

MINUTES
VSWEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, March 17, 2021
VIA [Zoom](#)

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Gregory Schneider (GS) – President

John Tanner (JT)

April Sauer (AS) – Secretary

Danielle Martinez (DM)

Dan Franks (DF) – Treasurer

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

The President, Treasurer, and Secretary were present, and a quorum was reached.

GUESTS

Invitees of the Board:

Frank Mirizio (FM)

Priscilla Garza (PG)

Michelle Kratzer (MK)

Members of the public present via Zoom/Registration through Google Forms:

- Deborrah Allen
- Susan Kerr
- Barb Cunningham

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- Colleen Pope
- Jill Thomas
- Adeline Carrera
- Laura Heaney
- JF
- Megan
- Kim Baker
- Deb
- Sami Rank
- Heather Sullivan
- Helena Moriarty
- Masako
- JJ

OPENING VERSE / INTRODUCTIONS

Meeting was called to order at 6:33pm. GS welcomed the public to the meeting, read the opening verse, and reviewed meeting procedures.

The Board members introduced themselves along with FM, MK, and PG.

GS Provided an overview of the agenda.

BUDGET AND FINANCE

Financial Update

PG Reviewed the Profit and Loss July 2020-February 2021.

GS Asked a question regarding our current balance and wondered if it will continue to look that way.

PG Briefly reviewed our grants for the first semester and the new ESSER grant we could get for second semester.

PG Reviewed the balance sheet.

FM PG has had an opportunity for a different position. Grateful for the work she's done and how she's worked to get him caught up. He's working with Monique to continue forward, but thanks to PG for her work at DMS.

Enrollment Update

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GS FM, can you give us an enrollment update?

FM Last time we talked, we were at 308 who applied and 80% had completed enrollment. We're not at 92%, but it's been fluid. 262 K-8, 56 high school, and 36 in kinder. The private program has gone up and could be as high as 16. We need 9.7 in private to break even. Some still need to complete enrollment, but we're still looking around 300 and up.

TylerSIS Renewal

GS Our school has a computer software program we use for attendance, enrollment, and that info goes to the state. We use TylerSIS, and they are upgrading. If you don't upgrade, they will no longer support. We've had to figure out budgeting, and FM and Deb started exploring other options for a more competitive price. We got three proposals, and Tyler is the least expensive. They've also said they're willing to space out our payments.

FM When the process began, DF and GS were frustrated. We met with Tyler and started looking at other options. They were too expensive. He got Tyler to lower the price to 14k, plus 1k for our annual expense. He worked with Tyler to split the payments to \$7500. That is what sold it to us. Crystal deserves a lot of credit here for the work she did. The system has to work with ADE, and we do know that this update will meet our needs and work with ADE, and it's 17k less than the others.

GS Thank you both for doing that work. I know it's a tedious process.

DF The recurring costs are cheaper too, right?

FM Yes, after this initial cost it will be cheaper yearly.

DF The other companies wanted more annually too.

FM Yes, they wanted \$5200 and \$6200 a year.

GS Any other questions before we make a motion?

JT DF, do you have some opinion on this matter since you're the whiz kid on computers?

DF I have a curiosity about what the others offer, but at the same time if this functions how we need already and it's cheaper then this makes sense. It's a prudent decision due to the timing.

FM A point of clarification regarding why we are voting on something we won't use until January: the deadline to choose is at the end of March. We will be billed in January 2022 for that first amount. That's why we're voting so early on this.

GS Any other questions? DM, you could email me your question, and I could read it out.

DM Is this system used by most schools?

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FM We've found that this is the system most used at smaller schools. Part of the reason the others were so expensive is they serve several large districts. Tyler does mostly charters under 500 students. Pretty much they serve smaller school districts.

DF There are hundreds on the market. So many systems to use.

GS moved to approve the adoption of the upgrade TylerSIS system along the terms that Mr. Mirizio described to us, which are a \$7500 payment in January 2022 and a follow up payment of \$7500 in July of 2022. DF second. The following discussion took place:

AS Was that date July 2022 or 2023?

FM It's July 2023. It's spread out over next year.

DF It's for the 2023 school year.

AS July 2022 for the Fall 2023 semester. Got it.

