

MINUTES
VSWEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 01, 2022
VIA [Zoom](#)

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Kerstin Kubina (KK)—President
Dan Franks (DF)—Treasurer
April Sauer (AS)—Secretary
John Tanner (JT)

Danielle Martinez (DM)
Ben Fong (BF)
Myriah Mhoon (MM)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Gregory Schneider, Nellie Grossenbacher, 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:

Morgan Davis
JJ
Kelsey Orosz and William Dyer
H
Kristen
deb
Heather Sullivan
Barb Cunningham
Laura Heaney
Mike

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 SM.

06.15.22 Approved

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE

FM Lots of good news since we last met. The ceremonies from Rainbow Bridge to Rose Ceremony and 8th grade promotion and high school graduation were great. Good attendance; good desserts from a parent who owns a bakery. Conducted mold testing on classrooms 5/6/7/8/farmhouse. Next test will be two years from now. Bathroom is underway. Still waiting on permits for the woodshop. 5th grade AC went kaput. We'll need to buy a new AC. We need to replace some roofs.

6:40pm Myriah Mhoon joined the meeting.

FM The DEI program has been selected. We're happy with the service we'll get. It's WestEd, and they do trainings nationally. We are prepared to move forward to have that training with our teachers before school starts. We eventually want to do some training with our students too. We have 308 enrolled for next year. If everyone gets their paperwork in, we'll be a 320. We budgeted at 300.

AS Thanked FM for his thorough report and giving some details on the new staff members. And there was lots of good news, so thank you.

FM Shared some details about the new staff members.

DM Did we research the AWSNA's DEI?

FM He spoke with Joan about it, and she didn't say anything about it. We had six companies and narrowed it down to two. Took a good long time to make this decision and wanted someone who has multiple experiences with schools.

DM So you answered my question. It's a no.

CONTINUING BUSINESS/OPEN ISSUES

Approval of Meeting Minutes

KK moved to approve the 05/18/22 Meeting Minutes. DM second. No further discussion. Unanimous vote in favor: KK, DF, JT, DM, AS, MM, BF. **Motion passes.**

Board Survey/Executive Director Questions Review

KK Everyone had access to the survey. Does anyone have any thoughts to share?

FM I thought it was very thorough with good questions, but some seemed redundant. Does it have to be this long?

DF Yeah, I was tightening up some of the questions. I just haven't had a chance to get together with DM.

KK I thought it was well put together. It's long, but I think it's thoughtful. I liked that they're agree/disagree. I think that's helpful. Also, leaving some where people could leave their personal thoughts. I think when referring to Desert Marigold or DMS, I think we need to choose one and stick with it. Same thing with Executive Director versus Mr. Mirizio.

06.15.22 Approved

AS I sent out grammar comments, so you're not alone. I did add substantive comments as well.

DM I did a lot of that on my phone, but thank you for those comments.

KK Some questions seemed duplicative. Shared some comments.

DF I agree.

DM There was one that was about us as board members and another was about us outside of board meetings.

DF I didn't add everyone to that document due to open meeting law. The other thing is I thought we should switch the order because everyone will have opinions about the executive director but maybe not the board. I don't want them to think it's only a survey about the board.

DM Good adds.

KK Any other thoughts? Okay, great.

2022-23 Development Proposal

KK We've asked our guest SM to join us and share thoughts with us. BF will be sharing some thoughts as well.

BF I put the updated plan into the meeting documents folder so everyone can take a look. The plan highlights three main priorities: retaining teachers, extending the day by adding programming, and building things. We have sporadic fundraising right now, and it's usually for specific purpose. Most of the fundraising goes to Parent Council, with the exception of class-specific fundraisers, so what we're proposing to do is streamline fundraising, so it would go to a sustaining fund that would go to unrestricted funds. That way when an AC goes out, we have money we can use for that. Shared goals and a calendar. SM will be helping with stewardship, and MM and I will be working on grants.

DF I love how well thought out this is. I'm grateful that we're looking to lessen the cognitive load on parents.

KK I like the structure and regularization around it, but I do have some questions regarding Parent Council since they've done a lot of fundraising. I like that the community gets to be a part of the fundraising. I'm wondering how we can continue those traditions of Parent Council fundraising.

BF On one hand, we think it's important to reduce the cognitive load on parents so the asks are regular. I like that this is upfront and makes it very clear how much we need from the start. The other component is that we want room for spontaneity for Parent Council to exercise its autonomy. I'm hoping we can find some balance there. We want to ensure there is fundraising that goes specifically to the school, like a sustaining fund. The hope is to focus on that and have other fundraising orbiting around that.

DF Does the proposal talk about who has the voices in how the sustaining fund is allocated?

06.15.22 Approved

SM We're not asking that Parent Council gives their funds to the sustaining fund. They still have control over their fundraising like Winter Faire. We're trying to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars that would be allocated at the school's discretion.

