

**MINUTES**  
**VSWEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 15, 2022**  
**VIA [Zoom](#)**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Kerstin Kubina (KK)—President	Danielle Martinez (DM)
Dan Franks (DF)—Treasurer	Ben Fong (BF)
April Sauer (AS)—Secretary	Myriah Mhoon (MM)
John Tanner (JT)	Nellie Grossenbacher (NG)

**MEMBERS ABSENT: Gregory Schneider and Scott Edwards.**

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

**GUESTS**

Invitees of the Board:

Frank Mirizio (FM)  
Michelle Kratzer (MK)  
Sophia McCurley (SM)

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

Bradley Young	Bailey Duffy
Gina Limesand	Barb Cunningham
Morgan Davis	Kelsey Orosz and William Dyer
Mike McCurley	Tammy/Tom
Jaime Santiesteban	Sergio Elixavide
W	Sami Rank
Deb	Laura Heaney
Helena Moriarty	

**OPENING VERSE / INTRODUCTIONS**

Meeting was called to order at 6:55pm due to technical difficulties. 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 SM.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE**

07.13.22 Approved

FM Unfortunately, we are one lead teacher short as our 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher needs to move, so we are looking to fill that position. Teacher training has begun. Thanks to MK for being a good host and providing treats. Bonnie has been helping to set up too. The teachers are learning a lot. The board received the teacher training booklet so they can see what topics are being covered. So far so good. This is the last meeting on the fiscal year. Wants to thank the board for muddling through what turned out to be a successful year. We ended the year strong. Thanked the board for supporting him and the staff. Listed some accomplishments. Enrollment started at 287, ended with 282; currently at 307 with 12 packets out for completion. We ended the year fully staffed for next year until yesterday, but he's hopeful to find someone in the next week. We have a great looking budget that offers all staff members a raise. The governor's decision may even bring that raise up more. Added choir this year, next year adding Spanish in 7/8, in grades we're adding some Waldorf programming in art, music, form drawing. High school is getting a sustainability course and a business course. Staff and LDC has been a big part in helping us to improve what we're offering. We added a Curriculum Director. Our staff all received evaluations this year. All of our classroom teachers are either state certified or have taken the proper testing to become highly qualified. That feels great. We completed an excellent Contemplation that initially started last summer. Finally, we returned to the Pentathlon, Medieval Games, 8<sup>th</sup> grade trip, and high school trip. We added more board members, and we've had all third graders pass Move on When Reading this year. This is excellent news given the difficult school year we've had due to Covid.

DM Teacher training— we aren't offering for community members? That doesn't seem inclusive. What happened?

FM Initially it was about finding more individuals who were willing to pay for the training. We filled up those spaces, so he called parents to let them know the new plan.

DM Why would we ever turn away dollars?

FM It's a little more complex than that.

DM Okay, we can talk later. You mentioned the word completed for contemplation, so I want to reiterate that it's ongoing. I think we still have some work to do.

MM To you and to the community—I'm amazed, and I love hearing all this good feedback. Thank you for all of the updates and for your leadership.

KK I'm also so impressed with all your good works. I know you're great at letting others take credit for achievements, but you really powered through, and I'm excited to see where we go next year.

FM Thank you.

### **DMS ANIMALS PRESENTATION**

MK Shared her screen to show a slide deck. Introduced us to our animals: Spammy a pig; George and Luna—goat twins; Chicory and Champ are rescue horses; Potato, Shiva, Vishnu, Zinnia, and Butter are ducks; 15 chicks with more on the way. Unfortunately, we lost some geese and a duck this year. 3<sup>rd</sup> graders feed the animals, clean water containers and refill them, and watch the farrier trim hooves. 4<sup>th</sup> graders raise chicks. This year 5<sup>th</sup> graders raised ducks and helped with duck Island. 6<sup>th</sup> graders feed the chickens, check for eggs, and clean the coop.

07.13.22 Approved

We've had a surprise chick hatch this summer. 7<sup>th</sup> graders do muck outs. 8<sup>th</sup> graders move around the horse corral as needed. This helps the horses, the field, and the kids. We hope to have the horses trained as therapy horses. The animals cost about \$4000 in feed, \$1000 in vet fees, other expenses make it around \$8000 total for a year.

KK Thank you.

DF No questions, but thank you, that was really great. I appreciate hearing about their characteristics.