Vote is unanimous in favor: DF, DM, GS, AS, JT. **Motion passes.**

Contemplation Exercise

GS Gave an overview of the contemplation exercise proposal the Board received by Teresa Marzolph. It would host parents, board members, and staff. It would be no more than 20 people in hopes that we can have a good discussion. We'd have 8 meetings that are public and viewable, but only those 20 would be participating. Meetings will be held at night to make sure everyone can attend. The overall goal is to assess where we are and decide who we are and where we want to go. We will have some good discussions and aligning on our mission, vision, and core values. The total cost for all of these phases is a little over \$8000. That covers Teresa, Joan, and Peter as facilitators.

DF In the proposal, there's an asterisk about having follow up sessions. Would the board decide on that?

GS Yeah, I think it depends on the amount. If it's over \$5000 the Board would have to vote. If not, it's up to FM's discretion. Teresa says building trust takes time, and she's predicting we will need some follow up.

DF You provided a nice, high level summary. Would it be repetitive to read the goals and objectives from the summary?

GS Sure, I'd be happy to read through the goals and objectives.

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Goal: To begin the process of restoring and repairing wounded relationships within the Desert Marigold School community brought about by events within the last two years (changes in administration and staff, COVID-19, etc).

Objectives: 1. To bring members of all aspects of the community together (physically and or virtually) to collaborate on the future of Desert Marigold. 2. Establish and implement healthy communication within the community, promoting a collaborative approach to future challenges and planning. 3. Create a team, representative of all members of the community, to lead transformational change within DMS.

The facilitators are Teresa Marzolph, Joan Treadaway, and Peter Rennick. The community member groups are Faculty and Staff, Administration, Parents/Parent Council, Board Members, Contributors/Donors/Volunteers, and Students/Alumni.

DF Thank you.

DM Is this the first one they've sent over, or have there been negotiations for pricing?

GS We haven't pushed back. I find this pricing reasonable for what we're asking her to do.

FM That price is good for the amount of work as this will be three months of meetings and check-ins.

DF It feels very clear that it's catered to us.

GS This price does include Joan and Peter, so three experts time for three and a half months. Especially given the wealth of knowledge these individuals have. Other thoughts?

JT I wish I got \$8000 for science equipment in the middle school. I think money needs to be spent on programming and equipment for the school. While I'm for healing and group work, I'm also for what's needed for the education and for the children of the school. I'm quite serious about that, and so I don't want that to go unrecognized. We need to continue without programming—that we're looking to get music teachers, instrumental teachers. I'm not trying to poo poo anything here, but I do want to be certain that the education is not overlooked in the process.

DM JT, do we have job listings already for those teachers?

JT That's still in the thought process. It's a budget item

FM I meet with Monique on Monday to figure out the rest of this year's budget, then I'll have a number for our leftover and a projection for next year. What we typically do is we take this year's staffing, and go from there. Then you make decisions on what's left over—does it go to salary increase, does it go to other needs—music teacher, pedagogical teacher, art teacher, but we're not there yet. Monday, we'll be finishing this year's budget, and then we'll go from there. I'll work with LDC who will make some priorities. Those are things we need to talk in depth about.

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DM I'd like to come back to this subject. The music classes have always been important. Hopefully they're considered a priority, but we can get back to that.

GS We can certainly put that on a future agenda, especially as we will start looking at the budget process. To JT's point, I would certainly want supplies for our school, but I'm also hearing from a lot of stake holders that we need a contemplation exercise. I'm looking at our Profit and Loss that says we're 113 in the black, and this is a need that's been asked for for a long time. I think we're in a position where we can do both. We can get teachers what they need and get the community fabric sewn back together. It's a rare moment where we may be able to have our cake and eat it too. It seems like if things stay relatively close to where they are now, that we can prioritize some of these things

JT Are you promising middle school science equipment? Are you going on record saying that?

GS I can't guarantee anything. Financially, I think we can do both. Can I guarantee science equipment? No, because I don't know what the other needs are. What I can promise is a good faith effort to try.

JT But you are aware that we, as DM stated, have had a music teacher as a part of pedagogy as well as instrumental teachers as well as other pedagogical provisions for the school?

GS Yes, the education of the students is our first priority. But how do we make that happen? It's a community coming together to bring this education to the students. If we as a community are feeling shattered and broken, that is an impediment to the education of the kids.

DF Can't we make a plan to go to the LDC and faculty and see priorities so we can act quickly? Can't we agree to have a plan to start doing that?

