

MINUTES
VSWEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, MAY 5, 2021
VIA [Zoom](#)

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Gregory Schneider (GS) – President

John Tanner (JT)

April Sauer (AS) – Secretary

Danielle Martinez (DM)

Dan Franks (DF) – Treasurer

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

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

GUESTS

Invitees of the Board:

Frank Mirizio (FM)

Barb Cunningham (BC)

Nellie Grossenbacher (NG)

Adelina Carrera (AC)

Kerstin Kubina (KK)

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

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- Sami Rank
- Colleen Pope
- WS
- Tammy
- Susan Kerr
- J Falconburg
- Jill Thomas
- JJ
- Helena Moriarty
- Robert F. Kennedy
- Deb
- Elodyyy
- Riva
- Heather Sullivan
- Mr. Schantz
- Christie Martin
- Nathalie de Saint-Hilaire

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 FM.

GS Provided an overview of the agenda.

BUDGET AND FINANCE

Virtual Maypole Replay and Trivia Night

GS Thanked DM for her work on the Trivia Night. It was a lot of fun and something that we've been wanting to do for some time.

DM It was endearing to be in classrooms to make some videos and to see the May Pole. There were a lot of parents who showed up for the May Faire, and it's nice to include everyone who couldn't be there by sharing the video. We had a lot of content and couldn't fit it all into the presentation. We'll make sure that everyone who had tickets has access to the video. Marylynne was great, and she discounted her fee to half of her cost. A friend put together some raffle buckets for the event. It was well received. Who wouldn't like a nice game night? I thought

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it was fun. The final count was \$1125.00. We had a lot of volunteers getting video of the May Pole. Thank you.

GS Congrats on the event. How do we keep the momentum going? What's our next step? How do we expand it?

DM I'm happy to do it again. I know Ms. Schmid had to cancel a Eurythmy event, so maybe we could do that off site and make it a gala.

GS This was great in engaging people and having fun together, but I think we could make it more of an appeal for direct donations. We could set a big goal for the night, people can make pledges, and you can feel the energy in the room as those pledges go up. That way we have a target and clear idea of what we're trying to raise.

DM I'd like to use some different platforms. Silent auction, donation buttons, etc.

Enrollment Update

FM Crystal puts that report together, and that number went from 304 to 319, I think. I am concerned about those individuals who may choose not to come back if we don't offer virtual. I'm hoping our summer goes well and Covid numbers go down. It would be great to have all 319 on campus. It would be awesome, and it would help our budget. We could use those funds for a pedagogical director, choir teacher, orchestra teacher, etc.

GS Those numbers would be great. 300ADM or more would be great for our state funding.

FM GS, have you heard anything on the per pupil funding from Governor Ducey? I haven't heard anything.

GS I haven't hear anything either. I was surprised when the Governor said we'd be back in person March 15th, so I haven't hear anything specific. Have you heard anything about hybrid options?

FM There was an executive order. I've heard that unless you had a license for online learning prior to Covid, then you cannot do it. If there's an emergency, then there may be a shift.

GS That's good to have that clarity. Should we send out a community wide message about that?

FM I think I'll send out a survey to find out who would return in the fall based on different scenarios.

GS Let's make clear about the executive order.

FM Yes, I'll make that statement at the top and then ask "What's your feeling about the fall?"

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Annual Audit Items

GS The revised budget has been signed and returned to Monique. For the audit, AS will be doing the updated listing of board members and minutes. The board list will need to be updated after elections. Anything else about cash flow, etc?

DM No, but I left out Laura Heaney. She was a great help for the fundraiser, so thank you to Laura Heaney.

PARENT COUNCIL

Update

MK The bbq went really well. Everyone was excited to be out and together. It was very nice, and all of the students and staff seemed to love it. This week we're doing teacher appreciation. We're doing it a bit different by honoring all of the teachers as a whole. Monday, we did coffee/tea and treats. Tuesday, was salad and go lunch. Wednesday, we had a masseuse in. She'll be back on Friday. And Thursday, we'll do a popsicle treat. Teachers have been loving it and have been sending us messages. We hope they have been feeling our love during this difficult year. We appreciate all that they do. Parent Council asked if we could change our May 11th date, and it looks like we can change it. We will meet on May 10th, same time.

