



MINUTES
VSWEA Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, December 14, 2022
VIA [Zoom](#)

Members Present:

Kerstin Kubina (KK)—President
Dank Franks (DF)—Treasurer
April Sauer (AS)—Secretary

Danielle Martinez (DM)
Myriah Mhoon (MM)
Nellie Grossenbacher (NG)

Members Absent: Ben Fong and John Tanner

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

Guests

Invitees of the Board:
Frank Mirizio (FM)
Ashley Parks (AP)

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

Kristen	H
Deb	MD
Michelle Kratzer	Morgan Davis

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 AP and FM.

Executive Director Updates

FM Enrollment is at 295. It looks like we'll get about six kids at the start of January, which would put us at 301, but we will lose a few who will be moving. We're in good shape budget wise.

6:41pm NG joined the meeting.

FM We had a town hall last week. KK and I attended the meeting. We got a request to have Dr. Darian join the next town hall to answer questions about curriculum. Parent Council held Winter Market. The attitude of everyone volunteering and attending was stellar considering mother nature did not cooperate. We also had Lantern Walk and Spiral Walk. Thanks to our teachers who put those events together. The bathroom is close to being done. We get inspected on Tuesday. It's my hope that the first Monday we're back we will open it to staff. The amphitheater

is being completed. There will be a high school performance once that's done, and we've ordered some lights for that area. The woodshop: we are being forced to go to two separate permits. We're making progress, but it's slow going. We need to purchase two air conditions to replace ones which have failed. We cannot wait until Spring. That 20k would come out of our general budget. The other 20k will come out of a grant that Deb secured for us. We did get another company to make a bid, but they didn't get it to me in time. I'm wanting to get \$40k approved, and I'll go with the better bid. You'll also see a recommendation to get a camera and speaker system for our outdoors. Someone is breaking into classrooms and vandalizing. Some people broke in a month and a half ago and spray painted some walls, and we took care of most of that. We had a lock down drill. We use our phones as a PA system. During the lockdown we noticed that several classes were unaware that we were in lockdown because they were not inside so they didn't hear the notice. These new cameras come with speakers and could be used in this function. The bid that came to us came from a graduate of DMS. It's about \$1000 per camera. They could be installed over holiday break if they're approved. We're having the staff meeting at my home this year just like last year. It should be fun.

MM What's the amount for capital projects to be board approved?

FM It's \$5000.

NG How are kids breaking in? Are the doors locked?

FM Yes, they're locked.

NG There was an assembly today and the parents were uninvited. Can you speak to that?

FM Yes, we decided to have the kids put something together, but it wasn't polished enough for parents. We decided to have it only for the kids so they could perform for each other. There was some miscommunication, but it was rectified quickly.

NG I think it's unfortunate because I think parents would like to be included in these types of holiday events.

FM We've had three events in the last few weeks that all families were able to attend, but I take your point.

KK Do we want to vote a dollar threshold with a clause for the better bid? I think the bid from Wolff was just shy of \$40k.

FM To add to that, the way it can be done is subject to a second bid, we approve up to \$40k. That would keep us from offering a contract to anyone without a second bid.

MM I'm fine with that, but I'm also fine with the most competitive bid. I do know that prices are moving around, so I'd say the most competitive bid should go forth.

KK moved to approve the most competitive bid for the four AC units--2 for EC, 1 for first, and 1 for second—to contract with the most competitive bid that comes in. MM seconded. No further discussion. Unanimous votes in favor: KK, AS, DF, MM, DM, NG. **Motion passes.**

KK I don't care for cameras, but I understand that it makes sense for the issues we've been having.

DF Can we have someone with a background in security make sure that these are exactly what we're looking for? I think our webmaster is a forensic security master, and he may be able to do that. I like the idea of the PA system, and I do think that the cameras would help us with security.

KK That's a great idea. I know we're trying to get this done over winter break.

FM I can get the vendor in with Steve and I and Shawn to ensure it's a good system. I have no problem asking Shawn. I could make that happen.

DF We could approve based on a sign off.

FM Our new webmaster, he was a security advisor for a sheriff in Ohio.

DF He has a digital forensics degree.

DM Is the plan to utilize those cameras only after business hours? I would be in favor of the cameras and PS system being used separately.

MM I'm in favor of staff providing due diligence and we vote. I trust FM and the staff to give us a well-researched recommendation.

KK moved to approve the camera/PA system by 411 Connect for \$8,922.13 provided it passes our webmaster's recommendation. AS second. The following discussion took place:

FM Would you like me to get a second bid?

DF That is a good bid.

DM Security is important, but I'd like to make additional programming a high priority.

