

**MINUTES**  
**VSWEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**WEDNESDAY, August 4, 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)

Michelle Kratzer (MK)

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

- Jean Falconburg
- Finnin Dominis
- WS

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- Deborrah Allen
- Laura Heaney
- David Schantz
- Jasmin Sky Pena Benavides
- Helena Moriarty
- Patrick Quigley
- JJ
- Brosia M
- Shannon
- Sami
- Colleen Pope
- Ruby
- Christian Pena
- Megan
- Tammy

### **OPENING VERSE / INTRODUCTIONS**

Meeting was called to order at 6:35pm. GS welcomed the public to the meeting, read the opening verse, and reviewed meeting procedures.

The Board members introduced themselves along with FM and MK.

JT joined the meeting at 6:38pm.

GS Provided an overview of the agenda.

### **BUDGET AND FINANCE**

#### Enrollment Update

FM We lost about 18 people this week, most who were moving. The good news is we had 16-18 people on a waitlist. Today we're at 288. We're waiting on some paperwork from new students. There was a tour this week for 11 kids, so we may have even more students enrolled.

GS The other good news is we're budgeted at 287, so we're doing okay.

#### Fundraising Proposal

DM Melissa Sutton answered our questions, so we wanted to make sure we're all on the same page. So we need to decide if we want to do campaign funding and tax credit support, or have a one time event.

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GS Yeah, I think we need to make a decision.

DM She did make it clear that she would provide training and materials, but it would be up to us to bring that to the public. She wasn't providing any sponsorship, that was the other thing. I thought she would be contributing in some fashion, but that's not the case.

GS So what do you think, DM?

DM I'm torn because I saw larger events we've done well, so I'm not sure we need a facilitator. But it was helpful to have that extra person when we did the online event.

DF Not sure that it's a slam dunk like we thought it would be.

KK I feel the same way, like maybe we can pull this off on our own.

Discussion regarding services Melissa Sutton can provide.

DM MK, is this something you could see Parent Council wanting to support?

MK Yes, but I do agree with AS that we have trouble bringing people outside of the school, and if she can help with that, that would be great.

DM I'd like to have students participate in some form of entertainment, but I'm not sure when and how to involve them or staff. Are we thinking we want to go with an off site gala? Is that what we're thinking?

GS I'm thinking the opposite--that it may be better to have her help with a campaign and marketing and getting out more messaging than "We need donations." So if we can get that kind of sustaining fund going, that could enable us to hire a development director internally to facilitate fundraisers and donations on a full time basis.

DF So having her structure effective community engagement outside of fundraising?

GS Yes, and I know JT has said it before that our PR has not been good for a few years, probably more. If we could improve that and bring in some money through a campaign that would be great.

DF There's also conversations around events like that regarding how inclusive they are.

FM Many staff members have talked positively about the previous galas. As you know, you get money by giving something for the night. It's a fun night out. On that side of the coin, that's a good way to fundraise, and people will remember that as an annual event. The key thing here is can we have a gala without having to spend a lot on the venue and get the food donated, then the income would be high. Staff has talked it up. They say it was so fun, and they'd like to see it again.

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GS I'd love to be able to do both if we could. I don't know how much money a campaign would bring in versus a gala. Plus the gala has more capital outlay, unless we can get donations. I'd like to generate some excitement though.

NG I can see that there's hesitation, and I get that. But I also agree with AS. I think that if a gala is something we could pull off, I think we could switch our gears and utilize her more in a training sense like marketing, outreach, and so on, so maybe next year we could go about this ourselves.

KK Are we sure that this is the right person that will get us where we want to go? I think she's really great at certain things, but I almost want someone who's more prescriptive—this is how we get from A-Z. This feels a bit grass rootsy to me, so I'm not sure what benefit that would be.

DF I wonder if that's an individual versus an agency?

KK Do we want to get some other bids and see what that's like? I'd like to see what else is out there?

GS I think getting more bids is more helpful, but I think we need to know what we want to do. I think if we could tell her what we want, we'd get more specific feedback of what she can/can't do. I feel like we should decide what we want to do as a board. I've heard enthusiasm for a gala, so I think that would be a clear way to do it if we want to get other bids.