GS On behalf of the board, thank you so much for your work for the board and for the teachers. JT looks more relaxed this evening. So thank you.

Mk Those flowers for the Maypole were donated from Trader Joe's. We did a flower kit for everyone who was remote, and they were excited about that.

AS Thank you for that. It was nice to be included as a remote family. May Faire is my favorite festival, and it hit hard not being there this year. It was nice to be a part in some way, and my daughter was happy with her kit and crown. So thank you from the remote families. We're grateful to be included.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Update

FM We've had an eventful past five days. May Pole, fundraiser, then Pentathlon, then Teacher Appreciation. I haven't been here very long, and it's fun to see what's it's like to be a part of the community. Kudos to Ms. Schmid and Ms. Hunter, Ms. Maynard for Pentathlon, parent council for teacher appreciation. I get my massage on Friday. Parent Council was so happy to do this for everyone. The big highlight was to see how many parents showed up with their lawn chairs, and they're taking time off to show up, and that's remarkable. It's been a very good week.

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Second announcement has to do with our online component and in person component. Those remote numbers are going down, and that's a good sign. You saw the report on possible enrollments. It's higher than it was two weeks ago. And that includes the preschool program that's filling up. Other announcements, you have some information about our bid for health insurance. It's really good news. Even if we stay with our current company Blue Cross we'll go down 8%. If we join a small group of charters and go with United Healthcare, it'll go down about 23%. We still need to see dental, vision, and life insurance. That'll be on Monday. LDC is looking over this with me. We'll send it out to staff and get some feedback. The initial thing we're hearing is that it's a good plan.

GS Excellent news all around. One question I have since our auditor is coming, we need proof of insurance for our current year. Have you started a conversation with our broker for next year?

FM Yes, that's done. That was renewed Friday afternoon. Monique and Jessica and I have been dealing with Holmes and Murphy, and they've given us a fair set up. Jessica is working on payments already because those are due soon.

AS You're doing great. Good news all around. And welcome to DMS. This is who we are.

FM After the May Pole, Rachel asked what I thought, and I asked, "Can we do it again next week?" She laughed. It's good to see all these fun activities. They add to the day for kids and make everything better.

COVID-19

Update

FM We're doing our best to follow protocols. Occasionally, a student takes a mask off, and we have to remind them. Same with parents. We'll continue our day porter for the rest of the month. We'll stop for June/July, and I'll get back with them about the fall. We have that appointment set to discuss. Carpet cleaning/tile cleaning is scheduled. I think we're moving right along. There's only three weeks left, which feels like a shock, but it's good.

GS Grateful to FM and staff monitoring all these changes and monitoring everything and dealing with all these concerns. This year has been brutally hard on the teachers, so thank you to you all specifically for such a tremendous amount of work. Shifting to different formats and extra hours, and it shows the level of skill our teachers have. There's such a commitment to our students. You've done wonderful work this year. We truly appreciate it.

BOARD RECRUITMENT

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GS Introduced applicants to the board. Hello, and thanks for being here again. I'll open it up now. Tonight isn't structured. It's an open ended. Board members can ask questions; candidates can ask questions. It's meant to be a discussion. I'd like to keep it to 30 minutes if we can. Board, let's start with you all first.

DM I would like to ask each of you where do you feel you would be most helpful?

AC Probably keeping the positivity. I'm always looking on the brighter side of things. And my ability and willingness to be a part of the team. I love organizing things. I love lists.

BC I really as you may know I am extremely passionate about Waldorf education and shouting it from the rooftops. I would love to help with the service mark. I love parent education. I love arranging to have speakers come. We went on field trips and stuff like that. I'd like to bring more education to our community. I'd love to see our community come back together. I'd also love to if there's not something in place to organize our alumni and our alumni parents. For one, I'll assume since I was in the high school and there weren't enough hands to do those things, I'd like to help market in whatever way is best for our school.

KK For me, I'm a doer. I prefer to work on projects, and I'm very task oriented. I'd like to work off a list of tasks. Wherever there's hands needed, I want to take care of that. I want to increase revenue and decrease costs.

NG I feel that a Waldorf community is a huge part of making a Waldorf school happen, and I am fully committed to bringing the community together and doing events and bringing money into the school. Pulling crowds together, getting supplies for events—I'm great at that. Being able to sit on building community events for all of our kids in school would be great. Whatever we need to make their experience better then I'm there to build these experiences. I want our kids to have the full scope of a Waldorf education.

