

Rudolf Steiner School of Ann Arbor

Minutes of the Board of Trustees Wednesday, January 15, 2025 Meeting

Trustees in Attendance: Elizabeth Head, Cindy Schoen, Angela Gladstone, Jenny Rajda, Caroline Golden, Heather Lomason, Donny Likosky, Sheena Anand

Absent: Gary Banks, Walker Barnes, Rob White, Lubhit Girdhar

Others Present: Elizabeth Kozisek, Jane Ford, Knut Hill, Brian Vroom

Elizabeth called the Board of Trustees meeting to order at 6:33 PM.

Agenda Review and Consent Agenda Approval

A motion to approve the consent agenda reports, including the meeting minutes from the December Board Meeting, was made by Cindy with support from Jenny at 6:34 pm.

Development Update

DD, the Capital Campaign pro advisor, joined the Board meeting via zoom to answer questions about the Capital Campaign as well as the concerns regarding the timeline. DD and Jane also discussed the focus on major gifts, especially from the Senior class, on how to encourage donors, how we ask and how we show appreciation. Jane and DD also spoke to the subject(s) of the Capital Campaign, looking to dig deeper than facilities as the main capital projects.

General Endowment Fund

A motion was made by Donny, with a second by Jenny, to undesignate the earnings from the endowment and use it in the budget and moving the original \$20,000 to an investment account labeled General Endowment, which the school can only use the earnings from. All voted in favor at 7:05 pm.

Tuition Increase Update

The Finance committee met in December and decided upon the recommendation of a tuition increase of approximately 3%, with a slight variance between EC and High School. Many things came to consideration for this increase, including the projection of next year's enrollment. Brian also spoke about the possibility of going over in budget for tuition assistance, but the positive means we are enrolling more students. Brian also brought up the consideration of changing the timeline for reenrollment, pushing the decision for families back a few weeks so we can get a more accurate number.

Knut brought forward a comparison of tuition from similar schools and the Board discussed some of these differences. Knut spoke to the importance of the lack of marketing for the greatness of our school and the importance of the need to communicate who our school is as we are not as visible to the external community.

A motion to approve the tuition increase was made by Cindy, with a second from Jenny. The motion was carried out at 7:34pm.

Parent Council/Winter Fest

Despite not having the number of attendees or volunteers we had hoped for, Winter Festival went well. Dana also spoke to a cultural shift in volunteering and to counter it, Parent Council plans to work on recruiting earlier, especially targeting early childhood families. High school participation was great, and the students had a lot of fun.

Dana also spoke about the inclusivity work Parent Council is focusing on, holding meetings on Saturdays in hopes of including all families (especially families in which both parents work and may not be able to make a meeting on a weeknight).

Administrator's Update

Knut passed out a document created as an elevator pitch for these talking points. These conversation starters were developed by looking at resources, including the Sunbridge Institute. Knut spoke to using these points for a social media campaign or possibly a list of blog articles. He also spoke of some input from Wheelhouse web Solutions suggesting that having an active blog brings in Google traffic. With that information, Knut spoke about how to reinvigorate and make our blog more active by bringing back archived blog articles, posting articles, other Waldorf schools have written and the potential of our Pedagogical Coordinators writing some. Having a great website as well as a great word of mouth will be a big chunk of our marketing.

Knut also told the Board about potential new administrative positions: the Lower school is creating a Project Manager position that would help with EC licensing, summer camp, the pentathlon, winter festival, etc. This position is much needed since the resignation of the EC Administrative Coordinator.

The High School has also created a position to help Katie Simon, the Administrative Coordinator, so she is able to put more focus into high school enrollment.

The College fully supports these positions and will have another discussion tomorrow to discuss these positions.

Homeschooling Collaboration Initiative

The idea of the Homeschooling Collaboration came together quickly, was an idea from the enrollment task force. It was launched this month and has had a slow start. The offerings and registration can be found on the school webpage, under high school tab.

Jenny spoke about her connection to the homeschool community and asked for input from that community. The goal for this collaboration is to attract other students to our school, offering an immersive experience. This may bring more students to enroll and help spread of the word of our school and Waldorf education.

Administrator Search Update

The Committee had a meeting last Wednesday and discussed whether it was plausible to find a School Administrator in a short timeline as well as extending Knut's interim position, to which Knut agreed. The committee decided that we would do the search ourselves with the help of Alma partners and the EC's Golden family, who have a staffing company. With this support, and the extra capacity of a few members on the committee, we will be posting on three separate platforms: one for Waldorf, one for ISAACS community, one for non-profit world. We cannot poach from other Waldorf schools but can ask people at schools for help and send to anyone that may be interested in. The committee is hoping for 2026 start, with possibility to start sooner.

Elizabeth expressed her gratitude for both Knut's service to the school and for Brian's leadership in his role.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Donny with Jenny as second. There were no dissensions, and the motion was carried out at 7:33pm.

Minutes taken by Elizabeth Kozisek