Or was this the discussion?

SE The motion was correct, but the discussion wasn't included at all. I wanted to correct the minutes, but I wasn't able to.

KK AS, correct me if I'm wrong. We have three days to post the minutes?

AS We have three business days. If the meeting is on Wednesday, we have until Monday to post them.

SE I understand that we're following policy, so I just wanted to clarify why I will not be approving the minutes.

KK Yes. That was a long meeting with a lot of discussion. We do need to get to the motion and vote.

Votes in favor: KK, DF, AS, JT, MM, BF. Opposed: SE, NG. Abstain: DM. **Motion passes.**

Board Operational Items

AS The training that is coming up is only for charter reps. Gregory and I are the charter reps now, so we do need to elect KK as Gregory is no longer serving on the board. Also, after the charter rep training it's likely the charter board will offer the same training to board members. Information about that should be coming through the newsletter, so keep your eyes on that.

AS moved to elect Kerstin Kubina as a Charter Representative for the VSWEA with the AZ State Board of Charter Schools. BF Second. No further discussion. Votes in favor: KK, DF, AS, JT, DM, MM, BF. Abstain: SE, NG. **Motion passes.**

KK Reminder for our new members, we need to get your paperwork in so that we can be in compliance. We need to remove Gregory as well and are hoping to get that all done at the same time. Also, we have created an autoresponder. DF worked on that with Deb to get that done, so thank you.

DM I'd like us to have a mentor program of charter reps to board members. Can we do that?

KK Sure, I think that's a great idea.

DM Do we know if the charter rep has to be an officer? And if it's only two or more?

AS As long as I've been here it's been an officer and only two charter reps, but I'm not sure if it has to be that way. JT has been on the board the longest. Maybe he has something to add.

JT No, I don't have anything to add to that.

KK Do we have a charter contact to check in on that?

AS Yes, our assigned person from the AZ State Charter Board is Mary Q. I'm not going to try to pronounce her last name. I can send an email or I can just bring that up at the training as it's in early February.

KK Shared some information on creating our playbooks to have this information readily available to pass on to new board members.

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Grants

BF MM and I have been putting together a grants list and a tracker. There's a lot of local foundations with a lot of money, and the hope is that we can begin to build relationships, bring these people to our school, and get them involved. The hope is to get this started and then move this on to a future development director. We also want to put together a template document with the proper grant language so we have that on hand. Hopefully, this Spring we can begin to bring this money in.

DM That's fantastic.

MM The list is a lot of groups I've worked with in my own career. This is very relationship based, so we need to develop a relationship with these people. We want to get that document going as well to keep track of everything.

DM I have a grant proposal I can forward to you.

BF That would be great, DM. Thank you.

KK Thank you. This is so helpful.

Agendized Motions

BF I think that this serves two purposes. The basic idea is that when we're dealing with documents like the Covid policy that we agendize motions. This could be more generally for any motions that the board brings up for discussion. It's beneficial because we'll know what language will be used ahead of time. The second thing is that it increases transparency for the public. They'll have a better idea of what will be discussed. That specific language of motions in the agenda would be helpful.

DM I would add that when I ran a board meeting it was difficult to focus on the language while I was leading, so I did ask others to do it. I think this will help.

KK Yes, being able to have the time to process will help and keep things a little cleaner. We will also always be able to call motions on the spot as well.

MM I think it's a great idea.

KK moved that whenever applicable or possible that we put our motions on an agenda item that will be posted 24 hours in advance for transparency purposes.

MM I'm not sure if this will limit us with making motions during meetings.

BF I've been in similar situations when only agendized motions can be voted on. I don't think that's what we're trying to do. I think this could be an expectation of board members. That way the specifics of the proposal are there ahead of time. I think I agree with MM that we don't necessarily need to vote on it.

KK Okay, so more of a suggestion.

DF Best practices.

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KK How does everyone feel about that?

DM When we have it on the agenda or in an email we respond to, it will help with the accuracy of the notes.

NG My only concern is that I want to make sure we have flexibility. I'm thinking of our last meeting when we had a lot of motions going on. I don't want to lock in with language we can't move around.

MM I agree with that. I think each agenda item would be an action item or an education item. If it's restrictive to things we're writing out then we could be binded.

KK Okay, so we'll leave it as a best practice. We'll vote of the motion at the meeting, and of course we'll leave it up to discussion. Does that align more with your thoughts?

BF This isn't about restricting. It's about transparency as much as possible and being most efficient with our time. I think sometimes it's hard to know what objections there are to motions, and this will help. It's not meant to restrict other motions.

KK I think it's a great idea. Okay, great, going forward, if you have an agenda item, we'll add it with the motion if that's ready. This will be something we're trying.

