

**MINUTES**  
**VSWEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**WEDNESDAY, August 18, 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:

- Nicole Goodman
- Amy Edwards
- Megan Young

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- Deb
- Chelsea Caschetta
- Elisabeth Moore
- Shannon
- Kim Baker
- Jaala
- Nina Prange
- Megan
- Heather Sullivan
- Barb Cunningham
- Blayne Goodman
- Laura Heaney
- JJ
- Tammy
- Tyler Limesand
- Kelly Osowski
- Dannieoc

### **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.

GS Provided an overview of the agenda and shared that DF would join the meeting later.

### **BUDGET AND FINANCE**

#### **Enrollment Update**

FM Up to 15 students withdrawing for the reason that we do not require masks. If we were to require masks, we would have an equal amount or more leave, so this is a split decision. We are adding students and have a couple more coming. We have tours scheduled as well. I have my sights set on 300, but at the least, I'd like to be above 287.

#### **Sustaining Fund Fundraising Update**

GS At the last meeting we voted to engage Melissa Sutton to help with sustaining fundraising. DM, were you able to reach out to her?

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DM I spoke with Melissa about our plans. She is busy as her regular clients are back, but she should be able to help us out. She's out of town now, but we'll touch base when she gets back. She agreed to split her billing for 2 invoices. One to include tax credit and a sustaining fund and the other for an offsite event.

### School Spirit Store

KK shared her screen to show templates of items we could sell.

AS Walked through the various products from pullover hoodies to embroidered hats to stainless steel water bottles.

GS Asked about pricing and how much we'd get back in a sale—profit margin.

AS It's up to us to set the price and determine what that kick back we'll be. I think most people would pay \$20 for a shirt, but we haven't fully discussed pricing. I'm not a numbers person, so I don't have a specific cost in mind, but I think it'd be easiest to determine a percentage and go from there.

GS Luckily, your partner, KK, is a numbers person.

AS Yes, one of the many reasons I roped her into this.

DM In the past we've had items like bees wax and other Waldorf items. Will we have those?

KK Yes, it's a different beast. We're looking to open a school store that has Waldorf items as well, but that will take time. This is more of a spirit store--something we could set up quickly and easily.

DM With spirit store, can we house our own items if a specific class wants to sell items?

AS Yes, the website is very user friendly. I simply uploaded logo artwork created by Laura Heaney and put it into templates on the website. So we can scan a student's artwork, upload it, and put it on specific items to sell.

NG I know we have a parent who has a Waldorf store, will we be reaching out to her?

KK Yes, thank you for bringing that up. I do know about Ms. B's store, and I will reach out to her to see if she'd like to collaborate. There are a lot of logistics to think about in terms of inventory, getting access to items, shipping, etc.

NG I know she wants to work with the school since she's just starting out.

KK Yes, I will reach out to her. I want to reach out to Madame St. Hillarie as well. I know she makes aprons, so that would be great too.

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GS Asked about resolution of images and if they'd print well.

AS The website is very user friendly and gives you an error when it's not going to work. Having said that, I haven't ordered any of these items, so I haven't seen them in person to gauge the quality. I think that's the next step. I think it would be nice to have some of these items in stock so people can see them and touch them. I know lots of people that have sensory issues, and it's helpful to see and feel the fabric to see if it works for them, so I'd like to have samples on hand to do that.

GS Well, this is exciting. I look forward to the next step.

### Financial Update

KK Shared her screen of the Profit and Loss July 2021.

GS reviewed the document. 238k in income. Some variant of expenses to get the school year going, giving us -14k in operating income. That sounds alarming, but let's look at our balance sheet.

KK Shared Balance Sheet July 2021.

GS 211k in cash in various accounts. We're owed another equalization payment, more federal money. We're getting more money from the state due to FM and Crystal getting more students enrolled, so that will be an additional \$4500 for last year's increase of average daily membership. Total current assets 449k not including property. Total assets are 2.5 million. Total current liabilities just over 72k. Long term debt is just under 1.4 million. Total Liability and Equity is 2.5 million. Anything to add, KK?

KK No, I think you did a great job.

GS Any questions?

