

**MINUTES**  
**VSWEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**WEDNESDAY, MAY 4, 2022**  
**VIA [Zoom](#)**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Kerstin Kubina (KK)—President	Danielle Martinez (DM)
Dan Franks (DF)—Treasurer	Nellie Grossenbacher (NG)
April Sauer (AS)—Secretary	Ben Fong (BF)
John Tanner (JT)	
Myriah Mhoon (MM)	

**MEMBERS ABSENT: Gregory Schneider and Scott Edwards**

The 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:  
Barb Cunningham  
Heather Sullivan  
H  
sami  
Sami Rank  
Nicole Goodman  
Kelsey Orosz  
Sophia McCurley  
Tammy Lopez

**OPENING VERSE / INTRODUCTIONS**

Meeting was called to order at 6:34pm. 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**

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FM Two big thank you's--a huge thank you to staff for sponsoring the May Pole event. We had over 200 people. Thank you to Rachel and Susanne for heading up the May Pole. Second thank you is to Parent Council for planning a week of festivities for teacher appreciation week. We're so happy. A huge thank you from the staff to our parents for taking care of us. We are at 282 students. Our projected total for the first day of school is 307. There are 7 more packets out. We plan on budgeting for 300. We're not there yet to fully plan the budget because the governor has not released the budget yet. We're hoping for an increase to education or at least have it be the same. We are working on the budget behind the scenes, but we're just waiting for that announcement. Good news on the capital project. The bathrooms will break ground this weekend. Should take about 7-9 weeks to be completed. It'll be a little loud. Still do not have a permit on the woodshop. It could happen any day per our contractor who keeps checking for us. We have interviews tomorrow for four teachers. We have two teacher openings and a counselor opening. Hopefully, by this Friday I'll have good news on some hires. In the board report I posted some upcoming dates for special events: the brunch, 8<sup>th</sup> grade promotion, and high school graduation. Also, I added the dates of the medieval games and pentathlon games. We're having a hard time getting information about the pentathlon. I also added the senior trip information.

DM Is the senior play mentioned?

FM It's not on there. It's Clue.

DM May 12/13.

FM It will be on campus on our new patio. We'll light that stage.

MK I thought it was just the 13<sup>th</sup>.

FM 12<sup>th</sup> is during the day for classes, and the 13<sup>th</sup> is for parents and the community.

KK Thank you for the update.

### **FINANCIAL UPDATE**

KK I wasn't able to be at the last meeting, so thank you to DM for hosting the meeting.

DM You're welcome. We didn't have much serious business. It was nice.

KK Okay, here's our financials. They're a couple weeks old. Our balance sheet --total liabilities 2.9 million. Profit and Loss Income at 391k. We have definitely had issues in the past, but we've stabilized a lot over the years. We've refinanced, and you'll see that our strategic plan's focus will be stabilizing our budget. We're putting good measures in place. We're moving in the right direction. It's a slow-moving train. P and L vs Budget—it's been a challenging year. We've had extra expenses from cleaning to everything else from Covid, but budget wise we've done a pretty good job. We're over a bit on our budget, but we do have money coming in that we've been waiting on. From a board perspective we'll start looking at our upcoming budget soon. Our refinance has gone through. We refinanced two of our three loans. 1700.66 savings every month will help. We have a good relationship with RSF, and as we look to take on capital projects, they've assured us that they'd work with us on a project in the future.

DM I still have not seen the documents.

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KK They're in the board drive. It's like a 30-page document. My email can't send a document that large.

DM Thank you.

## **CONTINUING BUSINESS/OPEN ISSUES**

### Approval of Meeting Minutes

KK moved to approve the 04/20/22 Meeting Minutes. DM second. No further discussion. Votes in favor: DF, JT, NG, DM, AS, MM. Abstain: KK **Motion passes.**

### Board Goals

KK We'll review some our board goals that we previously covered.

NG I reached out to the LDC to open the conversation and see how they're doing. If we want to have someone come on as a member of the LDC I can reach out again and see who'd be willing to come on.

FM A reminder that JT is a member of the LDC, and you can ask him questions as well.

NG Right. I just didn't want to ask him to do double duty.

