

Scattergood Friends School  
School Committee Meeting  
Open Session Minutes – 1 May 2021  
Conducted via Zoom

**Mission Statement**

**Scattergood Friends School challenges students with a college-preparatory curriculum, farm experience, a shared work program, and community living in the spirit of Quaker faith.**

**Present:** Ruth Hampton (clerk), Laël Gatewood, Charlie Johnson, Bob Winkleblack, George Bergus, Roy Helm, Kent Tjossem, David Wilcox, Nancy Jordan, Alex Lippitt, Bob Winchell, Tom Wahl, Aaron Woolfson, Matt Zisk, Karen Greenler

**Staff Present:** John Zimmerman, Kendall Smith, Kim Jones, Sam Taylor, Shari Sollars, Matt Gauder, Sonja Sondheim, Mark Quee, Jamie Newton

**Guest:** Riley Eynon-Lynch

Friends settled into silent worship in a timely manner. The Clerk read aloud:

*“All the art of living lies in a fine mingling of letting go and holding on.”*  
— Henry Havelock Ellis

Agenda Review: Tuition remission for staff will be tabled until another meeting

**MINUTE: With some small non-content edits, we approve the minutes, open and closed, of our March 13, 2021 meeting.**

**MINUTE: We approve The Gift Committee's recommendation for Blackburn Estate money. (The initial approval happened via email in late March.)**

**MINUTE: We approve the School Committee membership composition changes to the handbook. This is the second reading and final approval.**

We will reach out to the West Branch Friends Church for members. This can be considered as a formal handbook addition in the future. Northern YM is potentially interested in offering a second representative and that discussion is worth having. NYM will discuss into this matter at their annual sessions before our next meeting.

Academic: It has been an amazing year despite the pandemic. The school had only three Covid-19 cases and was able to avoid spread in each instance. The augmented electronic interaction with parents has been popular and may continue. Students have successfully completed their work with a variety of school attendance modalities. There will be 7 or 8 high school graduates; all have college acceptances. In the middle school, 10 of 11 students will be returning to Scattergood. Four will graduate and three will continue to the HS (the fourth's family is relocating.) We discussed whether the school will require a vaccine to return in fall. It's been considered but the legal situation is unclear at this point for youth.

Admissions: We have a 90% retention rate, which is excellent. Our tuition goal was to raise the tuition contribution levels from families, in aggregate. We increased tuition income by almost \$53K from last year. Like all mid-status schools, new students are trickling in slowly. We expect more applications during summer as Scattergood has an admission pattern of late applicants. Remote recruiting has been challenging there is an in-person open house coming up, and Shari will do more in-person recruiting in fall, as Covid allows.

Facilities: Russ Leckband will return as an associate member of the Facilities sub-committee, which is welcome. Matt's report is quite thorough. His proposed Capital Budget includes: **siding on the Instruction Building estimated at \$18K; new rood on the Quad estimated at \$10K; the Main building entry redesign to include an outward facing window estimated at \$3,500; and a larger van for MS students and more day HS**

**students**, John is researching options. CBL licenses may be necessary with a larger van; this is still in the planning stages. We discussed the sprinkler system and about asking the Fire Marshall for a variance because the dorms are fully concrete. The size of the storage tank required would be very expensive for a code compliant system. The reason for the large tank is there could be a delay in time for the fire department to reach the school. Matt thinks that a smaller system would be adequate. He will talk to Fire Marshall about the possibility of a variance, which would need to happen by this time next year. Without a variance, the contractors can only do the code compliant system.

**MINUTE: We approve the Capital Budget for 2021-2022. The Quad roof and the Instructional Building siding may be done in consecutive years.**

Farm: Mark got some new equipment and has a lot of work to do, but everything is ok. Dana is scheduling a work day for MS families to remove the “derecho” wood pile. Everyone is welcome to join this effort on May 16<sup>th</sup>. On June 5 Mark will be part of “Ask a Farmer,” via Zoom, for the Ames Catholic Worker group.

