

Scattergood Friends School
School Committee Meeting
Open Session Minutes – 20 July 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, Laël Gatewood, Charlie Johnson, George Bergus, Roy Helm, Kent Tjossem, David Wilcox, Nancy Jordan, Alex Lippitt, Bob Winchell, Tom Wahl, Aaron Woolfson, Matt Zisk, Karen Greenler

Regrets: Bob Winkleblack, Kent Tjossem

Staff Present: John Zimmerman, Sam Taylor, Sonja Sondheim, Kim Jensen

Guest: Matthew Gillespie

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

“Sometimes I need only to stand wherever I am to be blessed.”

~Mary Oliver

Bob Winkleblack, Bob Winchell, and Karen Greenler are stepping off the school committee after this meeting. Matthew Gillespie will be joining from IYMC (if approved at annual session) and Linda Corbin-Pardee will be joining as representative from NYM.

Agenda Review: we won't have regular committee reports at this meeting.

MINUTE: We approve the minutes, open and closed, of our May 1, 2021 meeting.

MINUTE: We approved, by email, the following dates for School Committee meetings in AY 21-22: September 25, November 13, January 15 (zoom only), March 19 (zoom only), May 7, July 26 (Tuesday of Yearly Meeting)

There were some questions about School Committee technology needs. John said that the current system will be tested and Taylor will be consulted about the needs after the testing. Some members don't get as much out of zoom meetings, although we all recognize that there are necessities and advantages as well.

Consultation and Finance: In a year of Covid, we were able to exceed our financial goals and are in better shape than in many previous years. The PPP loan of \$297K is forgivable, which is very good news. Kim asked if the financial reports we receive are sensible and helpful. Is there anything else the SC would like to see? There was conversation about how to best record the estate gifts. It's currently in the annual giving line, but it probably needs to go in its own line and Kim and John will work on that. Kim will make this report match previous operating statements so it's clear to the Yearly Meeting.

MINUTE: We reviewed the June, 2021 Operating Statement; Kim will review the Annual Giving line.

MINUTE: We tentatively approve the subcommittee assignments for AY 21-22. Final approval will follow formal approval of SC membership at Yearly Meeting sessions.

MINUTE: The Head's report to the Yearly Meeting was reviewed and approved.

We reviewed the 5 year plan. Year One goals are either underway, completed or ongoing. Covid management will be ongoing, the Community Healing project was launched, the handbook reviews are underway, a facilities plan is underway. The admissions timeline change was a bit elusive this year, but will be pursued in the future. Staffing plans are under review as are increased professional development opportunities for staff. A Health

Coordinator has been hired. Goals for enrollment for this year were 10 MS and 30 HS students. We currently have 12 MS and 32 HS students. Year two enrollment goals: 16 MS and 34 HS; this still looks attainable.

Other Year Two goals: The school had a five-week day camp this summer with 20 students, next year we hope for 40 in day camp and to consider a sleep-away camp. We are on target for accreditation. The next steps for the Community Healing Committee are to report the school suggestions of changes in cultural norms and policies. This should be concluded in the end of calendar year. Increasing the number of MS teachers may be postponed until the end of AY 21-22. Shari hopes to reinstate in-person visits to feeder schools and a calendar for travel will be developed by September. ISACs relationships can be deepened and we hope that can happen with release of Covid concerns.

DEI work is not listed in the five-year plan, but work is continuing apace. By November we want to have clarity and specificity in our goals for the next 12 months. Both SC and staff will be asked to contribute to the revised goals this fall.

Question: Can visits to Friends schools be paired with alum meetings? Yes, there are compelling reasons for strengthening the alumni network, including fundraising and enrollment.

Handbook updating: this coming year there needs to be some “clean-up” to make policy match what was actually happening at the school, including policies regarding inclusive housing and charges for student transportation.

MINUTE: We reviewed and affirmed the changes to the High School Student/Parent handbook.

An ad hoc committee worked on the Staff handbook. The grievance policy is being changed, given the hiring of the Professional Employment Organization, since they are able to take over grievance mediation process, details will do this will be forthcoming. Offering a ‘clearness committee’ for employment grievances will likely be replaced by arbitration and mediation by a neutral third party.

MINUTE: We reviewed and affirmed the direction of the changes-in-process to the Scattergood Staff handbook.

There was a positive response to our experimental year with an assistant clerk for School Committee.

MINUTE: We approve the change to the School Committee handbook, adding an assistant clerk as a permanent officer position.

MINUTE: For this coming year, our September, January, and May meetings will focus on subcommittee reports. In November, March, and July we will focus on other things; the retreat in November, training and draft budget review in March, and year-end reports in July. If subcommittees have pressing items, they may request them to be brought forward in “non-report” meetings. We will reevaluate this calendar next July.

Sub committees: This fall, sub-committees are urged to develop annual goals for the upcoming year, which then will be reviewed at year’s end. This should invigorate and focus the work of the sub-committees and offer more support for the staff members of those sub-committees. It appears that we will have an opportunity to move beyond crisis mode this coming year, strengthening the relationships between the SC and staff and also charting thoughtful movement forward. These conversations may also help our upcoming review of the SC handbook.

The upcoming capital campaign will focus on five major projects, although there will be smaller infrastructure updates that can get rolled into these five projects. We need a comprehensive list of all projects that can be prioritized and planned for greatest efficiency. Questions were raised about the potential for using geothermal means of air conditioning. Dwight Schumm can advise us on both geothermal and traditional air conditioning and provide price comparisons.

We need to start working on SC's role in the campaign and in the decision-making process regarding these projects.

MINUTE: We affirm launching a Capital Campaign that focuses on five large facilities projects: dorm sprinklers, a new well, dorm bathroom updates, dorm air conditioning, and solar panels. The specifics will be revisited as the campaign progresses.

DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) update and November retreat: Chinyere (Chi) Achebe, who worked with a travelling artistic group that visited Scattergood before Covid, also does DEI trainings. She worked this spring with our ad hoc DEI committee. The initial work was good and now needs to be made more comprehensive. Chi is currently working with John and Ruth and will work with the whole Scattergood community to prioritize DEI work throughout all of the school's activities and policies. She will be contracted for work during the upcoming year and the ad hoc committee will be more involved as time goes on. DEI goals and vision will be the focus of the November retreat, which we hope will be led by Chi.

MINUTE: We plan to hire Chinyere Achebe to lead our November retreat which will focus on comprehensive DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) work throughout the Scattergood community. The retreat will last Friday to Saturday or Saturday to Sunday. If traditional business is necessary, we may have a zoom meeting in addition to the retreat.

MINUTE: We accept the intention of the proposed change to the tuition schedule for AY 22-23.

September 25 is our next meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Greenler
Recording Clerk