

MINUTES
VSWEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, September 1, 2021
VIA [Zoom](#)

MEMBERS PRESENT:

April Sauer (AS) – Secretary

John Tanner (JT)

Dan Franks (DF) -- Treasurer

Danielle Martinez (DM)

Nellie Grossenbacher (NG)

Kerstin Kubina (KK)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Gregory Schneider

The 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:

- Laura Slayton-Garcia
- Griselda Pandura
- Scott Edwards

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- Amy Edwards
- JJ
- Amlan Banerjee
- Tammy
- Blayne Goodman
- Sami Rank
- Helena Moriarty
- Megan
- Deb
- Kim Baker

OPENING VERSE / INTRODUCTIONS

Meeting was called to order at 6:45pm. DM welcomed the public to the meeting, read the opening verse, and reviewed meeting procedures.

The Board members introduced themselves along with FM and MK.

DM Provided an overview of the agenda.

BUDGET AND FINANCE

Enrollment Update

FM It's been a rollercoaster of people leaving and people coming. We are at 284. We are budgeted at 287. It wasn't a mad rush to the door or out the door. We have upcoming tours of about 14 kids. The 40th day is important, so we're hoping to get more before then.

DM Are we doing anything for outreach?

FM Not now, but we did a lot over the summer. I'm getting a banner made for the high school, which I think will help.

DM Do we offer a shadow day for neighboring schools?

FM No, but I wouldn't say no. The issue with neighboring schools is you can only speak to the principal, and they don't have to do anything.

NG Do we advertisements in Waldorf Today?

FM We advertise for job openings, but not for students. Our website does quite a bit. There's a nice video with a tour and sound. It came about, I think, under Charlie, and it's a nice video.

NG Would we consider advertising on a broader scale?

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FM I would say if we wanted to advertise, it should be for the high school. Our grades are pretty full.

DM Any other questions for FM?

KK With the 40th day coming up fast, are we sending out a notification for parents to make sure families are there and on time?

FM Yes, I will make an announcement like I did last year, and families we're great. We didn't have any absences that day.

DM Just wanted to announce that Gregory Schneider is absent tonight.

Sustaining Fund Fundraising Update

DM Any questions about the invoice? I had a bit of sticker shock here.

AS I know that Melissa said that her price would go down if we had more volunteers. And we always show out in force when we need help.

FM Can we ask her to do a percentage? We don't mind paying higher if we make more.

KK I think she said that she doesn't do a lot with the tax credit, and I wonder if we took that off, if that would lower the price.

DM It would be nice to have a figure to say 'do it for this' and then we can get started. The sustaining fund in years past was just an ask, and we want to see more engagement. Would it be helpful to have a couple board members meet with her and then go from there?

FM I agree with that. I think you should do that.

KK I think even half is high, so I'm not the best person to say something about this.

FM What was the final number?

AS \$9600-24000 was her ask. Plus 10% if we do the gala.

DF Said she'd reduce her rate to \$75 per hour. Billed the first 20 hours at contract, then \$75 per hour. Shared other notes from Melissa's document.

DM How do we feel about that quote?

DF I think that seems reasonable. I think we need to define who will coordinate with her because whoever will do that will need to be cognizant of time.

FM I have no problem doing that, I just need to know is it \$9000 or 24000?

09.15.21 Approved

DF She didn't make that clear, and we need to check in with her. She said 20 hours up front, and everything else as needed. We probably need to go back to her and get some more information.

DM What was it? 20 hours at \$75?

DF Yes. I think it's on demand as needed. And what if she's under 20 hours? What is that billing like?

NG Maybe she has a 20 hour minimum.

DF That's probably what it is.

DM Do we agree that 20 hours at \$75 is agreeable?

DF Yes, I'm fine with that.

NG I agree.

KK I'd like to see what that first 20 hours buys us.

DM I think that's outlined in the specific duties.

