

MINUTES
VSWEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2021
VIA [Zoom](#)

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Gregory Schneider (GS) – President

John Tanner (JT)

April Sauer (AS) – Secretary

Danielle Martinez (DM)

Dan Franks (DF) – Treasurer

Nellie Grossenbacher (NG)

Kerstin Kubina (KK)

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

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

GUESTS

Invitees of the Board:

Michelle Kratzer (MK)

Joan Treadaway (JDT)

Tom Lopez (TL)

Benjamin Yen-Yi Fong (BF)

Myriah Mhoon (MM)

Scott Edwards (SE)

Blayne Goodman (BG)

Nick Casura (NC)

Andrew Young (AY)

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

- Laura Heaney
- Vincent Slayton-Garcia
- Barb
- Nicole Goodman
- Sophie McCurley
- Heather Sullivan
- Sami Rank
- Amy Edwards
- Laura Slayton-Garcia
- WS
- Jimmy Wahbeh
- Helena Moriarty
- Roxana Elixavide
- Megan
- Classroom E PIHMA
- Rob Hart
- JJ
- David
- Deb

OPENING VERSE / INTRODUCTIONS

Meeting was called to order at 6:33pm. GS welcomed the public to the meeting, read the opening verse, and reviewed meeting procedures.

The Board members introduced themselves along with MK and the Board applicants. GS introduced JDT as well.

BOARD EDUCATION

Joan Treadaway Presentation

JDT What are festivals and how do they speak to our children? While travelling, she took a detour to see Pueblo North American Indian ruins. At the summer solstice, the sun shines in through windows to the kiva, and it was their calendar. This festival connected them to their land, cosmos, planting, water, and so on. The ancient people had their festivals to the summer solstice light coming though.

In England, she drove through the moors at dusk. She saw Stone Henge—a moment you never forget. It was a place where ancient people came together to celebrate. Through the centuries we have this heritage of festivals that give us history of how we are connected to the land, each other, planting, harvesting. That's what those festivals were about. Those experiences help us understand why Waldorf celebrates festivals. Festivals tie people together. Unity comes through these celebrations. That's what stands behind the observance of the festivals—the passing seasons, the dancing, the food, the coming together to find something greater than ourselves.

The festival life brings living examples to the children and unites us as a community of the mystery and magic of passing seasons. It's the joy of the predictability of the seasons and festivals. It's anticipation. We all know that Thanksgiving is around the corner and Christmas is

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nearby. But how many of us feel a relationship to the Earth? We know that children live in rhythms. They're health giving. Children need to go to bed and eat at the same time every day.

Her mentor Miriam Wickfield told her about festivals in England. She said that rhythm is so essential for children—daily, weekly rhythms. And there are monthly rhythms of the moon and stars. She said for children not to have their meals at the same time every day is for us like the sun didn't come up.

We're in October. The leaves are changing and falling. The air is cooling. Falling stars came in August, and she watched them with my daughter. These are telling signs that the seasons are changing, fall is here, and darkness is arriving. Michelmas is a tale of darkness. The 2nd and 3rd graders build a huge dragon and tell a story to the whole school. They're bringing courage to face this darkness through overcoming the dragon. For adults it doesn't sound like much, but for the child it makes their hearts sing. It's a festival of courage.

Then we come to Martinmas with the Lantern Walk in November. The tale of St. Martin is a story of compassion. Children make lanterns with a candle. Accompanied by their parents they sing a song and carry a small light. Together, we make a strong light. At the end of the walk is a huge fire where the story of St. Martin is told. She worked in Boulder, Colorado, and they walked up trails for the Lantern Walk in the snow. Walking up the path of the foothills and seeing the pinpricks of light into the darkness is an image they hold in their hearts. Her daughter commented about the Lantern Walk when they moved, and she gathered some families to do their own. Her children remember that to this day—that image of bringing that light into the darkness.

Then we have Advent and Hannukah. I will talk about the Advent Garden, which is one of the well-known festivals in the Waldorf movement. It's an evergreen double spiral. The child walks the spiral, lights their candle from the center, and places it in the spiral. It takes courage to walk that spiral alone. Sometimes as you watch that child you get a real picture of who they are. Getting their own light and joining with the community in a celebration of light is an inner experience.

Dr. Karl Kuonig came to Scotland. He founded the Camphill movement. He saw the spiral and dedicated his life to bringing Waldorf education to others. He knew that this was significant for the child. There are so many more festivals that mark the seasons and give us and our children an assurance that life goes on. We're in the right place at the right time. The rhythm of this expectation is an inner recognition of this joy of the festivals. What she has to say is that having lived with the festivals for 50 years, don't we need them now more than ever? We stepped into isolation in the pandemic. Nothing was the same as it was before. Our children suffered, and they're still suffering. We lost a sense of time as life closed down. We still live in that uncertainty. Children lost the comfort and safety of predictability. This is what Waldorf brings—predictability. Not just the festivals but every day in the rhythms of the classroom. She believes it was a collective trauma. The life-giving daily routines of Waldorf education can help with that, bringing the assurance that life goes on.

