

# Syringa Mountain School

## Board Meeting Minutes – 12/07/2016

Meeting Called to Order by Randy Flood at 5:03pm. Board Members Present: Randy Flood, Jessica Banks, Greg Bloomfield, Tenaya Kolar, Amy Schlatter, Phoebe Pilaro, Angi Hunter. Non Board Members: Christine Fonner, Sandy Kelly, Christy, Julie Evans.

Public Comments: n/a

1st Agenda item: Laurel York Odell - Board / Charter School Expert offering services for support of growing and educating our non-profit board. Past President of BOD for Davinci Charter Schools 2006-2011. After providing her background, she asked what we needed as a board to address as our top priority. Randy answered that his opinion is that the board is lacking follow through metrics for certain board related items. Strategic focus is a priority as well as continuing to work on improving the financial planning process. Understanding the boundaries for the board and the administrator so as to impact greater efficiency. Phoebe answered that the biggest problem is our forced focus on continual fundraising and lack of sustainability. Sandy stressed the culture of the type of education at Syringa is important. Laurel left us with the promise send over her rates and proposed hours needed to facilitate our board functions and direction within 7 days. Her rates she quoted \$1300 full day/ \$650 half day; she will discount for us. We can contact her through Christine. She spoke for the first hour.

Additions and Modifications – Add Clarification of Construction as item C by Randy

Approval of November minutes - deferred until Jan meeting since we did not have November 16, 2016 minutes available.

Old Business:

Construction Update – Christine discussed the x-brace for upstairs invoice, needs to be paid. Invoice for \$1300. Randy met with builders. \$17k in bills outstanding, trying to generate ST loans to cover these. In order to move into upstairs space need \$30k for forced air system. This is not confirmed by the city, only the builder. Christine would want city to approve anything before we move ahead regarding moving music upstairs (instead of pod proposal). Christine inquired on the timeline for completion and if it is city approved. Christine will share pod proposal.

Building Purchase Update – Randy Flood had a meeting with David Flescher regarding building and feasibility study. Also met with Sandy and Christine regarding fixed and variable expenses. David would like to see a budget with only 10-15% reliance on fundraising as a reality check. Randy is continuing to work on this budget review. Randy and Sandy will complete this task before the 15th.

Sandy shared that 6 years ago charter schools would receive in federal funding \$300k for 3 years at their start up. Idaho failed as a state to get that federal funding for charter schools. She got this information from the certified CPA who was working with her.

Financial Update – Sandy sent out email with the information although late. She mentioned that the task is typically due the 10th of each month and because this meeting was before that resulted in the delay. Sandy modified reports. All historical actual v budget numbers are available in the spreadsheet. Careful when printing from the spreadsheet as donor names need not be made public. Need \$66k before Jan 15 deadline. This number is rent and payroll. There is also a Gala bill - food and beverage - coming due as well. Randy mentioned that we really need to make Jan and Apr payables which is closer to \$80k. Sandy clarified that she is a PT person who juggles other things.

Fundraising Updates - Tenaya and Angi have been preparing and compiling information regarding fundraising materials. Discussion began around the recurring payments that parents sign up for and how to most effectively follow up with parents. Christine mentioned that her and Sandy sit at the beginning of the year and reach out to those past parents and those who haven't yet signed up. 12 families out of 136 give monthly. Amount of gift is between \$5 - \$500. Half of families have given their activity fees. Randy asked Phoebe if she would reach out to people she didn't know in lieu of reaching out to the people she's asked in the past. Randy mentioned the state tax code and how we should use it in our fundraising efforts. Tenaya shared information from the Fundraising for Social Change book she discovered. Tenaya reinforced the need for board participation but clarified the difference between the school wide phone a thon v the major donor ask. The donor list is what we are missing and we need a work session to compile and complete. She continued to share how the major ask should work for raising \$200-300k. There is discussion around the state of database currently. More discussion around the cost associated with mailing and brochures needed. Can we ok \$400-500 for the fundraising mailing/brochure efforts. Angi made the motion to approve \$500 for the fundraising postage and brochure printing. Tenaya seconded the motion. All approved.

Administrator Update - Christine got a quote for Power School - non-negotiable for next year. She spent \$10k in time on School Decks. None of the faculty supports the current system. Both are student information systems (SIS). \$2400/year for School Decks (not working for us). Power School is \$4500/year; most of the schools in Idaho use Power School. We are one of two schools in Idaho to use the outdated system and we are the two schools impacted by delayed reporting to the state b/c of the system. To set us up and do the conversion and training and customer service the cost is \$12k. They want a \$6525 deposit to secure it for next year with final payment due Jul 2017. Christine stressed importance of having this by end of this year. Christine asked for consensus. Phoebe tried to make a motion, Randy interrupted with a question as to when the last day we can decide. Christine said August but she would prefer to have it in April b/c of time involved. Sandy said we went with the cheapest SIS during set up. Amy asked if we could get refunded for the issues. Our support is from AZ and not coordinated with ID requirements. Christine discussed customer service benefits that Power School offers. Tenaya said that April is not a good month based on the financials. Maybe May would be better. Randy is not for spending the dollars right now. Christine agrees to revisit this discussion. Randy says we aren't comfortable committing to these dollars. Christine is tabling it until May. Christine is moving on to modular classroom discussion (pods).

