

MINUTES
VSWEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16, 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:

Frank Mirizio (FM)

Melissa Sutton (MS)

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

- David Schantz
- Helena Moriarty
- Laura Heaney

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- Patricia
- Barb Cunningham
- JJ
- Michelle Kratzer
- Colleen
- Cynthia Bartholomew
- Deb
- Jamie
- Tammy

OPENING VERSE / INTRODUCTIONS

Meeting was called to order at 6:34pm. 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

Fundraising Proposal 2021-2022

GS MS is a professional fundraiser. She was referred to us by a former board member. She's worked with Keystone Montessori and had great success there. Turned the time over to her.

MS Previously had a meeting with some board members and FM where we brainstormed. Looking for a spring fundraiser with a net goal of 140k. Needs to know more about our community assets to move forward. Is there a clear direction we want to head in?

GS We need to decide exactly how we'd like to do this. We had a fundraiser in May with the help of DM, and we're ready to look to the next school year. Should we do something similar but make it bigger, or should we do some small events along the way heading into a bigger fundraiser?

MS Continuous campaign where you're fundraising all year round can be two or three campaigns, and they all look different. Tax credits can look different as well as capital campaigns. When there are multiple campaigns, they have to look different and tap into different resources. If it's one and done, it could be a gala culminating in a silent auction. Things change if you're on site or choose a venue. We could tailor to your community as well. We need to decide who will be involved. Do you want kids or not? A lot to discuss as we guide our planning.

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GS My gut says it makes sense to do a tax credit campaign. A bigger, sustaining event for general operating fund would be great. If we could do those two things and shore up our bottom line, that would be great. There are a variety of needs around campus, so I don't want to pigeonhole us.

DM Several ideas regarding venues and collaboration with the community. Maybe a gala with child care, including auction items from individual classes. We were on campus for prom, and that was great, but I'm not sure we can provide drinks on campus, so we may need to do it off site.

FM Public charter means we have to follow public school rules, and typically public schools cannot lift a drug/alcohol prohibition on campus. You could do that off site, but not on campus.

GS I like the idea of a more sophisticated event off site, but I'm wondering if that's the right idea since we haven't been on campus much this year.

DM I don't know what parent council has planned, but we usually have a fall event, and then we have Martinmas, and winter faire, so I know we'll be on campus a bit.

FM There are venues where we can purchase the night and then up the price for tickets. Our community loves live theater, and that would be great. You could make 20k in one evening. We could also contact restaurants and get a kickback from them as well. If they are higher end places, you'll make more money.

KK I think we need an individual event for tax credits because it requires a lot of education.

FM The only thing about tax credits is that parents can decide where that money goes, so we may not be able to use it for general operations.

MS Those items are earmarked, so that's good to think about.

KK I was reading up on tax credits, and it has the list of eligible activities and programs. Could we ask parents to choose specific ones?

FM I believe that list is a green light to a parent to know where that money can go. Boards can't say where it can be used.

MS Do your parents typically designate? That's pretty rare.

GS I think many do, but I don't know the percentage number. KK, to your point, for the ones who don't choose, we can designate where those funds go.

MS Yes, and that's about education as well. Letting parents know where those funds can go. Any more thoughts regarding the direction we want to go? Do we want one event?

GS Yes, that seems to be the agreement here.

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MS I can send over some ideas, show what the events could look like, what the messaging could look like, etc. I know the parent group seems to really be utilizing the space on campus, so I think it may be good to choose an off site venue. We can compare the two as well. There's obviously a cost for off site, so that's something to think about as well. There's a lot of contract negotiating that needs to happen too. So off site or on site, or a comparison?

GS I think a comparison would be helpful.

DM I agree because we haven't heard from our staff or community to see what their interests are.

NG I like the idea of a bigger spring gala. I like the idea of class contributions for an auction. I'd also like to reach out to the broader community to auction off services. Do you work with an online platform for a live auction so we can place bids online and get more participation?

