

MINUTES
VSWEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
WEDNESDAY MARCH 18TH, 2020
VIA YOUTUBE LIVESTREAM (<https://youtu.be/L7pKBrrKsXQ>)
DESERT MARIGOLD SCHOOL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Matthew Walker – President-Elect	John Tanner
John Elling – Treasurer-Elect	Julie Haines
Gregory Schneider – Secretary	April Sauer

MEMBER ABSENT

The Secretary was present and a quorum was reached.

GUESTS

Members of the public who signed in:

- Christie Kriegsfeld
- Michelle Kratzer
- Unknown number of live viewers on YouTube.

OPENING VERSE

Meeting was called to order at 6:34 pm

INTRODUCTIONS

Board Members introduced themselves and review of meeting procedure occurred.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

M.W. moves to approve 2/19/2020 minutes, A.S. – second. No discussion. Vote: G.S. abstained from the vote, all others in favor. **Motion passes.**

M.W. moves to approve 3/04/2020 minutes, J.E. – second. No discussion. Vote: G.S. and J.T. abstained from the vote, all others in favor (M.W., J.E., J.H., AS.). **Motion passes.**

BOARD PROCEDURES

Public comment address: G.S – finances.

M.W. – executive director.

G.S. - Explanation of board director application procedures.

Discussion regarding frequency of board meetings.

M.W. – motion to schedule regular board meetings to be between the existing monthly meetings, still on Wednesdays, still at 6:30 p.m., changing if we need to. G.S second. Vote: Unanimous in favor (M.W., G.S., J.T., J.E., J.H., A.S.). **Motion passes.**

Election of board officers.

J.H. – Moves for M.W. to be president, A.S. second. No discussion. Vote: 5/0/1 (G.S., J.T., J.E., J.H., A.S. in favor, M.W. abstaining). **Matt Walker becomes the new President.**

M.W. – Moves for J.E. to be treasurer, G.S. second. Discussion ensues. Vote: 5/0/1 (M.W., G.S., J.T., J.H., A.S. in favor, J.E. abstaining). **John Elling becomes the new Treasurer.**

COVID-19

C.K. provides information regarding current status of school:

A.D.E. issues guidance nearly twice a day. Today they clarified that closures are not a complete shutdown. Staff is expected to engage in work related activities and staff are expected to meet instructional requirements of schools. We are working together to put together a contingency plan as to what that will look like to avoid extending the school year and make up days. We are actively working on that and hope to have a plan out no later than next week. In the meantime, the faculty are sending out learning activities to help keep the students fresh on what they have learned to date.

Regarding assessments, there are both federal and state issues. Arizona is considering whether to waive spring testing. The state is also working with the federal government to discuss whether a waiver of federal requirements would be appropriate.

As a result, we are trying to find the best way to facilitate remote learning.

M.W. – Virtual or remote learning – for all grades?

C.K. – Yes. Goal is to have a plan in place by Monday of next week. In the meantime, being pushed out through parent square. Also working with A.D.E. to make sure high school seniors achieve all of their graduation requirements.

J.E. – Who is still working at the school?

C.K. – Only essential staff for now. Need guidance from the board on who to continue working, and whether to keep billing for the private programs. Funding will not be impacted because school reached its 100th day.

J.E. – How many employees would be needed?

C.K. – Around five. But we would try to follow all the CDC guidelines.

A.S. – Should we be charging for pre-school if we aren't able to provide the services?

C.K. – Closure of pre-school is not mandated by the state. But we need direction from the board – should we put a stay on billing until closure ends. We have 16 families and can also seek input from them about what they would like to do.

Extended discussion ensues regarding managing instructional, operational, and budgetary needs of school during COVID-19 closures.

Discussion ensues regarding school plan for instruction and whether board approval is necessary. General consensus is that board will review and ratify the faculty administration/approach.

G.S. – Move to delegate to C.K. the authority to close the school for up to two weeks increments pending the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic, J.H. – second. Discussion ensues. Vote: Unanimously in favor (M.W., G.S., J.T., J.E., J.H., A.S.). **Motion passes.**

M.W. – Need to address salaries during the pandemic. C.K. gave us some examples of how other districts have handled that. Can you walk us through the different categories of staff?

C.K.

- maintenance
- administrators
- student support services for those with IEPs
- state testing

But it is difficult to say how we can use all of the staff to the same extent as they are used to, where they are not supporting the children for 8.5 hours a day.

Discussion ensues regarding utilization and payment of staff. General consensus to keep the status quo in place until more information available regarding school's plan.

J.E. – Move to continue to pay all salary and hourly (on an average of year-to-date weekly pay) for two weeks up until the 27th and then we can make a further determination. G.S. – second. Discussion ensues. Vote: Unanimous in favor (M.W., G.S., J.T., J.E., J.H., A.S.). **Motion passes.**

A.S. – Motions five minute break, M.W. second. No discussion. Vote: Unanimous in favor (M.W., G.S., J.T., J.E., J.H., A.S.). **Motion passes.** Meeting in recess starting at 8:23 p.m.

8:32 p.m. – Meeting resumes.

J.E. – Some hourly employees may wish to take the two weeks off, and we should honor that.

