

# PRESCHOOL OF THE ARTS

## Board of Directors

Meeting Minutes

January 28, 2020

6:30 pm

**Attendees:** Jim O'Brien, Kristin Schmidt, Penny Robbins, Allison Carlson, Daniel Torres-Rangel, Noelle Warnock Al-Adra, Chelsea Johnson, Zoe Wolfe, Bethany Ackeret, Abby Malesytcki, and Mallory Williams

1. **Approve previous meeting minutes** - Allison Carlson

No corrections. Motion introduced and seconded to approve. Motion passed.

2. **WELCOME, Penny!** And THANK YOU Abby and Mallory for serving as interim directors over the past several months. They have done a great job.

3. **New Business**

a. **Director's report: Abby/Mallory**

1. Thank you for support from the Board as Abby/Mallory were interim directors!
2. Over the last month, Penny focused on finding ways to connect with children and teachers, scheduling different times with the help of the admin team. She would like to continue this as time goes on, to understand how teachers/ classrooms are doing. It was an excellent way to transition into the position. Hiring committee made a very concerted effort to ensure a smooth transition. Penny – Admin team is very strong, have been very helpful and well prepared for her transition.
3. Created private meeting space out of old Director's office. Nice to have another room available.
4. Administrative Accreditation is complete. Connie will be sending this to the Board soon. Beginning to schedule classroom observations.

# PRESCHOOL OF THE ARTS

5. Surprise licensing inspection on Penny's sixth day! A couple of minor citations that they are resolving. Citations must be accessible in the school and are posted.
6. A student recently was disenrolled by the family's choice. More one-on-one support was needed than could be paid for.
7. Produced year-end report, which included more detail than last year, including more numbers and explanation. Two larger donations were received as a result.
8. Outdoor classroom update: All 24 spots are full! Families are very excited about this opportunity. Teachers are very excited as well. Looking into how to fund different aspects, like via mini grants. This idea was one of the four strategic priorities identified during the board/teacher retreat in October. Impressive that it's already executed. A classroom is still dedicated to it in the case of bad weather.
9. Space usage and gross motor task forces are combining, as their discussions and tasks are overlapping. Have already had one combined meeting and will begin meeting monthly. Next steps to come up with short and long-term goals for the school, and possibly present to the board. Some of these may require fundraising.
10. Technology focused fundraising has been very successful! Raised \$11k. Planning to have new computers by the end of year, including extensive staff training.
11. Enrollment – currently have 183 enrolled for 2020-21. No open spaces for summer alumni program. Number of new applications coming in seems a little light compared to last year, but families still have through next week.
12. Building – furnaces were replaced! Carpets/rugs were cleaned.
13. IT consultant recommended moving Board folders to a Shared Drive. Abby will be working on this.

## **b. Annual Fundraising Gala – Friday, 4/17 at The Madison Club**

1. Will take place in the Atrium. It's a smaller space (one room), versus multiple rooms at Nakoma. But will be able to seat more people. Attendance of 120 is about average. Could go up to 150. Theme is "An Emerald Evening". Will try focusing the theme around colors over

# PRESCHOOL OF THE ARTS

the next few years. Penny will be the main speaker, so parents and friends can get to know her better.

**c. Update on Outdoor Classroom (Mallory) – See Director’s report above**

**d. Committee Updates**

i. Governance – Allison Carlson

a. New Board Elections will take place in April 2020, and Exec Committee Elections in May 2020.

b. Produced a board skills matrix indicating board members, skill sets, terms, and what gaps we need to think about filling as we plan for the new year. Expertise we need to focus on includes Finance/Accounting (like a deputy Treasurer), Law/legal, and fundraising.

c. Question: Can faculty be executive committee members, can they serve for more than two years, and can there be more than 2 faculty positions? Governance committee will look into these questions and get back to the Board.