FM All things being said, JT is correct regarding the supplies and whatnot. The \$8000 for this exercise doesn't give us even a 4th of a salary for one of these teachers. Now, it would be enough to get science supplies. That's a true statement, but it wouldn't touch that personnel piece.

DM I'm ready to vote, and I'd like to add this subject to a future agenda. I'm grateful for our teachers and that their heart is in the right place.

AS I have a lot of feelings about this, and I'll try to summarize. It's clear as you read through the proposal that this is customized for us. This isn't something created for a big corporation that they're using on us. Teresa wasn't here for a long time, but I think she fell for our school. She loves DMS. She's invested in the same way Peter and Joan are. They want what's best for our school, so I think we'll be getting above and beyond what we're paying for. Our community has been struggling for a long time, and I include our staff and teachers in that as well as parents. We're having a hard time getting along and working together. There's been some hurt, and by doing this exercise we'll be able to heal. That's the goal—to heal from these hurts. When you free up that emotional space that you're holding, you're able to access more of your skills and move forward. When we reach that level of healing, the benefits will ripple. A community that

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gets along and works well together finds solutions to problems and they reach out for help, so I think this exercise will do more than what we are actually paying for. I think the benefits will affect us in many ways we can't even imagine.

GS moved to approve engaging Tesera Marzolph, Joan Treadaway, and Peter Rennick to lead the school in a contemplation exercise based on the proposal they submitted for the first 3 phases for \$8125. DF second. No further discussion. Votes in favor: DM, DF, GS, AS. Votes against: JT. **Motion passes.**

PARENT COUNCIL

Update

MK The BBQ is on Friday. FM sent out information on Parent Square. We will serve from 10:45am-12:30pm. We sent out a request for donations for food which is mostly full, and those filled up fast. The volunteer slots are almost full. We feel like we've met our minimum, so we will be able to pull it off, but a couple more are welcome. Thank you everyone who has donated time, items, or money. We have a small gift for the remote learners. We will be putting that out tomorrow. Those who come for picture day can pick up their small gift at that time. We also have a fundraiser scheduled for next Wednesday, 3/24 at Rubio's on 24th St. and Baseline from 2-8pm, figuring those picking up after school can head over there if they'd like to. The flyer will be posted on Parent Square and Facebook and social media outlets. We're recruiting for Parent Council leadership for next year. Look out for that info on Parent Square. There's a small grant available through the Safeway Foundation between \$1-5000. Parent Council is looking into applying for that grant. In order to help expedite, it's recommended to have an employee at Safeway/Albertsons who's related to the school. So if you know anybody please let us know, and we can hopefully get that. We do have a name for someone who works for them, and they might be able to help us out. It's not a requirement, just a recommendation.

GS Thank you so much for all the work you've been doing, especially for this BBQ. It's a rekindling—it's something we haven't felt in a long time. I think everyone is excited to get back together. Thank you for leading the charge on that.

MK Thanks to Laura Heaney, Kerstin Kubina, Jen Wheeler-Smith, and Nina Prange in the planning, so thank you all.

FM I've had the pleasure of working with them since I got here. Their attitude has been so positive and energetic. I've sent the Board an invitation. If you can stop by, please do so.

AS I'm so glad that you're doing this. I'm on the opposite side here as my kid is still remote, and we won't be able to attend due to high risk in our family, but I'm happy that this is happening. It does feel like an energy shift—a rekindling as GS said. When I first met Frank when he asked

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me to give him a tour of the school, he walked through the garden and saw the grills in the outdoor kitchen, and his eyes went wide and lit up. He asked if we could have a BBQ, and he was so excited about it. So I'm glad that his dreams are coming true, and I'm grateful to Parent Council for putting this together.

GS One more item of discussion. We heard a Parent Council member may be interested in serving, but our procedures say you can't. I've looked into the history and learned it was more about trying to avoid a conflict of interest. I think it's worth revisiting. Other board members, I'm curious about your thoughts. Personally, I already see mingling of roles. I'm a parent; I have a kid at this school. Other board members too, and JT is teacher. We're all wearing other hats. Someone engaged in the community is plus.

AS On the board interview one of questions is about conflict of interest, so I would think it would be up the applicant to share their thoughts on that. Everyone knows their own boundaries and skill set. If they think they can manage both positions, I think it's up to them to say that in the interview, and for us to vote based on their interview.