J.E. – Motion to amend motion regarding pay, for any hourly employee who wishes to remain unavailable for the closure, that should be honored and they should follow the usual protocol for taking leave. M.W. second. Discussion ensues. Vote: Unanimous in favor (M.W., G.S., J.T., J.E., J.H., A.S.). **Motion passes.**

BUDGET AND FINANCE

M.W. – Thank you to Jessica Jarrett for preparing information about financials again. Given the uncertainty of funding around COVID-19, not sure if I'm in a position to dive into specifics of the financials.

J.E. – Should we have someone from Aspire come in and walk us through the financials, and the other information they can provide?

General agreement from the board.

M.W. – Let's talk about creation of subcommittees. Several reasons to do so – provides transparency and accountability. Should we create a finance committee?

J.E. – This could also be a group that works on next year's budget as well.

J.T. – I would like to be a part of that. I think having the LDC involved is important.

M.W. – Committee needs to look at expense side and the revenue side. Who would volunteer?

M.W. – move for the creation of a finance and budget sub-committee to be led by J.E. (the board treasurer) with G.S. and J.T. also on it, with its purview looking at the school finances and engaging and leading the annual budget process, and has the option of inviting guests as appropriate. J.E. – second. Discussion ensues. Vote: 6/0/0 (M.W., G.S., J.T., J.E., J.H., A.S.).

Motion passes.

M.W. – Next agenda topic – 2020-2021 budget process kick-off. Anything else to discuss here?

J.E. – Want to make sure Aspire is able to join us for the next meeting as we work on that.

C.K. – Definitely, will be in touch with Aspire.

G.S. – Update regarding RSF. We have been in touch, and agreed to talk soon. Discussions are cordial and optimistic those discussions will continue in a positive way.

M.W. – Fundraising ideas, fundraising committee. April, thinking you could chair a fundraising committee, but also want to learn what's on your mind.

A.S. – I am open to that, have lots of ideas, see myself as more of a coordinator. Agrees to look into it and see what we need.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

M.W. – Executive director position. M.W. moves for formation of permanent executive director search subcommittee, with M.W. leading the committee. Now is the time to do this search, we

may even be a bit late. School needs permanence, whether that is Christie or someone else. Committee needs to decide job description, process we would use to interview and select candidates. There would then be regular reporting back to the board. J.E. – second. Discussion ensues. A.S. and J.H. volunteer to be part of the committee. VOTE: 5/1/0. J.T. opposed, all others in favor (M.W., G.S., J.E., J.H., A.S.), none abstaining. **Motion passes.**

REPORTS

C.K. – Updates to executive director report. After 16 years at DMS, Deanna Douglas has accepted a different position. She has been training an interim person (Crystal Lee) to cover enrollment and Deb Pawlo has also been assisting. We are working on the re-enrollment process. Enrollment report and support services reports submitted. Laura Coady is working with ADE regarding assessment testing in light of COVID-19. Once we re-establish general education services, we need to establish special ed services, including providing those services during the closure.

C.K. – Nothing new to report on high school outreach and enrollment. Focus has been entirely on handling COVID-19.

Michelle Kratzer – Parent council report. Did hear that the class is full for incoming ninth grade. Saw a lot of unfamiliar faces at the info session, suggests there are many new people getting involved. We are canceling the spring benefit scheduled for April 5. We still have items to auction off that have been donated by various businesses. We are putting something together for that as a fundraiser. All other events on hold until we figure out what's going on with COVID-19. Next meeting scheduled and will likely occur by Zoom. Need to figure out how to do funding request without spring benefit going on.

M.W. – Want to thank Michelle and the whole parent council for the extensive amount of volunteer work put into the Parent Council.

A.S. – Agreed, and have personally observed the extensive amount of work put in by Michelle.

M.W. – Next, site committee.

J.T. – There are some things that could use repair. Woodshop, for example, needs to be addressed. Where do we want it? That is a 3-5 year question. Is the woodshop even operational now? Need to run power out there, not an extension cord, and that takes money to hire a licensed contractor. Many air conditioners are on the verge of being replaced.

J.H. – Can you give us a list of specifics so we can address the budget concerns that relate to this?

J.T. – Yes, can compile at least a short list of needs in next two weeks.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jill Thomas: Conveyed her sentiments regarding the history of the school, its importance to her life, and desired composition of board of directors.

Adeline Carrera: Read a quote from Rudolf Steiner relevant to difficult times.

Barb Cunningham: Conveyed her sentiments regarding being a parent in the community, witnessing loss of certain individuals on DMS staff, and her desired composition of the board of directors.

Danielle Martinez: Gave background regarding her commitment as a parent and community member of the school and request for clarity about where the school is headed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Next regular board meeting:

M.W. – I think we should schedule the next board meeting for next week to check in on pending issues.

J.H. – Would that include update from Aspire?

J.E. – No, that wouldn't be until April 1.

M.W. – Motion to schedule next meeting for March 25, 2020 at 6:30 p.m., via zoom. A.S. – second. No discussion. Vote: Unanimous in favor (M.W., G.S., J.T., J.E., J.H., A.S.). **Motion passes.**

CLOSING VERSE

G.S. – move to adjourn, A.S. – second, Vote: unanimous. **Motion passes.**

Meeting was adjourned at 10:07 p.m.

Prepared by G.S. on 03/18/2020 and revised on 3/23/2020, incorporating comments from M.W. herein.