

**Sunnymont Executive Board Meeting**

**April 3, 2006 at Sunnymont**

**7:12 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.**

**Attendees:** Kara Ligda, Allison Fox, Kathryn Murch, Dave O’Neal, Trelawney Pereira, Rita Halbach, Josh Dorese, Deanna Howell, Michael Borbas, Tinka Niedermier, and Judy Soto.

**Guests:**

**Absent:** Scott Eklund, Lana Musich, and Heidi King.

**Proxies:** Dave O’Neal for Kara Ligda, who was acting president, thus unable to vote.

**Agenda Review**

Kara, supreme ruler in Scott’s absence, called the meeting to order at about 7:12 by reviewing our agenda. Allison wanted to add a short minute or two at the end to cover the Director Evaluations. Kara laid out some heavy foreshadowing by upping the discussion time for the budget to 30 minutes saying there were some big changes.

**Approval of March 6th Meeting Minutes**

Dave’s request for questions about the minutes was greeted by the soft sounds of crickets chirping away outdoors.

*Dave moved to approve the March 6th Meeting Minutes. Michael seconded. 8 approved, motion passed.*

**Approval of the February Financial Report**

Trelawney highlighted the following:

- \$500 donation to the scholarship fund, showing up on the balance sheet
- \$250 paid for speaker (Mindy Pelz-Hall), speaking engagement moved to April 11
- The \$707 worker’s comp. charge is quarterly
- Net income for February was along the lines of \$1700, \$2200 YTD net income is good.
- We are 8 months through our YTD and the budget adherence looks good. March will bring about \$19K more in income making our position even better.

The crickets grew into a roar of applause as Trelawney bowed with great dignity and left the stage.

*Dave motioned for the approval of the February financial report. Josh seconded. 8 approved, motion passed.*

**Proposal: Teacher Re-Hire**

Allison took the floor, describing that our teacher contracts require us to make a board vote to rehire them each year. The teachers requested getting rid of the “intent to return” questionnaire for next year. Since we are in the process of hiring a new teacher, it was suggested that we rehire the teachers for the school year, but not for a specific class since schedules may change to accommodate the hiring process. Thus the proposal was amended for each teacher, removing the mention of the class (“X day class”) and replaced with “2006-2007 school year”. Thus:

*Allison moved to approve the proposal to re-hire Justine for the 2006-2007 school year. Josh seconded. 8 approved, motion passed.*

*Allison moved to approve the proposal to re-hire Tinka for the 2006-2007 school year. Michael seconded. 8 approved, motion passed.*

*Allison moved to approve the proposal to re-hire Debbie for the 2006-2007 school year. Trelawney seconded. 8 approved, motion passed.*

**Proposal: 2006-2007 Budget**

The original budget passed out for the board to peruse included a \$15K deficit. Tinka was on fire from a budgeting seminar over the prior weekend and worked with the finance committee to come up with a new budget in the day previous to the board meeting. Thus the new budget had not been thoroughly pre-examined by the board members.

Tinka, representing the finance committee, set out to explain the budget goals and methods used to reach them. First off, the finance committee felt it was vital to eliminate the deficit. In addition, one of the biggest take home points of the budget seminar was to get your tuition to cover your expenses entirely if you can. This in mind, our enrollment for the past couple of years has been just shy of 80%, yet we typically budget with 90% enrollment in mind. This year, the enrollment was assumed to be 80%, providing us lower income from tuition but a more realistic value. Expenses are planning to increase by roughly 9.5% (\$127K this year versus \$135K next year). These expenses include orientation of a new teacher, accreditation, teacher bonus increases as we try to move toward a proper benefits package for the staff, and an anticipated 5% increase in rent.

In order to make ends meet, the conclusion was drawn to raise tuition by 15% for each class. In addition, materials fees were raised and suggested contributions as upped to \$150 with an expected participation of at least 60 families. The end result was a budget with a cash positive income about \$1000. This budget still does not cover full expenses with tuition as suggested at Tinka's conference, but it does cover about 83%. Even full enrollment doesn't cover our expenses fully with tuition with the proposed 15% tuition hike.

At this point, heated discussion ensued. Specific points that were brought up included our problems with low enrollment and feedback from the evaluations showing the community is more open to higher tuition than increased fundraising. Josh suggested a gradual tuition increase over a few years to avoid the shock of a single large tuition increase. Others brainstormed ways to increase our program's perceived value to justify the higher costs.

Tinka suggested that if the new costs make people withdraw from Sunnymont, we should refund their \$35 application fee. Anyone requesting a refund should do so in writing.

Kara put the question to the board if the budget was ready for a vote or should be tabled at this meeting and reviewed at another meeting. The board generally agreed we were ready to vote. Thus:

*Trelawney moved to approve the 2006-2007 budget. Kathryn seconded. 7 votes approved, 2 (Rita and Josh) opposed. Motion passed.*

Kathryn jumped in with an off the cuff proposal to raise the application fee from \$35 to \$50 for returning families as of June 1, and \$50 for new families as of now. We had talked about this earlier in the budget conversations.

*Kathryn moved to raise the application fees as stated. Josh seconded. 9 approved. Motion passed.*

### **Hiring Report**

Kara transcended the presidency and reclaimed her role as head of the hiring committee, reporting that they have already had the first meeting on how to replace Katie. Flyers are being created and publicity plans drawn up. They have some feelers out already, and the first interview is scheduled for April 12. Committee members are committed through the summer if the process should take that long, and Katie is proving to be involved and quite helpful. They have talked about reconnecting with some of the previous candidates to see if their situations have changed. As a bonus, they expect some substitute teachers to come from this process as well. As always, when talking about marketing in a Sunnymont context, word-of-mouth is the best advertising medium. So in the immortal words of Beatrix Potter, "We implore you to exert yourselves."

