

MINUTES
VSWEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, March 3, 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)

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

- Deborrah Allen
- Masako Gardener
- Jessica Franks
- Barb Cunningham
- Michelle Kratzer
- Colleen Pope

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- Adeline Carrera
- Sami Rank
- Heather Sullivan
- Rachel Schmid
- Deb
- Riva
- Jill Thomas
- Sarah Baize
- Jamie
- Ziegenbein
- JJ
- Nikki Jackson
- Larry Grossenbacher
- Tammy
- Sarah Fairchild
- Laura Heaney
- Crystal Lee
- Kim Baker

OPENING VERSE / INTRODUCTIONS

Meeting was called to order at 6:32pm. 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

GS Asked DM for an update

DM Contacted Melissa and she said she'd discount her fees or we could do a percentage of profits. She would like an initial down if we'd like her services. Also contacted Tysen Schlink to review questions she sent him, and she'll hear back from him and report. Attended a virtual session for fundraising with a company that offers fundraising helps for an annual fee. They are able to put on events with two weeks notice. Would also like to connect with DMS community to share ideas and work together.

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GS By the next board meeting, can we get some finalized plans for fundraising so we can make some decisions?

DM Gave an overview of plans she's received so far and will have more information at our next meeting.

GS Parents are wanting a way to donate specifically to an individual class or find needs for a specific classroom. Let's jump ahead in the agenda to another topic.

Online Wish List

DF Offered some thoughts on providing an online wish list for individual classrooms. Discussed options regarding posting it on the website or Parent Square.

AS Offered some insight into Laura Heaney's website work and suggested using the website since Parent Square is internal only. I don't want to turn away outside donations.

Enrollment Update

FM 288/308 registered as of today for 2021-2022 year.

2021-2022 Budget Process Update

FM Priscilla is working with him first to close out this year's budget. Then they can focus more on 2021-2022. There are funds still coming in for this year—IDEA and ESSER grant. He meets with her tomorrow, and they will work on all of these things.

Other Financial Updates

DM Asked about ESSER round III.

FM He will chat with Priscilla tomorrow about that.

GS Priscilla did a great job tracking all of that, and I'm sure she'll be on top on that.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE

FM Updated us on Deb's attempt to get computers from the City of Phoenix. Yesterday, we got the official yes. 226 laptops with chargers. DF is helping Deb to make sure that everything is in good condition. We will need to invest in carts with locks so they don't get stolen. Should get them soon so we can get them set up before AZMERIT.

GS That's amazing! Thank you to Deb!

DF Checked into the specs and some other things.

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FM We found out at 9 last night. It was a surprise.

GS We like those kinds of last minute surprises.

AS Send more of those our way.

FM Update on remote learning and the plan to return to hybrid. The Executive Order came out, and we're ready to get started. We've been preparing campus for that too—cleaning up, fixing the parking lot, getting signs out, cleaning classrooms, and so on. Still applying for some grants for our counselor. Her work has tripled during this time. She has a lot of students who are needing support, and she's doing everything she can to help them. She's half time, and we need her full time. He's speaking with a few contacts to see if we can make her a full time counselor and get it paid for. The testing schedule created for AZMERIT will be revamped since we now have more computers. He spoke with Teresa regarding the community contemplation exercise. She, Peter, and Joan are getting close to sending us an agenda and a date/time.

GS That sounds good.

FM When we come back after Spring Break, on Friday we will be hosting a BBQ for families. Parent Council will be helping with this. There will be a taco bar and some bbq. We have plans to make it safe by serving two grades at a time. Thank you to Michelle and Laura for putting this together. Big thumbs up for them.

GS Any other questions?

DM Asked question regarding ESSER tracking and how we are categorized because the allotted money is based on that.

FM He'll with connect with Priscilla and get back to DM.

DM Are we are able to allocate ESSER funds to air purifiers as well?

FM Since that is a big dollar item, I think that's for the board to tell me to do. I've heard the air purifiers we have work, but that wasn't the question.

GS It would be worth getting a number for those types of purifiers. That way we can make a more informed decision.

FM Want me to investigate that?