AS Toot your own horn. What's the best thing you've accomplished at DMS?

AC I want to toot my own horn about the Halloween Carnival we pulled off. The logistics and prizes and commissions, that was our thing. As parents we took on food and prizes. I was super proud of us. The prizes were a hit. I think we sold out at the end of the night. Because of that, we saw other parents who wanted to be involved in the high school, so it was great to see that happen.

BC I feel proud of the Humble Hive and the speakers we were able to showcase and the art teachers who did art for us and fieldtrips we went on. I thought it did a great job building community. But honestly, what I feel is my most favorite success at our school was the high school graduation with the kids who came back from Europe. Being a young school, starting from scratch, to watch the magic happen, to not lose hope or focus, each year it got tighter, better, a little more cohesive as a team and then when that graduation happened, Michael and I knew we had done it. To hear those seniors give speeches after coming back from Europe, which was an amazing trip, I could've died that night. The surety they spoke with--that was the

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culmination. To have put so much love along with the thigh school faculty, to put so much love into the high school, that was it for me.

KK Being able to bring my own magic to the school. I'm on parent council. I like to do animal care and garden workdays. I'm active in all of those things. The thing for me is the smallest impact you can make. Being able to turn one person's day into something better is great. Little things on campus, like seeing a deflated tether ball and bringing a new one and putting it up.

NG We've been here this school year and not a lot of time on campus. Making myself known and being an active parent and community member. I was there at 7:15am Tuesday to make sure the pentathlon was set up. The teacher could count on me. I've put together other events where 30 parents have shown up. As a new member I didn't stand by the side, I stepped up and I included other people. I made them feel welcome even though I was the newcomer.

DF How will you balance and prioritize work on the board and your personal lives?

NG I'm unemployed, so I have the time and the commitment. When I need to schedule times for board meeting and take a more active role, I'll do that. My husband and I made an agreement after our move that one of us would be on hand to help with school facilitation. I was the lucky winner.

KK Kids, job, everything else. For me, my only outside activity is DMS. It's where my friends are, it's what I do for fun—in the garden, scooping poop. It makes sense that I would put more time in for the board. I thought about applying before, and I feel like now I have the time to make that commitment and make that balance happen.

BC I feel the same way. I've gone to many board meetings over the last decade, and you know some more than a few people have asked me why I never ran for the board. At the time I had a big family, a very needy family. I didn't feel like I had the time. With my son ready to graduate, I have many grandchildren, this really is a legacy for our family. All the love and attention we put into this community was for the long haul. I think for a lot of alum parents it's a great way to consider giving back to the community. You've got great wisdom and experience.

AC My son does have an early bedtime. I have one teenage daughter who will always be there for me too. I don't think there will be an issue with time. I'm not working as well. Moms are CEO's of families, but we'll find time. I don't think it'll be an issue. I want to do what I can to help out in any way I can.

DF Want to point out that even though you don't have paid employment, doesn't mean you aren't working. There are still balances that need to be struck. We know stay at home parents are hard working.

GS Thank you that comment, DF. We want to make sure that our school stays Waldorf and everyone contributes in different ways to make that a reality. If you don't make it on the board tonight, would you still be willing to help with these goals even if it's not in the capacity as a board member?

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KK Of course. I'm already involved in multiple ways. If I'm not on the board, it won't turn me off to what is in my heart—the school.

BC If this is not the right time for my skills to be of service to the board, I love helping our school grow, and I would volunteer in whatever capacity is needed. I shared with GS that I got to see the inner workings of the high school, and I would be happy to share what I've gleaned from that. And I love parent education, and I would love for DMS to be the hub that it always was.

AC Yeah, I'll still be around. My son will be starting 1st grade next year, and I'll always be helping. I'm already wanting to talk with next year's 1st grade teacher to see what help they might need. If I don't make it here, I'll try again with parent council. I have my eye on something there. And it might be in a parent education role.

