

Scattergood Friends School
School Committee Meeting
Open Session Minutes
13 January 2018

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: Phil Henderson, Bob Winkleblack, Lucy Marsh, Ruth Hampton (clerk), Karen Greenler, Rebecca Bergus, Bob Winchell, Kent Tjossem, Russ Leckband, Gail Nelson, Tom Wahl

Regrets: Ginny Winsor, Roy Helm, Dan Schlitt, Ann Robinson, Shana Wagner, Lael Gatewood, Katherine Young

Staff Present: Thomas Weber, Kim Jones, Amy King Weber, Miranda Nielson, Jenn Jansen

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

“Keep me Low. Give me Clarity. Give me the courage to do it.”

John Woolman’s 3 prayers

Minute: We approve the minutes, both open and closed, of our meeting on 11 November 2017.

Development - Things are looking better. Continued contact with donors yields increased donations. We are currently at 51% of Annual Fund and are cautiously optimistic we can reach the \$389 goal which includes the addition of the Onward Scattergood campaign. Matching grants have been successful and Jenn is looking for more individuals to offer the match. Academic - The modified disciplinary system is working well and the number of behavior slips has decreased significantly. Gabriella has gotten students involved in creation of program, so there is more buy-in. Academic performance is up. The onsite counseling mix has been rearranged. Initially it was planned to be 12 hours of drop-in counseling per week now switched to be 8 hours of drop-in and 4 hours of direct counseling work. Admissions – We currently have 25 students gaining a few at the semester but losing one. Several students are stuck with visa problems and Jenn will let us know if help is needed with congressional requests for inquiry.

Facilities – A water pipe burst in the packing shed and Tim has managed the pipe problem. The sub-committee is tasked later this year to plan for capital expenditures. There should be at least as much money as last year, maybe more. Farm – Mark’s report is complete. Mark is recuperating from hip surgery and Ben is doing most of the work and seems to be managing well. Some livestock were reduced knowing this was coming. Spiritual and Community Life – There is a strong student body this year. Depth of closing meeting for worship in December before Christmas break was particularly profound and very moving. The staff retreat went well. A School Committee member reiterated our support and trust of the staff. A staff member said that was much appreciated.

Consultation and Finance – The Scattergood Foundation’s Westwood II account will be changed to be distributed similarly to the Westwood I account, but that has not yet happened. That extra money should arrive this spring. All of the emergency funds the Foundation holds have been given to the school; there are none left. The sub-committee feels that we should spend money in particular strategic areas. Jenn is working to push our online presence and increase and optimize our website, then increase content so it’s ready for social media when people search for it. She is working to increase the quality of the applicants. The question is always how best to spend additional funds and how to generate additional donations.

It was noted that the financial reporting is much better and cleaner than it has been in the past. We appreciate the efforts towards this end.

Minute: We accept the Operating Statement as of 5 January 2018.

Head Report – We are expecting more students at semester and next year but the net gain in tuition income will be modest and we still spend around \$100,000 each month. We will keep our nose above water this year but we are not able to move on strategic initiatives without additional money. Increases in enrollment won't do it alone, even with modest increases we will be repeating this financial cycle in upcoming years. We need to broaden our revenue base, breaking out of the model of solely tuition-based income. At the 1/6/18 staff retreat, staff explored strategic initiatives that would diversify revenue streams and build a strong community. Working study-groups among staff were formed to explore and develop the following ideas:

- 1) Supporting Jenn's work. Where can other staff visit or travel? Staff is committing to extra work.
- 2) Develop idea of academic redshirt program with Grinnell and maybe other SLAC's.
- 3) Develop full scholarships as a marketing idea.
- 4) Develop instruments to get data from students who leave and prospectives who decline.
- 5) Develop a middle school either as a) Scattergood's own program or b) with a partner who would run the school on Scattergood's campus.

Grinnell's president Raynard Kington visited the school to discuss the Redshirt program. He believes that the situation for disadvantaged urban youth will decline and colleges need to increase their diversity. Culture shock for them is a real concern, and it might be prudent for us to start with a small pilot project of 5 - 10 students starting no sooner than the 2019-2020 academic year. The students could improve their writing and math skills and experience living in an academic community to be more college-ready. Raynard urged us to visit certain military schools that have been successful in working with bright, low-resource students. Scattergood will do research and work up a proposal that includes how these Redshirt students are accepted and other physical (i.e. dorm and bathroom updates) and programmatic needs. We discussed the possibility of starting a middle school on campus that would either be run by Scattergood or run by another group but using Scattergood campus including a simple classroom built on the farm. The staff committees will meet between now and March to develop plans more fully.

After brunch we discussed financial options. It's becoming clear that the possibility of taking a mortgage on the land or a loan against the endowment is likely an IYMc matter. Because we don't have a current debt (other than short term loans) we are in a good place to be able to service the debt on such a loan. We need to go to the monthly meetings to talk up a plan in advance of annual session. Thomas will develop a concrete business plan for the chosen initiatives for the March meeting. Lucy and Karen will work up an "ask" template that we can use when we visit monthly meetings to prepare them for this topic at annual sessions in July. We should each look at our spring schedule to see when we are free to travel and we should each write up a story about the importance of Scattergood, its vision, its mission, and the reason that taking out a mortgage or significant loan is a good idea. We will practice these discussions at our March meeting.

School Committee will meet on March 18 in Des Moines, IA at the Des Moines Valley Friends Meetinghouse. Ruth will send out an email about signing up for bringing food.

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

Submitted by Karen Greenler, acting recording clerk

Next Meetings: March 17 (Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting), May 5, July 24