### **Board Nominations**

Kara read through the nominees for the board next year, stating that the next meeting will have both incoming and outgoing board members. Please don't scare the newbies at the first meeting.

### **Fundraising Report**

Rita took a curtain call for her (and her team's) performance at the Silent Auction. Early tabulations show about \$5100 to \$5200 in profit. Excellent! Rita is still bummed that we had to share the room making space a premium, but it didn't slow down the spending.

Julie Del Fava will be a big asset next year as the head of fundraising. All the committee members are excited to work with her.

A Taste of Sunnymont is progressing nicely. Andy Z has finally called back and will be playing his kids tunes at ATOS. Christina Long is setting up a variety of booths and other activities. Since this is mostly a social event, we are only charging for food, the games and music will be free.

The Mother's Day Tea is coming up on May 13. Roxy has volunteered to be in charge of the whole event. The Parent Night Out feedback was very positive. Rita put the question to the board if we should make it a Mom's Night Out instead of an afternoon tea, and we responded resoundingly positive. Thus, we will now be having a Mother's Night Out from 6:00 to 8:30 pm on May 13<sup>th</sup>. Art projects will still be gift oriented for Mother's Day the following day. 1-Day kids may be welcomed this time if Debbie is the teacher.

**Class Coordinator Reports**

**1-Day:** Michael reports that things are great, just rolling along.

**2-Day:** Deanna says she can't believe the year is going to end. The kids have made such a big leap and Tinka is wonderful for the class.

**3-Day:** No Lana (maternity leave).

**4-Day:** No Heidi.

**SCVC Report**

This month's meeting was a chance to share interesting ideas between the various member schools. One school focuses child observations with specific concepts, such as "what did the child do with his hands"). Josh felt that process might lead to more insightful observations in our classes.

Communication is a big issue in many schools. Some schools have gone entirely email for sending out flyers and newsletters. It saves money and seems to reach people better. Weekly communications also keep people up to date with the school a bit better.

Two schools have a camp out in the school playground. Once school uses it as a fundraiser, the other closes the school for the summer that way. It was an interesting idea to try at Sunnymont in the future.

SCVC raised the per family membership fee to \$4 per family (up 50 cents). If you will remember, or reread your minutes, we all gave a thumbs-up on this a while ago.

Josh (was) volunteered to be on the CCPNS board next year,

**Directors Report**

Tinka's moment in the limelight arrived and the audience fell silent in anticipation.

- CONGRATULATIONS to Rita Halbach and her committee for a very fun and successful Silent Auction On March 11th. A tremendous amount of time and effort went into the planning and implementation of the event and it showed.
- March 28<sup>th</sup> – Justine, Debbie and I (Katie was teaching) were invited to join the staff at McAuliffe for a 4 hours session with Madelyn Swift and then out again in the evening to hear her speak. I will write a letter to the McAuliffe staff thanking them for including us.
- March 30<sup>th</sup> – I attended an all day workshop with Lisa Murphy the Ooey Gooey lady and have more examples of good practices with a children and how to articulate to the "wolves" who come knocking
- March 31-Apr 1 Teachers attended the CCPPNS in Los Angeles and had the incredibly good fortune to hear Alfie Kohn speak. We purchased his DVD for our library. Each of us attended workshops all day Friday and Saturday, some great and some not so great. In particular in relation to the Sunnymont Board one of the workshops had to do with Board responsibilities and the inner workings of the board. Our travel and hotel expenses (\$931.08) will come from the Teachers' Special Fund that was so generously donated by a family 1 year ago.

- Summer School co-ord. will be Claire Takemori and she is in the process of getting the forms ready for the ASM in April. She will be working with both Justine and Judy. The tuition this year will be \$250 for the session with half of the tuition due when you sign up.
- Regarding Summer School, the teachers have asked that I request that the Board approve an increase in the amount of paid hours per teacher per session. At the present time they are paid for 4 1/2 hours per day and would like it to increase to 5 hours per day. I will send out a formal proposal with the financial details so that we can vote at our May Board meeting.
- Starting this month, Judy will now be working 10 hours per week and Justine and I will decrease our hours to 3 per week per Judy's contract.
- I spoke with Minal Kamboj regarding the details for the ASM on April 11<sup>th</sup> and flyers should go out tomorrow and a class (I think 1 Day) assigned for snack.
- The staff met with Allison, Judy and I for their individual evaluation meetings and goals for the next school year. All went well.
- Meet with Christina Long (Social Chair) regarding ATOS and plans are moving along. Class Cord. Please encourage your classes to sign up and help. The date is April 29<sup>th</sup> 11:30 – 3pm.
- Work Party on April 1 was a success, even though Jen Bihn-King (work party coordinator) could not be there, nor the teachers. Jen's husband took the reins to run the event. Thanks!
- Class coordinators – please encourage classes to tell Toni Toledo what jobs they would like next year so we can get a jump start on the placements.

### **Director Evaluations**

Allison handed out the director evaluations to the staff and board members, urging us to have them back to her by April 12, so she can tabulate the results for the next meeting. She reiterated that these evaluations are very important to the directors, guiding how they run the school.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:00 pm. (Kara wins the timekeeping award!)

**The next board meeting is May 8th, at 7 p.m. at Sunnymont.**