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She would like to offer the possibility to mentor a festival committee to Desert Marigold to continue the work of the festivals. Teachers are overwhelmed. It's a big job and there's so much that we can do to help children to understand the deeper meaning of these festivals.

Thank you for that brief moment of living in a way of the festivals of the year.

GS Thank you so much, JDT. We're very lucky to have you, and I'm sure someone will reach out to you soon to take you up on that offer.

BUDGET AND FINANCE

Enrollment Update

GS 293 ADM right now which is over or budget of 286. We're still having tours and applicants. The grades are mostly full, so we're doing well.

Financial Update

GS Shared his screen to show the July-October 2021 profit and loss. Total income 1.1 million. Total expenses are just under a million. Operating income of 192k. Net income of 141k so very solid. Shared his screen to show the October 2021 Balance Sheet. 2.1 million of total assets. Total liability 1.4 million plus our income is 2.7 million. Total assets 2.6 million.

DM I have a question for MK. Did you get the report you were looking for?

MK We did get the budget, but it goes back to 2018, so it's a bit confusing. I think AS was looking into that.

AS Yes, I emailed Monique and said that you needed a report similar to what the board receives, but I'll follow up.

BOARD PROCEDURES

Approval of Minutes

GS moved to approve the 11/03/21 Meeting Minutes. NG second. No further discussion. Unanimous vote in favor: GS, AS, DM, DF, KK, NG, JT. **Motion passes.**

Date for Town Hall

GS Frank sent some dates for us to consider: Monday, 12/6 or 12/13.

DM I'd like to see some other dates. I'm not available. The last one was held on a Monday.

KK We're not going to make everyone happy.

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GS I'll ask for some other dates that aren't Monday, and maybe board officers can figure that out off screen.

MK Can we make sure it doesn't interfere with parent council meetings and winter faire planning meetings?

GS I'll pass that along. Thanks, MK.

Board Applicant Interview

GS BF, I'm sorry I took so long to get you into the meeting. I'm sure that was my fault. So this interview portion is up to the board members to ask what they'd like.

AS What service have you provided already at DMS that you are most proud of?

AY I was able to help a lot with the Medieval Games with set up and cooking. My family dressed up. I try to volunteer at a lot of events. I just served at the Halloween Carnival and try to help my children enjoy it.

BF My favorite service is at Winter Faire. I usually do parking in the morning and various booths. I also miss volunteering in the garden.

BG I've helped my wife with the service she does at the school, so it's a bit more indirect. Helping to build the dragon was a big one. But mostly I help my wife with the work she's doing.

MM I loved my time on the hiring committee that helped to hire Frank. There were a lot of deep dive conversations, and we had some great candidates. At Winter Faire, I was told to dress up as the Angel and I was not expecting that, but I loved it.

NC I've helped out with some Winter Faires and other festivals. I did project management for set up and take down for Winter Faire. I like Michelmas with the dragon as well.

SE My family has designated me as the Michalemas design director for the kid's costumes. I haven't had a lot of time to help at DMS. But at other schools I've been able to help with science experiments and internships. But this is why I want to be on the board to help in other ways because I'm booked during the day.

TL I helped last year with the Winter Garden. I helped with the 1st and 2nd grade tea. It was nice to talk to the parents and children and get to know them

DF If you are not elected, will the areas you highlighted that had the greatest need, will you still contribute or help in those areas? Maybe in an advisory fashion?

AY Yes, I've always been able to participate. I like to have a voice and be able to help. This last year, I've been able to be more active, so that's definitely something I've been interested in.

BF I guess I'd need to know more about what that would look like, but yes.

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BG Yes, I agree.

MM Yes for me as well. I've helped a couple times after the contemplation session, so I would be fully willing to help whatever the staff and board needs.

NC Yes, as well. I like what JDT said, I want to support the children.

TL Yes, I've already given ideas for the 99 pledges. Also, Harbor Freight gives tools to schools. I would continue to give suggestions to the board

SE Consultation and education. I think I'd be wary to help with grants because I think people would want to know that I could help direct that money.

DF How many board members do you think the board should consist of?

AY I think it's quite a few right now. I like the diversity right now, but it's a lot of voices and that can bring difficulty when voting. The amount I think 7-9, but I like to keep it at an odd number.

BF I emailed the board about this, and I think 7. Meetings will be longer with a big board. There's more likelihood for consensus with a small group. Larger boards tend to become advisory, and we need to be an executive board. So I think a small board and 7.