### **COVID-19**

#### Mask Requirements

GS Things have changed since we last talked. The Governor rescinded the executive order that required use of masks and a mitigation plan in June 2021. Then the legislature enacted a budget that created a statute saying schools cannot require vaccines or masks as a condition of attending public school. It stated that it was retroactive to July 1, 2021. Due to a lawsuit in Phoenix Union High School District, a judge said that it can't be retroactive, which means that the law isn't in effect until 9/28. The court said for them to come back when there's an actual dispute when this law is in effect. The court also said that the school didn't give a legal reason

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why it was unlawful. So, that's not the only lawsuit out there. Another lawsuit is pending on a fundamental level. The last time we met, we said we were not going to require masks, but we could make a recommendation to follow CDC guidelines and other public health organizations. So because things have changed, I put this on the agenda in case we do want to change. The restriction will not go into effect until 9/28, which means that we could change. Also, yesterday, the Governor issued a press release that said that he'd make \$1800 per student available to public schools who are in compliance with the law—meaning this new statute—starting on 8/27, and the source of that \$1800 is applying for a grant. In that application, you have to give information about your mask policy. You don't automatically get it, but you may be eligible if you do not require masks.

AS Would we even qualify for this grant?

GS I don't know.

FM I read through that today, and it's very specific about what it can be used for, so it's like tutoring programs, it's almost title I programs. You couldn't use it for capital items or normal staffing, but you could use it to supplement the classroom and get tutors or reading specialists. I was trying to check out what I would jump on, and I didn't see much.

DM Childcare, transportation. Transportation didn't excite you?

FM Well, they won't buy you a bus.

GS So it sounds like we may not qualify, or it may not even be worthwhile, but I don't think we should make this decision based on financial concerns only. But we still have to decide are we going to leave things the way they are or are we just going to stay the course?

NG I think we should leave things the way they are. Things go back and forth. We got a flood of emails, and hearing from our parents they want to make sure that masks are optional, and I do see plenty of kids wearing masks, but ultimately the decision is with the parents.

DM I don't see any need to change our course. I'd like to continue as well. FM, I know families may be able to apply to the \$7000 grant to educate their children.

AS I was on the call today with the AZ Charter School Association where they discussed these grants, and I believe this one is specifically for children at schools where they're mandating masks. That was my take away.

GS I know a lot of schools have seen a lot of Covid-19 cases in their schools. I've not heard that's the case at our school. FM, I assume we would've heard . . .

FM That is correct. There haven't been any cases, but I did hear from some parents that they kept their kids home with sniffles and coughs.

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GS We have the benefit of having classrooms with windows and ventilation. We also installed air filters in the classrooms. Those have HEPA filters in there. We have more opportunities to keep the air moving than some traditional schools. Are the classrooms taking advantage of all of those options?

FM I know classes have propped their doors open, but it's an interesting call because of the humidity and heat, so I see classes opening and closing doors for a certain period of time. Today, doors were open due to the rain. We're giving teachers freedom to do that right now. Because of the circumstances, I'm not pushing things one way or another. It's up to teachers.

AS I think all of these things are helpful—good ventilation, air filters, doors being propped open, but I also know that everyone wearing masks offers even more protection. I don't see why we wouldn't want another layer of protection for students and staff.

KK I agree with AS. I think another level of protection is good. I have a fear that we're going to lose a student. When I think do I want to wear a mask, do I not want to wear a mask, I choose to wear one because I don't want anyone to get sick. I think I'm willing to revote.

NG Science has shown that children have the lowest death rate. I don't think we can make a decision, and I haven't found solid data on studies on masks. And just two weeks ago, a former CDC director said he couldn't make a decision on masks because there wasn't enough data. On our website, we have the ADE handbook link, where it states that parents have the right to make healthcare decisions for the minor child. That's on our website.

KK I think that people not wearing masks, means that you're making a health decision for my child.

NG It's 35 out of 18000.

KK I hope it's not one of ours.

NG We got lots of emails stating they don't want masks.

KK Some were couples splitting up emails, so it wasn't that many.

JT It's an interesting conversation, and I appreciate the conversation. I support taking a vote, but I want to remind everyone that we're a fast meeting board, and we could change things again quickly. I appreciate everyone's candor and honesty.

NG FM, where do you stand? Would this change getting the grant money?

FM I don't think that we'd get this grant. I'd rather get grant money that we could use for capital projects and other things. That being said, you have to remember whatever we decide here there's going to be a ripple effect. We lost 15 to not wearing masks, now we may lose some if we mandate masks. If we wait for the governor to do it, then kids won't go anywhere. I'm with

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KK that God forbid if one our kids get sick . . . but if more kids are withdrawn, we'd have to make drastic changes to our budget

DF joined the meeting 8:18pm.

