

Scattergood Friends School
School Committee Meeting
Open Session Minutes – 13 March 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: Laël Gatewood, Charlie Johnson, Bob Winkleblack, George Bergus, Roy Helm (acting/assistant clerk), Kent Tjossem, David Wilcox, Alex Lippitt, Bob Winchell, Tom Wahl, Aaron Woolfson, Matt Zisk, Nancy Jordan

Regrets: Ruth Hampton, Karen Greenler

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

Friends settled into silent worship in a timely manner. The Assistant Clerk, Roy Helm, read aloud:

Thousands of candles can be lighted from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared. ~ Buddha

MINUTE: We approve the minutes, open and closed, of our January 16, 2021 meeting with corrections. We approve the minutes of our February 13, 2021 called meeting.

Subcommittee reports:

Farm: no action steps required (informational only). Question raised as to what happened to ram; answer is he was old and weak, but no information otherwise known. What is process of preserving the skeleton? Let fly larvae do the cleaning, so set out in remote location but so as to avoid scavengers.

Facilities: Snow removal was largest concern and we need to thank Matt [Gauder] for his work over and above his normal duties. Also noted, Matt will start looking for design contractor for sprinkler system.

Spiritual & Community: A student tested positive for COVID and is out of quarantine as of this afternoon. Systems in place are working well despite disruptiveness of COVID. Also discussed drug use policy, particularly room searches; discussed testing as an alternative and to emphasize treatment; if screening shows issues, discussion on first infraction, suspension and require a treatment program on 2nd, and expulsion on 3rd offense. Want to give students a chance to grow and learn and deal with the issues.

Admissions: impressive new approach to pricing by Sherri and team, four new students came in between \$19K AND \$36K. They are moving forward with funding of scholarships, and the February called School Committee meeting was very helpful.

Academic: It's wonderful meeting with Jamie and Sam. Sam relayed we had 5 gains and 5 losses to enrollment, and there may be 7 graduating students this Spring. Separate graduations for each student are planned with attendance depending on COVID status. A good discussion was had in subcommittee regarding different modes of learning within the Scattergood community; also discussed integration of MS with HS, particularly issues regarding transition from ungraded classes.

Development: Since report, an additional \$8435 has been received (still at 52% of target). Noted giving is down globally for organizations. Some concern raised. Next comes Spring Appeal, and discussions around estate planning and donor advised funds. \$350k donation received from someone unknown to Scattergood (may be a CPA who retired in 2013 uncovered in web search). The tree grant is good news and will pay for plantings related to energy conservation, restoring the wind break, and shade for farm and dorms, as well as restoring orchard and ornamentals and green restoration around campus.

HR: subcommittee did not meet but weekly separate meetings have been taking place among members. They will look at grievance policies and can affirm there will be a School Committee self-survey, expected before our May meeting. We also want to do 2nd head of school evaluation later in Spring for our July School Committee Meeting. John's note of agreement has been signed and received.

Consultation & Finance: Cash – we are doing okay – in part due to students who come in late who pay more per month. We also received 2nd round of PPP which will go toward personnel costs, but it's uncertain whether loan will be forgiven. Discussion was held around fact of moving target of regulations for the PPP and we will be in a better position to know about forgiveness by the end of April. We are looking at a big jump in budgeted tuition revenue, and it was noted that doubling aggregate won't necessarily double each student's tuition and there will be need-based considerations. They have set target of \$19k average per student, and this year's target is set to \$15k with expectation of gradual increase over time. It's hoped that international student visas will be easier to acquire, which will help with higher average. Question raised whether families who start students early have any assurance of tuition remaining fairly stable throughout time at Scattergood– they can speak to what was done this year – a letter sent to families to clarify that low tuition families would not have tuition doubled but that financial information and application for financial aid need to be done every year. Absent big changes in circumstance (or if there were some glitch -- being too generous, which will require additional individual attention), things will not increase over modest amounts.

Does School Committee accept operating statement from January: yes

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Head of School (open session): Even though students not physically on campus, lots of work performed over winter. It was tough to get through winter but John is incredibly proud of staff and students sticking with plan to the point that when COVID did reach into the community, it did not spread. Summer Camp committee met weekly, considering 1-week sessions and up to 5 or 6 sessions depending on IYMC. Camp will be old-fashioned (swimming, arts and crafts, etc.) and they are building capacity for 40-60 campers per week. Status of COVID immunizations: bulk of staff has received 2nd shot, and all but one will receive 2nd shots by next Friday; one staff member opted out for medical reasons. Summer camp staff is Scattergood staff, so vaccination will track what is in place now. Whether to require vaccinations for students in the fall is tricky and they need to check legal boundaries. Discussion held around HS students who may be more like adults. It was suggested that the “cycle threshold” for PCR be requested along with test results, particularly for positive COVID tests, because it's a good indicator for false positives. We need to consider when FDA may approve pediatric use, and boarding students may ultimately be considered higher-risk so may be able to get shot earlier. COVID Committee meets quite frequently, including on an emergency basis, and decision-making process captures multiple perspectives and is based on science and logic.

This year's remaining School Committee meeting dates are: 5/1, 7/20.

Respectfully submitted,
Matt Zisk, Acting Recording Clerk