



MINUTES
VSWEA Board of Directors Regular Meeting
6210 S. 28th St. Phoenix, AZ 85042
Eurythmy Room
Wednesday, August 17, 2022
VIA [Zoom](#)

Members Present:

Kerstin Kubina (KK)—President
Dan Franks (DF)--Treasurer
April Sauer (AS)—Secretary
John Tanner (JT)

Danielle Martinez (DM)
Nellie Grossenbacher (NG)
Ben Fong (BF)
Myriah Mhoon (MM)

Members Absent: Scott Edwards

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:

Kristen Ziegenbein
Laura Heaney
Morgan Davis
Roxana Elixavide
tammy/tom
MD

Bradley Young
Sophie & Mike McCurley
H
Kelsey Orosz
deb
Lily Zamora

Opening Verse/Introductions

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

The Board members introduced themselves along with FM and MK.

Executive Director Update

FM A week into school, and everything is going well. New staff has been great. AC and a half are out. Trying to find temporary solutions until we can purchase/install new AC for 8th. 1st grade AC will likely be fixed. Looking at 8k for a new AC. That's what we paid for our last AC. Looking to make emergency purchases like AC without board approval at board meetings. Other things: pickup and drop off has gone well. He's relaxing with EC/1st grade to help the kids with separation anxiety. It's progressing. 3rd-high school is going well. The back parking lot is becoming an issue. Parents are dropping kids off using the back lot. They need to come to the

front lot for drop off. The high school new start time of 8am is going well. Electives are first, allowing them to do movement outdoors when it's cooler outside.

FM We are at 295. 4 more turning in paperwork soon. We budgeted at 300; we're at 299. The high school is up 14 and at 57 total. Purchased new desks, working on sustainability programming to help build the high school. Hiring two EC aides tomorrow. We'll be at full staffing once that's done. Budget looks good. Salaries have increased. Teachers are happy with that. We want to continue to increase in numbers to add to our funding.

DM How many grades are getting to play before school starts?

FM Many grades do circle time before they start main lesson.

DM It's mainly with their class?

FM For the grades, yes. Though there are some pairings. The high school is all together.

DM The review of pay increases, does that happen with the aides?

FM Everyone got raises.

DM For a new hire?

FM An aide would get 15/hr. With teachers it's different; it depends on their qualifications. We did put that down in our long-term goals to look at that this year. I'd like to offer new teachers more.

DM Can you talk about teacher training?

FM We did have the summer teacher training, that Parent Council sponsored financially for us. Lots of our teachers finished year 2 training. We're hoping to turn that into a Waldorf state certificate. We had two teachers who weren't hired in time to take the training. 4 in year 3, 4 in year 2, and 3 in year 1 will be next year's configuration. We also had teachers taking grades training online, and we were able to reimburse some of that. We had teachers do Move on When reading training. That came from 301. DEI training workshop with West Ed occurred with our teachers. We have another session in September and October to complete the training. It went well. Lots of good participation. We've taken a step in the right direction.

DM Feedback from staff?

FM We have a staff meeting tomorrow where we can discuss that, but they have had opportunities to ask questions of West Ed.

DM Were you able to do the trainings this summer?

FM I didn't get to be at everything because I was hiring teachers. I've been told that I'll still be in year two next year.

Animal Coordinator Update

MK We are working on rolling out grades animal care programs. They've all been approved by the curriculum director, Dr. Darian. Some grades have already started their programs. Hosted

an Animal Care meeting to get everyone up to date, talk training, etc. First meeting was yesterday. 35 attendees were there. The next goal is to get these volunteers trained. Volunteers need fingerprint clearance cards to work with students. We'll create a fundraiser as well with volunteers. We have some repairs that need to be done. Future plans—looking to use the old woodshop as a barn for the animals. Looking at building a coop near the orchard. Every Friday this year will be a bake sale for different classes. Animal Care will be kicking off the first one on 8/19. We're hoping to get a fundraiser date approved later in the meeting.

NG Will the new chicks and ducks stay on campus?

MK It depends on how many we have. We have the capacity for 40-50, so we're pushing it as we're at 35 right now. Ducks we plan to keep.

MM You said curriculum, was there a discussion about approval at the last board meeting?

MK We went through Dr. Darian to discuss curriculum and put it in writing and get it approved.

MM I was assuming that curriculum needed board approval, but I may be mistaken.