Covid Policy

KK FM and Deb put together a starting point of the 2022 Covid-19 Policy and Procedures. I thought we'd start with them since they're administering it. The motions that were made at the last meeting were incorporated. I think this will give us a jumping off point. I'll open the floor for any feedback or thoughts?

SE Is there mention of school closures, outbreaks, etc?

FM The document we sent you was based on the first document we made. But remember the last two weeks we had a lot of questions. It was confusing, so we expanded on that document. I know SE had a discussion regarding outbreak. We looked at the CDC guidelines and added that in. The third option regarding natural immunity was added in. That was not clear enough to most people, so you will see explanations inside of those points. We expanded on that because it wasn't clear. Gave an example of natural immunity and testing. We wrote out the details to clarify some of the questions we got.

SE I was talking about actual closures. Is there anything about school, grade, or class closures?

FM No, I won't say that. We're not using the word outbreak. According to the MCDPH, they are the only ones who can tell us if we have an outbreak. We call in and report, which is mandatory, we also have to report close contacts as well. I want to be clear about that: it's mandatory for us to report. So how do we determine closures? We didn't decide to close, the EC's answers tell us whether or not to close. EC is three classes and a playground mixing and tackling and playing and even licking—that's clearly a close contact.

NG It's a Waldorf thing.

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FM So we go to MCDPH and report to them, and they tell us if we have an outbreak. We rule on close contact not an outbreak.

NG On page 5, it says: If, after reporting positive cases and close contacts, MCDPH considers a class to have an outbreak, they may recommend quarantine for the class. In this situation, Desert Marigold will work closely with the MCDPH and follow their guidance.

FM We closed EC based on how many kids were actual close contacts.

SE Okay, I want to look at that language then. I want to look at the slides I sent to the board. The CDC says there's no debate that kids do not get seriously sick, child to child transmission doesn't happen a lot in school if they're using a prevention strategy, and opening/closing schools has no effect on the community. The community has an effect on the school, but not vice versa. Back in December the CDC only mentioned closing down more than individuals. On January 4, CDC removed all mention of closures. I sent that information to the board. I said help me because I can't see a reason why we should have a covid related closure. An epidemiologist is only concerned about keeping the rate down, so of course they'll recommend that we shut down. So my motion would be to remove any mention retaining to closures. There shouldn't be a direct pathway for closures where it's left up to an epidemiologist.

DF FM, didn't you say the MCDPH didn't recommend closing?

FM They didn't say that we had a breakout. They didn't tell us to close EC. I believe before I got there last year that DMS went remote based on a board decision not the department of health.

SE I apologize, FM.

FM If you really want to know why the EC was shut down, it was for close contacts.

SE I apologize for making the assumption that you were manipulated by an epidemiologist. If it's a close contact and falls back in our report, we have to ask if this policy makes sense for us. Does this make a lot of sense based on things we know are true about kids and the virus? I don't think having FM use all of his time running around contact tracing is the best use of his time. We need to base our decisions on science. We need to have a goal of having a Waldorf school and not zero transfer of the virus.

NG Last week we got hit hard. My kids had a runny nose and cough, so I kept them home. Did we keep tabs on what any of the symptoms were? This echoes what SE said, that we're shutting down for runny noses and coughs. Did the people who were close contacts test positive? My kids are afraid now to blow their noses at school. Did the 52 close contacts end up positive?

FM There were many kids who tested positive, but also remember that some of those were siblings. A lot of the positives are within families. There are a lot of factors involved in this. I want to stop using the phrase shutting down because we are not shutting down. We ask people to quarantine because that's what's in the new CDC guidelines. The symptoms I have been keeping track of are the four most common: fever, headache, cough, and sore throat. Those have been consistent with the kids who eventually tested positive.

NG Are my kids going to finish their educational career like this? Is this it? Are we going to be shutting kids inside for 10 days for a cough and runny nose? We have to take a position.

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FM This board has taken a position which was to adopt the new CDC guidelines which went from 10 days of quarantine to 5.

NG I know that because we don't wear masks I have to keep my kids home for 10 days. I'm very passionate about this. My kids have been in Waldorf schools since parent/child classes. It's based on teaching our children to be critical thinkers and free thinkers and to research. Seeing what's happened to a Waldorf community has broken my soul. Following the guidelines of Steiner in being healthy and being okay with our decision to accept a cold. I wish as a community we could come back to the basics of health. I'm sorry for going off on a rant. It hurts my soul that we're stepping so far away from our Waldorf roots. It's getting further and further away from that.

KK Thank you, NG. I know it's a hard topic.

NG We have people in our community who can help with health.

KK But as a board we have to decide on policy.

NG With this policy are we not going to honor a child's prior immunity?