GS Yes, please.

DF Asked for information regarding purifier qualities.

FM Please email me that so I don't forget it, and I'll check on that.

DM Has there been discussion about summer programming?

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FM I believe early childhood asked about it, but we didn't get back to it as we have a lot going on. Also, early childhood enrollment for next year is up to 16, which is good news because then the program pays for itself. We did add in after care for next year.

DM Thank you.

COVID-19

AZDHS Benchmarks/Maricopa County Department of Health

GS The governor issued an executive order that changes everything, so I'll share my screen, and we'll go over it point by point. 1. DHS will use same metrics as CDC. 2. All charters shall return to in person instruction by March 15 or after Spring Break. Reviewed the subparts then asked about specifics as it pertains to our high school.

FM The high school has a plan. There are students who are behind, and we've created a specific asynchronous day. We want to double check and make sure everyone is on track for graduation. The notice from teachers has gone out to parents already I believe.

Further discussion regarding Executive Order and attendance.

GS Do we have a sense of how many students will be on campus?

FM 182 students will come in person. 71 will remain remote. There are still a few surveys outstanding.

GS My interpretation is if we don't have evidence of transmission, then we wouldn't have to change things up. Asked the board if they agreed with that interpretation.

DM and DF agreed.

DM Elementary stays in person?

GS Yes, elementary will stay hybrid regardless of transmission level. It gets tricky with middle school and high school. Reviewed our school's mitigation strategies and community following it. We need to notify parents that we'll be returning to campus.

FM I can take care of that.

GS Here's the key change: the reason we'd close now is if the local health department advises closing. Finally, we have to notify ADE no later than March 15th that we're in compliance.

GS moved that Desert Marigold School shall follow Executive Order 2021-04 Open for In-Person Learning and work with the local department of health in order to comply with the Executive Order. DF second. No further discussion. Vote unanimous in favor: GS, DM, DF, JT, AS. **Motion passes.**

FM Do you need me to send that notice to ADE?

GS Yes, please. We'll send you the minutes with the motion. Reviewed the new metrics we will use per the Executive Order. There's no question: we need to be open for hybrid learning starting March 15th. Glad that the governor gave a clear mandate about this.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Community Contemplation Exercise

GS We are making progress on this, and thanks for FM's update on that, but I want to focus on a few other topics for strategic planning. Shared an overview of the topics we'll cover in our strategic plan.

Fundraising/Donation Efforts

GS Let's start with the big picture here. What kind of fundraising do you envision for this school?

FM I would tell you that our first meeting with Melissa, she was talking \$130-175k by July. If we can make that come to fruition, we could knock off a few of these capital projects. But I didn't hear any specific ideas from her.

DM After she attended the virtual fundraising, she feels more confident we can do something like that. The presentation had prerecorded video and live content as well. We could showcase students, and reach out to those who can't be there in person. We can make lemonade out of these lemons.

GS I like the \$130-170k number we heard, but I think we should aim higher. The gap between the cost of our education vs what we get--it's a big target. If we can articulate why we need it and what we need it for that would help with soliciting donations.

DM A community member suggested a hybrid event with a medieval theme since we aren't hosting medieval games this year. We have a beautiful space, and we should use it. A good time could be in May, when everyone has their tax refunds and those who don't need it, can donate. Any objections for May?

GS No objection for a fundraiser at anytime. Just be careful for graduation and other end of the year events.

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DM I'll look into that. Ideally the first weekend of May if all are in agreement.

Capital Improvements

GS FM did a great job and interviewed a lot of members of the community to figure out what it is we need. He sent over some plans for capital projects, for example security fencing, multipurpose room, new classrooms where the farmhouse is, a new bathroom for teachers, etc.

FM I walked with two guys today to get a number for a project. We may have some donors for some smaller projects. We'll need to discuss where we want donations to go. I should have costs coming to us for some of these capital projects soon.

DM Did the plans leave room for an amphitheater stage? Asked a question regarding the plot for wheat for third grade.

