

MINUTES
VSWEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23, 2022
VIA Zoom

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Kerstin Kubina (KK)–President
Scott Edwards (SE)
John Tanner (JT)

Danielle Martinez (DM)
Nellie Grossenbacher (NG)
Ben Fong (BF)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Gregory Schneider, Dan Franks, and April Sauer

The President was present, and a quorum was reached.

GUESTS

Invitees of the Board:
Frank Mirizio (FM)
Michelle Kratzer (MK)
Myriah Mhoon (MM)

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

Helena Moriarty

Blayne Goodman

Barb Cunningham

Kelsey Orosz

Laura Heaney

Deb

Sami Rank

Gina Limesand

Kristen

Sophia McCurley

OPENING VERSE / INTRODUCTIONS

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, MK, and MM.

PARENT COUNCIL UPDATE

04.06.22 Approved

MK: A few things:

- Did a mudding on the garden structure before spring break, went well, a lot of participants. Will have to do a few more to keep it going.
- Rubios fundraiser on the 9th - \$235 raised
- Feed the faculty tomorrow: mostly full, but a few other things - a sign up on Parent Square if anyone is interested
- BBQ on Friday, April 1st
- Chipotle fundraiser - April 12th from 4-8pm
- Parent Council meeting that morning (Tuesday, April 12th after drop off)

Been wanting to have fundraiser for the animals - open to ideas.

NG: Had ideas about fundraiser too. Spring gala? Reached out to many venues, businesses strapped. Ideal to have venue donate space. Animal care an amazing thing that needs to be recognized and funded. A brunch? On campus. Taking away dinner and drinking, doing coffee and tea brunch instead. Pressed for Saturdays left in school year. I could pull this off, a brunch in the garden, Saturday, May 7th (before 6th grade goes to medieval games). 11am-2pm. Have each class make a basket to be auctioned, reach out to people to do silent auction. Could also sponsor individual animals? When the woodshop moves, will need to expand the barn. Animal care expenses only going to go up. Can be small event, can pull it off.

MK: Doable. Had a few parents asking about doing auction. Could incorporate in that event.

NG: Still healing, good to get people back on campus. Danielle and I have been thinking about gala - this is a way to have it on campus, way to raise money for animals.

MK: Still goes to kids. All of grades do something with animals.

MM: Two recommendations. April is National Pet Month. Can do flyer/mailer - ask that each child/family fundraise \$5 for Pet Awareness month - gets us close to \$1000. Grants? Let Ben and I know.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE

FM: Most recent situation - town hall. Everything good. Small but powerful group, very positive. Lots of good questions. On the patio. No mic needed. 11 total. Appreciate everyone who came.

Thanks to Parent Council - last month have done clean-up, new set of monkey bars, and mudded outdoor classroom. Working very hard. Managed to get 10-40 people to assist a weekend.

287 students currently enrolled. What we've had all year. A number of students enrolling for next year, brings us to 314 or 316. Big piece = 24 9th graders registered for next year. Double any class currently at high school. Good step in right direction.

3 openings - 1st grade teacher, 7th grade teacher, special ed teacher, speech therapist. Applicants for every one of those jobs. Hope is to be hired before May 1st. Don't want to go into summer. 2 Waldorf applicants.

04.06.22 Approved

Capital projects: still waiting on woodshop and bathroom. Checking every 4 days with contractor. Can pay to move that ahead? Contractor said no. But will have contractor talk to contacts.

Getting ready for May Pole, will have announcement about that.

KK: Could you share about how a charter school works operationally and why enrollment so important?

FM: Every board meeting, I stress enrollment. Main source of income is student enrollment. We get \$6800/student. Goes up if they're in high school. Goes up for students with special needs. Constantly trying to keep those numbers high. From 285 to 300 - that's 15 students x \$7k. Big chunk of change. Going to be 316 next year. Might have only 3 openings spread through the grades. John's class has 31 going into 8th grade. Could potentially double size of the high school. Lots of money going into our coffers. Need to give teachers more, better benefits, want to hire more. Love to add a strings program. Want another special ed teacher. In most education institutions, 95% goes to salary, benefits, operations. That's a big deal.

Attendance: our attendance is atrocious. Absences up. Everybody's attendance is atrocious across districts - either students with Covid, or family members with Covid. We have a family that's been through 4 bouts. My hope that attendance issues will be behind us in the fall. Real attendance policy = can't miss more than 10%. Covid was a different circumstance. We have kids with 35 absences right now. Well outside of 10%. By state rules, should have been withdrawn. But no school doing that right now. Best way to have student achievement is to be present.

NG: 8th grade class receptive to visiting day in high school. Outreach to 6th and 7th?

FM: No, focused on 8th. One thing for 7th but a very small thing. Definitely an opportunity with the 7th grade. High school might do one thing for 7th grade. Will do right after school.