FM Nothing changed. We didn't create something new. It had been discontinued during Covid, and now it's started back up again. So we're doing what was happening before Covid.

MK And it was really just Animal Care looking to put it in writing and have better communication.

DM I think we did talk about investigating that, so maybe that's something we still need to research.

KK Any other questions?

DM Was there a proposed date for the fundraiser?

MK Yes, it's in the agenda later on.

DF Will we discuss the email we received?

KK That is not on the agenda. I think we'll need to put it on next month's agenda.

Financial Update

KK Shared screen on Zoom for Profit and Loss vs Budget. Wanted to explain our finances better. As a charter we are funded through the state of AZ, which means we have to comply with state standards. We want to provide Waldorf to everyone, so here we are as a charter. We'll always struggle a bit because we're tied to our state's educational budget, which is low. This is why we're always talking about fundraising. We ended the year with some money, which is great. FM, it's amazing to me what you can do with a dollar. We are doing well. One of our goals this year is to have a few months of operating costs in the bank. We're on our way there, so that's good. We want to do more—pay our teachers more, add to the curriculum, etc. We'll try to do a better job discussing our finances as we go.

AS For future meetings, will we have access to a projector to put this up on screen for our in person attendees?

KK Yes, we will work on that. I'm so sorry.

BF We have a net income between June/July, which brought our bank assets to \$900,000. We can apply to more grants if we prove our fiscal responsibility, so this is good.

FM Ducey has been good to education the last three years, but now he's done, so we'll see what happens. We finished the year with 40k in carry over, so that's cutting it close. We're in good shape though. I am worried about facility because I have AC's that are ready to quit. I think we need to create some subcommittees to discuss the site, to discuss salaries, etc. Monique is a great resource because she works with other school districts. 3 months in the bank is really good to have. We have that now without any extra effort, which is wonderful, and yet we still need to do more planning—like that 5-year plan. I think our next step is let's create some committees to tackle those different goals—teacher retention, facilities, curriculum, etc. I would love to start having a monthly meeting with subcommittees to take care of some of these things, so come April we have a plan with the next budget.

DM It's always been our goal to have a cash reserve, and this is the first time it's happened, I think. But some of those funds are ESSER funds.

FM Yes, that number is inflated because of ESSER funds. Those funds have been used on long lasting items.

BF That makes sense. There was a grant I wanted to apply for last year, but we couldn't qualify because we didn't have enough cash on hand. I think we do now. If we repeat this next year and end at 1.3, that would be great.

FM We did some things outside of salary beyond the 8%, like teacher training, 301 money, stipend to teachers who've served for more years, a grant for those in EC. We've given in several ways, which is good. I don't think there's a staff member who isn't grateful for these changes.

Proposed Motions

KK moved to approve the Meeting Minutes for 07/13/22 Regular Board Meeting. NG second. No further discussion. Unanimous votes in favor: KK, DF, AS, JT, DM, NG, MM, BF. **Motion passes.**

AS We did have a member of our board resign, and for the sake of record keeping, we need to accept it.

AS moved that the VSWEA Board accept the resignation of Scott Edwards who was elected on 11/17/21 and resigned via email on 07/13/22. KK second. No further discussion. Unanimous votes in favor: KK, DF, AS, JT, DM, NG, MM, BF. **Motion passes.**

KK We received an invoice regarding the woodshop.

KK moved to approve the Woodshop invoice #1209 in the amount of \$36,028.24 from Modern Renovations that will be funded through ESSER III funds. NG second. The following discussion took place:

FM That is the inside of the woodshop. We already bought the frame. This is electrical, AC, lighting, fire alarms, etc. We're hoping to get those permits soon.

DF Do we need a vacuuming system as well?

FM We don't need a commercial system due to the size of our space. We have a roll up door which helps.

Unanimous votes in favor: KK, DF, AS, JT, DM, NG, MM, BF. **Motion passes.**

KK moved we give the Executive Director the ability to make larger than \$5,000 purchases in emergency situations without board approval. E.g. New A/C. AS second. The following discussion took place:

DF Why wouldn't there be a new limit? Like greater than 20k or 50k?

DM I agree. Good call.

FM I would say 15-20k. If I have to do 2 AC's at once that'll be 18k. If a water pipe breaks, that's an expensive issue. I would still email the board.

NG I think 20k would start a job too.

JT I want a stipulation that there's a communication between the Executive Director and the president.

MM I'm in the practice with my agency that the officers get to peruse those documents. It shows that that communication is had.

