**BOARD MINUTES**

**September 16th, 2015 5:00-8:00 PM Syringa Mountain School**

1. A Board Meeting of the Syringa Mountain School Board was held on September 16th, 2015. Board Chair Greg Bloomfield presided. The following members were in attendance:

Greg Bloomfield, Board Chair

Phoebe Pilaro, Vice Chair

Ben Rogers, Board Treasurer (via Skype)

Bobbi Filbert, Parent Council Chair

Randy Flood,

Also in attendance:

Director, Pedagogical/Curriculum Director, Mende Coblentz

Helene Mengert

1. The meeting was called to order at 5:11
2. Consent agenda
   1. Approval August 19 , 2015 Board Meeting Minutes
3. PM.
4. No Public Comment.
5. Expense Report was not presented.
6. Old Business
   1. New Board Member Randy Flood was sworn in.

Randy wanted to discuss using a Gallup Poll for Board Evaluations. Takes about 16 minutes

New Business – for audit? Mende needs original documents back and then we can add gallup.

* 1. Phoebe is meeting with Ellie Gilbreath tomorrow 9/17/15. Potential donors she had in mind/strategies. Bobbi commented that it should be a goal to have potential donors at the Harvest event not just parents.
  2. Financial Audit. Waiting to hear from Sandy. Ben will reach out to Sandy and let the board know.

1. New Business
   1. Development Director’s Update – Helene
      1. New donation received – Kate Sokoloff : $1000 toward scholarship fund
      2. Conference she attended: Focusing on: creating that financial partnership, foundations/grants, fundraisers, events. New artwork being present. Consider different ways to pay. Web site needs to be updated- need to check if the button is working. Need to be more direct about asking for money. Svea’s Paypal is manual and needs to be automatic. Board needs to write thank you cards. Not every month, but acknowledged frequently. 16 families currently. 119 families we need to try and recruit. Introduce at the Parent event. Other grants open up if we can get larger contributions and that will be communicated. Scholarships aren’t being advertised but will talk to parents because it can be an embarrassment thing. Even a one-time gift can suffice. Talk about all of the different options. There is a $5 minimum.
      3. Meeting with parent leaders on 9/21/15 to try and close the gap and open up some lines of communication. Greg feels we need a way to speak with non-English speaking parents. Mende indicated we have resources to have those conversations.
      4. Mailings- Will ask faculty to ask for parent’s addresses corrections. Needs to happen before you can send a mailer.
      5. Web page needs updated and regularly. Invest in a person that can do that. Asking board to find that person. Look at volunteer list for web person? Ben will look at budget to see if anything can go towards web development. Mende is saying just hire one time to find someone that can get the Web page ready for donations. Phoebe needs to know what needs to be done. Ben says we have $5,000 budgets for IT consulting. Last year we spent $10k to set up. Need to make sure they can go in and pay. Mende- the site is outdated and needs some work. New content, design, infrastructure, everything in Spanish, etc.
      6. Harvest dinner- but NOT a dinner. Come up with another name. Simplify, heavy appetizers for mingling. Posters that explain the funding and where the gap goes. Some people speaking, more food and drink and then paddles.
      7. Approach people again around Thanksgiving with an email update. Randy is asking if we should shoot for a percentage of participation. Set a goal. Tell the parents this is our goal. Helene doesn’t feel like Oct. 5th is reachable. Helene will think about it.
      8. Christmas comes, tax reminder, etc. Send to grandparents, etc. Probably like December 14.
      9. Maybe something in January or February. If the class reaches 100% participation then class receives something fun. Maybe coordinate with Super Bowl. Watch out for holidays too.
      10. Whisky Jacques- it’s a one year gift/donation venue. Big work in progress. Make sure we don’t conflict with other events- this or others we don’t want to compete with.
      11. Phoebe is signing up to be Harvest Person. Bobbi indicated we will still need parent volunteers. Not a big band, etc. Phoebe- what is the event? Just a cocktail party. Randy- can kids play violins. Outside the venue possible.
      12. Bobbi-Lantern walk? Mende-K-2 not all school. But not as grand in the past. Can discuss ticket prices, etc., but simplifying it. Greg, silent auction? Bobbi- just paddles unless we get some items we can auction. Some art and a ski pass maybe? Ginger is working on ski pass. Greg- possibly donate Mexico house for a week. Look for things like that.
      13. Look for message for forming Harvest committee.
      14. 3-6th grade volunteer some time to fall event, others for spring event would like to bring up this expectation at the parent event. Also introduce board.
      15. Mende was asked about how the school year is going and she shared an update and how much she is networking. Still the possibility of recruiting kids once school has started. Good publicity in the papers right now, etc. Bobbi- still encourage people to be put on the waiting list. Mende explained there is a lot of shifting that occurs early on but hard to predict numbers in these early years. She also talked about her observations in these first couple of weeks, etc., and specials rotations. She will start substituting later in the year. Bobbi- new teachers doing ok? Mende – yes, considering learning curve, it’s going well.
      16. Bobbi how can we utilize advertising student projects. Social media, etc? Something to think about.
      17. Phoebe- how is the director morale? Mende- learning curve, and state reporting is really huge right now and time consuming. Prioritizing with the state what’s important. Also, communicating when in the calendar year it’s crunch time.
   2. Funding needs anticipated 2016-17 school year – 7th grade. Mende felt she covered this in an email. Bobbi would like to look at getting some vans. Greg, can we put amounts on those items that were listed in Mende’s emails. Mende is happy to clarify any questions from that.
   3. Board Calendar – Policy Review Calendar (see below)
      1. September: Finish Board Self Evaluations, Goal Setting, Fundraising Plan
      2. October: Review 2000 Policies
      3. Mende will send operating manual soon with revisions highlighted or can edit. Mende will get recommendations a week before so they can discuss.

Mende- 29 hours a week special ed position. $19/29hrs a week position. Special Ed needs don’t come in until later. 17% Sped population that we need to meet the requirement. By law it needs to be met to be compliant. Understaffed and a huge concern. We don’t receive the Blaine county funding and have to outsource. Speech therapy for example have to be contracted out. Medicaid can be billed but we have to cover those cost upfront. Last year we had to become a qualified org with Medicaid and finally got through and will receive reimbursement. We don’t receive full funding. This would be the best “patch” for our situation. St. Luke’s in Twin does have some funding and other grants that are being looked into. But we are out of compliance and it’s urgent. We are audited every year on this so we can’t let it go.

State and Federal law requires as a public school we have to provide this service. Our speds have doubled to 22 since last year. Some families can contribute but many can’t. Need to ask for funding for subsidizations not for chrome books, etc.

Bobbi mentioned that they had been told this can be the case when beginning.

Randy- when would be audited by the state?

Mende- will have to check but one is scheduled and another is unannounced.

Board: movement to approve hiring a 29 hour per week/$15 a para pro special needs person.

Bobbi seconded.

Robyn declined invitation to join board. No time. Worth our while to extend olive branch to Power Engineers. They have a foundation?

Hailey passed a motion to allow farm?

1. Executive Session as Authorized by Idaho Code 67-2345b for personnel issues or other identified legitimate reasons as identified by Open Meeting Law.
2. Next Board Meeting Date: Oct. Oct. 21st – 5pm
3. Adjournment of Sept. 16th, 2015 Board Meeting – Phoebe motioned to adjourn the meeting, Greg seconded.

Submitted by: Lynnette Blas – Office Assistant