

Scattergood Friends School
School Committee Meeting
Open Session Minutes – 18 January, 2020
Conducted via conference call

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: Laël Gatewood, Charlie Johnson, Bob Winkleblack, Lucy Marsh, Rebecca Bergus, Roy Helm (acting clerk), Kent Tjossem, Debbie Galusha, Alex Lippitt, Bob Winchell, Karen Greenler,

Regrets: Ann Robinson, Dan Schlitt, Ruth Hampton

Staff Present: Thomas Weber, Dilek Aksu, Kim Jones, Kendall Smith, Sonia Sondheim, Sam Taylor

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

“All sound arises out of Silence
and dissolves into Silence.
All thought arises out of Silence
and dissolves into Silence.
The universe arises out of Silence
and dissolves into Silence.
Suffering arises out of Silence
and dissolves into Silence.
The unbounded spaciousness of Silence,
filled with the clear light of Awareness,
dissolves the roots of pain and sorrow.
Take refuge in Silence and know
unshakable joy”
— Lord Dunsany

MINUTE: We approve the minutes, open and closed of 9/21/19.

Academic: First semester is complete, and the fall immersion program went well. There are 5 seniors, 4 presently on campus, and 22 students total. The administrative team meets regularly and is functioning well. Summer planning is underway and there is active recruitment for the middle school program to start in fall. The aim is to start with 15 middle school students and there is optimism that this ambitious goal can be reached. This number is estimated to be necessary for a neutral cash flow, although it does depend on the tuition ability of the families involved. Kim added that if we have substantially fewer students, we would need to reconsider the funding model, considering both middle and high school programs.

Development: The Development subcommittee met on Thursday before the call. Discussed was a campaign to reach out to past donors who have given above \$250. They will be targeted for a call by members of the sub-committee later this spring. There was a donations surge at the end of December raising the gift total to \$172K and the annual fund to \$132K. (Fundraising is more difficult at present because giving to small organizations is down nationally, due to the change in tax laws.) There is the expectation that one donor, who gives substantially, will still be forthcoming, later this year than last. Development is also putting together a protocol and a list of people who could be approached to fund the current head search.

Admissions: There is nothing to add to the written report.

Facilities: The subcommittee met the day before and talked with Matt about the various projects that have been completed, as well as those that are forthcoming. The leach fields are fixed and working well, however, there is a possibility that we will need a new well. Kent is helping Matt procure some scaffolding to do some high work. The

capital budget is in reasonable shape, with \$32K remaining. The balance can be carried into future years. We discussed the sprinkler system and Thomas said he would reach out to State Rep. Bobby Kaufman to get more specific requirements for that project.

Farm: The report speaks for itself.

Spiritual and Community Life: The community's spirit feels strong and sweet. Some student departures and some new arrivals have been accommodated. There is a discussion on how to reintegrate students who have been hospitalized for mental health issues. Sonja, in consultation with others, is working on a protocol for that. Thomas mentioned that there was concern last fall about whether the current seniors would step up into leadership positions. They have done so handsomely, and both students and staff are credited with this transformation.

Consultation and Finance: The school's assets and obligations have changed little from September. Due to the conservative nature of Kim's and Thomas's proposed budget, the \$105K budgeted deficit is currently believed to be closer to a \$45K deficit. We have not yet tapped into our bank line of credit but will probably have to do so this spring.

We did not accept the operating statement. We may need to do this at a later date.

Head of School: We are in the first year of six for the sprinkler system waiver. There is work to be done sorting out the regulations and various state agencies don't seem entirely clear about them either. Thomas will work with these entities. He does have potential seed money for both the sprinkler system and for other door renovations.

Thomas and Roy (HR sub-committee) had a good meeting about the evaluations.

We have passed our audit with good success. The auditor has offered to come to School Committee and do some training, either with C and F, or with the whole committee about reading financial statements and other fiduciary education. The committee was enthusiastic about this offer. This audit does satisfy our ISACS obligation, and both a letter of approval and suggestions for improving our process are forthcoming.

We discussed the international student who left Scattergood without permission or notice. Neither the school nor his friends know his exact location, but he is apparently safe and planning on going to Canada to seek asylum. The school notified the proper authorities and the student has about two weeks before which he needs to leave the country. We were assured that our other international students are content here and that this departure appears to be a pre-determined plan by this single student. Because we have followed protocol and been honest and clear with government authorities, it is not expected that this will negatively impact the ability of future students to get visas.

The November Retreat: There wasn't further discussion about the content of the retreat but gratitude and a sense of renewed confidence and hope were mentioned.

Funding for the Search Committee: The Development sub-committee is working on a plan for this search, but there is a strong desire to have an ongoing savings plan for future searches so that funds are available when need arises. We might make a proposal to the Foundation that they house such a fund, as it is not so much a school budget item as a governance item. The School will hold the monies that are raised for the present search.

The clerk moved the meeting into closed session.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Greenler, Recording Clerk