DM My addition is to include a start date.

FM Even if that happens, I still need to get you an invoice afterward. Is that right?

DF I would think so for the sake of transparency.

BF The basics of open meeting law—are there places for emergency board approvals? Like a unanimous vote by the board via email.

DM It still needs to be voted on in front of the community.

FM And it could be such a large emergency that it could be an emergency meeting.

KK tried a different wording and proposed to give the ED larger than \$5k and less than \$20k purchases in an emergency situation with board officer written consent with communication upon the next board meeting effective August 17, 2022.

JT What does written approval look like? And is there something like this in our by-laws? I'm not against it.

FM I know this is normal to have a front limit.

KK I think JT makes a good point though to ensure it's a part of our bylaws.

JT I don't think we're changing the bylaws, but we're motioning. I worry about the word "approval."

DM I thought the \$5000 was in the contract.

FM Yes, it's in my contract.

MM I think it's more about how it happens.

DM Maybe "board officer review."

JT So are we changing FM's contract?

KK An amendment?

FM So that's a good thing because you're not changing the bylaws.

FM It's been quite a challenge working out all these details. It's not working out for our 8th grade parents or JT.

JT I lost 10 pounds.

FM We invested in some temporary fans.

BF I think we can table this for the moment and think on it and have an emergency meeting.

KK Motion retracted.

KK moved that for the upcoming purchase of the 8th grade AC and 1st grade AC repairs, that Mr. Mirizio is authorized to make that purchase and pay for the repairs up to \$20,000. AS second. No further discussion. Unanimous votes in favor: KK, DF, AS, JT, DM, NG, MM, BF. **Motion passes.**

Continuing Business/Open Issues

Town Halls 9/7 & 12/7 @ 5pm

KK Town hall dates have been set. 9/7 and 12/7 at 5pm outside of the admin building. FM and I will be there. Anyone who wants to sign up, please let me know via email.

Survey Results

DM We got a lot of good answers. I exported into Excel. Shared basic results. Thank you to everyone who completed the survey. It only took me 10 minutes. If you didn't have a chance to do it, you'll have another chance to this year.

AS Please add us to the document itself so that we can see the pie charts and percentages. I find that much more helpful than a spreadsheet.

DM Yes, now that it's closed, I can add everyone as an editor.

MM If we're discussing FM, we should do that in ES.

DM I sent out some questionnaires to the board. We had 41 responses. It was manageable, and a good starting point. I would like to know what stood out for you.

KK In reading through the responses, I was very drawn to the financial comments. A lot of parents wanted to know what our responsibilities and FM's responsibilities are. I think some more communication around that would help. We have the Bee, and I think we need to find an avenue for that communication. We've been coming off a couple of rough years with Covid. I thought we'd see some negativity around that, but there weren't a lot of comments about that. I think people took the time to honestly evaluate. I was pleasantly surprised by the entire survey.

DM It felt good to get that feedback.

KK It was the first one, so I think 41 participants is good. I think the timeframe can be better next year.

NG It only went on through Parent Square, right?

DM I think we should keep families on Parent Square so they can have that communication.

NG I think it's a good, thorough survey, but I think it should go out to our community.

FM We are all misinformed about Parent Square—every parent is a part of Parent Square.

AS They get emails. They do not have to use the App.

NG So every member had the potential to see that. That's good to know. I thought the results were good. I wanted more participation. I think those families that have left, should have been seeing that as well.

FM I think we need a date on it, so it's ready to go out.

AS I agree. We should pick a date.

FM You could look at it in March and then send it out in May.

MK You can also set up Parent Square posts to publish on a certain date.

KK AS, could you choose dates and put those on the board calendar?

AS Yes, I can do that.

DM There were some comments requesting a printed document so they can truly have anonymity. Do we want to take action on those responses?

AS I'd like to see KK and FM use some of the information collected and implement it in the goals they're currently creating.

FM I know my evaluation is happening soon, and my contract will be up too. Some of these issues could be addressed in the new contract. In my experience, Nov/Dec is when you should start thinking about that as well.

AS Would you like me to add some dates to the calendar for that as well?

KK Yes, please.

DM I'd like us to take a look at some of questions I sent out to help us.

Sustaining Fund Plan

DM I was hoping to get feedback from BF and MM on what we can do to help with the sustaining fund.

BF Right now there's no sustaining fund plan due to reasons we cannot discuss publicly. We need to start something up.