MS Oh, yes. There are many to choose from. We can do early bidding, online, and in person. There are plenty of options out there, and I can let you know those I recommend. If the community knows someone who could get a better rate, that could work too. We always need to check in with the community for resources.

GS MS, it sounds like we need more info about possibilities.

MS Yes, I can get that to you probably next week.

GS What other information do we need before our next meeting? What would you need before we get started?

MS Can you vote electronically?

GS No, that's not an option. We have to post an agenda 24 hours before, and then vote at meetings.

MS I think more information is needed. I'll get you what I have for a sustaining event and an on site/off site event. I'll get it to you early so you can mull it over, and you can always email me any questions you have. You'll need to make an informed decision the next time you meet, so I want you to have time to make that decision.

GS Yes, I think a week and a half would be sufficient.

MS I'll do my best to answer your questions and give you enough information.

GS Do you run tax credit campaigns?

MS I have, but it's fallen more toward the accounting side, but I've helped with marketing and giving Tuesday or AZ giving. Typically, an accountant or treasurer works to do that. It tends to be more internal, but I'm happy to support it to elevate and leverage the giving spirit.

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GS Perfect. Got it. Any more questions?

MS I'll be available to you.

GS Thank you so much for being here.

MS left the meeting at 7:07pm

2021-2022 Proposed Budget

GS Monique sent over the proposed budget. We have to approve the proposed budget. It sits for a few weeks, gets finalized, and then we approve the finalized budget at our next meeting on 6/30. FM, you might be the most versed in the proposed budget. Any questions about the proposed budget for FM?

KK A couple of things I noticed on the P&L. With the addition of sports and choir, I didn't notice anything for instruments or sports supplies.

FM There's a line for athletics and fees for CAA. We're predicting six different teams—golf, tennis, chess, frisbee, etc. We have funds allocated for coaching. Typically, students provide the supplies for these sports. The supplies we do need aren't terribly costly. Most schools charge to participate in sports, so we'd ask students to pay a small fee which will most likely go toward the coach since that's the biggest item. We just want to break even. We also have money that's carried over from this year since they were all cancelled.

DM Does that include circus?

FM No, that's different. I'm meeting with Jens next week. And Circus charges students; we don't take that money. I think we'll be using the community college as well for their tennis courts. We're looking to work with Legacy Golf Course as well. KK, you asked about music, but there shouldn't be much cost because we're starting with choir not band or orchestra. I've been working with the teacher on what she needs.

DM What about instruments? When are we looking to bring that back?

FM The teachers really want strings back, but I couldn't add both choir and strings this year. It was simpler to hire for choir, so we went with that. We'll start with high school because we have the most openings in high school. Most families tell me they leave after 8th grade because of extra curriculars, so we're adding sports and choir to help with enrollment. Did everyone freeze? It went silent.

DM I was looking for more: glass blowing, black smithing, etc.

FM Those are very specific to Waldorf. We don't typically see that at other schools in the valley.

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NG I know we're talking sports, but what about clubs for students? Possibly run by parents?

FM Clubs are useful; typically clubs that kids want. You have to have 3-4 kids, and you have to have a sponsor that's an employee of the school. We need to follow protocols—fingerprinting, CPR training, etc. If we have that, and a staff member wants to do it, then we could certainly do that. A card game club, checkers, pick a club, volunteering service club, the list is in the hundreds. We just need an adult sponsor to supervise.

NG As a board member I couldn't do that?

FM I think I'd maybe leave that decision to the board. I do know you have a fingerprint card, but maybe you'd want to do other trainings like CPR, blood born pathogens. As long as you qualify for that, and the board says they can live with that, I wouldn't differ on that.

GS We can definitely discuss that. Let's circle back to the budget. Some things I've heard in the last few years is that teachers are having difficulty getting class supplies.

FM Yes, there's a line in the budget for classroom supplies. We increased the budget for classroom supplies and also maintenance—like carpet shampooing, bathroom maintenance, AC. You will see some jumps in the budget for these items. Since this is my first budget here, I'm being cautious, and we may end up with some leftovers. But things happen. I met with Steve and Hector to go over each building and what we might incur, and I put it in the budget just in case. KK, did that answer some of your questions? I know Monique will contact you as well.

