

Scattergood Friends School

School Committee Meeting

Open Session Minutes – 16 March 2019

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: Rebecca Bergus, Deb Galusha, Ruth Hampton, Charlie Johnson, Russ Leckband, Lucy Marsh, Ann Robinson, Kent Tjossem, Tom Wahl, Robert Winchell, Ginny Windsor

Regrets: Phil Henderson, Karen Greenler, Dan Schlitt, Roy Helm, Lael Gatewood, Bob Winkleblack

Staff Present: Thomas Weber

The meeting began at 10:00 a.m. with a minute of silence. The clerk read a message:

“Live up to the Light Thou Hast, and more will be Granted Thee.”

Caroline Fox

Spiritual Life reported that It’s been a hard quarter, but kids on campus have a strong energy (especially the freshmen class) and staff are positive. Faculty follies helped, and they are trying different approaches to Meeting for worship. Staff are asking how can we work with enrollment and attrition, looking back over the years for patterns or concerns expressed to think rationally about why kids leave, why they may not feel safe or at home. Sometimes it’s better that they left so also need to look at the admissions process.

Thomas described the quarter-long **Farm** class, taught by Jenny, about pollinators and how to raise bees, studying plants that pollinators use and writing a handbook for how they’re to be kept. They hope to create viewing window, we wondered if it could be grant supported.

Facilities relayed they had a Zoom meeting and finally saw Lee Fay. They reviewed and supported decisions around kitchen floor and considered the drainage issues. Legislation regarding the required sprinkler system is winding its way through legislature, we have support of our representative Bobby Kaufman and Iowa DHS Director Foxhoven and hope this would allow flexibility to grandfather Scattergood’s existing buildings if other safety measures are in place. The status of cottage on farm: staff member living there now has indicated he’s happy to stay there and appreciates work that has been done. Perk test on farm would show where we could add a septic field and may help determine whether or not we get rid of that building. The wall at the Berquist House was fixed at low cost and looks beautiful. Russ asked us to be mindful that we have looming large capitol infrastructure requirements related to the well, septic, and other items from the deferred maintenance spreadsheet. The estimate is around \$500,000, we will likely need a capital campaign.

Admissions met with Jenn to discuss student turnover. Currently we have 23 students with only two seniors. Two students already enrolled for the fall, and though inquiries are lower than last year the serious interest from good candidates is higher. The new website is up with new branding and improved interactivity. We encourage all to visit Scattergood website and provide feedback. Progress in admissions is happening but not quickly enough within the shrinking market. We have feedback that we’re attractive but fewer people can imagine sending their kids to a boarding school. We continue to improve our profile locally and are meeting with a contractor in Iowa City to consider potential for busing for local market.

We are actively working on the Chicago and Illinois market and will meet with a Chicago marketer to consider opportunities for targeting outreach in that area. Our brand has a strong emphasis on college prep (but without creating achievement culture), is based on community, respect for spirit, quirkiness, farm, with safety for LGBTQ students. Thomas will attend a conference at the University of Chicago for more outreach. It was suggested we reach out to the University of Iowa staff as well as our own monthly meetings, possibly sending a letter of introduction to all IYMC families with middle school age kids.

Russ brought forward a proposal from **Marion Love**, member of Bear Creek meeting, currently living in New York near Oakwood Friends School where she's been offered a Friends-in-Residence position to integrate more Quakerism. She is interested in the landscape of Friends boarding schools and wants to support them, especially Scattergood, and is looking for a way to contribute. Being thoughtful of Quaker process she is asking for a traveling minute from Bear Creek, as a first step, to conduct volunteer outreach on Scattergood's behalf, including traveling to monthly meetings to promote the school. Members relayed that she has a lot of positive, creative energy. She also will need boundaries and clarification of her role that works in cooperation with the school. Thomas said they would welcome her outreach help but it's really important to meet with Jenn and Emily, to determine specific approach. Some wondered if she could also visit with Northern and Illinois Yearly Meetings. Marion would need to work with someone to learn more about the school. An opinion was relayed that it's important that the Head visit the monthly meetings.

Minute: We support the interest of Marion Love in promoting the school within Iowa Yearly Meeting's Monthly Meetings. Her proposal will be put forth to the Development and Admissions Subcommittees for additional consideration and guidance.

Academic did not meet, but relayed there is not an intersession Farm project because of student interest in other topics. It is reassuring to see that the math and science programs are strong despite staff turnover.

The Development subcommittee met via a call, and Emily walked us through her report. Her past experience and professionalism of her first report is appreciated by the subcommittee. There is optimism on reaching the fundraising goals. Thomas is appreciative for her entrepreneurial spirit.

Consultation and Finance relayed the currently projected end of year deficit will be less than originally predicted (\$236,000) but a cash flow shortage is anticipated this spring necessitating a draw from our savings before drawing from the bank's Line of Credit. Thomas thinks we will exceed our annual fund goal, but operating revenue will be somewhat higher, and even though payroll expenses will be less than budgeted due to departures of staff whose replacements have lower salaries and benefit needs.

Minute: We accept the operating statement as of February 26, 2019.

Thomas spoke about the rupture in work relationship in admissions staff in his report, but neglected to mention Roy Helms' important role in process to help them work towards a resolution. Roy's feedback was very helpful to all. It speaks to the process in the grievance procedure of the importance of dialogue before decisions are made. They felt the discussion encouraged more clear future delineation of responsibilities.

We broke meeting for lunch then returned to a closed session.

Ann Robinson,

Acting recording clerk

Next Meetings: May 4, July 23