BG I think the number 9 stuck in my head. I think you have some good applicants with lots of different backgrounds. I think the meetings can still be efficient with 9.

MM I would say as long as the board is driven by good governance following by-laws, I feel comfortable with a large board. As far as time management, that can be done with leadership.

NC I think 9 would be a great number, but between 9-11. We are a nation with a bunch of diverse people with different skills. I think we can make decisions quickly. Having that odd number is important.

SE I think I'm more focused on what people can bring to the table. I think the board needs to be reflective about what they need. Long meetings can be mitigated. Just have the board do their homework before they come to the meeting.

TL We need to look at the by-laws, and they say 11. If we want to change that number, we need to change that in the future. I think a good number would be number 9.

KK I would like to hear from all applicants in reverse alphabetical order. I would love to hear about a time that you were part of a team where did not get what you felt what was the right decision and still had to act as part of the team. How did you handle that? How did you support your team members?

TL That happened to me a lot in retail. You have to agree to those terms. When I worked with Best Buy the team wasn't up to par. When I went in, I met a lot of resistance. The easiest way that I have found through the years is explaining the whys to people. It's not me who's asking

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you to change, it's the company, and this is why they're asking. Then I talk to people individually. You have to do what Shrek did in the movie and peel the layers of the onion.

SE First of all, great question. Early in my academic/clinical career, I created an initiative with two departments. I needed to hand control over to one of the teams because it was the right thing to do for the hospital. In time, I was elected to the chair position of it, but what's important is to keep your eye on the ball.

MM When I was a new executive director and new mom, I brought forward a 'bring your baby to work' policy, and they squashed it. I had to make that choice that it wasn't personal, it was policy. I had to champion being squashed but still realizing that they didn't hate me, they supported me, but it was their preference to say no. And to this day, I have great relationships with these people. I am a believer that choices are not personal, they're professional. It's not a personal hit, it's a choice of how one wants to run their agency.

NC As a project manager I asked for a third-party vendor to help us and they refused to put the money forward. It put us behind. Our own engineers worked overtime to make it work for time and budget.

BG 10 years ago, the construction market was dry; not much funding. We bid a job with low margins. I had a team of 20 people. Spent five years and didn't make a whole lot of money, but the moral of the story is we didn't lose any people on the job. We used that project to spring forward.

BF I teach at the honors college at ASU. Faculty chooses curriculum, and I'm usually in the minority on those votes, and they affect me. As wrong as I might think they are at the time, I believe in democratic governance and supporting the will of the majority. Those details can be worked through, and we're stronger for having a divergence of opinions.

AY The company I work for, they contract my department out to help with communications. Our department has to work on that and be flexible with their requirements. It happens on a regular basis. Last year, I had to find efficiencies to find a better way to communicate between systems because of Covid. I designed a training guide and offered trainings. Corporate approved it, everything was on the up and up, but when it came to the corporate logistics, they didn't think it was necessary. It was upsetting, but you work with what you can get it. I still worked to help others communicate and worked around things to better things even though the whole idea was shot down. It'll work out so long as you keep up the perseverance.

DF What's a way your professional peers would say that you could improve in your role of an organization you're active in?

TL That I do too much of the work. That I don't always delegate right to make sure the job gets done. I've been told, "You don't have to do all the work. But you do the work to make sure it's done right." I have to backpedal, delegate, and check back in to see if they did it right.

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SE My colleagues would say that I could do better in the patience department in terms of the process unfolding. I tend to go pretty hard at things we want to get. I struggle with that. I try to temper that by bringing other people in.

NC That I like to be too much of a perfectionist. For the command center, I did the work myself without sleep for 21 hours.

MM My staff is super annoyed that I destruct because I like to over obsess. If I ask, "why do you do this?" and they say, "we always do it that way," that's not okay with me. We need to follow rhyme and reason. I can see how that would be annoying to have someone who's super reflective of what you're doing.

BG I think doing too much. Delegation is hard for me. It's a common theme here.

BF Everyone has colleagues that really like them, by the way. I think I'm open with my opinions, and I could probably afford not to give them so much.

AY I'm constantly training new folks, and I'm probably too detailed. It doesn't always translate to everyone. I want everyone to have the information and details they need. There are times when it can be a little too much and I need to dial it back.

DM Can any of our applicants name one of our objectives from our by-laws?

MM You got me. I cannot.

GS DM, I'm not sure I can answer that successfully.

DM There's an A, B, C, and D.

TL I think I'm paraphrasing but one speaks to the community as encouraging Waldorf education throughout the community as well as others.

DM Thank you, Tom.

GS Judging by the awkward silence from Teacher DM's question, I think we're done.