DF Tax credit campaign, marketing materials, etc. But it doesn't show how many hours each thing will take.

DM We're asking her to do tax credit and sustaining fund. The gala is an afterthought. So we can get started on those first items and go from there.

DM moved to hire Melissa Sutton at 20 hours at her stated rate of \$75 to organize our sustaining campaign and tax credit support. NG second. The following discussion took place:

KK I think we need to clarify with her before we start. It mentions training and campaign rollout.

DF It says in October sustaining fund. Then the gala is at the end of the year. I think the tax credit campaign itself will be about 20 hours. So we need to be aware of that.

DM We'll also have members of the community to help out, so that will help.

DF I would make sure that she knows when we're running out of time. We need to communicate that as we go.

DM Any other input? JT, do you have a feeling one way or another?

JT At this moment, I'm not going to vote for this as our budget is tight. I think a lot of these things can be done internally. I can't in good conscience vote to pay her out of the school's budget.

DM Thank you, JT. Did we roll out any kind of tax credit requests last year or before?

FM Yes, we did ask over email and ParentSquare. After a while you feel bad because you just keep asking.

DM I certainly feel we could be more efficient if we went outside our community and got some help for that.

DF What's the tax credit amount for single?

DM \$200 for single \$400 for married.

DF How much participation did we have last year?

DM I think 40%.

FM It went down last year. I think due to Covid and that affected donations.

DF I think also the cognitive capacity to do it is an issue. In a Covid year, that's tough. We're in peak overwhelm. It was such a mess of a year. I think we should compare to another year.

FM I will tell you that I was able to get a list and handwrite a thank you, but again, I think maybe there were 20 families that gave a tax credit that goes to the general fund.

DF And that was last year. What was the previous year?

FM I'm not sure. I think we got \$6000 last year and the year before it was \$40 or \$50k, so Covid definitely affected things. There were no festivals or events, and kids were on screens. We didn't do anything to the campus, so I could see that's why it went down.

MK I can remember the 2019 Winter Faire, that's what the board did was walk around and talk about tax credits, and there weren't things to pay for like field trips so there's huge gap just for 2020 being crazy. The other thing is that I can remember 10/11 years ago, the class reps encouraging people also to pay toward the tax credits. If we do something, and you need Parent Council or class reps, educating one person in each class on that type of thing and then they can promote it, that has helped in the past.

DM Let's take a vote. This is for the tax credit and sustaining fund. If we can do that with her assistance, I think it's worth the effort.

Votes In favor: NG, DF, DM, AS. Opposed: JT, KK. **Motion passes.**

Audit Invoice

DM FM, Any reason why we wouldn't pay that?

09.15.21 Approved

FM Nope. Things are going well. I've been speaking with him and Monique, and things are going well. I feel good about it.

DF moved to approve the invoice for the audit by Brett Backlund for \$8500. KK second. No further discussion. Votes in favor: KK, DF, AS, JT, NG, DM. **Motion passes.**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Update

FM I sat down with someone today and was thinking about how the opening of school went. We are in the midst of two teachers leaving, who we love, and we have split views on masks/no masks, but without those issues, we really would have had a fantastic opening to school. I feel really, really good about it. Pick up is going well. I started things a bit early, opening the doors 10 minutes early, but kids stay in the car, and that helps so much. I wish I could say the same about the afternoon. I don't know why our pick up isn't going well. People aren't as patient. They're being rude to staff and other parents. Drop off is going really well. The other thing is we found a 6th grade teacher, Mary Stevenson. She is highly qualified by state law. She's getting her masters. She's currently a long term sub, so we'll have her starting October 2nd. I need to find a sub for three weeks. It's been challenging. I have an interview tomorrow morning for the 8th grade teacher Dr. Darian will be subbing for 8th grade until we find someone. We offered the job to someone we loved, but she's backing out of it because she cannot find a home. JT and Dr. Darian conducted the interview for 6th grade, and we feel comfortable with her. Believe it or not, we tried to sell her the Kaiser's house, and they looked into it, but it didn't work out for them.