KK Yes. For me, it would be helpful to see some expanded notes because it's hard to determine some of the specifics.

FM You're asking the same questions I have had.

DM KK, I go directly to Monique. She prefers a phone call.

GS Moved to approve the proposed budget for fiscal year 2021-2022. DF Second. No further discussion. Votes unanimous in favor: GS, DF, AS, JT, DM, NG, KK. **Motion passes.**

Enrollment Update

FM We are at 300. We're still having tours, and there are families filling out paperwork right now. We'd really like some high school enrollment. We will have some students in the grades leaving, so we'll be able to use our waitlists. At the high school, we have six kids in limbo who don't know if they're staying or going. We know families leave for band or orchestra or other extra curriculars. We did meet with families to see what we could do or add to get them to stay. The budget is based on 280, so we were conservative. We changed from 287 to 280 just in case. We do not want to be short. I'm still hoping we'll be over 300. We did get two more high schoolers this week, so that's good.

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GS It's encouraging that we're sitting around 300. We'd love to see that go up.

FM I know a lot of people want to know how we can afford all these extras like choir and sports, and it's about enrollment. If you have enrollment, you have state dollars. This is good teaching, good families, good people enrolling in our school. 240-300 is a large jump. That's why we're able to add those new things.

Proposed Capital Improvement Projects

GS FM, you sent us an update for the woodshop and the fencing for the high school.

FM We're using small vendors, and Armando's Grading has given me two proposals for a block wall and a cement pad for the woodshop. We're piecemealing to save money because pricing has gone up everywhere, and these bigger companies cost more. We're saving a lot by using smaller companies. To remind you, the block wall is the fence by high school. We'd have a double gate and a walking gate. It will be upgraded in functionality and aesthetics. Then the pad is for the metal shop. The other bid is the metal frame for the woodshop. We'll get bids for electrical, AC, etc. I think we can get this building up to code for 100k total. That's framing, pad, AC, electrical, water, architect plans, fire alarm systems. That's remarkable to get a building that size up for that price. Willemeng wanted 199k for it. We will get blueprints as well. DF, I did research that company you suggested for fencing. They did an invoice, and it was about 8k higher, so I went ahead with the low bid you approved at the last meeting.

GS Any questions about these three invoices for the woodshop/block wall?

JT FM, what size is the woodshop? Is it the same or larger?

FM It's a little longer 60x20. It's about 11 feet longer. I included Steve and Luis in the dialogue and walkthroughs with the companies. They're supportive that this is a good way to go.

JT Will it be in the same spot?

FM No, it's moving. We didn't want to do demo. We're moving it and laying a brand new foundation. It's away from classrooms, so noise shouldn't be an issue for grades or high school. It's off the beaten path.

JT Is there water?

FM We're using existing water. I don't think we need a sink inside. You need it outside.

JT Well, that's exciting. Thank you for that.

FM This is all coming from ESSER funds.

JT FM, if this is approved do you have a completion time?

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FM No, but they know that I would like it before school begins. Pad and the building shouldn't be a problem, but electric may be an issue because I have to have permits for the city. We may have to start school in the old woodshop and then move when it's completed. I would prioritize this project because it's not a good situation to have kids in that building.

JT So maybe January 2022?

FM Yes.

JT Thank you. That is fantastic news.

KK What will happen to the old woodshop?

FM I've spoken to Michelle, and we're thinking more animal space. If that doesn't happen, we'll want to tear it down.

DM Was there discussion with high school staff regarding the block fence?

FM I've talked with some teachers, and they're aware of that wobbly gate that poses a lot of problems.

DM Is there a diagram or picture to see?

FM No, but we've decided on cream to match what we already have.

DM I'm having a hard time seeing it as a beautification with a block wall.

FM There are some safety concerns as well. Kids could jump that fence.

JT DM, they could have a mural project to make that more enticing. That could be a great project for the kids.

FM They have two projects they want to do right now, but there's not enough space. This block wall might solve that problem and give them the space they need. Also, we don't have any signage for the high school. We need something to show that we're a high school.