MM I respectfully disagree. The board approved a plan. I don't think it needs to be person centered. I think we need to vote and say we won't execute the plan or choosing someone to execute the plan.

BF Thanks for clarifying. The plan looks good, but we don't have anyone to head it up. I am not available to lead it. The document is there, and we can start it up at any time, but I cannot do it.

KK Is anyone on the board wanting to back that plan up? I believe in it, but I do not have the capacity to drive that. I don't know what that looks like, but it's a large task. It needs board backing, and we need to get behind it.

FM Can we recruit some parents to help with this? Maybe it's more than one person.

KK Repeated FM's statement. We are already started.

FM If you want to give me some names, I'm happy to meet with parents and get started on it. I just need a few good men.

BF I can't currently take this on. I think we might be better off if we hired someone to do it. The position might pay for itself. It requires a lot of dedication.

DM We approved an invoice to work with Melissa Sutton. We could maybe look into that again. She sent us an outline to roll out our initial requests.

FM BF is not wrong. You think of this in the form of—the Yugo, Buick, or Cadillac. It does make me nervous that we'd need to hire someone. That position would probably be around 75k. Maybe we could find a retiree to do it part time for 40k. We have to talk about it. 20 hours a

week might make us more. We all have the same vision. I'm nervous about carving off our budget. Someone worth their salt should make their salary back.

DM That's part of what she does as well. She was introduced to us by Jessica Jarrett.

MM My frustration is that we have not taken responsibility as a board for losing someone who could have implemented this. As fiduciaries we just lost out on capacity, ability, and time. I think that's problematic. Why were we not functioning enough to handle that? I think we should be self-reflective about this.

DM That is a big loss. We certainly want to evaluate, but we should still continue.

KK I agree that we continue, but I agree with MM as well. How do we fix that? Do we use Melissa or another volunteer? How do we support the next person walking into this type of position?

FM I have some ideas, but I don't think it should be done at a meeting. It will mean the board taking responsibility. The decisions will be made. There's no room to negotiate. If we're looking to make 300k a year, that's a priority.

DM I'm very interested.

FM JT, if you're on campus, can you meet with me during specials?

JT Yes, I can make that happen.

5-minute break.

DF left the meeting at 8:10pm.

Meeting started again at 8:15pm.

New Business

Security

KK There have been community members concerned about the unfortunate rise of school violence and shootings. There's been a lot of conversations around this. I think it's good to start this conversation. I think I'd like to leave it broad for now.

AS We've had issues with theft for years. We've lost lots of equipment. We had to pay to rekey our rooms. This all costly. The campus isn't secure. Having someone ensure that every room is locked up at the end of the day will help with all of that.

DM I'd like an employee doing that as opposed to labeling a security guard.

FM Yes, this is what I'm looking for. Someone to open the gates, close up at night. Not in a uniform. Ensure all gates are closed before leaving. I want someone walking campus to see who's here. Who's that guy who jumped the fence? We've had that issue before. It's easy to get onto campus. This person would look out for that sort of thing. We don't have a big budget for cameras or mechanical locks. I'm looking at a person who can talk to people, ensure they are checked in, someone who's spry enough to unlock/lock gates. We'll find other things they can

do. Shorts and tennis shoes and a t-shirt is fine. Someone who is walking and looking and relaying information to me. I need someone to be my eyes and ears. It's a first line of defense. Teachers are all in buildings. We don't have anyone looking out, and it's all about time. How much time do you have to call the police right now? I'm looking at \$16/17 an hour. They'd be off during breaks. It would be 8 hours a day. I'm just trying to get started and help us all feel better about our safety.

DM Perhaps that will open the doorway of allowing kids to play on campus earlier.

NG I like the idea, but I'm concerned that they'd fill in somewhere else. I'd rather they do this job full time.

FM I'm talking about a fill in for short times, like an hour in an emergency situation.

DM Security needs to be their job, not security plus childcare.

FM They'd be a part of the safety committee. It would be great to have someone who's walking the campus all day and can tell us what's happening during the day. Priority one would be a security guard, but I don't like that title.

NG Campus support?

FM Safety guide? I think that extra set of eyes could put a lot of parents at ease.

MM I'm confused. I think we need to look at the goal. What are we patrolling? What are the concerns? Mass shootings? People coming onto campus? Do we want to provide resources for that? If not, that's a different protocol. I think we need to call out what the priorities are.