DM I am not proposing we change. We would want to survey our community to find out who would stay or go if we made those decisions

FM That's a fair question, and JT is right: we can get that done before our next meeting

AS We're on a clock, and I'd rather vote now and not lose time.

NG So it's 4 weeks?

GS We're talking 6 weeks tops.

NG For 6 weeks, I think FM has already seen the ripple effect of people leaving the school, if we change this for 4weeks, it seems like it will hurt the school.

FM To clarify the ones who already left, left because they want mandatory mask wearing.

NG Yes, I understand. What I'm saying is the ones who aren't in alignment with that, have already found another school. It's just a small amount of time in the school year, so why would we change the policy and run people out of the school, who then have access to funds to educate their children elsewhere?

GS I think the reason we would do it is because it wouldn't be about funding or money, it would be about safety.

NG I understand, and I'm being a voice for those who want to have voice just like we all have a voice and representing our community.

DF I apologize for being late, I was moving. I can understand why people would want to mandate masks for 4 weeks because the court might overturn it and that could be extended. But then people also argue that there's a lot of children and it's a small amount, but now it is statistically occurring more often. I have been consistently pro-mask because I align with the medical community. Like FM said there's no way to make everyone happy--by not being strong enough and being too strong, so it's a lose lose.

GS MK, do you have a view from the side of Parent Council?

MK I don't know that I can represent Parent Council, but I can tell you my view as a parent myself, but I don't feel comfortable speaking for Parent Council. I am concerned for my children. My kids all mask, and I also have to request that they eat outside and that type of thing too so we're not passing germs, but I also have a child who is asthmatic. As much as I've tried to heal him naturally, I can't get it done, so I am worried more about what will happen to him or any of my children if they have it—what their future is. I'm not as worried about the death rates

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because they are low. I'm worried about the heart issues that some children might have for the rest of their lives. We don't know enough about this virus to know what will happen to them, so my kids are masked, and it would make me feel better if everybody was masked, but again that's my opinion.

DM Thank you for sharing. But if your kids are wearing a mask, that's your choice. Other families should also have that choice. If your kids are masked, aren't they're protected?

MK My kids wearing a mask protects other children. If everybody was wearing them it's more effective.

DF If everyone is wearing them, it's about 70% protection. The difference is significant for sure if everyone is wearing them .

DM We asked the faculty, and they said they didn't want masks. Is that correct?

FM No, we have not asked for their personal opinion. But in conversation, people are clear with their opinions and others don't want to talk about it. We're all over the place. There's no consensus on either side of this which concerns me.

GS From my perspective, we are in the midst of extremely high transmission in Maricopa County right now. I can't share my screen right now, but I'm looking at this data. We are at levels of transmission very similar to where we were in the January timeframe when we closed the school and went remote. Obviously, that's not an option right now. And this is with a variant that is more infectious and possibly more harmful. All that said, when we did reopen the school with everyone wearing masks, we were very successful at not having transmission. People got used to it. Many people didn't like it, and we acknowledged that. But from my perspective, it was an effective tool at mitigating transmission. It allowed classes to continue on site. Requiring masks when we can legally do so, it makes sense to me when we have the rate of transmission we do now.

DM Are you concerned about the amount of children leaving if we do mandate masks?

GS That is certainly a possibility. We don't know what that number is. If we took the emails seriously that we got it could be 15-16 kids, but my obligation as a board member is to ensure the legal and financial integrity of the school, and one of the things in that perview is the safety of the kids in the school. If I have to make choice about something that's annoying but effective at keeping a disease out of campus, I think we should.

DF From watching in Australia, the primary vehicle of transmission is in schools and college campuses. Things have shifted, but it is primarily spreading in schools. Schools are one of the more at risk places. The decision is yes, if we lose people that would be terrible, but what are we sacrificing if we're causing excessive risk? We're in a community where we're all together and one person's choice does affect others.



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GS So, I think we've voiced the opinions that are out there. It's time to take a vote unless anyone wants to add something.

JT What is it exactly that we're voting on because there isn't a motion? Are we talking about an indoor only mask policy? What are the particulars?

GS I would be in favor of requiring masks indoors, and kids can take them off when playing outside. Once you're outdoors the risk goes down.

AS Is that different from what was in our previous mask policy?