JT I would ask the LDC members. I think that would be more appropriate as it would offer a more well-rounded opinion.

NG I'll reach out to them. Thank you, JT, for everything you do.

KK Next was the Contemplation matrix.

DM We met a few times--a core group of us; we're in phase four of the proposal. Read phase four from Contemplation proposal. There's representation from each pillar. There was a discussion of work yet to be completed--recognizing areas where we didn't acknowledge—those who felt dismissed—that's something that we can do, perhaps write a statement.

MM I thought our last meeting we mentioned that we felt that the work proposed from the board had concluded.

DM We're in phase four, and that's why we're ongoing. Read definition of contemplation and purpose from proposal. It's always been on a voluntary basis. Another item that we haven't addressed or completed: love stories. I have a good portion of love stories. If that's something you'd like to do, we're working with Laura to get those on the website. We'd love to hear that. And the other item was a training workshop. We wanted to work on the state regulations and charter training. That's in progress. Presenting and accountability, I think that's something we've been doing well, but something we don't want to stop doing. The work was meant to be ongoing. To move our momentum forward and ensure we don't fall backwards. It's follow-up. Read from Contemplation outline regarding trust and check ins and ongoing exercises. Let me pull up the overview. Read from notes at last contemplation meeting regarding follow up support ideas.

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KK I think as a board we've done a lot of these things, and we want to keep that momentum going. We want to continue those good works, but the contemplation is completed but those who want to volunteer can continue to do so.

DM It's always been a volunteer position. We want to recognize all that good work and how far we've come. The May Faire was a great example of something that was in the contemplation. If there's someone who wants to continue, they can. We have so much more ahead of us.

KK Fantastic. I agree, but from a board perspective and board goals I'm not sure what else needs to be done.

FM The majority of my staff feel like the contemplation has completed, and they don't need to meet as a formal group anymore. Those who want to continue to meet, can but without the word contemplation because that is complete. It was created with three pillars in mind, and one is no longer attending.

DM Rachel has been attending. Barb confirmed with Jean.

FM Rachel is also a parent. Jean has said that she is done. We want to continue open communication between the three pillars. We want to dialog if a problem comes up. I liked MK's idea of renaming the group so they can still meet.

DM It's voluntary and anyone can continue to come. We want to continue this week.

FM I don't disagree. I think the name needs to change because we have completed the contemplation.

DM I don't think the name needs to change. The intention and purpose should continue with the support of all three pillars.

FM The contemplation was three pillars, and one is not participating.

DM Rachel is continuing. We discussed that in our last contemplation meeting, and no one wanted to change the name.

KK It sounds like you'll continue on as an independent group. As far as the goal, do you want to update us on a monthly or quarterly basis?

DM I think quarterly would be great.

BF joined the meeting.

KK The next goal was the strategic plan. FM and I committed to present something to start with. I will share all of this with you. In fact, it's in the drive under long range plan. It's three main buckets. We're focused on education, financial and site development, and faculty and staff. We are working on this, and we'll refine it and give updates as we work through this.

FM DM and AS sent me a past long range plan, and we used that as a template. We combined some of the goals to simplify. Faculty and staff were also combined to focus on working on our compensation package to retain and draw people to our school as well as continuing education and Waldorf certification. And also education—what are we planning and offering. I did add

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another goal of community and volunteering, and we will develop those as we start to achieve some of these others. We could always use more volunteer help. This is a draft of course and can be changed.

KK Since we haven't had a chance to look at it, I think we should put it on our next meeting agenda to look more closely.

NG Can you explain the new mathematics program?

FM The ESSR grant forced you to put money aside to help catch kids up in certain subjects. We are using those funds for researched based reading and math programs. ESSR has approved them. Those are for grades 1-6.

NG Will that be a substitute for our Waldorf math and reading curriculum?

FM We use Saxon math now. We're using Hufflin/Milton reading program, I think. These are nationally researched programs, and the feds will only approve nationally based researched programs. These cover our AZ state standards. When you say Waldorf math, we're using Saxon math.

NG Are the younger kids having main lesson books?

FM Yes, this is separate. We're still doing main lesson.

