

Scattergood Friends School  
School Committee Meeting  
Open Session Proposed Minutes  
7 November 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, Phil Henderson, Lael Gatewood, Dan Schlitt, Bob Winkleblack, Katherine Young, Lucy Marsh, Ruth Hampton (clerk), Karen Greenler, Doyle Wilson, George Bergus, Rebecca Bergus, Bob Winchell, Shana Wagner, Roy Helm, Russ Leckband, Ginny Winsor, Gail Nelson

**Staff Present:** Alicia Streeter, Louis Herbst, Thomas Weber, Jody Caldwell, Catherine From, Cindy Olivarius, Amy King Weber, Mark Quee

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

“ I salute the light within your eyes where the whole universe dwells. For when you are at that center within you and I am at that place within me, we shall be one.”

~Chief Crazy Horse, Oglala Sioux

**Minute:** We approve the minutes, both open and closed, of our meeting on September 12, 2015.

NOTE: We will review financial fundamentals and records retention policy later. The school can begin the process of sorting files, but not recycle until retention policy has been approved.

The excitement of the start of school has not left campus. A sense of purpose bolsters the work done by faculty and staff in these past few weeks. The School Committee is appreciative of all the hard work, which is visible in the well-cared for campus, the well-thought out academic interdisciplinary work, and the increased visibility in marketing and admissions.

We heard many reports in a very succinct manner so that the School Committee could participate in a retreat to work on the Strategic Plan. The Facilities Subcommittee reports that they have recommended that the well interconnection on campus and vehicle replacement should be considered main priorities. The Annual Fund appears to be on track to bring in what we expected, though we will have a better idea after December 2015. The Development Subcommittee is working on recommendations regarding what level of detail about Scattergood's financial picture should be included in the Annual Report. The Admissions Subcommittee invited us to reach out to various individuals or groups who might want to sponsor a student. They also reported that applications are continuing to arrive for mid-year and next year (including more students who are familiar with Quakerism or consider themselves Quaker), plans for summer outreach are well underway, and the admissions group is considering other outreach opportunities tied to the Iowa school calendar. The farm school class was a great success and data collected, including student evaluations and student work, will be used for marketing and outreach to educators. Students have requested new dairy goats and chickens and have harvested honey to support their apiary efforts. The Academic Subcommittee invites members of the School Committee to attend school, dates will be forthcoming. There is more communication between the academics and the residential life elements of the school via the Student Support Committee. One benefit of this increased communication is more targeted help for students who are falling behind, which will hopefully mean increased retention. Issues of illness are also addressed in the hopes of creating a healthier school community. To that end, Catherine has been certified in Mental Health First Aid.

**Minute:** We approve renaming the dorms. The Boy's Dorm will be named West Dorm. The Girl's Dorm will be named East Dorm.

The HR Subcommittee will begin the process of surveying staff in December for the Head's evaluation. Surveys will include both short answer questions and traditional survey questions to gain a holistic understanding. School Committee surveys will be sent out in the spring of 2016 because the time we spend on campus is more limited and a longer time frame to evaluate will be beneficial.

The Consultation and Finance Subcommittee reported that the projected deficit due to low admissions has not changed and as a result the school has a cash flow issue. In consultation with the subcommittee and the Foundation Trustees, the school was able to rectify the immediate need and through this difficult work the two committees and the Head of School have connected in better ways with an increased understanding of the challenges each group faces. The Trustees gave the December payment early as well additional money from their reserve that allows them to withstand market forces. (The school will return a portion of the extra payment once the cash flow issues have stabilized.) Given this payment from reserve and the additional \$80,000 that we received last year, though they will be able to provide funds for the scholarship and capital fund, the Foundation will be unable to continue to help us with our projected deficit. This deficit from low enrollment could be up to \$300,000 over the next three years. This is a situation that we must address as a School Committee. We are hopeful that the Strategic Planning Retreat will help us find way forward to addressing the twin issues of increasing enrollment and creating financial stability.

**Minute:** We approve the Operating Statement as of October 15, 2015. The School Committee continues to be concerned about the projected deficit reflected in the Operating Statement of about \$91,000. We are in support of the steps the school and Consultation and Finance are taking to address this concern. Transactions between school and Foundation will appear in the statement to be reviewed in January. We request that budget comparisons include the previous year.

**Note:** We are reminded that we should count our mileage and request reimbursement. Cindy will gather the mileage in May and those who wish will receive reimbursement checks.

The mission of the school is imbued in most activities. The faculty and staff hope to encourage students to take ownership of the person they are and have fun with it. Thomas reports that he feels surrounded by strong, committed colleagues. His focus is changing from the inward work of academic and residential programs to an outward focus to address the issues of enrollment and financial stability. He would like to work to connect more people to the mission and promise of Scattergood, including alumni and their families who were so responsive at last year's 125<sup>th</sup> celebration. He is also looking to build a realistic budget based on current enrollment projections to help make better decisions. Together with the Development and Consultation and Finance Subcommittees he is considering ways to add \$100,000/year for three years to address our deficit and build a stronger financial future for the school.

The clerk adjourned the open meeting to proceed into our annual retreat to discuss strategic planning. There was no closed meeting session.

Respectfully submitted,  
Katherine Young, recording clerk

**Next Meetings:** January 16, March 12 (Des Moines), May 14, July 26