GS The mandate was at all times including during outdoor athletic activities.

DF Provided information regarding covid-19 spreading outdoors.

NG Was that the party in Cape Cod where people got it who were vaccinated?

DF No, this was in Australia, but there is evidence that those who are vaccinated are getting the virus because the virus changed.

NG I understand how viruses and vaccines work.

DF In places like in the tropics the flu doesn't stop when it's warm; the flu still spreads.

NG FM, if there's a motion that passes and it expires on 9/29, what's going to stop people from unenrolling tomorrow and reenrolling 9/29?

FM I don't know the answer to that. They could leave and come back, but we wouldn't say no.

GS Assuming there was space.

FM Correct.

GS The flip side is, will others come back if we do have a mask mandate?

DF I wouldn't count on that. Everything changes so fast. I think that's why this decision is so difficult.

GS I'm going to make a motion and we can discuss it as part of this process and change it if we need to. We've heard the sides of the debate, but it's time to take action.

GS Moved that DMS require universal mask wearing indoors through 9/28/2021. DF second.  
The following discussion took place:

NG I think making this motion will put the school at risk in losing a lot of people.

GS Other thoughts?

DM I would like families to have that choice.

KK I'm going to go for safety. Not wearing a mask is making a choice for others.

DM We're always at risk—when we're in the car, when we go to work, and so on.

KK I wear a seatbelt when I drive.

DF That's not the same. When you wear a seatbelt, you're only saving yourself.

GS Any other thoughts?

DM It would be nice to get feedback from teachers. Maybe we can put a note in the drop box.

NG I agree, I'd also like to hear from the community.

DM I think it's safe to say our community is split to the middle.

GS I'm sure if we did a poll we'd get more information, but would that change anything?

DM I would like to think so. I would like to think they're a good voice, and one of the main reasons we are all here together.

DF It's like a 50/50 split there as well.

DM But it would be nice to know.

DF I agree, but I'm not sure it would change the vote.

DM It made a change in the last vote.

GS How so?

DM We asked FM.

FM I thought we were talking about following the state dept's direction. I don't remember taking a poll from the teachers.

DM Was it July? We were discussing whether we should make it optional or not.

GS I'm not remembering that, DM. Anything else?

NG FM, have you heard from parents in drop off/pick up?

FM Yes, on both sides. It's so close to the middle. No matter what we do here, someone's going to be upset.

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NG On our website we have a link to the AZ Dept of Education Parental Rights Handbook. It reads: "#5 The right to make healthcare decisions for the minor child."

GS ADE and AZ Dept of Health are recommending the universal wearing of masks.

NG It's a recommendation.

GS Yes, because they don't have the authority to mandate anything.

JT So the motion is masks indoors, the second a foot steps over the threshold of the classroom they need to wear a mask, and the second they're outdoors, they may remove the mask? And this won't affect our funding in any way?

GS Yes, that's correct. I'm not familiar with the threat to take money away, but I'm familiar with the promise of a possible grant if we follow the law that starts 9/29.

JT I'm just checking. I appreciate your bringing clarity to that.

AS Reread the motion.

Votes In Favor: GS, KK, AS, DF Opposed: NG, JT, DM. **Motion passes.**

GS I appreciate the discussion that took place tonight. It has not been this civil at other schools around the state. I'm grateful for the respect that was shown.

FM When does this start?

GS Great question. It's not covered by our motion.

DF We could leave it up to the school.

FM There's no way that we could expect that everyone would read the email and be ready for tomorrow. I recommend if we're doing this, that Monday is the day that we're doing it. They need time to think about that and prepare.

DM What about medical exemptions? I have one at work. Do we have a provision for that?

FM I don't have one. I think that would be based on what you guys decide.

DF Can't we go back to the mask policy we had last year? I know some children were able to wear a shield. Could we use that?

GS Pulled up the mask policy. Says all students and staff are required to wear facial coverings while on campus. It changed over the year. This one is July 2020. Masks are required, but you could take them on/off at different points through the year.

FM And I don't remember allowing face shields or gators.

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GS I hear you about medical exemptions, but I'm not sure how we would permit that. I'm open to suggestions if we'd like to make exemptions. Would we require a doctor's note, or a parent's statement?

DF What's typically required?

DM For me it was a conversation with HR, and it was kept confidential.

FM Normally, from a medical doctor.

