

Scattergood Friends School
School Committee Meeting
Open Session Minutes
12 March 2016

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, Dan Schlitt, Katherine Young, Ruth Hampton (clerk), Karen Greenler, Roy Helm, Russ Leckband, Ginny Winsor, Lucy Marsh

Regrets: Doyle Wilson, Rebecca Bergus, George Burgus, Bob Winkleblack, Bob Winchell, Lael Gatewood, Gail Nelson, Shana Wagner

Staff Present: Thomas Weber

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

"Love doesn't just sit there like a stone; it has to be made, like bread, remade all the time, made new."
~ Ursula LeGuin

Minute: We approve the open and closed minutes of our meeting on January 16, 2016.

We heard a few reports from subcommittees that met and Thomas supplemented the reports with additional information. A sense of gratitude for the immense work done by all staff was expressed. We are grateful for their innovative instruction of students, creating a positive community for student growth, integrating the farm so that it feeds not only bodies but also the minds of our students, and for the work done by the administrative staff in supporting the community, making connections with organizations and people across the country, and working to increase visibility with future students and donors.

The Assistant Head search continues and the response has been positive. Several candidates have been interviewed and are moving through the process, Thomas hopes to give an offer soon. We discussed our deep appreciation for Louis and his work in creating digital portfolios, increasing the quality of student achievement, differentiating instruction to help all students keep up with the rigors of the academic program, and his work on the farm initiatives. Additionally, a candidate for the opening in Development has been identified and interviews were positive. While the Annual Fund is behind, the subcommittee has confidence that the goal can be achieved. A spring appeal is planned to communicate farm initiatives; this represents one part of the implementation of the strategic plan. Applications have increased and mid-year transfers are fitting in very well due to Alicia's hard work at matching our school and future students. While there are concerns about how to connect with prospective parents in public schools, there is cautious optimism that we will have 40 students next year. Facilities continues to balance the needs of our current infrastructure (addressing transportation, water, and duplex issues) and our plans for the future, including support for some of the strategic initiatives. Work on the farm continues with Dana managing the farm immersion program allowing Mark to concentrate on the farm, which by all accounts is a good partnership. If budget allows, Mark is considering having two student farm interns this summer to support his work.

Consultation and Finance reports that there will be less of a deficit than expected this year, and expenses are as expected for this time in the year. Additional work is being done to true up budget and projections to more accurately reflect the inputs and outputs throughout the year.

Minute: We accept the Operating Statement as of February 29, 2016.

Thomas presented us with three different budgets for next year that differ based on enrollment projections and personnel costs. A projected double-digit increase in health care costs is a particular concern. A final budget will be presented at the May meeting. Thomas reported that a direct fiber optic connection will hopefully go live before spring break. He is also continues to discuss middle school options with parents from Summit School. Thomas shared some concerns about the Note of Agreement. We felt comfortable with his suggested changes that will be reflected in the revised Note.

Thomas also shared the school's response to the legislation introduced in reaction to a violent and abusive situation at the Iowa residential facility Midwest Academy. Thomas will speak in front of the House Government and Oversight Committee about Scattergood and the ways in which the school protects students, including accreditation, water and fire reports, and policies in our handbook. He reports that we have good working relationships with both our state representatives and senators, which is very useful as this process unfolds.

We reviewed the Strategic Plan. There was much appreciation for the work that went into the plan, the summary of the farm initiatives provided by Louis, and the implementation plan. The Strategic Plan can be given to a variety of audiences, but we should be mindful of not diluting the message too much. It is clear that the excitement and optimism shared by the committee at the last meeting is reflected in this work.

Minute: We approve the Strategic Plan 2016-2019 with the suggested alterations.

With this approval, Thomas will add a timeline, budget, and personnel to Implementation Draft Outline to create Action Plans. The School Committee will work to support Thomas in this as he requests. The Strategic Plan will be brought to mid-year meeting and hopefully presented at Yearly Meeting's Annual Session.

May is the time when the school committee does our self-evaluation. Questions generally cover how we function and what we could do to function better. Karen and Roy will work with Ruth on creating a survey or other method for this process.

We are grateful to the Des Moines Meeting for hosting us and for the good food and conversation that we shared.

The clerk closed the meeting in a timely manner. There was no closed session. We look forward to meeting again 14 May 2016 at Scattergood, God willing.

Respectfully submitted,
Katherine Young, recording clerk

Next Meetings: May 14, July 26