KK What does that mean to you?

DM Anything to help our students: a nature walk, strings program, anything. The evening with Ms. Dietz really stressed the importance of students' mental health.

DF Mentioned various groups run out of his school and how engaging they are.

Votes in favor: KK, AS, MM, DF. Opposed: DM. Abstain: NG. **Motion passes.**

Parent Council & Animal Care Updates

KK Unfortunately, Michelle is not well, so we will wait until our next meeting for her to update us.

Marketing and Development Updates

KK Sophie is not able to join us, but she did send a report to us. We've wrapped up the first sustaining fund drive. She's raised \$28,663 in one time donations. She's raised \$2296 in recurring donations. There's 26% family participation. We have 11 tax credit contributions thus far. I think she's been wildly successful. She's been handing out flyers and meeting with parents. NG, I know you helped with the coffee and chat as well. We are still building trust with

the community, but we are doing well. I am so proud of these efforts. Our board member participation is at 78%, and I think that's great for the community to see that we're behind this effort.

FM While we're thanking parents, we had an anonymous donor send a \$6000 donation to Hope and Help for families in our community who are in need of some Christmas help. We have a generous community, and I think that's amazing.

AS I think Sophie has done astonishingly well. These numbers are outstanding, and she's been such a trooper. I know this hasn't been easy. Our school is steeped in tradition, and that's great, but it also means that sometimes our community wants everything to stay the same. Trying new things can be challenging, but she kept at it. I'm impressed and so grateful. I'm seeing our community come together this year, and it's been great to see. I told Parent Council yesterday that I didn't want to go to Winter Market due to the weather. But I'm so glad I did. Everyone was in a good mood and smiling and working hard while laughing about the awful weather. It was wonderful to see, and I just feel pride when these moments come together and we see our community like this. We have had a great semester.

Proposed Motions

KK moved to approve the 11/16 regular meeting minutes and the 11/16 executive session meeting minutes. DM second. No further discussion. Unanimous votes in favor: KK, DF, AS, MM, NG, DM. **Motion passes.**

Continuing Business/Open issues

Substance Abuse Program

KK I left this topic on our agenda, but I'm not sure if you have any updates.

DM Yes, I reached out to Ms. Dietz and the Be Kind program. I'll put some notes together for our next meeting.

MM Are those evidence-based programs?

DM I haven't asked those questions. Would you like me to do that?

MM Yeah, I'd be curious to see if it's an evidence-based program

Town Hall

KK We already touched on this a bit. One thing we did was we took our attendees on a field trip. We showed them the new bathrooms and lounge area. We saw that we needed a few things to build up the berm.

FM Yes, we need some red rock that's graded.

KK We'll have a picnic table and some plants, and it looks really great. We'll try to do that again for the next town hall. I felt like that went really well. There were some concerns that were brought to us as well. Some of our new parents were concerned about not fully understanding

the festivals. I talked with Deb about putting together some information for parents and having it on the website.

AS Shared that it's on the website already, would like to see "Here at DMS . . ." I'm happy to talk with Deb about some of this to make sure that we're not reinventing the wheel but just improving it.

DM I'd like to see it as a parent education night. Putting information on the website feels hollow to me.

KK I like that as well. I think we can incorporate a lot of these idea. AP, can you speak to some of the parent education that's coming up?

AP Shea Darian will be coming to speak with us, and so will Rochelle. Both will be speaking to various aspects of Waldorf curriculum. I think we're trying to get a couple teachers to present in April and May. We're trying and working on it.

KK The final piece at Town Hall was not sending out reminders enough. I'm an offender as I didn't send anything out. We can all be better about this.

DM I thought Laura said that there's a setting for that on Parent Square.

KK FM, could you take that on with Shawn to see if he can give us some pointers there.

FM Yes, not a problem at all.

MM The school has done a lot of improvement in this area. There have been reminders: meetings, in the Bee, etc. It's not spoon fed, but there is a lot of information. I think we've come a long way.

KK You're right. Thank you for acknowledging that. I think if we can do a couple more things to improve in this area that will help.

Strategic Goals

KK We haven't revisited these in a while. I wanted to make sure everyone has time to refresh themselves on these goals. Some have also been completed, but there are those that need to be more measurable. Some we need to decide if it's a goal we can accomplish. Next board meeting we will discuss it more.

New Business

A/C Quotes

Cameras and Speakers

KK We have already discussed both of these topics earlier.

LDC

KK Mr. Tanner has agreed to speak with us regarding the LDC to get more visibility and updates. I've spoken with Dr. Darian and FM about that as well. We'll push that to our next meeting, but FM if you'd like to give us an overview that's up to you.

