



MINUTES
VSWEA Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, July 12, 2023
VIA [Zoom](#)

Members Present:

Kerstin Kubina (KK)—President
April Sauer (AS)—Secretary
John Tanner (JT)

Myriah Mhoon (MM)
Danielle Martinez (DM)
Ashley Parks (AP)

Members Absent: Ben Fong, Dan Franks, and Nellie Grossenbacher

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

Guests

Invitees of the Board:
Frank Mirizio (FM)
Paula Cummings (PC)

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

Michelle Kratzer
Kelsey Orosz
Deb

Opening Verse/Introductions

Meeting was called to order at 6:36pm. KK welcomed the public to the meeting and read the opening verse.

The Board members introduced themselves as well as PC and FM.

Executive Director Updates

FM Good news—deposited 760k into a savings account. We talked about where that money will go while we sit on it for a year. Did we find an account with a decent savings rate? And around October/November we should commit to a subcommittee to determine where those funds will go. We had some nine jobs to hire and most of them were hired. I have not found a Spanish or math teacher yet. Still looking for both. Posted two SPED positions, waiting on applications to come in. Some bad news in regards to the fundraising position—that offer has been turned down.

KK Is that position still posted?

FM Yes. Regarding the woodshop—insulation is in, dry wall, cement pads being added. AC will go in Monday and Wednesday/Thursday lighting and windows. Mr. Camacho is eager to move in. We are all very excited for this.

PC Electricity for the art barn?

FM That will be put in Thursday. Hector has been working hard to use our EC grant money to upgrade our EC playground. The last piece to add is a shade covering. The parking lot has a walking area now so that cars cannot drive through. He may add some plants, but he worked very hard to get that done. Luis is working on the ark in the 1st grade playground. We will be working on that to make it safer, and that should be done before school starts. The AC unit has been put into EC, and another was fixed. We're happy with the work that's been done with the EC grant. That was a lifesaver for us. Danni O'Connor is the new HR specialist. She's off to a great start with a great attitude. We hired a new receptionist—Becca Lineweaver. Crystal and Danni are helping to get her trained. Luis will be working on grounds maintenance with Hector. He will still teach woodworking. Enrollment is at 289 now. We have 8 offers out right now. We're hoping to get back up to 297. We've had a few families move out of state. We have a waiting list for many of our classes, so we're still in good shape.

DM What are we doing to increase our efforts to increase our enrollment?

FM Ms. O'Connor has some connections with homeschool groups, and we are attempting to contact them. We're hoping we can meet their needs, but so far we have not had a lot of people respond to us. We reached out to another charter that was being taken over by Great Hearts. Some of the teachers there wanted to recommend our school to their families who are not interested in Great Hearts. I was able to read through the survey results. I want to say that I love the job that you are doing. I know how supportive you are. It is a volunteer position and you are all busy working and raising your families, and I want you to know you do a great job, and I'm proud of the work you do.

DM Are electives and class schedules for high school out yet?

FM The schedule is almost set. Crystal and I have been working on that with Meghan Kelsey and PC. We plan to have that finalized on Monday. It's complicated and a big puzzle.

DM Do we publish that in any papers, circulars, or bulletins?

FM I don't know if we should do that, and I haven't heard about that.

PC I think DM is talking in terms of marketing.

FM Okay, not the schedule, but offerings.

PC I don't think we've done any marketing like that before. That may be something to look into.

DM Have we thought about doing a banner with some of that information to advertise?

FM I wouldn't mind doing that. Let me see if we can put that on 28th St. They're cheap, around \$150. Let me talk to Hector and see if I can get that done.

PC Do we have a budget for high school marketing?

FM No, but I'm pretty good at scraping money together for different things. We've set up open houses, and no one came.

PC I think we may need to try a different direction. Maybe online or something else as well.

FM If you have any ideas for contacts, I'd be happy to reach out.

KK I was speaking with AS, and she mentioned that the money we just got may do well in an ALLY account. I was also wondering about some donations for the woodshop.

FM I was talking with Michelle, but I have not heard back. I'll check in with her.

AS I just wanted to thank you, FM, for your kind words regarding the work the board has done. I read through those comments and wasn't in a place to see some of them, so I appreciate that. I hope you know that it's mutual, that you feel supported as well. I know how far we've come as a board. I know there are valid concerns in the comments and some that should be taken with a grain of salt, so again, thank you for your kind words.