DF Regarding the 2k per year per kid, the schools here that are Steiner, that's about what you pay on top of what you pay for the school. It does cost more to run a school that way.

SM That's really what we're doing here. Initially it was \$1500 per kid.

MM BF, I disagree with your language of contradiction. I feel like this is an addition to what already exists. It doesn't take away from any momentum we already have. Teacher retention and Waldorf programming are very different from things Parent Council is funding.

BF By contradiction, I meant regarding spontaneity. We want more of a regular ask process for parents.

SM Maybe MK you can clarify this, but what have been big fundraisers in the past for Parent Council? Winter Faire and animal care fundraisers. What else?

MK Winter Faire is a big one for us. We used to do a Spring Brunch, but we moved that to be an animal care fundraiser this year. Auctions are normally done at that time. We used to switch years between the staff planning a gala and us doing a brunch. We've done monthly restaurant fundraisers and skate land. Most are community building and fundraisers. Even Winter Faire, it's not just about money, it's about the kids and what they're experiencing.

SM I think that we can roll the skate land and restaurant fundraisers into the calendar.

MK My biggest issue with this is that it says every fundraiser needs to be board approved. That's overstepping boundaries.

BF By board approved it just means that we're going to talk about it at board meetings and make sure we're on the same page. We don't want to tamp down things; we want to regularize them. The board needs to know when fundraisers are happening and what they're for. The calendar will be decided on together. The language simply means that we decide on the calendar together.

DM Would it be better to say agreed upon collaboratively?

BF That's what we're doing.

DM Let's change the verbiage.

KK Maybe rather than being preapproved, we could put some dates on it, like we create the calendars together on these dates. No one wants to overstep; we want to work together and find good common ground so we're all moving in the same direction.

MK My other thing is that the animals are not included in this. I think you all know how near and dear they are to me.

MM FM, do you have any thoughts?

06.15.22 Approved

FM I've been working very well with both entities on these new fundraising ideas, and yet it's clear that without intention one side's feelings are getting hurt. Unless we get together and talk this through, it can be difficult. I know initially the conversation with BF, MM, and SM were about big fundraising—a multipurpose room, etc. Clearly, those are not things Parent Council are working on. Parent Council does lots of amazing things—bbq's and teacher trainings and so on. They're all great things. We need to delineate who's doing what. As you know, we cannot put out a dime for the animals. MK has been trying very hard to ensure our animals can stay. I know it isn't the focus, but I will tell you we get lots of kids enrolled because of the animals and our campus, so it's a big deal. We certainly want to keep our animals, and MK and Laura know we can't use public funds. That means we have to fundraise, and the Parent Council is the group to do that. It's impressive to me to see what they've been doing. I sure hope we aren't trying to stamp out fundraising that helps the animals.

MM I'm struggling a bit with us pulling into the motions. The recommendation isn't a suggestion to take away animal care. It's an addition to what a group of people and collectively what the school can do. It doesn't take away. I would love to champion additional fundraising if we need to. I want to talk strategy and not assumptions of emotions. I want to figure out how we can collaborate. It's just an addition to things that are already happening.

DF This is a common thing for an organization that is growing. The people who have been doing it all along feel like they're being pushed out. What I always try to help people understand is what MM is saying, it's additive. We are interested in aligning these groups, to have our timing line up, collaboratively exploit efficiencies. If we can align, it will benefit all of the pillars. We need to be attentive to our relationships. Their work is important and needs to be equal to the other work.

DM Thank you for that. We're more successful when we work together. I don't think there should be a division.

SM I absolutely agree. I want to reiterate that there's no intention to take anything away. It's to open doors to true collaboration. We want to raise a lot of money, and we're hoping to present this ask to the community. It's going to take a massive collaborative effort. As far as the animals go, no one is pushing animals out. To DF's point, we'd be supporting and bolstering everyone's needs and goals. I know the children love the animals. It's just maybe ownership of the animals would help us to move forward. I hate to see this get hung up over this.

MK I don't think animals are going away. Animal care has been responsible for two years for everything, and we did a fundraiser that will carry us for the year, but there's not a plan to fundraise for them more in this plan. I'm not disagreeing that teachers need to be paid more, they do; I'm just saying we need to take care of the living beings on the property.

MM I get your point about animal care not being in the plan. What I could commit to is looking for grants for animal care. I think if we have a plan we can spend more time, I'd love to find a foundation grant for this. I would be more than willing to be more inclusive to grant opportunities.

BF I understand that it may feel like we're sweeping out the old and bringing in the new. But this plan is saying that we want to work together collaboratively. We want Parent Council to come to these meetings to work out these details. The whole point is to introduce collaboration on fundraising. I think we need to encourage trust to the whole school to support the schools' mission. If this body is going to deliberate on animal care I'd like to know more about the expenses. It would be good to know.

06.15.22 Approved

DM It's not about pushing back. We haven't done a sustaining fund in a long while. Now that we're back in person, I think it's good timing.