DF Does everyone agree that we want structured community engagement? Then we could add the gala later?

AS I like the idea of starting with community engagement and getting training on marketing and then moving forward on a decision to do a gala with Melissa or someone else or by ourselves.

JT We're trying the best to decide what services to hire her for. MK, do you think there's a lot of gala excitement on your end?

MK Yes, a lot of parents want community engagement.

JT So it sounds like what DF has described is a mix. We want to point ourselves toward a gala, but we want to start now with something on the ground.

MK We've heard a lot from parents about being bothered for money, so I think community engagement would be great as well as a gala.

JT A gala is a lot of work—blood, sweat, and tears, mostly tears. They're beautiful tears, but it's a lot. I guess we're trying to warm up here and engage the community. It can't always be the same 5 people, so we need to engage more people. So, yes, DF, I like your plan.

GS I think everyone has said what they want, I think it makes sense to make a motion and vote.

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GS Moved that we engage Melissa Sutton for developing a sustaining fund for us and all the marketing that goes along with that and community engagement and that we also seek other bids for someone to help us put together a large scale off site gala. JT/DM second. No further discussion. Unanimous vote in favor: GS, DF, AS, JT, DM, NG, KK. **Motion passes.**

AS Before we move on, are we asking DM to speak with Melissa about this? We made the motion, but we're missing the action.

GS Yes, DM, will you please speak with Melissa about our decision?

DM Yes, I can do that.

### School Spirit Store

AS KK and I split up the research for prospective online spirit stores. We looked at ease of use, kickback, types of items sold, if they ship individually, etc. We've decided on two we like. At this point, we will make the unpublished stores and see how that goes and provide an update to the board at the next meeting. After that, we just need to add the link to our website. KK, did you want to add anything?

KK We are mindful that we want to offer some Waldorf items to our community, so I did some research this summer by visiting some schools and their stores. We are kicking around this idea and looking into Frank's input and involving others. So this is something that we are mindful of and will continue to work on, but it's a bit down the road.

DM Shared concerns about teachers or coaches being able to sell their items to fundraise.

AS Deb forwarded a letter I wrote to teachers to see what their fundraising plans were, and I didn't hear anything back. Previously, I've seen shirts and cards, but they'd all been student art. What KK and I are working on is simply using our school logo, so we don't think there will be an issue because we're selling different things. And if they'd like us to pull an item for a short while, we can do that as well.

KK We can also use these sites for that as well because we can offer other logos.

NG Do we get to choose the items so that they fit our community?

AS Yes, we looked at several stores and specifically at the items they offered. We didn't want to go a cheap route like Oriental Trading where it would fall apart and be trashed. We wanted good items and things that our community would want to buy. One site we're looking at has stainless steel vacuum sealed water bottles, canvas tote bags, etc, so yes, we are making sure the items are of good quality and of interest to our community.

## **COVID-19**

### Update

GS Shared a recap regarding last year's Covid-19 plans regarding online school, in person, or hybrid. In March 2021, the governor took this decision out of our hands and said everyone needed to be open for in person learning, but we did have to have a mitigation plan including a mask policy. Then in June, the mitigation strategy and the flexibility to tell everyone your plan ended, and in its place we got an executive order that prohibited public and charter schools from mandating masks as a condition for attending school as well as mandating vaccines to attend school. There's also no requirement to offer a mitigation plan. Currently, we are not allowed to require masks or a vaccine. There's no mandate to include a mitigation plan, so that's where we are. Over the last few days, we've gotten emails regarding masks in both directions, so it continues to be a hot topic. But as a board our hands are tied. That said, a lot of the reading I've done says that the risks of getting covid are significantly higher if you're not vaccinated. A significant number of children at our school cannot yet get vaccinated. Previously, it was said that covid didn't grossly affect children, but we know now that Delta is changing things. So the question is, do we want to make a strong recommendation to the community? The CDC has now recommended that everyone should be wearing masks in high transmission areas like we are in Maricopa County. Under the old rules, this would've meant that we'd be doing online only. Do we want to recommend to our student body and teachers to wear masks?

DF It's no surprise that I'd like to recommend mask wearing. Now we can carry the virus and transmit it to others even when vaccinated, and it can spread through children and other people, so it makes common sense. City of Phoenix has told employees to wear masks.