GS I guess the alternative would be that there's a form that families are required to fill out for vaccines. Maybe we do something similar.

FM And this is employees also?

GS Yes. My thought is it isn't just medical, there's religious exemptions, etc. When you require vaccines, you have to offer a reason to be exempt, and it's up to whoever is administering that policy to evaluate that. I think this is something FM would need to evaluate. I don't think we could spell out every parameter that would be every legitimate medical or religious request. I think if people came to you and said this is my situation, that you would have to work with them.

FM What about say a homeopath?

GS That's a person's choice to choose their doctor, so I think that would apply.

GS Moved that there be exemptions to the previously approved mask policy for those with medical needs or strongly held religious beliefs. DF second. Votes In favor: GS, KK, DF, AS Opposed: NG, DM, JT. **Motion passes.**

GS Moved that the mask requirement begin on Monday, 8/23/2021. The following discussion took place:

DF Should we add that kids shouldn't be sent home on the first day?

GS I think that would be at the discretion of FM. Do we have masks on hand?

FM Yes, but they are cloth, not disposable. I'd have to order more, which is fine.

DF 23<sup>rd</sup> sounds fine, but I want to make sure that we have the capacity to communicate it out and have some nuance as we implement that. Not sure how to put that in a motion.

GS Withdraws motion.

GS moved that the mask requirement begin on 8/23/2021 provided that the executive director shall have discretion to implement the policy consistent with available supplies at the school and providing families with adequate notice with the change in the policy. DF second. No further discussion. Votes in favor: KK, GS, DF, AS Opposed: JT, NG, DM. **Motion passes.**

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NG I want to mention an email we received in regards to the letter we sent out, so I want to make sure that we communicate that this is about masks and not vaccines.

GS I think that's fair.

FM Would you like me to write the email or would you like to do that?

GS I think you could get that out faster, so I'd appreciate it if you did that.

FM Of course.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

### Update

FM The high school brick wall has been stuccoed. Should be painted soon, weather permitting. I met with a new contractor that Jimmy Wahbeh connected me with for the adult bathrooms. I'm moving forward on the bathrooms. I'm moving forward on the woodshop as I have a new bid on the cement slab, which is within the money you approved, so I'll move on that. Air purifiers are in classrooms and up and running. Our number is 285 right now. We have offered some spots to kids and have some more tours coming up. That's it right now. My mind is in a lot of places as I'm thinking about the letter I'll need to write. Oh, and we changed our drop off and pick up, and that's going well.

DM Do we know when we'll open doors earlier so children have more play time before school?

FM That is the least desirable option among staff. It's difficult to supervise children before school.

KK FM, that wall looks great.

FM Thank you. The high school students are excited to get that painted.

GS FM, thank you for that and for your continued hard work to make our campus as beautiful as it is. It looks the best it's' looked in years. I appreciate that our vote has put you in a tough spot tonight, and I know it will give you a lot more work, but I'm grateful. Thank you.

## **BOARD PROCEDURES**

### Approval of Minutes

GS moved to approve the 08/04/21 regular meeting minutes. KK second. No further discussion. Votes in favor: GS, AS, DM, DF, KK, NG. Abstain: JT. **Motion passes.**

09.01.21 Approved

### Board Education Reminder

AS Reviewed the schedule for board education, starting with DM at the 9/1 meeting.

GS Joan Treadaway has offered to do some training with us for 20 minutes. Has anyone reached out to her?

DM I spoke with her today, and she's open for that date.

FM I'm meeting with Joan Tuesday, so I will confirm that.

GS Yes, that would be great.

### Board Meeting Scheduling

GS I got married in March 2020, and I'm finally going to take a honeymoon.

DM Congrats. Anyone we know?

GS Her name's Lu. She's wonderful. DM offered to run the next meeting, so we'll plan on that. If you have any questions leading up to 9/1, let me know.

DM So you'll be here up until that day?

GS Yes.

JT So when DM leads the meeting, she's not a board officer, she's just a board member?

Gs Yes, she's just facilitating.

FM I also heard it's your birthday. Happy birthday, GS.

GS That's later in the week.

FM Your kids are spreading rumors at school.

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

### CLOSING VERSE

MK read the closing verse.

GS Thank you to everyone at home watching, and thank you to everyone here in the meeting. Next meeting is 9/1.

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Meeting was adjourned at 8:25pm.

Prepared by AS on 08.18.2021.