Officer Elections

GS So we are going to first do the election of board officers, and then we'll move on. One person has put their name forward as president, and that is KK.

GS moved to elect KK as Board President of Valley of the Sun Waldorf Education Association. DM/DF Seconded. No further discussion. Unanimous vote in favor: GS, JT, AS, DM, NG, DF, KK. **Motion passes.**

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GS moved to reelect AS as Board Secretary. DF second. No further discussion. Unanimous vote in favor: GS, JT, AS, DM, NG, DF, KK. **Motion passes.**

Move to reelect DF as Board Treasurer. AS second. No further discussion. Unanimous vote in favor: GS, JT, AS, DM, NG, DF, KK. **Motion passes.**

Board Member Elections

GS I have emailed ballots to the board. Once you received them go ahead and cast your ballot. We have everyone's response but one. I'll give it a second. I forgot that JT's time is up, and we need to have a separate vote to keep him on the board.

GS moved to reelect JT as a regular board member for another one-year term. NG second. No further discussion. Votes in Favor: GS, AS, DF, KK, NG, DM. Abstain: JT. **Motion passes.**

GS AY, I'm sorry, but you were not elected to the board with a vote of 4:3. BF, congratulations you were elected to the board 4:3. BG, I'm sorry 5:2. MM, congrats 4:3. NC, sorry 5:2. SE, congrats. You were elected by 4:3. Sergio Elixavide, my apologies 5:2. TL, apologies 5:2. So since the three new board members are lower than our margin of eleven, we don't need to do a second round of voting. Congrats to our new board members; you've got your work cut out for you.

GS moved to accept the results of votes cast for board members this evening. DF second. No further discussion. Unanimous vote in favor: GS, AS, DF, KK, NG, DM, JT. **Motion passes.**

GS shared the voting results.

Votes for AY: NG No, KK Yes, AS Yes, DF Yes, DM No, GS No, JT No.

Votes for BF: JT No, GS Yes, DM No, DF Yes, AS Yes, KK Yes, NG No.

Votes for BG: NG Yes, KK No, AS No, DF No, DM Yes, GS No, JT No.

Votes for MM: JT No, GS Yes, DM No, DF Yes, AS Yes, KK Yes, NG No.

Votes for NC: NG Yes, KK No, AS No, DF No, DM Yes, GS No, JT No.

Votes for SE: JT No, GS Yes, DM Yes, DF Yes, AS No, KK No, NG Yes.

Votes for Sergio Elixavide: NG Yes, KK No, AS No, DF No, DM Yes, GS No, JT No.

Votes for TL: JT No, GS No, DM Yes, DF No, AS No, KK No, NG Yes.

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Departing Board President Statement

GS I want to give my thanks and gratitude of everything we have done in the last three years I have been on the board, but specifically in the last year and half. This is what we've done. We fixed the school's finances with the protection loan. We are in the black. We repaired our relationship with RSF. They call us an A+ relationship. We survived a five-year interval review with the charter at the same time as we had turn over with our Executive Director. We hired an Executive Director, Frank Mirizio. I can't thank all of you enough who served on that committee and spent so much time on that work. Especially AS who lead that effort. And MM, I know you served on that as well. Thank you. We have managed Covid. We have remained civil to one another. By and large we have avoided chaotic board meetings, and we have kept our school open. We have approved all kinds of projects with ESSER money. We have a security fence, we have adult bathrooms, and we're rebuilding the woodshop. These are things that are possible because of the work we've done. We've given our teachers raises. We've approved hiring of a pedagogical director. We've got cheaper and better insurance for our staff. We have a choir director. We did the contemplation exercise, and we've made changes based on that work. We started Town Halls again, and by all accounts those are appreciated and well received. Our board membership has been stable. We have done that by working together. We've expanded our membership. So I really can't thank each of you enough for your time and letting me lead you through this past year. It's been an honor, and I will be available to you, old and new members. And congratulations to the new board members.

DM Thank you, GS.

JT I just want to thank you for the last three years. I've been at the school a long time, and those were some of the most dangerous and difficult years we've ever experienced, and I really appreciate your keeping a level head during very volatile times and making very fair decisions without becoming angry or reactive. I've learned a lot from you, and I really appreciate that. I want to thank you on behalf of the school and the faculty for guiding us through a very difficult time. We wish you the very best, and I can't thank you enough for your service.

GS Thank you, JT. That means the world to me.

GS moved to adjourn tonight's meeting. NG second. No further discussion. Unanimous vote in favor: GS, JT, AS, DM, NG, DF, KK. **Motion passes.**

CLOSING VERSE

AS read the closing verse.

GS Thank you, everyone. Goodnight.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:17pm.

Prepared by AS on 11.17.2021.