

MINUTES
VSWEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2021
VIA [Zoom](#)

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Gregory Schneider (GS) – President

John Tanner (JT)

April Sauer (AS) – Secretary

Danielle Martinez (DM)

Dan Franks (DF) – Treasurer

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

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

GUESTS

Invitees of the Board:

Frank Mirizio (FM)

Priscilla Garza (PG)

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

- Michelle Kratzer
- Megan Young
- Melissa
- Barb Cunningham
- Colleen Pope

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- WS
- Tammy
- Kim Baker
- Jill Thomas
- Larry G
- Laura Heaney
- Deb
- JJ
- Nellie Grossenbacher
- Harper Rose
- Melonee Crouse
- Debbie Allen
- Sarah Baize
- Ms. Falconburg
- Heather Sullivan
- Helena Moriarty
- Becky King
- Adeline Carrera

OPENING VERSE / INTRODUCTIONS

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

The Board members introduced themselves along with FM, Executive Director.

MEMORIAL

AS I wanted to share some words about a former board member, Chris Allen. He passed away on January 6. He was a wonderful human being. He was husband to Debbie Allen, who is an EC teacher, and he was father to Nathaniel Allen, who served on the board as well. I had a child in Debbie's class while she was teaching in the grades and again when she moved to EC. I got to know Chris as Debbie's spouse through class activities. I also got to see him in action as a board member where he served our school so well. You may have known him as our resident magician who performed at Winter Faire. He was the kind of man who when he spoke to you, he made you feel special and important and like he wanted all the best things for you. I got to attend the funeral services, which were so beautiful. Many family members spoke of Chris and how amazing he was. He was an artist, a musician, a composer, he was in the navy. He was a philosopher and a student of anthroposophy. He embodied the Core Principles of Waldorf. He

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had a sweet heart, and he served well. He was a beautiful soul, and he will be missed. So our hearts and thoughts are with the sweet Allen family at this time. We're thinking of you.

GS Shared his condolences for the Allen family as well.

BUDGET AND FINANCE

Fundraising

GS Let's get an update on fundraising from DM.

DM We have a zoom meeting schedule on Monday with Melissa, FM, and DF. She'll coordinate with us to have us share our thoughts and ideas.

GS Board members please share your ideas with DM and DF.

DM Financial stress is difficult on any relationship. We want to move forward.

GS The gap from the state and what we need is roughly \$2100 per student. We need to raise about 3-500k a year. Thanks to DM and DF for spearheading this.

Updates

PG Reviewed Profit and Loss Sheet. We are under charter intervention, so we have to report quarterly. ESG posted in December as a one time grant. ESSER was posted as well as a one time grant.

GS This highlights the gap we have. We have to get fundraisers up and running.

DM This is the first 6 months, so the next 6 months we'll be shy 155k?

PG Fiscal year ends in June, but yes, we will be short. FM and I met and have been discussing where we can save some money.

PG Reviewed Balance Sheet. Explained rolling back payroll for quarterly report to state.

GS Asked question regarding credit card.

PG Explained that the card is being used for monthly payments and some supply purchases.

DF Will work with MidFirst and Jessica to get access to credit card statements.

GS Any other questions on balance sheet? Anything else PG wants to share with us?

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PG Shared information regarding spreadsheet she shared with the board and has added some tabs based on questions from our last meeting.

GS Question regarding audit costs.

PG When annual financial report is sent into the state, they add it into the equalization payment. I can send you a copy and highlight that so you so you can see where it's at.

GS Is there any reason to seek another auditor or stay with Brett?

PG My suggestion is to stay with Brett. You just switched not that long ago. Brett knows our account and our history, and it helps the audit to go smoothly.

GS Last fiscal year the price for services was 13k. We paid a deposit early, and the rest later. The price is going up.

PG Brett has been very flexible with us and willing to work with us. There are other audit firms if you'd like to get some quotes and take a look.

GS It makes sense to stay with Brett based on the points you made. Brett is asking for an answer in February, so I'd like to take care of this now. It's a 4% increase and it's reimbursable from the state. We need to give someone authority to sign that quote. FM, is that something you'd be up for signing.

FM Yes, of course.

GS moved to give FM authority to sign the Brett Backlund CPA quote for audit services for fiscal year ending June 30, 2021 in the amount of \$14, 500. DF second. The following discussion occurred:

DM Who audits the auditor?

PG We don't know. It's a peer group. It's an auditor selected by the state. It's totally random.

DM How often does that happen, and do we get feedback?

PG I don't know, but I can find out and get back to you.

DM Thank you, I'd be curious to hear about that.

GS Any other discussion?

No further discussion. Vote unanimous in favor: GS, DF, JT, AS, DM. **Motion Passes.**

Enrollment Update

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GS Reviewed enrollment data. Started at 281, currently at 277.4, budgeted at 291. Explained monies received for kinder vs high school. Our ADM is 7 below which has a significant impact on our funding. That's why its important that we boost our enrollment numbers. It looks like every class could use more students apart from 2nd and 6th maybe. JT, please correct me if I'm wrong.