DM We have the job posting out and available?

FM Yes, everywhere. And I have an interview tomorrow, so that's fantastic.

NG Is the fellow you're meeting tomorrow Waldorf trained?

FM Not a certificate, but he's been involved in Waldorf schools.

DM FM, you sent out the Covid-19 Policies. Is there anything we need to vote into place or adopt?

FM I know last year Christie made a plan and the board approved it, but I don't know if you have to do that this year. It's based on the previous plan and using Maricopa County Health Department guidelines.

AS Last year there were state mandates for a Mask Policy and Mitigation Plan. They had templates, had to be approved, and uploaded online by a certain date. Things are different this year, so I'm not sure we need to do anything.

09.15.21 Approved

JT I think it should be recognized; that would be responsible.

FM I'd hate for a parent to say they didn't have to follow it because the board didn't approve it.

DF moved to adopt the Covid-19 Policies for the 2021-2022 school year. KK second. No further discussion. Votes in Favor: DM, DF, KK, NG, JT, AS. **Motion passes.**

BOARD PROCEDURES

Email Protocols

DM Gregory has been doing the brunt of email responses, and that's a lot of work. It can take some time to get back to emails. Do we want to create an auto response? Standard business practice has been 5 days, but now with technology 48 hours is acceptable.

DF I think we should put a range in case we get difficult emails. Those take more time.

DM The auto responder could say, "We got your email, and we'll get back to you in this time frame."

NG I think it should be a response from an individual. I think our community needs that.

DM I wouldn't mind doing that, but I'm not sure I can respond when extensive research is required.

DF Do you think we could do an automated response—you've reached the right email, and a human will get back to you in this many days? That might give us some flexibility.

AS I love the idea of responding, "I'm a human, and I received your message." Previously, under Matt Walker, I was doing a lot of the email responses. The majority of them were informational requests. I've continued to do some of those, but I'm happy to do more. I'm attached to the Facebook page and answer questions there all the time. Last summer, one of the projects I worked on was getting the new website up and running with Laura Heaney and the LDC, so I feel very comfortable on the website and can access information easily to answer questions. So I'd be happy to do that.

JT I certainly back AS doing that, working with Gregory Schneider. I know things should be answered quickly. I have to thank Gregory for the work he's done. And you're a board officer as well, AS, so I would support that.

DF I think that's great. I don't have the time to jump into that.

DM AS, are you saying you'll do first responses to emails?

AS I'm happy to answer informational requests, but I don't think I'm available all the time to answer "I've received your email," but I like the idea of an automated response, but I have no idea how to do that.

09.15.21 Approved

DM So I'm hearing an auto response, maybe from the board or Gregory's email. AS will do informational, and we'll rely on Gregory to do the rest.

DF We could also add an autoresponder to the board email list so it wouldn't be tied to an individual email.

DM Any thoughts on when it should be a phone call versus an email?

AS I think that's up to the person sending the email. If the topic is complicated, the board member responding could add something to their email like "If you feel more comfortable talking to me, please give me a call."

FM Deb is the one who would know how to handle the auto response.

DM 3-5 days. Does that sound reasonable?

NG That seems like a fair timeline.

DF Deb, please reach out to me, and we'll work on that auto response.

DM Are we considering this procedural?

AS I think it's all very informal because it's constantly changing, but I think we could be better about communicating when it's too much, or when we can help. I often text Gregory if I can jump on an email or I'll see if he needs help or send him links that might help. I think that's something we could all do—check in and see how it's going and how we can help.

Board Education

DM Joan Treadaway was not able to attend tonight, but she did want to know what we wanted to learn about. Each topic could take about 15 minutes or more. She sent us a letter you all have access to.

AS I wrote down a list, but do you want us to share our ideas here or email them?