AS We all received a document in June 2021. The US Department of Education Covid-19 Handbook 3 details safe practices for in-person learning and school leadership's responsibility to promote vaccination and mask wearing. I'm going to read straight from it.

The safe practices for in-person learning include: "Promoting COVID-19 Vaccination; Consistent and Correct Use of Masks; Physical Distancing; Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette; Maintaining Healthy Environments"

Promoting Covid-19 Vaccination: "[School leadership] can also play a key role in providing accurate information on the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine and build vaccine confidence by acknowledging and addressing their communities' concerns."

Promoting Consistent and Correct Use of Masks: "Another key prevention strategy is to encourage the consistent and correct use of masks. . . . When people who are not fully vaccinated correctly wear a mask, they protect others as well as themselves. Consistent and correct mask use by people who are not fully vaccinated is especially important indoors and in crowded settings, when physical distancing cannot be maintained. Administrators should encourage people who are not fully vaccinated to wear a mask consistently and correctly. . . . In areas . . . with mixed populations of people who are vaccinated and unvaccinated may consider

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... mask use by all people present on campus including vaccinated students, faculty, staff, and other people such as visitors.”

AS Regardless of our personal views, this is what we are being asked to do—share this information. And the CDC, American Academy of Pediatrics, AZDHS, and Maricopa County Dept of Health have all updated their guidelines to include “universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status.” ADE says the same thing. So while we can’t mandate masks due to the executive order, we are being tasked with promoting and recommending these safe practices to our community.

DM I think that’s excellent verbiage, I like that it’s “promote” and “highly recommended.”

DF I agree.

KK I agree.

NG I think it should be optional. I don’t think we have a right to ask people for their medical information whether they’re children or adults. It puts us all in a big predicament as of what to do. I’ve been researching in regards to the levels of suicide that have gone up in the year and the importance that kids have the social component of needing to see and hear their teachers properly. I think the emotional components need to be taken into play as well. I am for optional, which is what we have right now.

GS To be clear, mandating is not an option for us legally. It’s do we want to take a step of encouraging and promoting the use of masks while saying it’s optional?

NG I think we need to allow parents to make the decision on what they want to do. It’s a parent’s right to make that decision whether we recommend it or not. The parents need to make that decision.

JT Here we are with this word game again about promote or recommend, but I think we need to promote or endorse what the CDC recommends. Legally we can’t enforce that, but my biggest concern is the comfort level of the children. Some will wear masks, and some will not, and I want to see a great deal of respect for the decisions parents are making for their children. That’s a big concern of mine. There’s an issue of asking teachers to enforce that. Parents will be checking in on teachers asking if their child wore their masks and that may be uncomfortable for them. But I do believe that we have to be very sober about this as it’s a very fluid conversation. There may be changes. We know that it can happen just like that.

GS Yes, we do.

JT So I like optional at this time, but this may change.

GS We need to have compassion for the kids. We don’t want them to feel stigmatized for their decision whatever that is. And we also don’t want to pressure our teachers to enforce mask wearing. And NG I think you were aiming in the same direction regarding compassion.

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DM Just a quick question, you asked if we should promote? What does that mean—a statement in a board meeting, a poster, an email?

GS I was thinking a school wide message regarding information from CDC and stating that the school supports these recommendations, but it's up to families to choose for themselves and that teachers will not be enforcing a family's choice.

JT Could we hear from FM what his wisdom on this topic is?

FM I'm a trained educator, and I don't like the political realm at all. I've been taught to seek out a win win, and there's no win win here. If we decide not to mask up, people will be mad. If we decided to mask up, people will be mad. The country is divided, and so are we. I believe in the CDC in masking and vaccinations. I'm vaccinated. I wear masks. But I know that other people feel differently, and I respect that. Right now the law is clear. We are up to 9 districts who are going to defy the governor. You will notice those are inner city congregations where there are higher contact rates because of the density there. There is a lawsuit from a teacher in the Phoenix Union, and that lawsuit will decide everything. Once that happens, things may change. JT, I want school to return to normal. I want kids to have fun. Teachers are all excited to have kids back in the classroom. But every day we see news that makes us think we can't go backwards. In two weeks, we could be in a situation like Florida and have to shut down. To focus on the topic AS brought up, to recommend and promote is taking a side. I'm always looking for a win win, and there isn't one.