JT No, you are correct.

GS We need to increase students in classrooms. FM, you've taken some efforts to advance enrolment. Are there updates on that front?

FM We had 4 families with 10 kids who want to enroll. They're all Waldorf kids, but the problem is they can't be here until February which is after the 100th day. It wouldn't help us for this semester, but 10 kids wanting to come would be helpful for next year.

GS They are not in the state yet, and that prevents them from enrolling.

FM Yes, that's correct. Crystal is looking into that to double check.

GS I don't know how others feel about it, but growing our enrollment by ten for the next school year would help.

FM Crystal and the LDC are looking into it to see if we can bite the bullet for a half semester so we can increase our enrollment for next year. Some kids are HS, a K, 4, and an 8. They'd be here awhile with us.

DM Are they on the waiting list?

FM Yes.

DM Are we doing exit surveys?

FM Not sure.

AS Answered regarding information on the enrollment spreadsheet where we learn more about who left and why, including comments they wrote on their exit surveys.

Possible PPPL

GS Asked PG about PPPL options.

PG I don't think DMS qualifies for a second round. I had four people ask me. And my answer is no, but if you want to apply, then try it.

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FM PG, the losses that are expected for us to apply again, is that including the 400k we got in the first place? If we didn't get that we would've continued to have losses.

PG I'm not sure, which is why I said you might want to apply and see what happens. We booked it when we met the circumstances.

FM The other piece I'd add to that is that the myths and legends of monies that went out—not enough people claimed them. If we put in, we may still get it and get lucky and get it that way. I don't think it would hurt to apply. A roll of the dice may be worth it.

PG I agree. They may make exceptions. You never know.

GS Midfirst was our loan the first time around. DF, will you follow up and see about our process?

DF Sure. I need some financial statements to move forward on that.

PG Let me know what you need or have the banker contact me. Just let me know.

DM I would get clarification on the funds and the payback.

DF Definitely.

GS Worth finding out.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE

FM We've transitioned the whole school online. Getting the younger kids online has been tough. We've had some technical difficulties and had to call Fruth out. It has not been perfect, but it has been better each day. Teachers have been getting calls from parents with issues for Zoom.

FM We found out the window for test dates for AZMerit. March 29th-April 9th should be testing. They made a rule that will be a challenge. All testing has to be in person. Problem one, we don't have enough computers. We've relied on students using their own computers, and for this testing it has to be a school computer. Problem two, what do we do with a parent who says, "No, I'm not sending my kid to school." How do we deal with that? Is that okay, or not okay? Problem three, in a class with 26 kids, we can't space them according to social distancing rules. We'll have to split them and use assistants to proctor. I'm hoping by Spring Break things will change.

DF Asked about splitting up the test over a few days.

FM We could do that. Trying to figure it out. We also have families with several kids in different classes.

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AS Asked for clarification on the dates.

DM Is there an option to have parents sign off on time spent doing school?

FM We want them online, but we're trying to work with families. Spoke regarding attendance and working on getting kids into classes. Parents and teachers are working on what's best for kids.

DM Regarding testing, is there an exemption?

FM We got an answer back after asking if we switch to paper, and the state said no. We must use computers.

DM Have we spoken to other Waldorf schools about that?

FM I've reached out to the other 4 Waldorf schools in AZ. We've discussed several things, but we need to talk about this too. We need to work out the computer issue. I'd like to have a plan in place by the time we get back from Spring Break. We've reached out to George Gervin if we can use their computer lab, and unfortunately, we have the same testing dates.

FM The ESSER funds are the grant to get campuses in shape for COVID. We used those funds for a custodian. Those funds are exhausted now. Every day we keep him, that comes out of our regular budget. That's about \$2500/month. If you think it's worth it, okay, but I want you to understand how that affects the budget.

GS Can we pause that while we've virtual?

FM That's a good suggestion. I could probably get Hector or Steve to do that while kids are virtual.

GS That brings into sharp relief the tension between doing what we can to be safe and the funding we have. I think for now, let's see if we can pause it and check if Hector and Steve can do it. I'm hoping some fundraising will help offset some of these expenses.

PG I'll be at school tomorrow, and we can look at those invoices and discuss it and get on the phone with them.

JT If we put it on pause, do we have to rewrite our mitigation plan?

GS That's a good question. Let me look it up.

FM If someone is doing it, it's still getting done, so it shouldn't have to change.

GS Found the document.

DM Is that happening in all the rooms?

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FM No, just the on-site rooms and other rooms used by children.

DM How many rooms is that?

FM I think 4-5.

GS Mitigation Plan mentions cleaning rooms and bathrooms.

FM The night person is doing that.