FM MM, you're right; you're talking directly to the large problem. My training as a safety officer for several districts is that everything is about time. The person who's hired would call police to respond. The goal is to secure the perimeter. Goal two is addressing people on campus that we don't recognize. We just had an incident yesterday where someone came on campus and walked the garden and got to the third grade. Hector caught up with him and had a chat. He didn't sign in as a visitor. A sub saw him go the wrong direction, and she contacted me. So it's eyes and securing the perimeter. This person wouldn't deal with students. I don't need someone to—

NG Man the bathroom.

FM Well, I'm not saying that. Our fences are too small; our gates are too open. I think we could all breathe easier if we had someone to look out for the school. I need someone with a cell or walkie talkie to let me know what's going on.

BF Where are the security concerns coming from? Parents? From you? Staff? I know there are drills and emergency protocols that happen at schools. Some sort of policy.

FM We have a policy. Staff performs drills and other protocols.

BF Where did this come from? Parents sending emails? If so, I think we need to communicate that we have a policy. That may help with this issue.

FM I think 8-10 parents have expressed concern. My hat of past security roles tells me it's too late if a person is already at the door. I need to identify that person the minute they walk through the gate. I'll paint the worst picture—a man with a rifle. We can see that's a problem; call the cops right now. We need someone to be the eyes. I've been to a lot of trainings on this. It's about identifying the problem quickly and calling the appropriate people. The goal is prevention. We can't guarantee that, but there's a chance. We want that.

KK Any other thoughts? We've been lucky so far that we haven't had anything awful happen here.

JT I think it's a conversation that needs to be continued. Faculty is concerned. This place is wide open. FM said there's people who get onto campus, and they don't check in. They do whatever they want.

KK Do we poll from staff?

FM I've talked with faculty, and no one hasn't advised against it. We're talking worst case scenario. We had two rottweilers, and our secretary was trying to shoo them away. We called police and animal control. I need someone else to take this on. The dogs left, thankfully.

AS You didn't chase them away with your coyote sword?

FM I was too late. Mr. Camacho made me a wooden sword a to chase away the coyotes.

NG FM, is this a position you want filled?

FM I'm leaning toward experimenting for a year and seeing how it goes.

AS Do we have a job description? I think that would help to answer some of our questions and help us have a better idea of what this would look like.

KK Could you have that ready for the next meeting?

FM Yes, I can do that.

MM Would you accept volunteers?

FM If they're not parents. There may be some liability issues there.

KK If we could see a job description before the next meeting, that would be great.

Contemplation Update

DM We may need to table this for the next meeting.

DM There's a strong push to make sure that we continue to collaborate. There is going to be labyrinth created on campus. We want to make sure that we have good communication between all pillars.

NG Who's attending the meetings?

DM There's nine of us.

NG Do you have staff going?

DM Rachel Schmid is going.

9/17/22 ACWE Meeting

FM In September we are hosting the next ACWE meeting here on campus.

DM I printed the agenda for the next ACWE meeting. It's good to have someone on the board attend. It's good information and to hear from other schools. Dr. Liz Beaven will be presenting. Her topic is on the agenda as well.

FM Joan Treadaway, Michelle Blazewicz, and I have met with Liz twice to try to get national certification for our trainings. She is trying to get that permission for us. We've made some connections, and she's on our side for teacher trainings.

DM It's 8:30am to lunch if anyone would like to come.

11/5/22 Animal Care Fundraiser

KK Thank you to MK and Laura for submitting the fundraiser for approval. I did check the calendar, and it's clear. It's a Saturday. Also, do we want to make a contact person to approve those? Or maybe this is a one off at this point?

AS Discussed approval of animal care fundraiser.

KK AS said while we are still having conversations about the sustaining fund that we could approve this fundraiser as a one off since we have that date free on the calendar.

KK moved to approve the request for the animal care fundraiser on Saturday 11/5. DM second. No further discussion. Votes in favor: KK, AS, DM, NG, MM. Abstain: BF, JT. **Motion passes.**

Announcements

KK 09/21 is our next board meeting at 6:30pm onsite and on Zoom. We'll have a better setup next time.

KK moved to close the 08/17/22 board meeting. BF second. No further discussion. Unanimous vote in favor: KK, AS, JT, DM, NG, MM, BF. **Motion passes.**

Closing Verse

BF read the closing verse.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:53pm.

Prepared by AS on 08.17.2022.