GS I think that's an important distinction promoting versus just saying it's up to you. I've learned that there is no win win, but we have to do what we think is right. Sometimes that means it's not going to be a win win or a majority win.

NG One way that allowed me to help think about JT and our teachers and what they're faced with kids having an option is that when we send our kids to school we don't rely on the teacher to make sure a kid eats their lunch. Do the best that you can in this situation. We are all very divided on many issues, and that's my wish for JT and the rest our teachers that you can only be in control of so much. It's a lot on a teacher's plate since you're with them all day.

JT I really appreciate that. The fine part of it is though as a lower grades teacher, there really is an expectation for the teacher to be sure that the students are eating their lunch, and that helps the teacher on many different levels, so I just want to say I appreciate what you're saying, but adding the mask to that makes it complex. Teaching in the lower grades is very parental. "Look in your lunchbox. Why is your sandwich in the trash? Now you're hungry." It's in our benefit as a teacher to stay on that because there's a lot of caring for children. But adding the mask to that takes it to another level of complexity.

DF There will be parents sending kids in masks no matter what we do, so I think it would be good for the board to say teachers will do their best, but it's not a teacher's job to be a mask enforcer in a situation where masks are optional. And even when masks were required, it was difficult for the younger kids to keep them on. Teachers just do their best.



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GS How about this—I'm going to make a motion.

GS Moved that DMS strongly recommend that all members of the school follow the guidelines issued by the CDC, Maricopa County Health, and ADE regarding Covid-19 mitigation strategies including the use of masks provided, however, that teachers will have no expectation to enforce any individual family's choice regarding mask wearing. DF second. The following discussion took place:

NG Can we also add that even though we'll strongly recommend it that it's up to the family?

GS Yes, let's revise. AS, please add "and provided that it is ultimately up to individual families to choose whether to use masks or not."

FM Should we add "at this time" for now?

GS Yes, let's add "at this time."

GS Moved that at this time DMS strongly recommend that all members of the school follow the guidelines issued by the CDC, Maricopa County Health Department, and ADE regarding Covid-19 mitigation strategies including the use of masks provided, however, that teachers will have no expectation to enforce any individual family's choice regarding mask wearing and provided that it is ultimately up to families to choose whether to use masks or not. KK second. The following discussion took place:

DM It reads like teachers cannot make a choice.

AS Want me to remove the word family so it just read individual?

GS Moved that, at this time, DMS strongly recommend that all members of the school follow the guidelines issued by the CDC, Maricopa County Health Department, and ADE regarding Covid-19 mitigation strategies including the use of masks provided, however, that teachers will have no expectation to enforce any individual's choice regarding mask wearing and provided that it is ultimately up to individuals to choose whether to use masks or not. KK second. No further discussion. Vote in favor: GS, AS, DF, KK, NG, JT. Opposed: DM. **Motion passes.**

GS AS, you had all that information at your fingertips, will you please take a first stab at a communication and circulate that to the board?

AS Yes, I can do that.

DF AS, I can look at it and send it to individuals in the medical community to make sure it's accurate.

AS Yes, that would be great, please fact check it.

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## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

### 2021-2022 School Year Preparation

FM We've painted, put up a white fence, cleaned up the campus, put up the wall near the high school. It's getting stuccoed and painted soon and the gates will be going in. Moving forward on the woodshop and the restrooms for adults. We've done some fact checking. Dr. Darian has been great to check who has the proper editions of books for our staff. Some books seem to have disappeared. We'll ask teachers to check those into us so they can't disappear anymore. So we're working on some curriculum things. We're done with hires. We have all the aides and staff in place. Luis Camacho came in and fixed all the benches and is now working on picnic tables. We feel good about making updates on those picnic benches. Tomorrow is the first meeting for new staff. Frida and Monday are other teacher trainings: 4013b, harassment training, emergency training, and so on. Kids coming on campus changes everything. Everybody's face lights up, and we're ready to see that. Our Waldorf teacher training went wonderfully. Thank you again to Michelle and Parent Council for covering the costs of that. Our contemplation exercise had our last meeting this week. The first goal was for people to truly talk and listen, and that has taken place, and we feel really good about that moving forward.