KK The animals are fully funded by parents, is that correct?

MK Yes, they are fully funded by volunteers. This year the fundraiser should cover us for the year.

DF Have food costs been going up?

MK Yes. We also bought that horse corral this year, but that was a direct fundraiser for \$2000.

MM Can I get a better understanding as to why it's not a part of our budget? Are they their own entity?

FM State law prohibits that as an expense. Funding animals is not an expense we can cover. The fundraising has been very clear, so that has been helpful in making them successful. I would rather see them do it that way than the volunteers paying for the animals themselves, which has happened previously. You won't hear me say anything other than how can we help support the animals because they are a great draw to new families.

DF It's common for teachers to have class pets, so I'm assuming that expense comes out of the teacher's pocket.

FM Yes, that's correct.

BF Thank you for the presentation. I was curious to know more since this came up at the last board meeting. If I'm hearing correctly, we couldn't raise money for animal care with the sustaining fund. JT, I'd love to hear about the way in which teachers think about the animals and how they incorporate them into the campus.

JT I think that's unique to every Waldorf school. The animals are a part of the Desert Marigold fabric. It really depends on each teacher and how they choose to interact with the animals. Some years we've interacted with the animals; some years we haven't. Bringing chicks into a classroom is a big deal. It can be disruptive. It can be valuable as well. I think the animals do provide character for the campus. They help relieve a certain stress in the children. Teachers were previously in charge of the animals. We took shifts and came in on the weekends. We'd take the animals for a walk. Those goats are strong. It's good for the kids, but it really depends on the teacher and their objectives.

BF That's helpful. Thank you.

DM You mentioned chickens. What age do chickens age out of the coop?

07.13.22 Approved

MK It's usually 4-6 years.

DM Are the horses helping with any mowing?

MK That was a discussion with Hector. We might be training them for plowing.

DM Thank you, JT, for sharing about animal husbandry.

NG Our garden is part of our curriculum. Is that a part of our budget? If so, how do we make animals a part of our budget?

FM The garden is a part of our curriculum. Some teachers use it depending on the grade level, time of year, etc. The school hasn't paid for any seed. We pay for repairs. Gilbert High has a full agro program and so does Coolidge. I was an Assistant Principal at both. No school budget money goes to those programs. It's all fundraising from students and community.

KK It's state money that we cannot use on our animals, but we can still do fundraisers. We need to be clear and transparent.

DG If they were therapy animals, could that be an option? Are there grants?

MM I don't think you can offer therapy without a clinician.

DF We are a tiny animal rescue. Maybe there's a grant for animal rescues. Has anyone ever tried that?

BF There's a school close by that has an equine license, but those are tough to get. I think this is more of a technical issue. I don't think we can use sustaining funds for animal care as a state entity. From my perspective, we need to have Monique or Jessica come up with a plan.

KK They cannot be a line item in our budget.

DM Sustaining funds is fundraising not state funds. We decide where those funds go. Discussed equine therapy and rescue options.

NG I can work on this with MK.

MM Do we own the animals? Do we have liability?

KK I'm not entirely sure.

FM I don't know if there's a lien on them.

MM I'm curious where we land in a liability stance.

MK None of these animals have to be registered like a pet, so there's no signing over or anything like that.

MM Thank you. That's helpful.

FM I know the liability is on us if an animal bit someone, not that that's happened.

07.13.22 Approved

KK Okay, so NG will look into other areas to get funding.

### **CONTINUING BUSINESS/OPEN ISSUES**

#### Approval of Meeting Minutes

KK moved to approve the 06/01/22 Meeting Minutes. DF second. No further discussion. Votes in favor: KK, DF, JT, DM, AS, MM, BF. Abstain: NG. **Motion passes.**

#### Board Survey Update

DF I have not had time to work on this as I was doing solo parenting. I hope to work on it this week.

DM We need to label and update the verbiage. I think we can get that done by the next meeting. Remind me when that is.

KK We're scheduled for 7/20, but we need to change that due to the budget deadline.

KK moved to change our 7/20 board meeting to 7/13 to accommodate for a vote on the budget. DF second. No further discussion. Unanimous in favor: KK, DF, AS, DM, NG, MM, NG, JT. **Motion passes.**

DM To have everyone approve it by the 7/13, when would you like it done?