Last thing: thank you for kind words, back to work full time.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

KK: Will share screen to look together. Feb profit and loss. We have gone in the red by \$4k. Not been able to follow up with Monique about analysis of why, but suspicion is unexpected expense around appraisal and environmental assessment for refinance (\$7k). Once the refinance goes through, will make it up.

FM: We meet tomorrow morning (with Monique). Will have more information tomorrow. If something is up, will send email to everyone.

MM: Comments on ebbs and flows of pre-K tuition? Jan seemed out of the ordinary.

FM: We have to chase those checks. Not automatic. Have Jessica working on it. Beginning of the year, around Christmas always a dip.

KK: Move on to collapsed profit and loss. A wide lens on the year. Still good for the year. Collapsed balance sheet, just putting up to see if we need any discussion.

04.06.22 Approved

Update on refinance: taken a little bit longer than hoped, hoping to close before March. Refinance has taken longer. RSF gracious, letting us work this through. Should be receiving drafts of contracts tomorrow. Everything backed up, should close by end of the month. Refinancing 2 of 3 loans that we have at lower interest rate. 2 points lower. Third year loan. Refinancing a large loan very tedious. Hopefully by next meeting can celebrate the savings.

CONTINUING BUSINESS/OPEN ISSUES

KK moved to approve the 03/02/22 Meeting Minutes. NG second. No further discussion. Votes in favor: KK, JT, NG, SE, BF Abstain: DM. **Motion passes.**

KK moved to approve the 03/02/22 Meeting Minutes for the Executive Session. NG second. No further discussion. Votes in favor: KK, JT, NG, SE, BF Abstain: DM. **Motion passes.**

NEW BUSINESS

Board By Laws:

NG: Still new, wanted to get clarification if there is a by laws committee, do we make changes? Talked to a lot of people, would like to have input in voting process. Way we've always done it is vote ourselves on, but how do we change? Would have to be in-person. In general seems voted on by public. Strange to have votes internally.

MM: Is this a Waldorf thing?

KK: Don't know. Can change the bylaws. Just need to make a motion. Last time changes made in 2010. Now would be good time to review. Not sure how it came to board members voting on board members.

NG: At Waldorf school in NY, also voted each other on.

MM: I'd like to review bylaws too. Thought it was cutthroat. A different process.

KK: Definitely grueling experience. Something to look at. Up for reviewing bylaws.

NG: Would like to be a part of bringing changes. Want this to be a one meeting process.

KK: Agreed.

NG: Willing to agree to go over bylaws. Can propose changes too.

KK: A 14 page document.

BF: Should check into process about changing bylaws.

04.06.22 Approved

KK: Amendments pretty loose. Simply majority support.

MM: Make sure rhythm isn't to see this as live document. Maximum twice a year to change bylaws?

NG: Committee to look it over and propose. Shouldn't change as fluidly as Covid policy.

KK: Maybe something to write into bylaws, so that it's not a living document.

NG: Thoughts or input as to voting process?

SE: What is our role? Representational of school community? Higher elitist group that does our thing based on what we think is best interest of school?

KK: A good reflection of community. Some new, some long timers. Don't currently have any alums. Don't think we are elitist in make-up.

SE: If we don't find ourselves to be that kind of group, should be open election process rather than self-rejuvenating process.

BF: But we can propose these things whenever?

KK: With a document with this much information, should take time with it.

FM: A lot of things have to be stated with motion of changing how board members are elected. Would be bad to change all 9 of us at once. Should be a system of gradual terms. Who gets to vote should be thought through. How to tally votes. Maricopa County will provide service free. Want third, independent place counting the votes.

KK: Brings up good point. Board members need to pass background check, fingerprint clearance. Lots of proprietary information board members get.

NG: Beginning process would be the same. We would do interviews that community watches, and then day that there is a vote, community members would vote. If your child is enrolled, you are eligible to vote. Legal guardians of child. Frank, that's good information about the county. A machine on site?

FM: Yes.

SE: Terms. Not just a voting process but also feedback process on board. That's a good thing. Propose and then discuss? What is best thing?

NG: Can start the conversation.

SE: Terms are a good idea.

KK: We do have terms. 3 year terms.

SE: Weighting votes? People on board for a while, don't know if there should be 1:1 vote. Every 5 community votes = 1 board vote? Something to think about. Forming a committee?

KK: We all look at bylaws and think about it. Any other ways?

04.06.22 Approved

MM: Bylaws are legal governance document. Don't want it to be drawn out. Trickle down effect could be something we're not seeing. Want to check with good governance consultant.

KK: Can definitely run it by our legal team. Don't know governance consultant.

MM: I can reach out to a couple.

PROPOSED MOTIONS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

KK: 04/01, Board applications are due. The next board meeting is 04/06 at 6:30pm via Zoom, and on 04/15 there is no school as it's Good Friday.

KK moved to adjourn the Wednesday, 03/23/22 meeting. NG second. No further discussion. Unanimous vote in favor: KK, JT, DM, NG, SE, BF. **Motion passes.**

CLOSING VERSE

MM read the closing verse.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:33pm.

Prepared by BF on 03.23.2022.