GS Thank you. That is all really good news.

JT FM, I wanted to thank you for the state of the campus. It's the best it's looked in many years. I wanted to thank Mr. Pawlo and Hector for their hard work this summer. The place is really looking good, and I thank you for that.

FM Since we're in thank you's I've forgotten a couple of parents. We've hired a 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher, Mr. Rustempasic. Some parents have stepped up to paint his room and even cut out wood trim for the windows and chalkboard. Nina Prange and her daughters and Kristen Ziegenbein both helped tremendously with those projects. If you see them, please thank them. They really went above and beyond.

GS Thank you again on behalf of the board and to all of the people you just thanked. The school couldn't do it without them.

DM Thank you to board members and everyone watching, and thank you to our faculty and staff. It's a great feeling to be a part of this.

## **COMMUNITY**

### Update

GS We talked about some steps we'd do. We took some steps already—we attended a board retreat this morning, and we've invited MK to our meeting, and we're so glad you're here. We've talked about having a town hall. And let's see, where are we in terms of what else needs to

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happen? We talked about Joan Treadaway meeting us once a month to guide us in Waldorf and the other one was doing some training with the state.

DM There was a total of 8 items on my list. We talked about a town hall, but we haven't set a date yet. I think FM was going to give us some dates to choose from.

GS Yes, that was my memory as well.

DM What about love stories--do we want to post those written statements, or do we want to do videos?

AS I think we could start with written stories and then change it over when videos are ready. I know that can get complicated and time consuming.

KK, NG, and DF shared permission to post written love stories.

DM And then are we planning a town hall first and then discussing public comment changes?

NG Will that be in person?

GS I'd like to do in person but in a large area due to covid, but I'd also like to add an online piece so we can be inclusive as we can.

DM I think you touched on everything else. The last one was regarding holding each other accountable.

FM I remember being asked for a calendar to know who will attend which events and festivals.

GS Could we create a sign up sheet based on that calendar, so we could get one or two board members present to do that.

FM Do you want me to have Bonnie do that? You could just add your initials and then we could distribute that? Maybe one semester at a time?

GS Sure.

NG If it doesn't come out soon, I can be there for the rose ceremony.

DM I will be there.

KK I will be there as well.

DM Is there a place we need to be?

FM Just being there and enjoying the event.

AS Do we have contact information for the state training?

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GS If someone has that contact information, I could call and start that conversation.

FM I'm not sure if it's through ADE or the AZ Charter Board Association. I think there's a separate set of rules they have to share with us.

JT I think Mr. Wahbeh may know. He's planned a training in the past.

GS Okay, I will reach out to him to do that. Anything else?

DM Thank you to everyone who participated.

Gs Yes, thank you to DM , JT, FM, and MK. It know it was a lot of work.

## **PARENTS**

### Update

MK Parent Council hasn't had any summer meetings, but we are hoping to get together the leadership to set the dates for this year. Most likely we will stick to the second Tuesday, switching off from morning and evening. That will be decided as well as being in person or continuing on Zoom. Again, that will be dependent on what leadership feels. But mostly likely we will continue with zoom even if we do meet in person. We are recruiting for a secretary since ours moved away. If you know of anybody, we'd love to have them. A few important dates to share: BBQ 9/29 for Michelmas. We feed the students. Winter Faire is 12/11, so mark your calendars. And I think that's it.

GS Thank you, MK. Questions for MK?

NG I emailed regarding if you need help for providing meals for teacher trainings.

MK We will be picking up lunch, and DM is helping with tea. I'm not sure about Monday. That's a question for FM.

FM Monday, staff is having lunch on their own.

NG I'm happy to help if you need an extra set of hands.

## **BOARD PROCEDURES**

### Approval of Minutes

GS moved to approve the 07/14/21 regular meeting minutes. KK second. No further discussion. Vote is unanimous in favor: GS, JT, AS, DM, DF, KK. Abstain: NG. **Motion passes.**

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

### **CLOSING VERSE**

DF read the closing verse.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:23pm.

Prepared by AS on 08.04.2021.