GS So we need to approve the block wall, cement pad, and metal frame building.

GS moved to approve \$50,000 expense for the block wall, cement pad, and the metal frame building based on the invoices Frank Mirizio sent us. KK second. No further discussion. Vote unanimous in favor: GS, AS, KK, JT, NG, DM, DF. **Motion passes.**

Approval of Legal Invoice

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GS We have received an invoice for a legal matter we have with a former employee. The invoice is for \$8575, which sounds like a lot, but they are doing a great job. Any questions that we can address?

GS moved to approve payment of the legal invoice for Squire Patton Boggs for \$8575.00. DF second. No further discussion. Unanimous vote in favor: JT, GS, AS, DF, DM, NG, KK. **Motion passes.**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Summer Work

FM Everyone likes to take a breath in the summer, but the people in the front office have so much work to do. Also, we're having the contemplation right now. Everyone is coming and being cooperative, but it does get emotional. In the end, I think this will be a good thing for our school so we can move forward. In three weeks, we start the summer training. We're up to 13 people, and 3 are paying customers. I have to thank Parent Council who is funding this. We're excited to start. I'm meeting with Laura and Michelle to start planning lunches for half these trainings. We're busy with interviews and hires. We have a first and fifth grade opening. We're working hard to find that right person. We have three interviews upcoming, and all three have agreed to do the summer training we're offering. We also had our audit this week. Overall, it went well, but we did get dinged on a couple things. We're working on that with the auditor. We're ordering supplies and fixing rooms and benches. We have inspections. We're busy. We're getting ready for school already. By August 11, we'll be ready.

DM What about the lazuring? Is that happening?

FM Yes, two teachers have already started. I saw some teachers yesterday with paint dripping. They like it. It's a ritual. They're laughing and smiling and painting away, and it looks great.

NG Are the teachers your interviewing Waldorf certified?

FM We're looking for Waldorf trained, but it's difficult. We had two interviews set up and an individual missed two interviews, and it didn't work out. The two we're interviewing next week are not Waldorf trained, but they're willing to be trained, and another worked for DMS previously. NG, if you need to come by next week to get caught up, just let me know.

GS In regards to the auditor, let me connect with you because we have some reporting to do for RSF at the end of October. But let me check on that timing.

AS Yes, it's at the end of October. It's on the calendar.

06.30.21 Approved

DF left the meeting at 8:00pm.

COVID-19

Mitigation Plan 2021-2022

GS A little over a year ago there was an executive order stating we needed to create a mitigation plan. Now we're in this limbo plan, and as far as I know there are no directives to have anything specific in place. FM, have you heard anything different on that?

FM That is correct. Those directions ended for this school year.

GS In November 2020, ADE issued a mandate requiring masks. That was rescinded mid-April as the vaccine rollout happened. There's currently no requirement to do anything for next school year. There's nothing specific coming down for us to follow. I know we're short on time. We're still in the early summer. We have time to see how the vaccine roll out continues, how the metrics change. Now doesn't seem like the time to make the decision if in a month and half we have to make changes. That being said, I know people want to make plans. If we did it mid-July I think that could work.

JT My question is, we're not required to have a mitigation plan for the upcoming year?

GS Yes, that's correct.

JT So the plan expired already?

GS I cant remember if it's the last day of school or the last day of the fiscal year.

FM I think it's the last day of school, but that varies on districts.

JT Time is running out either way. FM, you don't have any sense that there's going to be a mitigation plan required?

FM The districts I communicate with believe that the school year will start like a normal year, but they will also be prepared to enact a mitigation plan if needed. We seem to be heading in that direction.

DM So you're proposing we revisit the discussion in July?

GS I'm saying let's wait and see what we want to do, if we want to do anything. I think we should wait until we're closer to the start of school. Are you asking about people on campus right now?

DM I want to give families time to make plans.