NG I would be committed. I'm committed to my kids and seeing them through a Waldorf education. I'm committed to making sure they're provided with the education I started them with. Any Waldorf parent can tell you we're hard core, and we're committed to this. It makes me cry. The commitment level of any true Waldorf parent is high, and I told FM I apologized for sending him so many emails. I want kids to have every experience that they're supposed to have. I'm committed. I moved my family 3000 miles away because this school goes through high school, and that's really special. I want to see my kids through it in the correct style of Waldorf education. Whether I'm on the board or in the parking lot, I'm all in.

GS What can we tell you? What questions do you have?

AC I'm happy NG is here. I'm glad you trekked 3000 miles to be here.

BC I have something to say. I'll pose this question to GS. I love that there are so many active community members running for the board. I hear most of us, except for KK, talking about community, and I want to point out that there are so many subtle differences of what we're talking about—they're very different. What NG is talking about is different than what I'm talking about. It's important that so many people work that particular angle. You have what KK does with the animals and the garden. That's not my love language. I do something different. We all want to bring a different facet, and I would hope that you wouldn't think that just taking one of us as a community/social life that it's different. We all have a different angle. I didn't want to assume that perhaps you think we're all coming from the same platform.

GS No, I didn't take it as you're offering the same things. I'm hearing different things from all of you. I said it before, and I'll say it again: our community is our biggest asset. The investment we get from our community members is just wonderful. It's an embarrassment of riches. The hard part is which ones do we pick with our limited resources. So, I don't hear you all stating the same thing.

NG I have a quick question. DMS is a small Waldorf community, and I was in Waldorf community in NY. I travelled to look at Waldorf schools, and I hope that as a board you can look outside the box to build our community. To recruit other families to build our Waldorf community. Is there a plan for that? For DMS to be a charter in this beautiful state, to go from preschool all

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the way to high school is really almost unheard of, and there's got to be a way. There is a way to promote ourselves nationally. We were waitlisted and fortunate enough to get in this year. The board and admin could reach a broader community if you sell yourself in other communities. That will help bring our community to where we need it to be.

GS Not currently, is the short answer. I think it's worth considering. One of my long term goals is to have a development director who would focus on these questions. How do we cast a wider net? Getting people to visit and move here. That said, right now, we are just poised to figure out what's next. We've come out of the winter in many ways, and now it's Spring. Financially our ship is in good shape, so it's a matter of how do we choose to do that. But I think we need to hire someone to do just that.

NG Can we reach out to community members before we hire somebody?

GS Yes.

NG I'm speaking for myself because I paid for metro New York Waldorf school. DMS is charter, DMS has a beautiful campus. It's attractive and an amazing community, and we could build the school. And there are other families like me. We need to bring quality Waldorf families into the community.

AC Is it appropriate to ask FM a question?

GS I'd like you to keep it to questions about the board.

AC I know in the by-laws it's not the board's job to do that, so my question is involving if we'll ever hire someone like that.

DF We haven't settled on any concrete plans, but we would love to do that.

AC But a pedagogical director isn't meant to bring people in. They're there for the teachers.

DF We're discussing a development director, not a pedagogical director.

AC Thank you for that clarification.

KK JT, what do you feel like makes someone very useful and successful as a board member?

JT I think you have to keep to the business of the board which are legal and financial issues, and you have to be completely confidential with your communications. The school has to be protected, and that's the board's job.

AS I have a question for BC. Last week, during interviews, you were asked a question about conflict of interest. You are heavily involved in a website that has inflammatory comments about DMS on it. Can you explain how the website isn't a conflict of interest? Because I know there are a lot of concerns about that.

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BC I don't know what you mean by inflammatory comments. Information was taken from board minutes. That year we were asked to bring in toilet paper, and the intent was to give families a raft in the water. The intention was it would be a one stop shop where, to my knowledge, no one is telling you what to think but here's where you can get information about if you think what you were being told was true. And any comments that come in, there was always a closing comment that if you see anything that is false, that it would be immediately corrected. So to say it's a conflict of interest is a fair question, but I don't think it is a conflict of interest. The focus has changed to educate the community about core principles of Waldorf and to educate community members about anthroposophy and parent education. So I don't see that as a conflict of interest.

GS Okay, any last questions? No. Board, you should have a ballot in the form of a google form. Go to the form, and then we'll tally the results and announce them. Let's take a five-minute break to vote. We'll reconvene at 8pm.

