



MINUTES
VSWEA Board of Directors Special Meeting
Wednesday, April 24, 2024
VIA [Zoom](#)

Members Present:

Dan Franks (DF)— President
April Sauer (AS)— Vice President
Myriah Mhoon (MM)—Treasurer

Nellie Grossenbacher (NG)
Danielle Martinez (DM)

Members Absent: Paula Cummings, John Tanner, and Ashley Parks

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

Guests

Invitees of the Board:
Frank Mirizio (FM)
Michelle Kratzer (MK)

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

Dylan Myers
Deborah
Kristen's iPhone

tammy/tom
Laura Heaney

Opening Verse/Introductions

Meeting was called to order at 6:34pm. DF read the opening verse and welcomed the attendees.

The Board members introduced themselves as well as FM and MK.

Proposed Motion

DF moved to approve the 04/17/24 regular meeting minutes. DM second. No further discussion. Unanimous vote in favor: DF, AS, NG, DM, MM. **Motion passes.**

New Business

Board Applicant Interview

DF Tell us a little bit about yourself.

MK Phoenix native. Mom of 3. Started at DMS when her oldest was in kinder, now they're graduating. LLL leader and postpartum doula. Took LifeWays training—EC Waldorf training. Loves to travel.

DF What made you interested in joining the board?

MK Felt called to extend her services to the community, and this felt like the next progression of what's she's been doing as a volunteer.

AS What skills do you have that you think will fit and serve the school as a board member?

MK She trusts in the community. That is a skill she possesses. She has resources outside our immediate community. She attends regular meetings of ACWE. Has a good calendar brain to organize dates and events. Has good knowledge of the platforms the school uses like PS. PS was one thing she helped bring to the school. She has a serving heart. She has knowledge of nonprofits—financially. She's helped in grant writing—gathering info to get grants done.

AS In your opinion, what is the biggest concern facing DMS right now?

MK The biggest thing is communication and collaboration. She feels like that's a root of other more visible problems.

DM What has the board done well this past year?

MK The board has been making better financial decisions—like putting funds into a high paying CD. The ability to see that we might need help with strategic planning is good.

DM In your opinion, what is going well at DMS right now?

MK There's been some beautification of the campus. The new woodshop is an amazing thing. Her children are all happy most days, and the majority of days they come home happy with things that are going on. She's had children home for mental health days, and her child was upset and went to school anyway. She gauges how things are going from her children's point of view.

NG What could the board do better or differently?

MK The board could be communicating better. Something as simple as a newsletter or a synopsis—something of that nature. She realizes things cannot be divulged, but there are more things that can be from the meetings. She thinks this would help with meeting attendance. Taking actions that you can after reviewing surveys. She realizes not everything can be addressed, but some sort of action would be noticeable and could build more trust.

NG What types of volunteering have you done in the last month?

MK Helped with the musical--helped wrangle kids behind stage during rehearsals and musical. She made sign ups for animal care. Ensure that animals are cared for morning and night every day of the year. Created a combined calendar for Parent Council and

the academic calendar and festival calendar. Meetings with administration as Parent Council leadership. Drives for field trips. ACWE meeting attendance.

DF What is your availability for time commitment to the board?

MK The school is my fourth child sometimes. What's needed is what I try and help with.

DF If selected as a board member, what committees or projects would you like to focus on in your first year?

MK Hopeful that the strategic planning is effective and looks forward to implementing those ideals. Pine Forest the Waldorf charter in Flagstaff has something called Pine Forest Foundations. It's a separate tax ID—it's a committee of their board and they raise funds specifically for certain things at a time. They also do grants and other community outreach. She'd like to focus on that.

DF What conflicts of interest do you anticipate as a board member and how will you manage them?

MK She trusts us with a lot of information, and she feels capable and comfortable keeping things separate and not letting a conflict arise. She feels she should be able to say that she can step back if something does arise that's unforeseen. She has no professional or financial conflicts.

AS How do you work through conflict with your peers?

MK She likes to see things from other perspectives. She likes to have open communication with people who she's in conflict with and tries to collaborate with them to come up with the solution.

AS What questions do you have for us?

MK She's curious what our thoughts are on committees or projects we need the most help with and what we think she might be able to help with.

DF We could have more structure around committees. He likes the idea of a board sponsored committee and having others join that committee and report back to the board. There's a lot of areas where we could use help—collaboration between board, PC, and admin. Having rich historical context will be helpful.

MM It would be helpful to have committees to bridge in good governance. Having someone fruitful learning charter compliance, open meeting laws, etc would be helpful. Strategy and task in committees is great, but we need people driving those initiatives.

MK She's been attending board meetings for six years regularly. One of the questions she had was—what are you most proud of that you've accomplished at DMS? When Covid hit and everyone was forced to be at home, Parent Council still thrived. They immediately went to an online meeting. They regularly had 20-25 people on meetings. It

was a community when we were separated. We thrived and still regularly had 10-20 people at their meetings. They feel welcome and want to help. Attending ACWE meetings and hearing the reports of other schools—they have parent groups that don't exist or are very small. She takes pride in how our parent community works.

MM What do you think your biggest hurdle will be intersecting other groups into understanding governance and charter school compliance? Do you think you understand that, and do you think you could help the community understand those things?

MK She has a better understanding than many people do, but she can improve on all of those things—open meeting laws, charter school compliance, etc.

MM You would be comfortable with federal compliance and state compliance?

MK Yes.

DF Would you be willing to attend board education? Attending training on state compliance, legal lectures, etc?

MK Yes, absolutely. We could all use that education.

DF Do you understand that an aspect of being on the board is recruiting other board applicants?

MK Yes. Coming from LLL, we also are regularly looking for people who are interested in leading.

AS How will you react as a board member while serving as PC chair? There are times as a board member when attending PC meetings that I felt it wasn't my place to make corrections or share policy, etc, but you will be holding both positions. Can you speak to that?

MK She will be stepping back a bit. It depends on the comments and how she might respond. She will try to say it best as she can. Suggesting that "that's not how it was" or "maybe attending a board meeting would help." She'd try to change hats. It's something she may have to do as it comes up.

AS She have seen trusted members of the community viewed differently after joining the board. There are things you cannot say, and that can change relationships. You are one of the most trusted members of our community. You will have to keep things confidential and speak to compliance and policy to protect the school. This may make you less trustworthy in other's eyes. What are your thoughts on that?

MK She's seen that happen. She will have to come to terms with that. She will still try to be that resource. Sometimes She doesn't need to have an opinion; sometimes people will pull her into a meeting just to have someone there. That might change, or that might continue because of being a board member.

Board Member Elections

DF moved to elect Michelle Kratzer to the board of directors. DM second. The following discussion took place:

DM I think one of your strong points is that you build relationships. That would help the board. It's been a pleasure working with you. People understand, and because you have those relationships, I don't think that will change.

Votes in favor: DF, NG, DM, AS. Opposed: MM. **Motion passes.**

DF Welcome to the board, Michelle Kratzer. You will be receiving next steps to become a full member of the board.

Announcements

DF Our regular board meeting is May 15, 2024 at 6:30 via Zoom.

DM moved to adjourn the 04/24/24 board meeting. NG second. No further discussion. Unanimous vote in favor: DF, AS, NG, MM, DM. **Motion passes.**

Closing Verse

DF read the closing verse.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm.

Prepared by AS on 4.24.2024.