NG Okay, thank you.

KK I have a child in 5<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, and my kids come home with beautiful main lesson books. Their teachers do a great job of translating those materials in a Waldorf way.

NG Okay, thank you.

### Survey Update

DM The survey is being created. It's ready to launch on the 18<sup>th</sup>. When do we want to review? It'll be taking the temperature of the community.

KK You'll run the communication by us. I think we need more than a day to do feedback.

MM I would like more time.

DM It's specific to the board for community feedback.

AS I'd like more than one day to review it, and I think the evaluation questions should be separate.

DM I think I'll offer those questions and we can use those if we want.

MM I think we should do an annual self eval as well.

FM I think it's correct to do one survey with two sections. One relevant to the board, and one relevant to the Executive Director. It would be nice to collect it all at once. We're looking for feedback; we may as well do it all at once.

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AS I'm worried about the timing and logistics of creating the survey questions for the Executive Director evaluation.

DM Would we put together a working group to evaluate the questions?

AS I think we would all offer feedback.

KK DF, do you think we could come up with our questions for the Executive Director evaluation by the 15<sup>th</sup>?

DF Yes, I think we could do that.

KK I think we'll put it on the agenda for the 18<sup>th</sup> meeting and then it could go on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

BF Surveying in general—perhaps it would be nice to think about the way in which we do community surveys in a more systematic sense. I think making it regular would help the community. We'd all know what it's for and when it would come. Perhaps this could go on the strategic plan.

DM I agree completely.

DF That's something I do with my organization. Surveys go out every quarter. It's helpful with engagement.

DM Another reason why I want to send out an announcement for that as well.

FM I agree with BF, that those surveys should go out regularly. I think it should be one big survey, and it can be divided by sections. You can collect an annual response. I think that's a great idea.

KK Excellent idea. Thank you. We can even put that on the calendar as well. We can add that to the agenda as well.

#### Executive Director Evaluation

DM We've already addressed this, so we're okay.

KK DF and I will be putting that information together. We're committed to getting caught up on that.

#### 2022/2023 School Year/Budget Line-Item Support/ Review and Roll Out

DM We should hit this running hard. I meet with other boards and parent council groups, and someone had mentioned step it up. It's a communication model. It's a contest style. One school raised 25k in one year. I don't think that's something we tried, but we could even just follow that style. We're always more successful when we choose an item to raise tax credits for. We need to put that into our communications. If we want to continue with Melissa Sutton, we could. We want to access outside pockets. I propose to choose two items from the budget to aim for. The capital campaign is good for specific items. We'd love to have everyone's participation.

KK Great, I know that Sophie McCurley, MM, and BF are working on some of these things, so that's great.

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NG I know Sophie is working on a welcome packet, and that would be great to add something about the tax credit there.

BF I think by the next board meeting, the hope is to present a comprehensive plan of all priorities and a proposal.

DM FM, are there two items you can think of right now?

KK Why don't we wait until we get the plan?

DM I was just asking FM for ideas.

FM I have plans for the ESSR monies. I'd like to have an amphitheater for the high school and may have ESSR money for that as well. I think once you see the long-range goals, the first capital project is to take down the farmhouse. We may want to buy another set of portables. That would allow us to have a second 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. I have a waiting list long enough to do that. That's income we're ignoring. We need buildings to house those students.

DM Are we building a pool of teachers for that?

FM We have to start with the building and then find the staff. Dr. Darian was able to work with ASU to get a student teacher, and she's been great. I think she's a high-ranking candidate for our school. We have another student teacher set up for next year. We're trying to build that capacity of student teachers to pick from like other schools. We want to check in with other colleges as well. These are all good things.

DF The school here did the same thing. They added parallel classes. The money that came in allowed them to have a gym and other buildings. It's a highly effective way to make money go farther.

FM We're doing some mold testing, and I found a grant for that. What I don't have is if we find a problem, I don't know what to do to find those monies. We're doing AC repair. They're not glamorous, but we have to do these things. We need parking lots to have no holes and good standing fences.

NG Do we not utilize the additional early childhood classroom?

FM Right now if you take a kinder, you have to offer them a spot in first grade. We can't do that because we don't have a room to put them in.