KK Yes, but we need proof. We have to safeguard for everyone. That's our unhappy task to put language around it that is easy to understand. So how do we write a policy for everyone? I'm not sure that can happen. We need to put it in writing and in motion.

NG Are we going to continue to shut down classes for runny noses and coughs for the next few years?

KK That's why we need to write a policy so it's clear.

FM You all voted on the CDC guidelines which lessens the time of quarantine and to accept prior positive tests to prove immunity. That is helping.

DF I don't think this will last forever. Eventually, this will normalize, and we won't always have to mask.

MM I thought we made a healthy middle ground agreement, and I know that because I wasn't happy with it. I didn't agree with it, but I think we're polarizing that we'll get what we want, but we're not. We exist within a governing board with laws and policies, and we have to get there with a middle ground. I truly thought that we got into a semi-healthy rhythm. Our rates went up in Maricopa, so ours did too. But I think our policies are a middle ground.

SE I want to follow the science. I wonder if it made the minutes—that we'd look at this again, but it was a failure. This contact tracing shut down--sorry closes down. Someone please tell me why this policy is really the best thing for our school.

KK No one is here to answer to anyone. If there's changes you want to make to the policy, please bring those forward. We have a rough draft to start with. We can make amendments to it and vote on those.

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DM I would like to amend that children who aren't exhibiting symptoms shouldn't be sent home. I don't know how anyone is managing this. We're not offering onsite services, and that can be problematic. We need to serve our community.

KK We need to start somewhere. The policy is what we have, and we can call motions and then just vote. Are we going to change minds? I don't know. But I think we need to move forward, put language in front of us, and vote. I think that's our best move to go forward. I think we need to put it in writing on the document, and it shouldn't fall to AS to capture everyone's ideas. We need to put our thoughts into motions, and we can vote. Does that sound reasonable?

SE I'm concerned about how this can be an exchange of ideas. How are we to make an educated decision about this? I want to hear why DF doesn't think we're in an endemic right now.

DF I'm reading that some people think we are; some people think we aren't. I don't think that my opinion matters. The medical community is what we should be listening to.

KK There are a lot of schools going virtual right now, and there's no easy answer. I think that's why we have to get our thoughts down and vote. And if we need to have another discussion, then that's fine too, but I feel like the longer we're in flux and unclear about it that means the community will be unclear as well.

FM Tomorrow I'm going to school, and tomorrow I'd like to know what I'm following. Am I following the motions made at the last meeting, or am I follow on the document that was updated?

KK I think you have to follow the votes.

MM Policy can have guidelines built in for the director, so what are we telling FM not to do? FM has to interpret the policy and the right guidance to that policy.

NG Are we allowed then to discuss this?

KK This isn't in effect; it's a rough draft. But we need to get an actual document that we can put on our website and direct people to do.

DF What we've done is voted on the policy and then the executive created the guidelines. We were supposed to go back to amend the guidelines not the policy. We should be looking to make amendments to the policy. The policy has been set; we already voted on that.

NG We passed a one page sheet, but then what was put out to the community wasn't the same. Th natural immunity proof has been an issue.

DF We went from 10 to 5 days and now natural immunity, but you don't like how it was said. So maybe we need to change the language there.

MM They built guidelines and a plan, not policy.

NG But families who've had Covid aren't being allowed to have their natural immunity counted.

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FM I found a way to get confirmation. The devil is in the details. NG was right that that wasn't voted on, but it came up and we had to figure it out. So I'm all for putting it in writing so it's crystal clear.

NG My impression was that we presented a quick document, and we were going to work on the policy this week.

FM That's because I had to have a policy to explain things to families, but yes we planned to continue to talk about this.

KK I think the best move forward is to go off of this 2022 Covid-19 Policy and Procedure. We need everyone to study this and get your information to us for changes. We need those in motions, and we'll come prepared to vote on it, and then we can make changes to the policy.

MM I struggle with that because we wait 14 more days. It's not our position to manage it. They have to figure out their action plan. I think sitting around for 14 days won't work for anyone.

SE I'm worried that the EC isn't going to go back to school for the next two weeks.

FM No, I don't see that happening.

SE Well, if two more kids get sick then the class goes home.

FM I see that concern. That could happen, but the EC decided to be one cohort. That was their decision. I support that. Maybe we are panicking, but that was one situation. They had a voice of reason, and they're a good team. Those three teachers are certified Waldorf teachers, and I'm listening to them to not push a panic button so let's see.

NG Page 2 all the way at the bottom. If someone is close contact, we notify the families, but they stay in school.

DM That was what I was suggesting.

DM Moved to amend the policy that children/staff who are not exhibiting symptoms who are close contacts will not need to quarantine. They will be closely monitored for symptoms and will be able to stay in school. The families will be notified that they are close contacts. SE Second. The following discussion took place:

SE I'm wondering how this plays out logistically.