FM LDC is a Godsend to me. All principals have to have a leadership committee. You have to ensure that you're getting information from each group. We've changed some of the rules and regulations. That was done in August. We adjusted some of the requirements. This is the committee that exists that is changing these rules so that we can get more perspectives on and off. Once we hired a curriculum director, we knew that we needed to change out some responsibilities. Their focus is to be a voice for their realm. They're all represented, and I'm happy with the progress they've made. Next year, we look forward to some new leaders. We're using it to train leaders. You'll hear from Mr. Tanner on this as well at the next meeting.

DM Does that give opportunity for specialty teachers to join?

FM Yes, it gives them an opportunity because we have two with a highly qualified cert and have been there for 3 years.

DM Great, thank you.

NG Who's currently on the LDC?

FM Heather Sullivan EC, Jean/John Grades, Kelsey/Paula Cummings High School, and I rep specialties and special education. We pay a stipend so I don't want to get to 8 or 10 members.

NG Can this document be on our website?

FM I'm not sure if that's been done in the past, but I know it's in our employee handbook.

NG What about posting an agenda or minutes?

FM, AS, and NG discuss best ways to get updates from the LDC.

FM I think your questions can be answered by myself or John. I'm confident in the LDC. I bring them ideas and ask for input. This is the committee to ask about that. We spend a lot of time hashing out different plans. We need to make the best decision for the students.

NG I've been trying to get answers about the LDC for a year, and I get stopped at every step.

FM I'm confused by your question. I'm confident in the LDC, and they're performing the purpose they should be.

NG and FM continue to discuss LDC.

DM What I'm hearing NG say is that we want more collaboration. Is that what I'm hearing?

NG Yes, that's what I'm saying.

FM LDC is an advisory group, not a decision making group. Andrew and I make the final decision. They advise and give input.

KK I think this document is a great start. I think having an update in the Bee or a Town Hall would be good.

MM I'm just confused. An advisory board don't have agendas beyond advising someone. Beyond being in the meetings, we know why they're there.

KK The feedback from the community is that they don't know who they are.

MM I get that this is a trusting and learning curve, but they're advisors and we don't need to know all the things.

FM Let me apologize. I know that I'm being strong in my language. I have to defend my leadership team. They're doing great. They're a big part of the success that we've had the last few years.

KK Thank you. We'll look forward to Mr. Tanner sharing more at the next meeting.

Campus Touch up Projects

KK I pulled NG into this. When we look at the farmhouse, there's a lot of thoughts. When buildings aren't maintained, they have issues that require the board to get involved. We're thinking about how much money we can borrow, what things we can fix on our own. We put together a checklist. There's a hole in the eurythmy building that's already been repaired. We're forwarding our ideas to FM and Steve and Hector. The parking lot will be beautified a bit. Behind the orchard, there's a landfill. We're working on cleaning that up. We're trying to find solutions for festival parking.

FM Steve and Hector and I met today and some of the projects are already done. There's two or three we'll do over break. Some stucco and leveling around the trees. Some other projects will involve hiring some specialists. Some of the work won't get done until summer. We'll have specifics for the January workday.

NG Oh, great.

DM We left a few events out: we had the 9th grade put on MacBeth, and we also had Dante Night as well.

FM Yes, those were great events.

MM I'm confused again how this was elevated to board work.

KK I took this work upon myself. I'm concerned about the cost of farmhouse, and I want to ensure we don't reach that level again. I think we need more of a maintenance schedule. I don't want it to bubble up.

DM It's been quite a number of years, but previously boards created long range plans, and this was always a part of it.

MM I get that things surface to the board, but I'm not quite sure that we're equipped for this type of work. I'm concerned about liability.

KK Maybe that's something we need to consider—hiring a specialist to walk the facilities and let us know what needs to be done.

MM I think a 5-10 year schedule for capital projects is a good idea.

DM Do you remember if the farmhouse came up in the inspection for the refinance?

KK I can't remember. All of that is in the loan document in the drive.

MM Would it be possible for us to talk about the DEI work at our next meeting? I think we need to make this a priority at our school.

KK Agreed. Yes, and I'll put this on our strategic goals as well.

Announcements

KK Early release on Friday 12/16/22, winter break is 12/19/22-1/1/23, and our next board meeting is 1/18/23 via Zoom.

KK moved to adjourn the 12/14/22 board meeting. NG second. No further discussion.
Unanimous vote in favor: KK, AS, DF, DM, MM, NG. **Motion passes.**

Closing Verse

AP read the closing verse.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:13pm.

Prepared by AS on 12.14.2022.