

Syringa Mountain School

Board Meeting Minutes – 10/12/2016

Meeting Called to Order by Randy Flood at 5:10pm. Board Members Present: Randy Flood, Jessica Banks, Amy Jonas Benson, Stefanie O’Neill, Greg Bloomfield, Tenaya Kolar, Bobbi Filbert, Phoebe Pilaro, Angi Hunter.

Public Comments:

Purity Stennett – Parent of Kobie and Dayton Cain. Passed out a letter and read the letter out-loud. She has concerns regarding emergency contacts being wrong, kids not being allowed at school before 7:45am, and the kids being outside in the mornings.

Brittany Shipley - Parent of a 5th grader with autism. Her son is thriving in SMS and has been mainstreamed very successfully thanks to the school and Julie Evans. She is an expert in special education within the community and strongly supports Julie Evans and her departments work. Julie Evans went out of her way to provide her with son with what his needs. She feels that the Syringa Staff should be attending more IEP training. Her organization will be doing a training in November and they will be adding a new training. It is a free training and she feels that the staff should attend.

Rachael Arndt - spoke to the BLUUM Network to get information on our school and how it is run. She read to us some words from our Charter. The Charter touched her. She feels that the school has lost a lot of what it was intended to be. She feels that Mary’s work is being overlooked and that we are not inspiring our special-ed population. She spoke with Jamie Rivvetts and no one has contacted her to work with the children at Syringa. She feels that our children are no longer being taught compassion. She said that Julie Evans has been very helpful to her and is an amazing special education director. Her son is missing Swiftsure because of an employee told her son was not disabled enough. She is worried that parents will get discouraged.

Additions and Modifications – E and F

Old Business:

Construction Update – Christine Fonner sent out invoices for board approval. She referred to Sandy’s financials. We have spent \$46,135 with another \$46,195 due and another \$35,000 in estimates that is not due right now. Randy Flood asked the total cost of the stairs: It will be \$101,000. Stefanie O’Neill asked what the original estimate was. Christine Fonner said it was \$80,000. Christine told Levi to finish the canopy and to hold off a bit on the interior estimate. Randy asked for the total breakdown for the USDA loan. RF needs the elevator and the cost of the rest of buildout. Christine will get it to him.

Building Purchase Update – Randy Flood said that the third party accountant has signed off on the financial projected plans and feasibility study. Randy told the public guests for their information that Syringa is purchasing the building and we will save money by doing so. Bobbi Filbert asked how the purchase process was going. Randy said it is going very well. Our contract is through December 15th and we may need an extension.

Financial Update – Randy noted that Sandy Kelly is not present to give the update. Christine offered to update the board. She stated we are still on the same funding track. We received \$16,000 from the state for intervention. Over 55 kids are at the intervention level. Tenaya Kolar asked where the biggest issues lie. Christine said it was in 3rd grade and 5th grade. A lot of expenses came through in August and September for classroom supplies. Greg Bloomfield asked if Syringa ever got any federal money for reading as promised. Christine stated that yes, it had come in.

Fundraising Updates - Christine stated that she is looking at a literacy grant from the Papoose Club. She will be applying for the Wood River Foundation grants. Bobbi Filbert asked Christine if she would be the point person on this and Christine said yes. Christine is encouraging teachers to apply for grants. Center for the Arts has changed their format and our teachers are being encouraged to apply.

Parent Council Update – Eco-thon is underway with money to fund the bus. Tenaya is concerned about the PC raising the money just for a bus. Christine is not worried about where the monies go. Stefanie stated that she talked to the Board Attorney, Chris Yorgasen, and gave the two options he gave. Purity Stinnett, parent, chimed in that she read about the bus and said that she feels we should change the wording. Tenaya said that it will be changed. Randy is concerned that we are adding \$10,000 to the budget at a time where money is tight.

Bus Update: Bid is in the paper. We can get a bus for \$4500. Randy asked if we can get more than one bus. Christine said yes.

Teacher Update - Amy Schlatter stated that the teachers are working really hard on how to mesh Waldorf with common core. They are looking at how to work on Math and integrating it. On professional development: Amy asked the staff what their vision was on PD and 100% of the staff want to finish what they started with Dr. Goral. There is a concern that there will not be a certification at the end. Phoebe Pilaro asked if there was an update on Dr. Goral's status. Christine stated that there is nothing new and it is still pending. She is scheduled to do a week of coaching with the teachers in January. Phoebe will follow up with Dr. Goral.

Site Visit Update- Christine feels that it went well. The rubric was pretty straight forward. A main discussion was meshing Waldorf with the common core standards. We should get the report in November. The renewal will happen in January. Amy Schlatter said that the charter commission rep said that she was happy with the school.

Stefanie introduced Jessica as the Curriculum Committee Chair. Jessica Banks said she will have Angie Grant, Kristin Funk, and Amy Schlatte... plus parents Michelle Sandoz and Amy Carse on the committee. Jessica said they will all be working together to see where we are at and where we go

from here. Bobbi asked if they will develop a mission statement. Kate Wood will be liaising with Jessica and the committee to work towards common goals.

Board Self Review – Greg said one of the things that we need to focus on is how Syringa is performing as a Waldorf Charter School He feels that we are underperforming on Waldorf-ness. Randy said the charter renewal commission did not have another basis with which to compare us. Amy Jonas Benson felt that they were not giving us clear direction as to what they. Randy has an interesting conversation with a parent today regarding test scores. Erin Sweeney, Parent, asked a question: How are the teachers able to evaluate the children progress? She thinks the evaluation tools are common core assessments. Christine said that we do have common core benchmarks but that the teachers are working to assess the overall education and growth of the child. Teachers are using observations of how they act and aware of more than common core. Jessica does have rubrics and benchmarks for Waldorf for each grade. Jessica was there when we received our charter and we knew we would fail in K. Christine is very happy with the test scores in K-2. Amy Schlatter asked if Erin if she meant more like character. How do the observations get documented? Amy Schlatter said the beauty of Waldorf is the looping. Julie Evans thinks that we must create a rubric for these observations that go more to Waldorf. She thinks that the curriculum committee should handle it. Jessica said that there are assessments for the Waldorf realm and you look at the whole picture.

Board Communication Policy – Randy feels that Waldorf schools are collaborative and a community with a passion for the school. This breeds success. Randy feels that it is important for the parent body to know how to talk with the board. Amy Jonas Benson thanked the parents who came tonight. Stefanie said it is one of the best meetings we have had because of the parent involvement. Rachael Arndt said that parents are scared to talk to the Board and to complain to Christine. Purity said she was scared. Bobbi told Purity that her letter resonated with 75% of the parents. Bobbi said that if you have a problem with a teacher, go to the teachers. If you have a problem with administration go to the board. The Board favors direct communication if possible. Randy said we need a groundswell at parent Ed nights.

Strategic Planning – Bobbi wants to know how the strategic planning process works. Christine said the program that she is signing up for is a mentorship. Jessica wanted to know how the strategic plan incorporates the curriculum. Bobbi said that it should be shared with the curriculum committee. Christine said the grant writer will submit at least 9 grants per month.

Executive Session - Roll call in: Randy Flood, Jessica Banks, Amy Jonas Benson, Stefanie O'Neill, Greg Bloomfield, Tenaya Kolar, Bobbi Filbert, Phoebe Pilaro, Angi Hunter. Roll call out: Randy Flood, Jessica Banks, Amy Jonas Benson, Stefanie O'Neill, Greg Bloomfield, Tenaya Kolar, Bobbi Filbert, Phoebe Pilaro, Angi Hunter.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:23pm