NG If you're positive you stay home. If you're positive and I was next to you, I would be notified, but I would stay in school with no symptoms.

JT Are you including the faculty and staff in this motion?

DM I would include staff.

DF In this section, can we add how this overrides the CDC guidelines? That context is important. Does this cancel out one line?

NG Mentions the document regarding the isolation and natural immunity.

DF I was going back to the policy.

NG Page 2 at the bottom under the section 'if you were exposed quarantine.' I think we should remove the word quarantine. This is where DM's motion comes into play. If you get covid symptoms, stay home.

MM I'm still confused.

KK We're looking at the draft document.

FM I gave you a document today, and that amendment would be to change the close contact CDC ruling. Close contacts will be told, and it will be up to the family to decide to stay home.

DM It's not if. If they have symptoms they stay home.

SE Isn't that already a rule. If you have a fever, you stay home.

Fm Yes, that's the rule. But not many parents follow it.

NG Does this go back to the idea of working with SE to work on this policy?

DF I don't know if it does.

FM DF, you confused the heck out of me. You have a document; it has three titles. DM's proposal is that we do not follow that third line having to do with close contacts. So we would be following two of the CDC guidelines and the not the third. Please correct me if I'm wrong.

DM That's accurate.

BF I think that DM picked out the right issue in the policy. It appears to me that that's the sticking point. I'm certainly willing to consider this, but I'd like more time to look into this. This conversation has been clarifying to me. I have difficulty voting on it right now. I would like more time to think about how to write that.

DF I agree, and I think this is closest to what I was looking for at the last board meeting. I think this is what I was trying to do was to keep kids safe from having to go home if they don't have symptoms.

KK We could have another meeting so long as we post an agenda 24 hours in advance. That could be an option.

MM Did we have a motion on the floor right now?

AS Yes, SE seconded.

SE If I can offer a medical fact out there. It is a very common misconception about the issue of asymptomatic carriers. Things are a spectrum. With every virus there will be time when you're contagious. The misconception is that you can carry it and give it to others. It's extremely uncommon to be asymptomatic and spread it.

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BF Since we voted on the guidelines last time, they can still be in effect. We don't have to vote on that draft tonight. If we will have a specific meeting to approve the document, do we need to get that scheduled now?

KK I think it's better that we discuss it here and decide.

JT At this point we have a motion on the floor it needs to be retracted or voted on.

Votes in Favor: NG, SE, DM. Opposed: KK, AS, DF, MM, BF, JT. **Motion fails.**

MM I'm nervous because this is a meeting. Tomorrow morning, things will continue. I'm afraid that we're going to do this again in a couple days or a week. How much time do we need to accomplish this?

SE Those who are making comments are getting shut down. Will there be any changes? I agree with MM, where are we going?

KK That's why we vote. We haven't been given enough time. If we have it writing beforehand, we have motions we can review, that will help.

DF I don't want to give FM conflicting motions.

MM I get that, but that's one amendment. I want us all to put forth sound ideas. I want to utilize our time well.

AS What if we approved the policy until our next meeting on the 2nd? That would give FM and Deb something to follow for two weeks and give us time to really look at it and send our agendized motions to Kerstin that we can work on at the next meeting. Give me a minute to figure out the language of this motion.

AS moved to approve the 2022 Covid-19 Policy and Procedure document until the next meeting on February 2, 2022. During the next two weeks, the board will study the policy and send KK their agendized motions for the next agenda. DF Second. No further discussion. In Favor: AS, KK, DF, MM, BF, JT. Opposed: NG, SE, DM. **Motion passes.**

KK Okay, please study the document and send me those motions ahead of time.

DF Please try to make them singular if possible. That may be easiest for voting.

SE MM, Tell me the difference between the policy and guidelines.

MM I think we're too far in the weeds. I think we need to work off of policy and let management build guidelines, but that's my personal philosophy. Sorry, I have a sick child in my lap.

DM Go, motherhood!

NG Hang in there, MM.

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JT moved to adjourn the meeting. KK second. No further discussion. Unanimous vote in favor: JT, DF, AS, DM, NG, KK, MM, SE, BF. **Motion passes.**

NG KK, in some of your emails, you quote the parent code of conduct. I had to dig far to find it. It was hard to find. Can you send that to us?

Kk It's on the website.

AS It's in the Parent Handbook. If you go on the community page, it's got a lot of information about Parent Council and then at the end of the page there are about 6-9 blocks and one of those is the Parent Handbook.

NG Thank you.

CLOSING VERSE

DF read the closing verse.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:43pm.

Prepared by AS on 01.19.2022.