

Rudolf Steiner School of Ann Arbor

Minutes of the Board of Trustees Wednesday, January 17, 2024

Meeting

Trustees in Attendance: Elizabeth Head, Knut Hill, Cindy Schoen, Angela Gladstone, Adrian Madland, Jenny Rajda, Lubhit Girdhar, Jane Ford, Dana Sutton-Myers, Walker Barnes, Tim Standke

Others Present: Elizabeth Kozisek, Brian Vroom, Siân Owen Cruise

Absent: Sylvia Gardner, Gary Banks

Knut called the Board of Trustees meeting to order at 6:31 PM.

Agenda Review and Consent Agenda Approval

A motion to approve the consent agenda reports, including the meeting minutes from the December 6 Board Meeting, was made by Adrian with support from Jenny. There were no dissensions; the motion was carried out unanimously at 6:34 pm.

Board Anecdote

Knut speaks about community service his experience from his son's class, grade 4, with Anna Kamitses. They learned about a ranch in Ontario, that was raising and protecting ponies significant to a Native Tribe. The ranch was called Grey Raven Ranch and it ensures survival of Ojibwe horses. Learning about such things inspires an interest in community service and giving back.

Grade 5 does a service project, in which the students knit scarves for people in need at the Delonis Center in the dining center. One student was so inspired by this act, they decided to do a can drive to raise money on their own and bring the proceeds to the Delonis Center. The initiative spoke to the mission of showing where there are needs and how to give back to the community.

Development Update

Jane discusses the great start to the new year with a generous gift given anonymously, with a full range of how this gift may be used by the school. She also discusses the great start to the Annual Fund Class Campaign and future alumni events.

Sian speaks about how and where gifts come, whether they be acts of surprise or from the hard work of relationships. She also speaks to how pleased she is with Jane's work and commitment.

Tuition for 2024-25 School Year

The Board has a proposal from the finance committee to raise tuition, which will be announced through ParentSquare within the next two weeks.

Sian speaks about the proposal:

Last year the Board approved an across the board raise vs a percentage due to COVID's continued effect on the school.

Takes enrollment prediction for next year, adds in pay raises, adds in predictions for services and products. From this, board guidelines were made between to raise tuition 3-5%; less than 3% works against inflation

She also informs the Board that enrollment for next year is very strong with many new enrollments starting halfway through this year.

This range of percentages will cover the needs of the school and not be as significant for families, especially those affected by Covid in the last few years.

Adrian Makes a motion to approve the increase in tuition as outlined in the Board Packet with support from Elizabeth with unanimous decision at 6:55. Adrian thanks Brian for guiding the process with all the financial information he has gathered.

Accreditation

Sian discusses the accreditation process and the difference between the two parts of our process: ISAACS pays most attention to policy and AWNSA focuses on the principles and curriculum of Waldorf Schools.

Independent Schools are not required for accreditation, unless you have a high school which is why we also go through ISAACS, and we gain a lot from being accredited by them. It also keeps us connected with other independent schools in the community.

The first half of the process will be AWNSA observing and answering the question: Are we the school described in this self-study? They will verify the self-study and upkeep of our standards.

The other half of the process will be things such as: observing our pickup/drop off process, talking with parents to understand our community more, meeting with the Board, Finance Committee, Personnel committee, the Faculty, the College, etc.

Sian discusses the Board's responsibility in looking through the self-study, be it grammar, questions over the phone for input, Board/College meeting Feb 1- ask to send major concerns in writing, focus of that meeting will be the self study being approved by the Board and College. How well are we meeting the 7 goals

Year-to-Date Financial Review

Brian informs the Board that the report was received late so it will be discussed in the February meeting and will be sent out within the week for review.

Math is easy because most things need to be doubled aside from tuition (as we are halfway through the year). Sian commends Brian's amazing work with Walker Glanz.

Sian also informs the Board that all our financial data into one system and our income has been synced up to FACTS so there is one source of truth.

State of the School Preview

This year we will discuss the State of the School in two steps:

Video of Faculty and Administration discussing the state of the school, which will be sent out next week.

The next step will be a Board Exec meeting on zoom with open invite to answer any questions.

Examples of new happenings in the school to be discussed will be the change in curriculum and student support.

Brian, the Operations Manager, will talk about the financial status of the school.

There will also be a discussion of the tuition increase and things to look forward to.

Board Self-Evaluation

The Board is to individually rate the Board every year with a self-evaluation.

The results from last year had very little turn out, therefore Knut encourages everyone to take part in the upcoming evaluation. It is important to do carefully, and to look in the packet at the questions if there is anything to edit/add.

Jenny encourages everyone to look at the survey from last year and asks if the results provide good insight. Questions to ask are: How are we doing this year? How can we better not only the Board, but our community?

New Business

Sian recently received a letter of resignation from Cassie Standke, the school's Communications Director for the last 10 years. She will be working with the Board Executive Committee on how to fill the position. Some questions to ask are: should we work with an agency? Do we hire two separate part time positions,

Angela announces the EC has posted positions to hire for the outdoor kindergarten. The whole project is coming together, including fixing the fence and finishing the shed space.

Brian had a new reserve study done of the buildings and grounds. An example of results of the study are there are heating and cooling needs on both campuses. This study will be brought to the Board later this year. Brian also discussed how to start presenting Facilities projects and needs to the Board.

Knut takes the time to thank the Board for their commitment.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Cindy with support from Jenny.
There were no dissensions and the motion was carried at 7:58pm.

Minutes taken by Elizabeth Kozisek