GS If there's a way to pause and see where we are in a month or two that would be good. We've had relatively low cases/spread. I'd hate to give up a protection and find out it causes problems. But I don't think that's the case. If we can save the money through the year, that will be helpful.

FM I'll call tomorrow and see what we can do and explain our changed situation.

JT You still have a fair amount of adults coming in during the day. Just to be mindful of that. Maybe we need to cut back on the night crew. Just a thought.

FM The night person's job is to clean classrooms at the end of the day. Also offices and whatnot, but maybe that doesn't need to be such a long shift.

GS I think it's worth exploring all the options.

FM I'll talk with PG tomorrow and get back to you on the decision.

GS Anything else to share?

FM Talked with LDC and other schools regarding insurance. Trying to be proactive and get some ideas ahead of time on that. I have lots of meetings set up next week. A full staff meeting will happen. We have wonderful people! I've been in classrooms, and they treat the children great. We're very lucky.

COVID-19

GS Reviewed AZDHS benchmarks. Recommended Delivery Model: Virtual. AZ is generally coming down on number of cases. We'll see if that holds. It looks like we'll be in this virtual learning model at least for a few weeks. On January 11th, all faculty and staff became eligible to get a vaccine. FM made ID cards. Two things on that front: one, board members are eligible, but we don't have vaccine cards. Can we take care of that?

FM Yes, Tami can take care of that. Just send in a photo.

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GS Two, is there a general consensus for staff to take the vaccine, or is there a resistance? Curious of where faculty and staff stand.

FM Seems like half and half. Half already signed up, half asked, "Is this mandatory?" It's not mandatory, but we want to make it accessible and easy for them.

JT DMS and Waldorf has been anti-vax in general, but this is another circumstance, so I'd have to do more research on that.

GS It's complicated.

DM This is personal, and we need to leave it up to families to choose.

AS Agreed. Also agreed with FM that we need to give our community information to make this easy and to access it. Perhaps a Parent Square post would be helpful.

COMMUNITY

GS Continually working on this. Would like to set up a Town Hall where parents can ask questions and get answers. I think we ought to plan for that. FM, if you're available for that? Are there board members who want to help?

FM Yes.

DM Yes.

AS I'll be an alternate if you need me.

GS Perhaps a Saturday would work.

FM If I could get the date in advance that would help.

GS How about 1/30?

FM What would you want to use as the facility?

GS I think we'd do Zoom and just organize it. We could go for about an hour about 10am.

Discussion regarding date/time.

GS February 6th 3pm?

DM/FM Yes.

GS If we have too many people, we'll schedule another one. We'll take open questions and have a dialogue. In the meantime, DF proposed a dynamic FAQ.

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DF Yes, it's an idea board. Everyone can write a question, the community votes, and you answer the highest rated questions. You need a moderator.

FM We could have people send in questions ahead of time.

GS I'm skeptical of my ability to get that up and running quickly.

DF Well, maybe for next time. There are some programs that are cheap that we may want to look into.

BOARD PROCEDURES

Approval of Minutes

GS Moved to approve the 01/06/21 regular meeting minutes. DM second. No further discussion. Unanimous vote in favor: GS, DF, JT, AS, DM. **Motion passes.**

Charter Review

GS Those are due tomorrow. I submitted today the last piece of it regarding the property we added. I think the only other piece was a small issue regarding enrollment.

FM We've taken care of that. Crystal changed it and submitted it to Mary. I reached out to Mary to see what the next steps are as well.

Board Calendar

AS Reviewed the calendar and updates. Mentioned board education and our desire to hear from Liz Beaven since school started. Suggested we ask Liz Beaven to come to our 2/3 meeting to speak with us. I will ask her to come to that meeting if there are no objections. Invited board members and FM to specify any specific topics they'd like to hear about if any.

GS I did look through the cover page regarding budgets, and I do need quarterly reports for RSF from PG.

PG Do they want a quarter or 6th months? I sent July-December.

GS They want the 3 month window.

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Board Growth

GS Discussed our need for some more help. Asking board members as well as FM and PG to help find those who can apply and have the skills to help out. If you know of anyone, even those watching, who think they have answers or could help, please apply. You will need to attend 2 board meetings to apply. We could use the help. We appreciate all the segments of the community. We'd love to have outside expertise as well. If we could get some experts that would help. And applications are due soon—April 1st. Any other comments on board growth?

AS Shared some information regarding some action items for the board to help us grow. We'll be contacting faculty and staff as well as the community to ask for their assistance, to let them know what areas we need some support in. We'll be sending out a survey as well. We want you to know that we need you to help move our school forward, and you're important to us.

GS Moved to adjourn. DF second. No further discussion. Unanimous vote in favor: JT, GS, AS, DF, DM. **Motion passes.**

AS read the closing verse.

CLOSING VERSE

Meeting was adjourned at 8:20pm.

Prepared by AS on 01.20.2021.