DM I think we need to decide priority of topics. For me it's how to incorporate Waldorf at home, but that may not be a topic you all are interested in. The first topic she proposed was what is Waldorf education, 9 year change, 12 year old change.

AS I think a lot of these topics would be great. There are many I've heard before and some that are familiar but go in a different direction—like temperaments and how the curriculum meets each one. That's a new angle, and I'd love to hear about that. I'd also love to hear about how Waldorf education has evolved in the last 20 years with the advent of Waldorf charters and how we can embrace that evolution as a community.

DM MK, what about book club?

09.15.21 Approved

MK We don't have one selected yet. We'll be speaking with Dr. Darian about some recommendations.

JT I love the Waldorf at home piece. If parents aren't supporting it at home, there's only so much we can do in the classroom. I think that would be a tremendous help.

DM I haven't heard much from the other teachers. Is there too much communication or too little?

FM Everyone's nervous about replacing the Kaisers. That's a big deal. The communication teachers have been getting is about masks, and those are get forwarded to me. The normalcy of students forgetting things or needing information is just fine.

DM I'm a little biased about the home piece, so I'd like to start with that and include Waldorf involvement, but if you could give me a running list that would be great.

AS Did you ask us to email you our topics?

DM Yes, or add it to the document.

AS Okay, I'll pass the board education document around again and add the topics we discussed tonight and then anyone else can add to it as well.

Community Engagement

MK NG and I didn't get a chance to speak, so sorry about that. Many of the events suggested by NG are events Parent Council organizes. But we are hoping to start up with community workdays, skating, involvement with others in the community. Parent Council still needs to schedule them, but we usually have 3-4 socials—square dance, smores night . . .

AS Clothing exchange?

MK Yes, and a book exchange. Sometimes the exchanges go along with a dinner or pie night, so we hope to get back to those with everything that's been going on. From the board, what I've asked for in the past is Parent Council can put those on. We have teams that love to do that stuff, and if you'd like to help, that's awesome. But we'd love to see you there. Be present. That means a lot to us.

DM Do we have any board members on subcommittees?

MK Yes, KK is on hands team, so yes. KK's been part of Parent Council for years now. Having those events is what we need to get back to at this point.

NG Do you want to start small and pick an event? I can support it in any way. A social is a great way to get people on campus and remember that we love this. Is there a place to start?

MK Right now, our next thing is the student lunch which is on Michaelmas, September 29th. That would be a good start to coordinate that. I know you helped last year, so that would help.

09.15.21 Approved

NG Do you need help coordinating or just working the day of?

MK Yes, we can use help coordinating.

DM Have you announced the next meeting?

MK No, we are still trying to find a secretary and a class rep lead.

NG I'm new. You said KK is in hands. What do they do?

KK Projects, volunteers, community work days.

NG Are you on Parent Council, or just there to help them?

KK Yes, I'm in parent council.

NG I usually throw my hat in the ring, so just let me know. I'm available.

MK Thank you.

DM DF, are you sending a proxy?

DF I'm not quite sure.

DM I know AS has been a parent council board rep.

MK I know I've seen a few board members there at one time. Is there a time when there's too many board members?

DF When there's four of us.

MK Is it if you don't have your board hat on?

DM As long as board business isn't discussed, it's fine.

Approval of Minutes

DF moved to approve the 08/18/21 meeting minutes. DM second. No further discussion. Votes in favor: AS, DM, DF, KK, NG. Abstain: JT. **Motion passes.**

DM A few announcements: town hall scheduled 9/20, board applications will be starting soon, and our next meeting is 9/18.

DM moved to adjourn tonight's meeting 9/1/2021 of the VSWEA, Inc. DF second. No further discussion. Unanimous vote in favor: JT, AS, DM, NG, DF, KK. **Motion passes.**

CLOSING VERSE

09.15.21 Approved

JT read the closing verse.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:08pm.

Prepared by AS on 09.01.2021.