SM I didn't include specific dates on the calendar, but there is a break down of the different drives we'd be holding. We don't want to fatigue the community. We want things evenly spaced. In regard to animal care, is there a reason why Parent Council can't fund the animals?

MK I've been the animal care coordinator longer than I've been in Parent Council leadership. They are two separate things. I'd like to keep them separate.

SM We fund Hope and Health through Parent Council. Could we do something like that for animal care?

MK We have to guarantee that the animals have food. If we don't have full funding, it's an issue. Often animal care individuals are picking up expenses on their own.

MM Would you be able to share with us or admin the costs at another time? I think we need to find a way to make this work. If we're looking at 5-10k, are you suggesting the school adds it to their priorities? I don't want to force it on Parent Council.

MK What I would like is to have a separate meeting to discuss this? BF, SM, myself and FM and probably Laura could discuss this. It's not just the animals, it's the way we're feeling about having to get board approval. It doesn't feel like collaboration.

BF If we want to have a spring fundraiser for animal care that can happen. The point of the proposal is to plan these things at the same time to get them on the calendar. MK, I take your point, but it means we just want to work together to make the calendar.

DM I think some wordsmithing would help. It just sounds limiting and like we're micromanaging.

KK MK, does that feel better to you? I know you have your own calendar, but we would add it to ours. Would adjusting the wording help? What would help to get us on the same page? Do you just need more time to get your calendar together?

MK We do have the majority of our calendar together. There are some fundraisers that can take a year to put together, so we've been working on some of those already. I think a difference in the wording might help. I think a face-to-face conversation without an audience would help.

KK That seems reasonable. To have a small group meet and go from there.

SM I'm concerned about the timing because we're already in summer. We presented these changes, so I'm wondering what more needs to be changed. I hate to lose time on these lofty goals. I'm passionate about getting our teachers raises and getting this messaging out. We need this funding to get our school on track.

FM MK and I just saw the document. I know you are saying don't limit, just get it on a calendar. I appreciate that, but we haven't had time to digest this document. One more meeting isn't gonna hurt. I think we need to take some time to get Parent Council through this. Even this meeting isn't making it better for MK. I don't think this is helping. I think we need to sit down and talk more.

06.15.22 Approved

MM I agree. I just think we can do both at the same time. MK, I adore you, I care for you, I would love to sit and chat and collaborate. I don't think that needs to pause the momentum of SM starting on this. I would hate to lose the opportunity to fundraise more. I'm willing to sit with anyone, but it doesn't need to stagnate getting dollars in the door. I think we can do both at the same time.

DM Why can't we continue to move forward?

MM That's what I'm saying, we can. And we can continue our relationships as well.

BF I'd like to move forward on this and get the board's approval. I'm sensitive to you all just seeing this document. I'd love to sit down and talk about it. I guess I propose that we vote on everything apart from section three because that's the fundraising calendar.

DM Why do we even need to vote on it? It's one of our objectives.

MM If there's uncertainty, we vote on it.

KK It shows unity as well.

DM For me, it still seems like wordsmithing would help.

BF moved to approve the proposal exempting section three, which is the fundraising calendar. AS second. The following discussion took place:

DM It would be nice to add verbiage not to exclude animal care fundraising.

BF To be clear, when we had conversations, this wasn't meant to be a comprehensive list. I think adding a line saying "not to exclude certain things" would help.

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

PC Fund Update

KK At our last meeting we discussed the possibility of parent council opening their own account. Correct me if I'm wrong, FM, but you spoke with a group and decided to have separate accounts.

FM I sat with Monique and Jessica, and they are on board to have PC choose a bank of their own and set up an account so there's autonomy. Talking with MK and Laura, they think this is the best move, and summer is good timing.

KK Great. That's good progress.

NEW BUSINESS

Budget on Hold

KK You already mentioned that we usually see the budget at this point, but given that the governor hasn't set numbers yet, we're on hold.

06.15.22 Approved

FM Yes, I think he'll decide Friday.

KK AS, keep me honest, we need to have our draft up by July 5th. Is that right?

AS Yes, the first draft is Jul 5th, and then the final has to be up by July 15th.

KK Okay, so we still have time.

DEI Proposal

KK The final business is for the DEI proposal that FM sent us. We do need to approve that.

FM We did find a grant for that, which is great.

KK moved to approve the DEI training sessions through WestEd that Frank Mirizio gave the board for \$8353.00. AS seconded. No further discussion. Votes in Favor: KK, AS, MM, DF, BF. Abstain: DM, JT. **Motion passes.**

PROPOSED MOTIONS

None at this time.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

KK 06/15 is our next board meeting at 6:30pm via Zoom.

KK moved to adjourn the 06/01/22 board meeting. BF second. No further discussion. Unanimous vote in favor: KK, AS, JT, DM, NG, BF, MM. **Motion passes.**

CLOSING VERSE

DF read the closing verse.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:05pm.

Prepared by AS on 06.01.2022.