JT Can you tell me where that rule is in place?

GS It's not in the by-laws; it's on a procedure document to apply to the board.

More discussion regarding parent council members applying to the board.

JT Perhaps we should change the language.

GS Absolutely. We should change the procedure document, and if we do that tonight, then it would still apply to everyone.

JT I prefer to make that change.

DF I agree with all of that. What's the idea of a class rep not being a board member?

DM I want to remind you that when the school started, it was started by parents who were teachers, and they had to fill many roles.

JT That's conjecture.

DM That's first-hand accounts we got when we were rewriting the Parent Council by-laws.

GS moved to amend our board membership procedure document to remove the prohibition of a board member also serving as a class rep or an elected Parent Council member. JT second. No further discussion. Vote unanimous in favor: JT, GS, AS, DM, DF. **Motion passes.**

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GS We will issue a revised document with an email reminding people of the upcoming applications. MK, thank you for bringing that up.

MK Absolutely, you're welcome.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE

FM Deb got the 225 laptops, and they were delivered yesterday. DF got to look them over, and he approves. These are legitimate laptops, and better than what we have. Shout out to Deb again. We're buying carts to keep them locked up and safe in a spot where teachers can use them for Galileo or AZ Merit. That is the huge kudo of the day. We have them, and we're very happy to have them.

Gs I saw that Deb asked us to write a letter of thanks for the donor. I'll take the lead to draft that letter to give to Deb.

FM I got to meet the lady who delivered them. I was appreciative in talking to her, and we want to write something to her. We haven't thanked our tax donors in a long time. We're putting a letter together.

DM I sent out my first thank you, and it's a pencil sketch of the farm.

GS Well, that's good news.

FM You've seen the ideas for construction. The construction company Willmeng needs two weeks to give us a cost/plan. These things take some time. I think that's all I have to report right now. Am I leaving something out?

GS In your report, you mentioned an approval of a fundraiser invoice. DM sent out some proposals, and we'll get that on our next agenda.

FM I'm leaving that on there as a reminder so we stay on top of that. I don't want us to forget about it.

DM There is one proposal that completely looks like it was written for us. They put together some photos of us that correspond to DMS, and that was a nice touch. It reminds me of what AS said about the contemplation exercise.

DF I have a related question, in those computers, do we need a computer lab for the high school?

FM We talked with Christie today, and we'll separate the carts. The high school will have two carts as they use computers more regularly than the grades. They can bring the carts into their classrooms as needed.

DM Do we need more insurance coverage for these computers?

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FM As long as it's an asset, I think it's covered. DF, correct me if I'm wrong.

DF They should and the computers only have a life span of a certain time and that money comes off every year, so it should be budgeted for 3-5 years typically.

PG The threshold for fixed assets is \$3000. It will be expensed as they come on.

DF They're used and have touch screens but a lower end model—a year and a few months old.

COVID-19

School Operations

FM I was asked to look into pricing for air purifiers at the last board meeting. I've emailed and called 3 times, and I haven't heard back. The website doesn't have the cost. We could use the ESSER on something like that, but they're just not getting back to me.

DF They probably have inventory issues due to Covid.

FM I could go another direction like something at Lowe's or Home Depot, but this particular model was recommended by some parents.

GS I'm skeptical about a lower end model that would work in someone's house versus a commercial grade purifier. It's a different grade of equipment. If there are other commercial options, then we can look.

FM I'll keep trying with them or find another model, and I'll get back to you at the next board meeting.

BOARD PROCEDURES

Approval of Minutes

GS moved to approve the 03/03/21 regular meeting minutes. DF second. No further discussion. Vote in favor: GS, DF, JT, AS, DM. **Motion passes.**

Board Application Process

GS We mentioned a couple times now, but board applications are due April 1st. Procedures are on our website. If you have any questions, please email us board@desrtmarigold.org or find us individually on the website as well.

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Board Calendar

GS Do we have anything to discuss on our calendar?

AS The quarterly report for RSF is noted for the end of April. Other than that, just meetings and the upcoming board application process.

GS Great, thank you for that reminder.

GS moved to adjourn. DF second. No further discussion. Unanimous vote in favor: JT, GS, AS, DF, DM. **Motion passes.**

DF read the closing verse.

CLOSING VERSE

Meeting was adjourned at 8:03pm.

Prepared by AS on 03.17.2021.