GS Yes, that's the question. How much time do we need for families to plan? No one seems to object to handwashing or cleaning, but mask wearing is quite controversial. County wide we're

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moderate, but those are some of the lowest numbers we've seen. Vaccines are available now for 12 and up. Masks are another effective protection. Depending on what the community spread looks like, we need to make a rational choice based on that. We could even make separate guidelines—like kids ages 5-11 could wear masks but perhaps others not. There are a lot of ways to go. That's my take on the situation.

NG I feel like if the mitigation plan has ended that it should be business as usual in September. If there are people who are hesitant, then mask wearing could be optional. A lot of people aren't wearing masks around the state.

FM I had one parent respond that survey to talk with me.

NG I think it should be optional, and I don't think we should put it off.

AS I'm aligned with GS that we should wait and discuss it later. Over the course of the year, we saw so many mandates come and go. Sometimes we had a plan and that same day an executive order would drop. Also, the US Department of Education keeps updating their Covid-19 Handbooks. We got one in February, a second in April, and a third this month. It just came in our email today. I imagine we will get new guidance before the school year from the US Department of Education as well as ADE. We could make our decision once we get that new guidance or set a timeline. We only have one meeting in July, so that may be the best time to decide on the plan.

DM I also think that masks should be optional.

GS Any plans about making this decision now or later?

DM We have to make decisions. Whether they're easy or hard.

GS Of course. We're not saying we won't make decision.

NG I think we should make the decision tonight. I understand that new information comes, but we've learned to be flexible. If things change over the next month, we can change. At the least, masks could be optional for those who'd like to wear them.

DM Are we hearing from faculty?

FM I haven't spoken specifically to the teachers about this, but I have been listening. The general consensus is that they want to get back to normal. They want no masks, no social distancing. I think we've got to make the decision so families can decide.

AS I know you haven't interviewed teachers about this, but do you know if they're concerned about enforcing mask wearing for a child whose parents want them to wear a mask? I'm sure classes will be split on this. Also, what about a kid on the spectrum or a kid with ADHD who

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says “Yes, Mom; yes, Dad” in the car, but then they’re on campus and the mask comes off. How are teachers going to keep kids who should be wearing masks in masks? Are they concerned about that? How are they feeling about that?

FM The end of the year was a struggle with teachers trying to get kids to wear masks. Yes, teachers struggled to get kids to follow those protocols. The last month was difficult.

GS KK, DF, what are your thoughts?

KK I’m of the same mind as you. I’d like to wait until July with all of the information we can get. We get blowback when we have to change things up as well.

JT I can hold off until July. Although it sounds like the decision is made because the mitigation plan is over.

GS Yes, that sounds right.

JT We can always say we’ll encourage handwashing. The particulars that AS pointed out, that could get tricky. I would never tell anyone to take your mask off. That’s not going to happen.

GS After hearing this discussion, I think I’ve changed my mind here regarding when to make this decision. My thought is that we simply say we will return to business as normal in the fall, barring any directives of ADE or AZDHS or an executive order. Of course, anyone who’d like to wear a mask could do so.

GS moved that for the 2021-2022 school year DMS will return to a normal school environment with no Covid-19 mitigation plan in place, provided that any student or faculty member who wishes to wear a mask may do so, and we will continue to encourage the cleanliness procedures that we’ve had in place such as handwashing and surface cleaning. DM second. The following discussion took place:

AS Are you opening it up for us to share our thoughts now? Or would like us to vote and see how it goes? What’s happening?

GS That’s up to us.

AS Okay, I’ll see how the vote goes, and we’ll go from there.

Votes in favor: JT, GS, DM, NG. Votes against: AS, KK. **Motion passes.**

FM Would you like me to put that out on ParentSquare?

GS Yes. I’m sure the community will like that we’ve provided some clarity.

06.30.21 Approved

BOARD PROCEDURES

Approval of Minutes

GS moved to approve the 06/02/21 regular meeting minutes. JT second. No further discussion. Vote is unanimous in favor: GS, JT, AS, NG, KK. Abstain: DM. **Motion passes.**

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

CLOSING VERSE

KK read the closing verse.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.

Prepared by AS on 06.16.2021.