Returned from break at 8:02pm

GS KK and NG have been elected as new members of the board. Unfortunately, that means AC and BC that you were not voted onto the board. Please don't take this too harshly. You both have great ideas and add value to our school. You are a wonderful part of our community. So KK and NG, welcome. We have a lot of stuff for you to do as board members. We have some paperwork to send to you. We need fingerprint clearance cards, some amendments to make sure you are official members of the board. Expect an email from me with a lot of attachments. For the rest of the meeting, you are provisional members, so you can talk, but you cannot vote. I'll announce how the votes went.

Voting results:

- KK was elected. Unanimously in favor: GS, AS, DF, DM, JT.
- BC was not elected. In favor: DM. Opposed: GS, AS, DF, JT.
- AC was not elected. Unanimously opposed: GS, AS, DF, DM, JT.
- NG was elected. In favor: GS, AS, DF, DM. Opposed: JT.

GS With that said, congratulations again to KK and NG.

BOARD PROCEDURES

Board Education

GS We had a great meeting with Liz Beaven. DF sent out an idea awhile ago. Will you talk about that?

DF Which idea?

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GS About board education.

DF My idea was simply that the community seems to have some questions about our commitment around Waldorf. I suggested we have someone on the board speak to something they are learning about/reading about. I've been reading a book now and listening to a podcast. I thought that would be a good way for the community to know that we are committed, and we can get some insights as well.

Gs I like that idea. It shows our commitment, and we can share resources.

AS I set up that presentation from Liz Beaven. It was something we wanted to do as a board. We wanted to bring in speakers to our meetings. A year ago, I started a form and loose plan to get speakers, but we got stuck in who do we ask to speak to us and preferably for free. I'm happy to take that up and make calls, but I'm not sure who to ask. I'm happy to ask Liz Beaven for ideas of who to contact, but I'd love more ideas of who to contact. I'd love to start that up again, and I like DF's idea too to share resources. I'd like to do both.

GS Please circulate that again.

AS Sure thing. It's just a simple list of topic ideas and a template for scheduling.

GS NG spoke about the greater Waldorf community. I'd love to see more speakers from outside our community.

DM With the book club by Parent Council, maybe we could incorporate that book.

GS I like that. Any other ideas?

DM JT, could you present something as well?

JT Certainly, I'd be happy to do that. And I think any of us could lead that discussion for about 10-15 minutes. DM, you're more than capable of doing that.

GS AS, could I task you with one last thing? If you could summarize these ideas onto the form and then we can noodle on that for a couple weeks and speak about it at the next meeting. I'd like to start DF's idea for our next meeting.

AS Sure, I can do that, and I volunteer DF to present first.

DF Sure.

Board Calendar

AS Reviewed the tentative dates for 2021/2022 board meetings. They are standard to what we've been doing: 1st and 3rd Wednesdays. I suggest we opt for 3/23 in place of 3/16 as that is during Spring Break.

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GS I think we should move it to 3/23, so we can have that break.

DM 7/7 is close to the 4th of July. Do we want to change that?

Gs Yes, maybe change it to 7/14 and 7/21.

AS Our budget is due on 7/15, and I know we get help from Aspire, but we may need to discuss the dates to make sure we get it all done.

GS Maybe if we add 6/30. And then one board meeting in July should suffice, so let's do 6/30 and 7/14. That should ensure we have enough time to get budget approval out.

AS Okay, I will make those changes and get that onto the main board calendar that also has school dates on it as well, and I'll send that out again so everyone can have access to it.

DM And can you get that out to Deb and Laura to get on the website and ParentSquare?

AS Yes, they'll get those meeting dates. I'll take care of that.

DM Thank you.

Approval of Minutes

GS moved to approve the 04/21/21 regular meeting minutes and executive session minutes.
DM second. No further discussion. Vote is unanimous in favor: GS, DF, JT, AS, DM. **Motion passes.**

GS One last thing we have to do, and I almost forgot.

GS move to accept the results of tonight's board election of Kerstin Kubina and Nellie Grossenbacher. DF second. Unanimous vote in favor: GS, AS, JT, DF, DM. **Motion passes.**

GS moved to adjourn. DF second. No further discussion. Unanimous vote in favor: JT, GS, AS, DF, DM. **Motion passes.**

CLOSING VERSE

DM read the closing verse.

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Meeting was adjourned at 8:25pm.

Prepared by AS on 05.05.2021.