

## **Rudolf Steiner School of Ann Arbor**

### **Minutes of the Board of Trustees Wednesday, January 11, 2023 Zoom Meeting**

**Trustees in Attendance:** Gary Banks, Elizabeth Head, Anni Fox Maniglia, Jim McCauley, Knut Hill, Heather Rindels, Sylvia Gardner, Walker Barnes, Cindy Schoen, Angela Gladstone, Adrian Madland, and Jenny Rajda.

**Others Present:** Sian Owen-Cruise, Elizabeth Kozisek.

Absent: Lubhit Girdhar, Tim Standke

**Heather Rindels 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 November Annual Board Meeting was made by Heather with support from Jim and Walker. There were no dissensions and the motion was carried.

### **Development Update**

Siân discussed first the kick off for the parent part of the annual fund. She then discussed the endowment fund of the gentle upkeep and expansion of the lower school grounds. Siân then discussed the naming of the Lower School art room and presented a picture of the plaque that will be installed for the room with the names of the teachers the room is being dedicated to. Siân also discussed that the Development committee will review the policy for room dedication.

### **Accreditation Update**

Siân discussed the bifurcated accreditation process in which the second half of the process will take place in the spring of 2024. She discussed the second part of the accreditation process is a self-study on the AWNSA principles and ethos of who we are as a school. Work on this will begin in February.

### **DEI Update**

Siân discussed the progress of the DEI committee as well as the Affinity Group and the conversations the two are having about diverse hiring, moments of cultural conflict and ways of approaching a bias incident. Angela acknowledged the group's work resulted in more productive conversations and comfort with diversity.

### **Strategic Planning**

Siân informed the Board of need for two Board members to volunteer to review the strategic plan that will be presented to the Board at the February Board meeting.

### **Administrator Salary Update**

Jim reviewed the Administrator salary, informing the Board that two additional contracts were signed for Siân Owen-Cruise and will be rolled into her salary over the next 6 months. Knut thanked Gary, the College, and Jim for bringing it to the Board, reviewing and approving the extra work done by Siân. He also thanked Siân for doing the extra work.

### **Staffing Outlook**

Siân discussed the burnout Covid has burdened the faculty with, as well as a prevalent amount of sickness over this year. She recognized how hard it has been on the teaching staff and expects some amount of turnover, including two teachers whom are already planned for. Siân also added in confidence that the

school has received many inquiries from teachers and expects to fill in the positions.

## **Tuition Increase**

Jim first discussed the way the Finance Committee came to their proposal for the tuition increase, including a look at comparable schools, the rising level of inflation as well a look at the school budget. The Finance Committee proposed an \$1,800.00 flat number increase to the Early Childhood, Grade 1-8, and High School tuition. The Board discussed the difference between a flat number and a percentage increase and concerns about it. Jim also discussed a \$3,000.00 flat rate increase to Faculty salaries and a \$1.50 increase for hourly employees with an acknowledgement to both inflation and the competitive salaries for staff and teachers at other private schools.

The finance committee strongly recommends

- That the Board ask the Finance Committee to carry out a comprehensive review of Tuition and Tuition Assistance in the Spring of 2023, with an eye to ensuring that we have the most equitable and sustainable system going into the 2024-25 school year.
- That the Board form an Enrollment Task Force charged with immediately working to bring the school closer to full enrollment, and that the Task Force have at minimum the following three charges.
  - Ensure that our electronic and physical advertising and presence (social media included) is as effective as possible in promoting the school.
  - Work to increase the number of international students at the High School back to approximately 10% of the student body.
  - Analyze what could be done to increase retention (with the understanding that we do not have a significant retention problem, but that improving in the areas that cause families to leave is always significantly helpful to both enrollment and family morale)
- That the Board ask the Personnel Committee to carry out a comprehensive review of employee compensation in the Spring of 2023 with an eye to

ensuring that we have the most equitable and sustainable system going into the 2024-25 school year.

A motion to approve the tuition increase was made by Heather and was supported by Gary and Walker along with a unanimous vote from the Board

A motion to also approve the recommendations made by the Finance Committee was made by Heather with support from Knut and Jenny along with a unanimous vote from the Board.

### **New Business**

Siân informed the Board of the three Athletic Director interviews being conducted on Friday, January 13<sup>th</sup>.

### **Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Heather with support from Jim and Jenny. There were no dissensions and the motion was carried at 7:55pm.