

**MINUTES**  
**VSWEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING**  
**WEDNESDAY JUNE 3, 2020**  
**VIA YOUTUBE LIVESTREAM | VIA ZOOM**

<https://youtu.be/5gK45rTUn6s>

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87320195218?pwd=UTV6NTZHNUxkb0pRMDZib0xuU1dyQT09>

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Matthew Walker – President (M.W.)  
John Elling – Treasurer (J.E.)  
Gregory Schneider – Secretary (G.S.)

John Tanner (J.T.)  
April Sauer (A.S.)  
Nathaniel Allen (N.A.)

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

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

**GUESTS**

Invitees of the Board:

- Christie Kriegsfeld (C.K.)
- Laura Heaney
- Michelle Kratzer

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

- Jennifer Walker
- Deborah Allen
- Susan Kerr
- Jim Kerr

**OPENING VERSE**

Meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m.

**INTRODUCTIONS**

Board Members introduced themselves and review of meeting procedure occurred.

**BOARD PROCEDURES**

**Approval of Minutes**

M.W. – move to approve minutes of 5/20/2020 meeting, J.E. second. No further discussion.

Yea: M.W., J.E., J.T., N.A., A.S. / No: -- / Abstain: G.S. **Motion passes.**

M.W. – move to approve minutes of 5/20/2020 executive session, A.S. second. No further discussion. Yea: M.W., J.E., J.T., N.A., A.S. / No: -- / Abstain: G.S. **Motion passes.**

M.W. provided a reminder to the community regarding the importance of civil discourse even when disagreeing with decisions of the Board and the school, especially as outlined in the Parent Code of Conduct. M.W. encouraged the community to engage in self-governance on this topic.

### **PARENT COUNCIL UPDATE**

M.W. expressed the Board's deep gratitude to Parent Council, who give a tremendous amount of time, energy, and care to the school in many ways: raising funds, helping students in need, and supporting the development of teachers, among many endeavors.

M.W. apologized for a lack of clarity regarding Parent Council at the last Board meeting and was excited to announce positive meetings between himself and J.E., C.K., and the Parent Council.

M.W. then invited Michelle Kratzer to provide a report and update.

Michelle Kratzer:

- Provided an overview of what Parent Council does: it is the go-between parents, faculty, administration, and the Board – a bridge between those groups. We have a few different teams. The Hands Team – volunteers who organize volunteer activities including community work team. The Heads Team – who handle parent education and class representatives. The Hearts Team – who are the social part of the Parent Council, who coordinate things like the S'Mores Night and Clothing Exchange.
- Parent Council does a lot of fundraising based on parent ideas and community member ideas about things that are needed on the campus. Last year we looked to spend money on teacher continuing education and bringing a speaker on campus. Biggest fundraising event is the Winter Faire. Occasionally we do fundraisers with restaurants and local businesses like Tuft & Needle.
- Noted that the Parent Council is working with the Board and C.K. that they are working to fix a funding discrepancy. Once there is a clear picture Parent Council will have a funding meeting to decide how to use the funds that are available. You must be at two meetings in order to vote on how the funds are used.
- Book club continues every Monday night at 8p.m. Current book is Kim John Payne's *Being At Your Best When Your Kids Are at Their Worst*.
- It's important to log your volunteer hours. These are often important to grants that Parent Council coordinates applying for.
- Parent Council is currently searching for a secretary.

A.S. commended Michelle Kratzer for her excellent work in leading the Parent Council.

### **BUDGET AND FINANCE**

#### **PPP Loan / Regular Financial Update**

APPROVED 6/17/2020

J.E. – MidFirst does not have their forgiveness application yet; will let us know when they do. But they will be assigning an officer of the bank to help us with completing the application. Around the next meeting we should have final figures on how much of the PPP loan we have used, but we should be able to use most if not all of it.

G.S. – noted there is a bill pending in Congress right now about extending the use of the money and suggested community members call their Senators to encourage them to vote in favor of the bill.

M.W. – asked how close to the end of the 8-week limit we are.

J.E. – We have about 1.5 weeks left.

J.E. – We do not have a regular financial update at this time because we are in between reporting periods for finances.

#### Annual Budget Update

J.E. – No updates yet.

M.W. – We have until the middle of July at this point to meet the state’s deadline for submitting the budget?

C.K. – Correct. We continue to work on the budget internally and should have a revision to the Board working group early next week. We are on track to have it submitted, evaluated, and approved by the state deadline.

M.W. – Do we need to set a budget approval meeting?

G.S. – Yes, and we need to post it on the website about when it will happen.

Discussion between N.A., M.W., and J.T. ensued regarding the date.

M.W. – General consensus reached to host the budget approval meeting on June 24 at 6:30pm.

#### Bookkeeper Role

C.K. – When the contract with Aspire was renegotiated in Fall 2019, a standard bookkeeping role was incorporated into their responsibilities. When we compare that with hiring a part-time bookkeeper at 10-20 hours a week (~\$30,000/yr), Aspire is a more financially viable option and cheaper. They also provide a neutral third party who can look at the books and verify accuracy.

A.S. – If we don’t have someone on site, how does that work for parents who want to pay \$10 for a field trip or some other expense?

C.K. – With SchoolAdmin and SchoolMaster, we added a billing component that we didn’t have before. Now everything is automated so they can pay everything online and parent driven. There will be a log of everything they have paid for that they can see. This reduces a human error component of the bookkeeping and will help us make sure all monies received are allocated where they’re spending.

