

Scattergood Friends School
School Committee Meeting
Open Session Minutes
9 May 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, Allan Winder, George Bergus, Rebecca Bergus, Roy Helm, Russ Leckband, Phil Henderson (acting clerk), Dan Schlitt, Doyle Wilson, Bob Winkleblack, Ruth Dawson, Harmony Dunn, Ruthie Hampton, Bob Winchell

Absent: Karen Greenler, Katherine Young, Shana Wagner

Staff Present: Christine Ashley, Amanda Paul, Mark Shanahan, Louis Herbst, Shumpei Yamaki, Jody Caldwell

Friends settled into silent worship in a timely manner. The clerk shared the following quote by Isaac Pennington (1616-1679).

"Truth will not lose ground by being tried."

Note: Please email Debbie your plans for School Committee next year: if you are staying, leaving, and if you would like changes in your subcommittees.

Minute: We approve the minutes, both open and closed, of our meeting on March 14, 2015.

Academics reported more about the Farm Immersion initiative that will give new students more class time at the farm. The graduating seniors are headed to many competitive colleges, and Louis feels the college counseling at the school has done a good job of preparing them and finding a good match for the individual students. We asked if he could give another Academic Report at Yearly Meeting this year, and he also offered to visit Monthly Meetings to help members learn more about our programs.

Development reported we are only \$20,000 away from meeting our Annual Fund goal, and the Matching Challenge Grant appeal will be sent out next week. Plans for the 125th are coming along and Shumpei shared six of the bowls he is donating to the event. Responding to the strong feedback received about hosting a dinner at the winery, Christine will likely move the Thursday dinner back to campus with no ticket price. Many of us shared about the concerns and the difficulty of seeing all opinions. If the winery is an issue, what are other concerns out there we are not hearing? We also encouraged each other to speak honestly if we feel misgivings about things happening at the school or in its publications, these expressions of apprehension help us see the broader picture.

Sparked by the winery issue, we have heard other frustrations from the older generation. Some do not like the glossy flashy look of things and wonder if we are no longer a Quaker school. It was noted a root problem is that **there is not an alumni organization** and people are feeling left out of the conversation; not understanding the admissions challenges we are facing today; not understanding why parents choose to not send their kids to Scattergood; and not understanding that though the school may look different, the core values remain. The need to increase our communication with IYMC was reiterated, either including members in the life of the school and/or more visits from the Head and possibly Louis. Yearly Meeting will be devoting an evening program to Scattergood.

Admissions has set a goal of 45 students for next fall, 26 of them would be returning students. They are grateful for the increased budget, and Jody and Alicia are attending a Google SEO workshop to optimize our website presence. They have been studying Seth Godin's book Purple Cow with the message to "Stop advertising and start innovating" and can see how this fits with what we do. Facilities reported the well at the Farm has been repositioned so the house can now be torn down, and they are looking for someone to deconstruct the Old Gym in exchange for salvaging its materials. They are considering ideas for a replacement building that includes a classroom. Next year's Capital Budget priorities are: 1) new van 2) Science Building boiler and 3) water line connections. Appreciation was expressed to Mark Shanahan for his work and attention to the campus over the last five years.

Farm will be increasing its presence in the curriculum for new students and Louis is researching grants to provide materials and tools for the students. It was expressed we do not know a dollar amount for Ken Fawcett's donation of time and equipment, it is an enormous gift that he gives to the school every year. Dana will be spearheading the Summer Farm Camp program, and she is leaving the position of livestock manager. As always, labor is the limiting factor for the farm's productivity. Spiritual and Community Life reported that though there has not been strong student leadership this year students are attending Meeting for Worship regularly. The shift in staffing next year will help give more attention to this committee, and they hope to host Student Leadership workshops to give students the skill sets for being good leaders. The goal is to have a Community Life Curriculum to create structure for this area that is part of our mission, all of this to help us recognize kids who need the help and to provide avenues for those who don't feel comfortable voicing their concerns.

Consultation and Finance reported we are facing a \$44,000 loss this year, similar to last year. The additional spending in Admissions from next year's budget is listed as a 'pre-paid expense' so is not listed in this year's budget. They are impressed with Thomas's budget for next year, though it includes a salary freeze for administrative staff and retirement freeze for all staff. Fees for comparable replacement health insurance plans have increased dramatically so Thomas renegotiated a different HMO plan with higher deductibles. We are sorry to hear of benefit loss, and acknowledge this is the trend of the times.

Minute: We approve the financial report as of April 29, 2015.

Master Planning feels that without Christine's momentum the solar farm project cannot move forward on schedule which means there may not be tax advantages and rebates for investors. Discomfort was expressed at the idea of using the Foundation as a way to guarantee investments: there may be tax and legal issues because investments by definition are not guaranteed, and some did not feel this was the purpose of the Foundation. The idea behind the proposal was that the Foundation would not have a purpose if the school closed, and the solar farm project would help the school financially, so the Foundation would do what it could to ensure the school remained financially viable and open.

Note: Phil will talk with Barb Garlinghouse more about this.

There was also sadness and dismay expressed over postponing or dropping the solar project, and that concern that results are 'individual-personality driven'. There needs to be someone to find the investors and pull everything together, and we wondered if this is still possible.

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

Ruth Hampton, recording clerk

Next Meeting: July 21 (Tuesday before Yearly Meeting)