NG How many kinder are there?

FM 2 kindergartens, 18 each. They give us .5ADM. It's not a full student. PreK is different because it's private and tuition based. That tuition covers the aid and the teacher. It's a self-sustaining program.

KK I like that we have student teachers coming in and Waldorf training this summer. It seems like growing them ourselves is a good idea.

#### Public Comment

DM Do we have any public comments?

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KK We're not offering that right now. We're doing town halls as opposed to public comment.

MM I remember it as conversation, but we wanted it governed by strong protocols.

AS I was asked to send out the protocols for everyone to look at it, and I did. We were supposed to discuss it at another meeting, and we have yet to do that.

DM So has anyone read it?

AS I did.

NG It was about 2 minutes, being respectful, etc.

KK DM, if you could send that out again and we could put that on the agenda to discuss.

MM DM, I'm happy to help with that.

KK Do you want that on the next agenda?

DM Yes.

### Thank You

DM I know we're all grateful to the faculty and staff for the May Faire. It was a such a delight. We felt enriched and enjoyed the day. It was wonderful to come together. It was such a treat. The Kona Ice was delicious. It was fun to see the fairy houses. The games and boat rides were fun, and everyone looked so festive. Thank you, Rachel. I loved being a part of that with you all.

KK I believe there was another group you wanted to thank.

DM I wanted to thank all who participated in the community gathering and for the tree planting. Rachel was there to lead eurythmy. The turnout was good, and their intentions were discussed. It was certainly a beautiful gathering. Special shout out to Hector for digging those holes for the trees.

### Update from the Capitol

DM This was fabulous. The Governor was there and representatives. They came by our table. We displayed some schoolwork, and everyone was impressed. I brought artwork and woodwork. Everyone was handing out items. I think I might try bringing yarn balls to hand out next year. It was great to engage. There were families there. It was good to engage in conversation with some kids. Laura will post some of those photos. Some schools had their student councils there, so that may be an idea for next year.

KK It sounds like you uncovered a jewel of an event.

DM The last one was before Covid, but it is an annual event.

KK Sounds like we should continue to do that. Maybe we should put that on our board calendar.

NG Thanks for going. I think it would be important for our school to go to more events like that and find that right give away that's perfect for our school, but I always found having student



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body there drew people in. I think we should try to bring some high schoolers with us. I'll go with you next time.

DF I could volunteer a giant bell tent.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

None at the time.

### **PROPOSED MOTIONS**

NG made a motion to move the meeting to once a month in person starting at the beginning of the summer. MM second. The following discussion took place:

AS Shared comments regarding the necessity of 2 meetings in June due to budget, have tentative schedule starting in July ready to go. Suggest we start on site in July. Also, do we have the materials needed to project on the screen?

FM Yes, we have those items.

NG I'm happy to start in July.

DF Would we still have a provision for remote guests and members to come on? Obviously, we have guests as well. Is that assumed?

AS Previously, we've had people call in, but I don't see why we can't stare at you via Zoom unless KK wants to give up her Zoom account.

KK I know the Zoom has been helpful. I think a hybrid option might be good.

JT July is notoriously difficult for board members to attend those meetings. A lot of people are out of town. NG, would you consider changing it to August?

NG Sure. Does our school calendar start August 8<sup>th</sup>?

FM Yes.

NG I retract it.

NG moved to move the meetings to once a month in person starting at the beginning of next school year in August. MM seconded. No further discussion. Unanimous vote in Favor: KK, DF, AS, JT, MM, BF, NG, DM. **Motion passes.**

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

KK 5/7 Barnyard Brunch is Saturday. Get your tickets. It'll be a great event. 5/18 next board meeting at 6:30pm via Zoom, and 5/26 last day of school and our rose ceremony. Bring a box of tissues if you haven't been before.

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KK moved to adjourn the 05/04/22 board meeting. NG second. No further discussion.  
Unanimous vote in favor: KK, DF, AS, JT, DM, NG, BF, MM. **Motion passes.**

**CLOSING VERSE**

DM read the closing verse.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:12pm.

Prepared by AS on 05.04.2022.