Heart space is not functional for music and orchestra. Christine inquired about modular classroom options. She got three options. 12 mos lease option with permitting, foundation, electrical, etc. \$11,500 over 12 mos. The other option is over \$27k. She distributed copies. Jessica asked why music can't happen in the classroom? Christine says it takes too much time. Amy talked about the space required. Set up time was mentioned. Julie Evans suggested using an off site warehouse. Randy/Christine says there are too many liability and insurance issues. Greg questions the off site issue and where they will go. Randy brought in the other option of building out the upstairs. Tenaya asked for time frame to install and maybe we should ask Sage for information since they have bought theirs. More discussion with Julie Evans and the city permitting process and off site options in general. Can music be done in a nearby warehouse? Christine reminded that this conversation didn't get finished from the summer and it continues to be an issue. Julie mentioned making a classroom a music room by combining two small 16 student groups.

Randy suggested that Phoebe provide a C. Pilaro update on the Legacy grant. His answer was no. Phoebe did say that he could give in Jan from his foundation if someone else could speak with him. Randy and Christine talked about their intention to meet with him in Jan. Greg reiterated that someone other than Phoebe ask him. Phoebe said we should meet with him to show our appreciation.

Parent Council Update – Tenaya reached out to PC regarding the fundraising needs. She asked for help from the group. Starting to fundraise for the Hoe Down. PC has a new checking account. How do we move that money over? Angi said we might need to pow wow with Annie and Ginger to determine the amount to give. Christine said they would write a check to the school. Angi said Eco thon dollars were for the bus. Helps alleviate the transportation issue that arises during enrollment.

Teacher Update - Not much to report. Randy asked for the teacher morale update. Amy mentioned the teachers are working very hard and there's not a lot of community right now. Teachers are stressed with expectations and how to stay open. Keeping heads down and doing what they need to do to reach test score expectations. Christine reminded that 75% of kids are at intervention level. This exhausts the teachers b/c of the work needed. Discussion moved around test scores and how charter review looks at them. Christine reminded it is about student achievement, not test scores. Discussion moved around continuing Waldorf training for teachers. Randy is going to the Waldorf alliance in January. Jessica asked if Christine could change her obligations. Christine will be at a conference in Feb and she works closely with people at the alliance. Amy would like another school resource to use that has blended Waldorf with public well. Christine reiterated that we are a new school with new teachers that do not have the history that others do. It's a process to foster. Jessica feels that traditional public school things are being pushed. She feels it is in deficit of Waldorf education. Amy is worried that skills may not be picked up in an order that is required due to the blending. Christine thanked the teachers for all they give without complaint. She stressed the importance of continuing those open conversations.

Board Mentorship - Randy researched Board on Track. It is \$12k / year to get the board running smoothly.

Enrollment/Marketing Committee Update - Randy said we need the framework for how we are moving forward. Angi said Marketing with Aris at the head is going well. She is off and running with community outreach projects. Enrollment - we are using the same things to feed enrollment. Framework - finding people to help us determine the tracking we do for 2017-2018. It's now in the board's court to answer the financial questions that were brought up by the group (Mandy, Kristin, Crystal). Randy mentioned Bobbi might be able to assist with those answers and/or possibly have old numbers from considering the tracking last year. Maybe there was work we could leverage. Randy will update in executive session regarding Bobbi. Framework would be decided by Dec 16. Randy discussed breakeven point concern for number of students. Randy mentioned there are 9 classrooms in the building plan/expansion. Phoebe added from last year's discussion board went against the recommendation of administration (Svea, Mende). Valid argument for keeping 6th grade is a great transitory year and demonstration of the hybrid model that we are striving for. Jessica wonders the social acclimation climate. Since all students come in together during 6th grade. Does that impact our kids who come in one year later and don't have the same bonds. Tenaya said Hemingway is starting 6-8. Montessori still does 6. They are still transitioning on their time. Amy also reminds us that keeping a 6th grade allows for us to keep the pace. Angi stressed the importance of getting the financial projections in order to make a decision that can then go back to the committee. Randy is going to look for info from Ben Johnson.

Executive Session - Roll call in: Randy Flood, Tenaya Kolar, Jessica Banks, Greg Bloomfield, Tenaya Kolar, Amy Schlatter, Phoebe Pilaro, Angi Hunter. Roll call out: Randy Flood, Tenaya Kolar, Jessica Banks, Greg Bloomfield, Tenaya Kolar, Amy Schlatter, Angi Hunter.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:05pm