

Scattergood Friends School
School Committee Meeting at Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting House
Open Session Approved Minutes
14 March 2015

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, Shana Wagner, Allan Winder, Ruth Dawson, Phil Henderson (acting-clerk), Ruthie Hampton, George Bergus, Rebecca Bergus, Roy Helm, Russ Leckband, Claire Cumbie-Drake, Katherine Young, Dan Schlitt, Doyle Wilson, Bob Winkleblack, Bob Winchell

Absent: Harmony Dunn, Karen Greenler, Debbie Galusha

Staff Present: Thomas Weber

Friends settled into silent worship in a timely manner. We noted that this will be Claire's last School Committee meeting and extended our gratitude for her many years of service with the Committee, and we will miss her wise council.

Minute: We approve the minutes, both open and closed, of our meeting on January 17, 2015.

The subcommittees elaborated on the staff reports and their snapshots of life and work at the school. Facilities has been working on the capital budget and is looking into VRF (Variable Refrigerant Flow) HVAC systems which have large up-front costs but are energy efficient and could be run off an expansion of the solar panel plan. They also expressed their appreciation of Mark Shanahan's work and management of the campus over the last five years and wish him well in his next stage of life.

Master Planning feels the departure of Christine and Mark means a postponement of the extended Master Plan and Capital Campaign, but we can move forward with the Solar Farm investment project. Investors would receive rebates, returns and tax advantages for their financing; and Scattergood would receive electricity for a reduced rate. After ten or fifteen years the school would then 'buy out' the remainder of project costs (or it might be donated). It was observed we could make the array highly visible to the interstate. VRF (Variable Refrigeration Flow) zone-controlled HVAC systems were also discussed as energy-efficient alternative to boilers. These could be powered by an expansion of the solar panel system.

Note: Due to the limited time that we can take advantage of the rebates and tax credits, the Solar Array proposal will be presented for approval at our May meeting.

Development subcommittee relayed we have \$212,000 (of the \$275,000 goal) in the bank for the Annual Fund, and due to both need and to the success of last year's efforts, is requesting the Committee endorse another challenge grant of \$15,000 with the hope of 100% participation of School Committee, the Foundation, and IYMC Trustees. The Committee consented to this proposition. We also hope that Committee members can attend the 125th Celebration to help convey our visions! We will devote part of May's meeting to prepare ourselves for these conversations.

Admissions subcommittee is requesting an increase in their budget to address the school's number one priority of increasing enrollment. Website improvement, advertising and networking are some of the projects earmarked for the increase in funds. Farm subcommittee is working on the budget challenges and will work on setting priorities by May. It's difficult to truly assess the farm budget because of how intertwined the farm is with the school activities. It was noted that the Farm is not just about production; it's a mission-centered farm that provides both community and educational programs. A suggestion was made to add a PFI farmer as an adhoc member to the Farm Committee. The academic subcommittee gave

a synopsis of the successful CSI project which involved three classes and most of the school and culminating in a mock trial. It was a fun, educational community-building project and received great press in the area papers.

Consultation and Finance reported that due to low enrollment we are looking at a shortfall of around \$36,000. Though that number looks grim they are pleased that our cash flow is healthy at the moment and our line of credit has not yet been used this year.

Minute: We approve the financial report as of March 15, 2015.

The proposed budget for next year poses challenges, including cuts and unknown increases in health insurance. Over the last few years we have been operating in deficit because we have not met enrollment goals to match the budget, so we need to be realistic and create the budget for 40 students. Thomas is proposing we impose a salary freeze for the administrative staff and a decrease in retirement benefits for all staff. Concern was expressed about how this could affect morale, what message this sends to our already over-worked staff, and how labor often bears a disproportionate brunt of budget cuts. We want our staff to feel appreciated and our future-planning needs to plan for the future of our those who do the real work of the school. Appreciation was also felt for Thomas's efforts with this difficult situation.

The budget proposal includes increasing the Admissions budget as an investment to boost our enrollment. It was also proposed that we begin spending next year's increased Admissions budget *now* to ensure more students for the 2015-2016 school year. This would be called a 'pre-paid expense'. It was expressed that it is a risky move to begin spending next year's money, but also noted that the Admissions budget had been cut over the last few years, and we were bringing it back up to a more normal level, a necessary move if we hope to increase enrollment. It was also conveyed that our business model is not working. We need to rethink it and make a change at some point, but meanwhile we can still make a difference in students' lives.

Minute: We approve the preliminary draft of the operating budget for the 2015-2016 school year.

Minute: We approve beginning to spend the increased 2015-2016 Admissions budget as a pre-paid expense.

Thomas relayed to us a picture of the challenges of winter quarter and spoke of his appreciation for the perseverance of students and staff to come forward and give support in creative ways. Faculty Follies was a hit, then the students followed it with an 80's night a few days later that was led, organized and cleaned up solely by students. Thomas is working on both Facilities and Dean of Students job descriptions, and hopes Catherine From will help create the role of Director of Residential Life.

Minute: We accept the audit for the 2013-2014 school year.

The Middle School adhoc conducted numerous surveys and interviews and conclude that at this point we will not move forward with beginning a middle school at Scattergood. Willowwind may start their own middle school, and there are conversations with Scattergood about using the school's facilities.

The clerk concluded our open meeting to continue with a closed meeting.

Ruth Hampton, recording clerk

Next Meetings: May 9 and July 21