Development: On May 19 John will conduct an interview with seniors to connect with alumni and to push for Spring Appeal, and the following next week the students will make donor calls. We’ll make a decision about adding a matching grant after the senior interview. We tend to have fall donors and spring donors and so this push is likely to be productive. Annual contributions across the nation are down and many philanthropic dollars are going to food banks and homeless shelters due to the effects of the pandemic. Aaron is working with others on the alumni list with Touch Point Pro, a tool which will help produce a clean and useful alumni list, including notes on how people want to be contacted. This should assist in launching an alumni organization. Aaron will contact Riley since he is familiar with this kind of software. Sam suggested that getting alumni and staff together to have a Facebook message blitz might be useful. Aaron will reach out to Sam and others to further that idea.

Spiritual and Community Life: We are talking about challenges of language and culture with students and staff. Sonja’s report is thorough. The sub-committee continues to work on maintaining safety while moving towards an ideal of intentional community. Appreciation was noted for the work that has been done on handbook.

Consultation and Finance: It’s very good news that we have not had to tap into the line of credit, largely due to the PPP loans, which Kim thinks will be forgiven. We are getting reenrollment dollars early this year and it is helpful to have contracts in hand before summer. Some families have pre-paid for the full year, and all this gives the school cushion going into the summer. It was wondered if we can reach the goal of having reserve funds. In recent years some capital money has gone into the admissions budget, which was woefully underfunded. The committee noted its appreciation for Kim’s enthusiasm, pragmatism, and also the tempering of our expectations.

Please note that we are going to be using a new format for our operating statement, which Alex has been working on diligently. Stay tuned! Next year’s budget is the lowest projected deficit we’ve seen for some years! We expressed our appreciation to John and Kim.

**MINUTE: We accept the April 23, 2021 Operating Statement.**

**MINUTE: We again will request \$54,000 from IYMC for 2021-2022.**

**MINUTE: We approve the proposed 2021-2022 budget.**

Head Report: As more students are vaccinated, we are able to be in one pod for the final weeks of school. We can interact with one another, happily and unmasked. The middle school will still be separated, since they are not yet vaccinated. Graduation will be live, but also live-streamed. We will celebrate our first 8<sup>th</sup> grade commencement. Hiring for the positions listed in the Head’s report are moving forward. John asked that we hold up Dani Evans-Schreiber for her work with the summer camp program. We are currently anticipating about 30 campers and Dani continues to work on recruiting both for the school and the camp.

**Note:** We asked John to please share the SC’s appreciation to all the school staff for an extraordinary year!

DEI: John reported that coming out of Black History Month, the school community recognized that there is a lot of work to do in this area. Looking at the challenges that students and staff of color face in this community is sobering. The school would like to work with a consultant to look at how we are approaching these issues. Initiatives could include anti-racist training for hiring committees and setting aside a regular portion of community meetings to address these concerns. This is work that is so important that it needs to be addressed at all levels of the school including the School Committee. How do we address the lack of diversity on the School's governing body? Should there be a SC subcommittee working on DEI at Scattergood?

Our self survey has noted lack of diversity in the past and SC should take that on. It was noted that NYM is pursuing this topic in depth, investing both time and money. It was suggested that gender identity be included in the DEI initiative. We should look at our SC Handbook to see how we can promote diversity through our governing structure. We should use an aspirational lens and urge IYMC to consider DEI issues at greater depth as well. One member recognized that Sonja has been addressing this with the students and doing a great job.

SC affirms the desire to further this work. An ad hoc group will meet to determine the parameters and goals of a DEI subcommittee to be put in place as early as next fall. We could bring in outside expertise; some of the Blackburn money has been earmarked for this work and we may find the need of other partnerships.

**MINUTE: We approve an ad hoc group to begin a process improving our attention to issues of DEI with the intention of forming a DEI subcommittee.**

Alex Lippitt, Ruth Hampton, Roy Helm, Lael Gatewood, and Nancy Jordan will serve on this group.

July 20 is our next meeting, we look forward to seeing each other then.

Respectfully submitted,  
Karen Greenler  
Recording Clerk

**Proposed dates for School Committee 2021-2022**

- 1) September 11
- 2) November 13
- 3) January 15 (likely via zoom)
- 4) March 12 (likely via zoom)
- 5) May 7
- 6) Tuesday, July 26