G.S. – What is the financial difference between going with Aspire versus hiring a bookkeeper?

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C.K. – The Aspire contract already includes bookkeeping so we save the entire expense.

G.S. – Will the automated system you were describing be able to handle tax credit donations and keep track of them?

C.K. – Yes, and parents can designate them as tax credit donations, so they are easy to track.

A.S. – Do we have a timeline of when Jessica is completed with her volunteer work and Aspire will take over full time?

C.K. – No specific deadline, but Jessica has worked amazingly hard, and we are in a far better position than we would have been without her tireless effort.

A.S. and M.W. further expressed their gratitude for the hard work Jessica Jarrett has put into the school to set it up for financial success.

### RSF Update

M.W. – We continue to work with RSF to get them additional documents they have asked for. There is a meeting scheduled next week to discuss the negotiations and timeline for refinancing the loan. One thing Amy has asked for is a site visit. But it's not clear how that will happen right now with all the travel restrictions, COVID, etc. We expect she will have a proposal.

### COVID-19

M.W. – The Arizona Department of Education provided their guidance on reopening in the fall. Definitely too early for any decisions, but we can begin discussing the issues that we need to navigate. Thanked C.K. for the message to the community on ParentSquare on when to expect a plan. We should be thinking about how we can coordinate with the school and teachers. C.K., can you provide us the issues you're grappling with?

C.K. – Yes, we are grappling with a number of issues. There is a guideline for opening the school. There is another set of guidelines for parents, teachers, and students. This week our task is to evaluate all of the guidance and put together a roadmap for reopening DMS specifically. We will be collaborative and will seek input from faculty and staff. When we're completed, we'll submit it to the board for review and ratification and release it to the community. Our goal is to have it out by June 30. We feel it is very important to have a working framework as soon as possible. The overall takeaway theme is flexibility – everyone needs to be flexible. Whatever roadmap we put out is subject to change depending on the circumstances. Our roadmap will be guided by the state based on four scenarios:

- everyone back in school;
- some students doing distance learning, and some in school;
- everyone doing distance learning;
- intermittent distance learning in the event of a school closure – what do we do if we have a spike in COVID cases and how do we keep instruction going.

In any of the scenarios we have to look at a variety of factors to see how we can best adapt to each one.

G.S. – How can the board help, any specific issues you've identified where we could help you meet your June 30 goal?

C.K. – Nothing specific, but if a few board members wanted to participate in meetings even as a sounding board that would be helpful.

G.S. – I'm happy to participate in a few meetings a week if it would be helpful.

A.S. – Also happy to help, or even just take notes. Also expressed concern about some of the guidelines taking an additional financial toll on the school, and some of the guidelines being challenging to implement.

C.K. – Aspire is helping us with a minimum of \$50,000 grant to help with those issues. But the question now is how do we prioritize them? Obviously sanitization is a huge part. We are still getting bids to handle that. We are also looking into having staff getting trained to take temperatures and assess symptoms. We will need to be flexible and creative to figure this out.

N.A. – I'm also available to help as another board member. Regarding specific considerations, these are guidelines from ADE, not a mandate so we get to pick the tools we need to make the school safe and functional in the fall.

M.W. – Whatever plan we come up with, this seems like something that needs Board approval. We should also be delegating authority to C.K. to make decisions on an emergency basis in the fall, so we would need to know in advance what authority it is we are giving you.

C.K. – I would prefer that as well. ADE is also going to want to see the written plan so they can see what every school is choosing.

M.W. – What have you learned since March that will help the school in the fall?

C.K. – We have learned a lot from this experience. First, we did not have a pandemic or extended forced closure plan in place. We also learned that even though technology does not have a strong place in our educational model, we need to be prepared to use it when it's necessary to keep the education going.

M.W. – Let me reiterate the point about flexibility. We need to be patient and flexible. The school has a lot of decisions to make. Not everyone will agree with every decision. But we need to try to recognize we are doing the best that we can, and that we need to move forward as best we can. One of those areas is funding. I'm concerned we will have a shortfall in state funding to manage all the additional costs the school will be facing, so we may need to ask for additional contributions from the community. We don't know what that will look like yet because we won't know for sure what state funding looks like for another 1-2 months.

### **COMMUNITY SURVEY**

C.K. – We have sent out a faculty and staff survey. We are turning toward developing a community survey for parents to weigh in. We do not have an ETA yet, but we are working with the 301 committee members on it. But we will be giving everyone an opportunity to weigh in.

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G.S. – What is the scope of the faculty survey?

C.K. – We wanted input about the overall organizational structure, how it is serving them, what are they doing to help, what are the school’s strengths and weaknesses, accountability, and workplace culture. Also, what qualities and experiences does the faculty believe are important for a permanent executive director.

M.W. – There are also questions about how the Board is doing and what type of support they are getting from the Board.

C.K. – Survey closes on the 8th, so we will be able to provide some (anonymous) data in an aggregated form.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Next regular board meeting: 6/17/2020, 6:30 p.m., via YouTube live stream and Zoom webinar, links forthcoming.

**CLOSING VERSE**

M.W. – move to adjourn, N.A. second. No discussion. Vote: Unanimous (J.E., G.S., M.W., A.S., J.T., N.A.). **Motion passes.**

Meeting was adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Prepared by G.S. on 6/3/2020 and revised on 6/8/2020, incorporating comments from A.S. herein.