DF Maybe 5 days.

DM I'll aim for 7/6.

#### 2022-23 Development Proposal Update

BF The 3 big changes are softening some of the language on fundraising as well as approval from the board, and the calendar is fully fleshed out. Thank you to MK and Laura for helping us with that. I'm still unclear about some of the rules regarding fundraising.

SM Thanks for the update. I want to add that I've been discussing some changes around the verbiage regarding teacher retention. We'll let you know when that gets updated.

DM Have you had discussion with faculty?

SM I've met with the LDC and individual staff members.

DM Was anyone left out?

SM I wasn't able to meet with all of them.

NG What was the percentage that we've collected before for material donations?

SM It's not a lot. I'm not sure if I'm at liberty to share in a public forum, but it's not a lot.

NG So this number \$1500 includes materials and class trips?

07.13.22 Approved

SM Not class trips. We're hoping tax credits will go toward that.

NG Based on our previous conversation, we have animals and need to fundraise for them, so we should have those on the calendar, right?

SM It was offered to have animal care put fundraisers on the calendar, but it was declined.

MK We handed over the Parent Council calendar but not the animal care calendar.

SM I'm sorry. I don't remember that discussion.

BF I think this was a broader problem because it's nebulous on its own, but I think those animal care fundraisers should definitely be added to the calendar.

NG For Parent Council they have Winter Market and Spring Faire.

MK There's class bake sales as well.

NG Will teacher training be covered by Parent Council or will it be in our budget?

SM I think that's a FM question.

NG When animal care decides on fundraisers, they can add that to the calendar, right?

SM They'll need to be well timed, but yes.

NG Offered an idea regarding pulling \$50 from the \$1500 for animal care.

SM The plan is to cover our main three priorities, and animal care isn't on that list that was put together through a lot of discussion.

BF These are important priorities. I just want to get clear whether or not it's the board's concern to raise money for the animals. I think it's a technical question.

NG I don't think the board needs to be responsible.

BF, DM, KK, FM, SM, and MM discussed getting clarity with Aspire, defining responsibility, and the fundraising calendar.

JT I want to recognize what SM said earlier. There is a pedagogical question regarding the animals. Polling the teachers might help. If we're all behind it, then great. We want to get a collaboration behind that. Building consensus would help.

BF moved to approve the third section as written with the amendment to add animal care fundraisers to the calendar at a later date. DF second. The following discussion took place:

DM What would be sufficient for the pedagogical approach?

JT I'd just like to hear what the teachers think—what their position is.

BF Offered to email teachers and check in regarding faculty and staff's opinion.

07.13.22 Approved

FM what is the question we're asking?

JT What is your interpretation of the animals as it fits into the pedagogy?

FM But now it's an open-ended question. Do you believe utilizing the animals in Waldorf curriculum is helpful is a different question.

MK My suggestion is to have the presentation of the animals as well.

AS Suggested sending over the slide deck with the question as teachers are busy with training.

MM The intention is wise and good, but I'm concerned we're making this polarizing. What happens if we land on teachers don't care and we end up losing our animals? I don't think we have to choose. We can fundraise for many things.

SM and BF discuss teacher reaction further.

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

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### Budget

AS moved to approve the Proposed Budget for fiscal year 2023. DF seconded. No further discussion. Votes in Favor: KK, AS, MM, DF, BF, NG, DM, JT. **Motion passes.**

## **PROPOSED MOTIONS**

KK moved to approve the roof repair for the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and high school science rooms for \$13,930 per the quote received from FM. MM Seconded. No further discussion. Votes in favor: KK, DF, AS, NG, JT, MM, BF. Abstain: DM. **Motion passes.**

KK moved to approve the air conditioner replacement for 5th grade for \$8,896 per the quote we received from FM. MM seconded. No further discussion. Votes in favor: KK, DF, AS, NG, JT, MM, BF. Abstain: DM. **Motion passes.**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

KK 07/13 is our next board meeting at 6:30pm via Zoom.

KK moved to adjourn the 06/15/22 board meeting. DF second. No further discussion. Unanimous vote in favor: KK, AS, JT, DM, NG, BF, MM, DF. **Motion passes.**

## **CLOSING VERSE**

AS read the closing verse.

07.13.22 Approved

Meeting was adjourned at 8:50pm.

Prepared by AS on 06.15.2022.