FM He discussed this with Mr. Shantz, and he wants the back plot for wheat. We'll put the building up front instead which helps with some costs since we don't have to pave or light the area. This room could also be a lunch room when needed. The classrooms will be attached and have sliding doors. If we have a big crowd we can open those doors, and it's overflow to the auditorium. These are all just ideas. I'm told we need lots of space. A space for 200 is too small. Do you agree?

GS Yes, our community brings a lot of family when we have events.

FM Discussed parking lot with Steve as well. We need more spaces. We'll need to redesign that somehow to fit more spaces.

DM What's priority 1?

FM That's for you to tell me. These are just the top five mentioned by the majority of people he spoke with.

DM Are there any safety concerns?

FM Probably that safety fencing since the kids play there. Also, the woodshop. There are a lot of safety issues there as well. The adult bathroom is important too. We should consider that.

DM Have we gotten quotes on the woodshop?

FM They walked with me yesterday, so I can get it to you once I get those. If I left something off, let me know, and these guys will draw something up to help us.

AS Grateful for all of these ideas and FM's research, and she agrees that we need all of these things. She's excited to move forward with them. It will change a lot for our school.

FM Wanted to discuss the farmhouse and building replacing it. It will be four classrooms: 2 for middle school, 1 for SPED, 1 for a computer lab. This will afford us more space for a second

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track when we're ready for it. I know right now we can have three kindergartens. That turns into two first grades, but we don't have room. We need room, and we need to fundraise. The best way to fundraise is raise student enrollment. This plan gives us five more classrooms: 2 attached to the multipurpose room, 3 in the farmhouse, and a sped room. I know I'm dreaming, but . . .

GS One of our issues with high school enrollment is that only one grade feeds into it. If we had two, that would create a more robust high school experience. That will take time, but to think about that growth possibility would be huge for the school, for the community, and for all the kids we could teach. I think it'll be hard to prioritize without numbers, so we'll wait on this a bit.

Waldorf Teacher Training

GS FM mentioned some plans for summer Waldorf teacher training.

FM Mentioned Rebecca Allen (now married) who will be here over the summer. She is a national Waldorf trainer. Our contracts mention agreements for Waldorf training, so this will help with that. And we have some plans for our teachers to do some trainings too. He's inviting other schools and will be having them pay for their courses.

GS Could we do this every summer?

FM Joan and Peter said this used to be the place for summer trainings. I'd love to do that again. We're central and have the space. We just have to arrange for the trainers and how we can pay for them. He needs to talk more with Michelle and Laura to work out some other details.

Community Education

GS In the past I know we've brought in speakers. When he joined there was a speaker about once a month. I'd like to see if we can get that going again. He'd like it to be free and meant for parents mainly so they know what we're offering and to bring anthroposophy back into the fold. It's enriching. If anyone has any ideas on how to do that, I'd like to hear it.

DM Parent Council had teachers share presentations of their summer training as well. That was phenomenal.

GS That's a great suggestion. Maybe that's where we should start.

DM With speakers, we could do it virtual as well. We would invite trainers to work with teachers for professional development, be a guest teacher in the high school, and host lectures for the community in the evenings.

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GS JT, maybe you could ask around the teachers to see who would be interested in sharing their knowledge. Maybe get some names and topics, so we could get started next month. If we could get someone once a month with a different topic, that would be great.

BOARD PROCEDURES

Charter Board Compliance

GS We are finally all the way done. Fully compliant based on our five-year interval audit. We just got word Monday. We're updated with ADE, the Board, and so on. As reminded me, if you are interested in being on the board, your application is due April 1st. We have needs in marketing, fundraising, IT, capital projects. Am I missing anything?

JT Project management, construction, engineering, a medical person for this day and age.

FM Architect.

GS If you have those skills, please think about applying. Or if you know someone with those skills, get them into contact with us and we'll lead them through the application process.

Approval of Minutes

GS Moved to approve the 02/17/21 regular meeting minutes. DF second. No further discussion. Vote in favor: GS, DF, JT, AS. Abstain: DM. **Motion passes.**

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

DM read the closing verse.

CLOSING VERSE

Meeting was adjourned at 7:58pm.

Prepared by AS on 03.03.2021.