Financial Update

KK We are still working through our audit, and when we finish it up we will report back.

Proposed Motions

KK moved to approve the 06/21/23 regular meeting minutes. MM second. No further discussion. Votes in favor: AS, DM, AP, JT, MM, KK. **Motion passes.**

KK We have all gotten the updated budget. We need to approve the adopted budget.

KK moved to approve the FY24 Adopted Budget. JT second. No further discussion. Votes in favor: AS, DM, AP, JT, MM, KK. **Motion passes.**

FM We need that signed document tomorrow because we have to get it up.

KK We needed to approve it tonight, and then I'll send out that signature sheet. We will get that up as soon as possible. I will text Nellie and Dan to make sure they get that done.

Continuing Business/Open Issues

No continuing business.

New Business

ERC Grant

KK I've already mentioned the ALLY account as an option. DM were you and Dan able to do some research?

DM I haven't been able to get in touch with Dan, but I've talked with a few banks. It's a bit different since we are a nonprofit. I'm happy to send out this info. Chase is at 4.25, B of A is 4.5, Wells Fargo at 4.5, Desert Financial hasn't gotten back to me, but I think it's a 4.5. Alliance is 5

on a three month. Both Alliance and Chase were willing to come to the school to set this up. These were all for amounts over 100k.

KK Fantastic.

FM DM, thank you for doing that. I'm going to rely on your expertise here. Are these good rates?

DM Yes, these are good rates for short term.

FM and DM discuss rates and time frames.

MM, FM, and DM discuss other options to diversify.

PC Is there a percentage or probability that the government could take this funding back?

MM and FM discuss possibilities.

Survey Results

KK We just got them, so I skimmed but haven't had a chance to look at them in depth.

MM I understand the importance of anonymity, but sometimes it puts us in a tricky position because not a lot of people are identifying themselves. I think we may want to require names so we can validate and have some buy in on the other side.

KK I agree with that.

DM I want to put this on the next agenda so that we can have time to look at it more closely. I think we should keep it anonymous because some people don't feel comfortable answering with their name. I want to thank everyone for participating. I really appreciate your deep reflection on the work that's being done.

AP I do think we need more time to digest, but I also agree with DM regarding anonymity. I think we get better results if we have things anonymous.

MM I agree that it's best practice for research, but for our agency, there are things that are reported that we need to address and we cannot do that if we don't know who is taking the survey. If there are serious concerns, I think it's a safety net for the school to have names.

AP I agree. It seems like there's an issue that people don't feel comfortable speaking to us. I think that's something that we need to figure out. I think we're transparent, but I think we need some more.

PC It would be great to get more people taking the survey. How is it we can increase participation in the survey? I think we need to think about that.

KK I have spent hours and hours talking to community members to work out issues, so I'm wondering where these comments are coming from. I don't know what else we can do. I know Nellie was there for coffee and chats. We're there on campus for events. Virtually no one is attending board meetings or answering the survey, and I don't know how to move forward. I'm curious about what else we can do.

DM Thank you for being so open. I do have a decoding strategy to use on these comments.

KK But decoding is making assumptions. It would just be easier if they would identify.

FM I read it first thing in the morning. I looked at it again later. We take such pride in what we do, and so this can hurt our feelings. If you look at it closely you'll see the positives. Remember that those who are happy don't often leave long messages. I recommend you look again. Don't beat yourself up too much. We really do want to know what we can do better.

AS I agree, FM, but I wish that we had a section for actual action items to suggest. I think we get stuck on concerns that continue to show up because we've tried everything we can to address those concerns, but the community doesn't seem to be satisfied. We're out of ideas. If the community has specifics in mind of ways we can improve our communication or presence, I'd like to know. We've tried a lot of different things over the years, but we keep getting the same feedback.

PC That's a good idea. I like the option for a suggestion section.

Announcements

KK The next board meeting is 08/16 at 6:30pm via Zoom.

KK moved to adjourn the 07/12/23 meeting. JT second. No further discussion. Unanimous vote in favor: AS, DM, AP, JT, MM, KK. **Motion passes.**

Closing Verse

JT read the closing verse.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:31pm.

Prepared by AS on 07.12.2023.