

Scattergood Friends School
School Committee Meeting
Open Session Minutes
14 May 2016

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: Lucy Hansen, Phil Henderson, Dan Schlitt, Katherine Young, Ruth Hampton (clerk), Roy Helm, Russ Leckband, Ginny Winsor, Lucy Marsh, Doyle Wilson, Rebecca Bergus, Bob Winkleblack, Bob Winchell, Lael Gatewood, Shana Wagner

Regrets: Gail Nelson, Karen Greenler, George Bergus

Staff Present: Louis Herbst, Thomas Weber, Tim Schulte, Andrew Orrego-Lindstad, Cindy Olivarus, Alicia Streeter

Friends settled into silent worship in a timely manner. The clerk read a message:

“...to turn all the treasures we possess into the channel of Universal Love becomes the business of our lives...”

~John Woolman

Minute: We approve the open minutes of our meeting on March 12, 2016, with corrections. No closed minutes were recorded.

As we heard reports, we shared our gratitude for the hard work done by staff and faculty. Scattergood faces several serious challenges that we are all working to address. Our meetings have developed a sense of thoughtful and stirring energy. We know that these challenges will require additional attention from all of us and the sense of the meeting is that we are ready and willing to meet them. This energy has seen no ebb since the approval of the Strategic Plan and even though the School Committee is often far from the physical plant, it is clear that the health and well-being of the school now and for the future is never far from our thoughts and actions.

We welcomed Andrew Orrego-Lindstad as Development Director and are very excited as he begins what will hopefully be a long tenure at the school. With Andrew’s guidance, we are working to close a \$70,000-\$80,000 shortfall in the annual fund. Excitement was shared for the proposed launch of the new website which will be more mobile-friendly and will hopefully generate more interest in the school and help with admissions. Alicia is increasing outreach in Omaha and Cedar Rapids with in-person visits. The school is also looking for people or meetings to sponsor students from Afghanistan, as there has been increasing interest from that country.

The Facilities Subcommittee reported that they are struggling with interpreting the capital expenditure policy and changes to that policy were presented. The proposed revision is attached. As this is a change to the School Committee Handbook, the policy will need two approvals before it can be added to the handbook. The proposal, with minor changes, will come to the July meeting for second approval.

Minute: We approve, with changes to paragraph 1, the Scattergood Friends School Capital Expenditure Policy, dated 14 May 2016. This is the first approval.

Additionally, the subcommittee and Tim are working on the list of capital improvements for the next budget year. At the July meeting, the committee will provide us with a prioritized list of capital expenses for the upcoming year.

Minute: We approve the following capital expenditures for the 2016-2017 fiscal year: the well interconnection; the main building water heater installation; the farmhouse demolition; and the gym lighting retrofit.

The Farm Subcommittee reported that they are reexamining the apportionment of the budget lines with Cindy to provide more clarity and align the budget reporting more closely to the way that money is spent on the farm. We discussed how the increased focus on the farm as outlined in the Strategic Plan might impact this work. We were reminded that increasing work on the farm to meet the goals of the Strategic Plan will require not only extra expense but also extra labor. In addition to noting how the farm might change in response to the Strategic Plan, Mark is considering what might be built in the place of the razed farmhouse, perhaps a greenhouse.

We heard from the Spiritual and Community Life Subcommittee that there is work being done on campus around transgender issues. The subcommittee encouraged us to consider how we might support this work, including recommending the latest issue of Friends Journal that includes an article about how George School has addressed the issue of transgendered students in their community.

All seniors are college-bound! Unfortunately, because of the date of our meeting, the School Committee did not hear from the seniors as is our usual practice. We shared how very proud we are of these graduates and celebrated all the hard work they and their faculty members have done in getting them to this exciting next step in their journey.

As part of the Academic Subcommittee report, we celebrated the hard work done by Louis, the leadership team, and the faculty in creating a solid foundation for academics at the school. From the farm program to the individual academic plans for students to the increased focus on teacher development, we are very excited about the future of academics. We expect that Gabriella, the new academic dean, will built on this foundation and continue to strengthen it. Louis reports that the transition is going very well and he has provided, and is continuing to craft, position papers to assist in this transition and record the reasoning and results of the current academic plan. Next year, the focus will be on improving the math program to boost math skills and expectations for both students and teachers.

Minute: We minute our appreciation for Louis Herbst for not only his ability to create and implement plans for curriculum, but also his ability to identify and lift up the skills and gifts of individual teachers and students to push both to reach their full potential. We appreciate his broad vision for the school and its future, as well as his energy and attention to detail. We will miss his enthusiasm for getting things done and his thoughtful, progressive approach to education. We wish him and his family all the best as they move to Maryland.

Consultation and Finance presented the Operating Statement and Proposed Operating Budget. The SFS Foundation provided the School an interest-free loan to provide additional funds. The current operating statement shows areas where we are saving money as faculty and staff continue to be frugal in their spending. The Proposed Operating Budget is a very conservative budget based on the number of students we expect to enroll next year given current people in the admissions pipeline. It also includes a 3-Year sustained campaign to raise \$300,000 in addition to an increase in the Annual Fund. The budget reflects a smaller than expected health care payment as well as a small increase in salaries for all staff and a small contribution to retirement for all staff.

Minute: We approve the Operating Statement as of 30 April 2016.

Minute: We approve the 2016-2017 Proposed Operating Budget.

In reviewing the implementation stages (of the Strategic Plan) prepared and presented by Thomas, we determined that a small committee might assist in assessing progress. Thomas will consolidate notes and send them for review. It is understood that this committee does not provide approval for implementation, but merely acts as a way to help Thomas find way forward should he request it. The committee also will provide any needed structure, such as deadlines, that will help the School Committee monitor the plan.

Minute: The previous ad hoc committee, the Steering Committee for the Strategic Plan, was laid down with appreciation for the work done to support Thomas in his work.

Minute: We approve the creation of a new ad hoc committee the purpose of which is to help Thomas discern way forward to develop the Implementation Plan for the Strategic Plan and to support and monitor said plan. The members will be Roy H., Phil H., Laël G., and Ruth H.

We took a moment to review the work on the Strategic Plan. It was a positive thing that the Strategic Plan had a specific focus and the work to narrow the focus meant that the final plan could be specific and easier for the school to implement. The Strategic Steering ad hoc team was successful because it had a clear direction from the committee, was led by someone familiar with the creation of a Strategic Plan, and had a short timeline. The sense of urgency around this task was felt by all on the School Committee. We also acknowledge that we were led by the visioning work that has been happening at the school and we need to continue to support the work and direction already underway.

Thomas shared an update of the legislative work around child safety and protection in boarding schools in Iowa. This work began in response to severe violations at an unaccredited boarding school in southeastern Iowa. Thomas, Ruth, and Dan Treadway appeared before the House Oversight committee in the capitol, supported by our state congressmen, to share information about Scattergood and how we address issues of child safety. The current drafted legislation is open-ended, and soon rules will be written by several state departments to codify what schools will need to do to be in compliance with the legislation. Thomas is hopeful that the work he did, and continues to do, to build relationships with the congressmen will be useful in this process. In addition, Thomas has been looking at Scattergood's faculty and staff training to expand the elements related to child safety and protection.

Thomas shared his hopes and gratitude for the faculty that are leaving Scattergood this summer. They will all be missed. We extend our gratitude to David Cohen, Kate Moon, Stephanie Sheikholeslami, and Jennifer Ready Herbst.

The clerk adjourned the open meeting to proceed into closed session.

Respectfully submitted,
Katherine Young, recording clerk

Next Meeting: July 26 (Tuesday)