

Spring Garden Waldorf School

Board Meeting minutes

June 5, 2023

Attendance: Bridget Ambrisco, Gabrielle Aryeetey, Stephanie Bailey, Tricia Cottrell, Miriam Daniel, Joyce Gordon-Shapkaliska, Darrin Griggy, Amy Hecky, Brenda Leighton, Julie Marchetta, Jen Vereb, Kyle Yoder, Dionne LaRue

- Meeting called to order at 6:36pm with the reading of the Opening Verse
- May 2023 minutes approved as written

EDUCATION AND INSPIRATION

Stephanie Bailey, Early Childhood Lead Teacher, spoke about many new developments in the EC program, including forest kindergarten supplies for The Meadow, an EC teachers' book study, and incorporating DEI into the curriculum with story baskets. The story baskets contain many items, including peg people of various shades, for the EC students to use to make up their own stories. She said these baskets have been very popular with the children. Stephanie also shared a portion of a book that she found inspirational and conveys the importance of immersing oneself in the outdoors. Some of EC teachers have also taken training related to forest kindergarten. They are coming up with ideas of how to bring aspects of forest kindergarten to the EC program, including collaborating with a professional in the area of nature play. She said this has been a magical and renewing experience for the EC teachers. They have also discovered that there are ways to be more progressive in Waldorf education without such a rigid adherence to traditional tenets.

ADMINISTRATION REPORTS

Director of Administration

Amy Hecky, Director of Administration, stated that work will begin in June with Bechter Plumbing for repairs to the boys' restroom and with Untangled Technology for the two-way communication system. SGWS was not awarded a grant for safety upgrades. SGWS will pay 25% of the cost of the communication system, approximately \$3K, with the remainder paid for with BWC funds. There are many open positions to fill over the summer. Those who have been hired to begin teaching positions next school year have jumped right into their training and classroom observation. The challenges of retaining a Spanish teacher were also discussed. Amy can reach out to a Waldorf Spanish Teachers' group for guidance. Administration and Faculty continue to work with Copley-Fairlawn Schools and the Copley Police Department to devise additional school-wide safety measures. Great consideration will be given to presenting any new safety drills to the students in a developmentally appropriate way. Care will be taken to normalize the drills, and they will be thoroughly practiced before involving the students. EANS funds were used to purchase computers for Faculty and Staff. Sage Rock will serve as tech support and create a Google drive for documents.

Director of Admissions & Marketing

Amy presented the Board report for Rocky Lewis, Director of Admissions & Marketing. She noted that of the 11 students waitlisted, 8 are on the list for Grade One. The others are waiting for spots in the Early

Childhood program. The Board was also reminded to complete the survey related to our AWSNA Accreditation process.

Director of Finance

Julie Marchetta, Director of Finance, reported that fundraising to-date is 59% greater than what was projected by the budget. Additionally, only \$6800 of the \$40K budgeted for facilities projects has been spent. The remainder has been deposited in the SGWS restricted account to be available as needed for further facilities projects. Payroll will be paid two more times and tuition collected once more before the end of the fiscal year. The income from the summer camps that begin in July 2023 will appear in the 2023-24 budget.

Director of Development

Amy presented the Development Board report on behalf of Joanna Caley, Director of Development. As an update to the report, Amy stated that Joanna had spoken with an official regarding the Ohio Attorney General's school safety grant who reported that all funds have been dispersed. However, another round of funding is planned.

Amy also expressed her gratitude for Joanna's outstanding work as Director of Development, saying she is the right person for this role.

Parent Council

Tricia Cottrell, a Parent Council Lead, reported that Parent Council is currently working on the End-of-the-Year Gathering, graduation gifts for Grade Eight, and securing reps and leadership for the 2023-24 school year.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive Committee

At its most recent meeting, the Committee set the agenda for the June Board meeting and reviewed the proposed 2023-24 calendars for Board and Executive Committee meetings. Administrative Assistant Jess Stachler will send Google invites for next year's Board meetings.

Finance Committee

The application process to receive ERC funds should be completed by the end of June 2023. There is no way to predict how much money SGWS will receive. The Payroll Protection Plan funds that were received earlier will be considered when ERC funds are calculated.

Governance Committee

There was no new report from the Governance Committee.

Nominating Committee

Jen Vereb, Nominating Committee member, contacted the three new Board members who were elected at the May meeting.

DEI Committee

The minutes from the May DEI meeting were submitted in advance of this meeting. There were no questions nor additional information to report.

NEW BUSINESS

Action on Pay Matrices for Hourly Employees

Joyce Gordon-Shapkaliska, Board Treasurer and Finance Committee member, presented the Hourly Employee Matrices that have been approved by the Finance Committee and the Administrative Faculty. Currently, all hourly employees are paid the same rate regardless of their experience or time at SGWS. The newly drafted Matrices set forth rate increases for professional development and years of service at SGWS. The Matrices define how credits for professional development and years of service are calculated. Once the Matrices are applied, the overall increase in pay for all hourly employees is slightly higher than the 3% recommended by the Compensation Task Force but does not significantly impact the 2023-24 budget. One purpose of the Hourly Matrices is to meet SGWS's goal of greater employee retention.

The Board discussed what training options are available for hourly employees, if SGWS pays for the training and whether there should be a requirement that an employee whose training is paid for by the school continue their employment for a certain length of time. The Board also explored whether professional development or years of service should be more heavily weighted. Such a determination depends on whether SGWS wants to encourage retention or continuing education. Additionally, while the Matrices provide for steady increases as years of service progress, should they instead have a greater pay "bump", or begin to increase at a higher rate after a certain number of years. Amy noted that these concerns also apply to the Salary Matrix and it will be reviewed to ensure that all matrices are fair and match.

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Joyce moved that the Board approve the Hourly Matrices as drafted for the 2023-24 school year. The Board voted accordingly:

In Favor: 10; Opposed: 0; Abstained: 1.

Motion passed.

Based on concerns raised by the Board during the discussion of the Hourly Matrices, Joyce further moved that the Board, Finance Committee, and Administrative Faculty review the Matrices by February 2024 and advise whether to give more weight to length of employment with SGWS, or continuing education when calculating pay increases for hourly employees. The goal of this weighting system should be to encourage employee retention. Jen Vereb seconded the motion. The Board voted accordingly:

In Favor: 11; Opposed: 0; Abstained: 0.

Motion passed.

Review Results of Board Self-assessment Survey

Each Board member was given a print-out of the survey questions and responses. Bridget spoke generally about the results and asked for comments from members. The Board discussed ways to encourage members to speak up at meetings and the importance of creating an environment in which members feel comfortable expressing their opinion, or to disagree with others. The Board debated the advantages and disadvantages of requiring members to participate in-person at future meetings. Members also discussed the need to clearly outline what we expect of the Director of Administration. This would be particularly important should the DA position be filled by someone new to SGWS.

Bridget thanked the retiring Board members for their service.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15pm with reading of the Closing Verse.

Dionne LaRue
(she/her)
Board Secretary

Next Board Meeting: (tentative) August 14, 2023, at 6:30pm