

Spring Garden Waldorf School

Board Meeting minutes

September 12, 2022

Attendance: Bridget Ambrisco, Gabrielle Aryeetey, Stephanie Bailey, Vikram Bedekar, Daren Brake, Tricia Cottrell, Miriam Daniel, Joyce Gordon-Shapkaliska, Amy Hecky, Brenda Leighton, Rocky Lewis, Julie Marchetta, Kristen Oberhaus, Marie Paul, Jen Vereb, Kyle Yoder, Dionne LaRue

- Meeting called to order at 6:33pm with the reading of the Opening Verse
- Minutes of August 2022 Board meeting approved as written.

EDUCATION AND INSPIRATION

Miriam Daniel spoke on the AWSNA self-study principle of Spiritual Development in Support of Professional Growth. She led the Board in an exercise to find spirituality in an object in nature. She stressed the importance of the connection between spirituality and the values instilled at various stages of life.

ADMINISTRATION REPORTS

Director of Administration

Amy Hecky, Director of Administration highlighted some of the topics covered by her Board Report. Training from the Sophia Institute has been offered to the Early Childhood hourly staff and the First Grade assistant on the role and responsibilities of a Waldorf assistant teacher. The classes will be online, and cost will be covered by the professional development budget. Separate training will be offered to the Grades teachers on the topic of Classroom Behavior Management of grades 1-8.

Amy also reported that SGWS has obtained liability insurance coverage from the Philadelphia Insurance Company. The coverage is similar to our prior coverage with Liberty Mutual, but at a lower cost.

Amy encouraged Board members to reach out to anyone they feel is qualified to fill the open position for a Grade 6 and 8, part-time math teacher. Although SGWS has been advertising for the position, the current job market necessitates extra effort on the part of employers. A second interview for a candidate for Director of Development was held on September 7 and announcement is expected soon.

Director of Admissions & Marketing

Rocky Lewis, Director of Admissions, announced that child-caregiver class sessions will return for children aged 18mos-3.5yrs old. There will be Fall, Winter, and Spring sessions taught by former SGWS EC lead teacher Kathy Miller.

Rocky also serves on the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee and presented its working draft Vision Statement. One goal of the DEI Committee is to engage the Board in DEI training and policy accountability. As the Committee has only recently been formed, that has not yet happened formally. One idea is to have the Board participate in SEED training that the Faculty and Staff have already completed. Other options suggested were to add abbreviated SEED training sessions to Board meetings and to explore training through the Groundwater Institute. Rocky also agreed that the DEI Committee should keep the Faculty and Staff updated with DEI training as needed.

Rocky is also co-managing SGWS Accreditation and provided the Board with the Accreditation timeline, Self-study goals, working groups descriptions. The working groups have been formed and Amy will be reaching out to the Board for participation soon.

Director of Finance

Julie Marchetta, Director of Finance, reported that 180 students are currently enrolled with one potential new enrollment. Some funds for the Annual Giving Campaign have begun to come in. The Connelly Family donations are added to the GAR Endowment, which is only for tuition assistance. The amount of tuition remission in the budget will increase because some of the newly hired employees have children enrolled at SGWS. The 9-6-22 YTD Budget shows a budget net grand total of \$9280.

Director of Development

Rocky explained that grant reporting is up-to-date and there may be another GAR grant for which SGWS can apply.

Parent Council

Tricia Cottrell, a Parent Council Lead, reported that the Welcome Back Dinner held the Monday before school resumed was well-attended, especially by new families. Tricia felt that it was beneficial to have New Family Orientation in the gym while PC volunteers were setting up for the Dinner. There may be some interest in moving the Dinner to Friday for greater attendance. Also, Suzie Reich will become a Parent Council Lead this year, replacing Jen Vereb.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive Committee

Bridget Ambrisco, Board President, stated that the Committee is formulating its goals for the upcoming year. Also, Stephanie Bailey is the Faculty Representative serving on the Executive Committee.

Finance Committee

Joyce Gordon-Shapkaliska reported that the Finance Committee has spent most of its time reviewing the Salary & Tuition Model for the Compensation Task Force. It has also set its committee goals for the year.

Governance Committee

Jen Vereb, Committee Chair, stated that the Committee has approved its goals for the upcoming year.

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee has not yet met this school year, but Tricia Cottrell reported that Darren Brake is the new Committee Chair.

NEW BUSINESS

Committee Members and Annual Goals

Bridget Ambrisco, Board President, stated that she has received some, but not all, annual goals from Committees. She also stated that the SGWS Strategic Plan is scheduled to end Spring 2023 and would need to be updated. However, following the Accreditation process, SGWS will receive a report on areas

for improvement/goalsetting. Therefore, it may make sense to hold off on updating Strategic Plan goals until after the Accreditation process is complete.

Update from Compensation Task Force

Dionne LaRue, Task Force co-chair, summarized the work done by the Task Force since the August Board meeting. Since that time, the Task Force has held three meetings during which the group reviewed the results of the Faculty and Staff survey, discussed healthcare benefits options, and began working with the Salary and Tuition Model that will be used to calculate tuition increases and corresponding compensation increases.

Dionne also stated that the consultant hired by SGWS, Toby Ann Weber, met with PC Leads Kelli Wright and Tricia Cottrell to get ideas about the best ways to communicate with parents on the upcoming changes in tuition. Amy reported that a parent survey is being developed and a presentation to parents is planned. She is also speaking with administrators from other Waldorf schools about how they involved parents before implementing large tuition increases. She further stated that communication with parents should be very intentional and direct. Information gathered will inform the Task Force's decision-making.

The Task Force's first priority is to use tuition increases to increase wages, then apply the increased revenue to benefits and retirement because decisions on those benefits will take more time. This also keeps the work in line with the order of priorities enumerated in the Faculty and Staff survey.

Suggestions from the Board included different tuition rate increases for the EC Program and the Grades, freezing tuition for certain Grades, and increasing SGWS financial aid. The Task Force also needs to consider how to adjust the compensation plan once maximum enrollment and tuition numbers are reached.

Action on New Board Member

Tricia Cottrell, from the Nominating Committee presented Darrin Griggy as a potential new Board member. Board members were given Darrin's professional bio for review. Tricia stated that Darrin is looking forward to serving on the Board and that he is interested in serving on the Development Committee. Voting Board members unanimously elected Darrin Griggy to the SGWS Board.

Meeting adjourned at 7:54pm with reading of the Closing Verse.

Dionne LaRue
(she/her)
Board Secretary

Next Board Meeting: Joint Board-Faculty meeting, October 10, 2022, at 6:30pm