d. Zoe will put together a summary to send out to teachers, so if they are aware of any parents who would be good Board candidates, they can identify them

e. Did not meet as a committee in January, but will pick up again in next month

ii. Diversity and Inclusion – Abby/Mallory

a. On February 5<sup>th</sup> there will be a Brown Bag lunch discussion, the first in a series that will focus on different books, articles, podcasts, etc., related to diversity & inclusion. Also beginning to plan the summer festival and looking for ways to continue offering workshops, including other schools or educators

iii. Fundraising Adv Comm – Jim O’Brien

a. 2019 total - \$11,000 – see Director’s report re: technology update. Will be working with tech consultant to determine how to phase in computers, based on what can be done with the fundraised amount. Also looking at what type of computers – Apple vs. Chrome Book, etc.

# PRESCHOOL OF THE ARTS

- iv. The Marketing Advisory Committee was not able to meet this last month.
- v. Finance Committee – Jim
  - a. Continuing discussions about land lease. Not an urgent rush currently, but we'll need to determine how to handle to manage future expenses. Jen has a contact at UW Research Park. Caleb did review the land lease previously and determined that the initial agreement was sound and in PSA's best interest.
  - b. 4K revenue is up by a significant amount, which is good
  - c. Jen shared classroom tuition planner with Penny
  - d. No feedback has been received from families regarding the tuition increase, which was approved at the last board meeting

#### 4. **Dr. Penny Robbins – Three Pillar Strategy for 2020**

- a. Penny's style – likes to brainstorm, think big, and then get to work. All of the pillars are connected in some way.
- b. **Marketing/Visibility** – She has known PSA as an outsider for a long time, but only because she knows someone here. Facebook and social media have helped, but the school needs to have more visibility. Not just families who want a great school for their kids, but also educators who want to know how to be better teachers. If you went up to the average person in Madison, would they know about PSA? Need to be more visible throughout Madison, not just west side. Where do we go to be seen? Part of being seen is just the little things. Like a flyer in Starbucks, and other grassroots style marketing. Small, but can have big bang for the buck. We can also get teachers to get excited about it and do things in their neighborhoods. Also, the families that come here need to understand how special the school is. How do we get them to talk to others about it? How do we bring more teachers here for professional development? We have some great trainers/professionals that have lots to share. We have thought leaders here. Parent University? Lots of opportunities for teachers to expand their roles. Networking with businesses in the community. Connected with Reggio, you want area businesses to support the school. We can build channels and connectors. For example, one class is interested in pipes and

# PRESCHOOL OF THE ARTS

plumbing. They could visit the local hardware store. Smaller fundraisers that are also community-building, but also will pay for things that we can't pay for with regular tuition. Communicating what we need and what we have is very important. In her old school, they had a Fundraising Board, with a minor chair (smaller events) and a major chair (big fundraisers, donations)

c. **Community through the Whole Child Concept** – How do we build empathy and compassion in our children. Research shows that this is a quality that has unfortunately decreased over the last 10 years. We can all think about times when our child has wanted to help. We need to try to build these qualities into our day-to-day. We need to help the children identify needs and what they can do. Needs to be age appropriate, of course. Example, helping to bake cookies to bring to the firefighters. These activities can also help to build visibility of the school. In last school, the community had several compassion projects, and raised a combined \$500k for different causes. These projects can be very tangible, and there are a lot of places to go to find these opportunities.

d. **Fundraising using Community within a Community Concept** - How do we support each other? Teachers who are mentors and family "pods" are a couple of ideas. Family Pods – you might have three in one classroom, with five families each. Might get together once a month, to both support each other, and also identify ways to support the classroom. For example, perhaps the classroom needs a new projector. The Pod could hold a small fundraiser to support this. Smaller communities like this can be helpful to build connections and support the school.

## 5. Announcements

- a. **CORRECTION:** Next Meeting Date – Feb 26. Remaining board meeting dates will be discussed at next board meeting
- b. Erica is next up to bring snacks/beverages!

## 6. Adjourn at 8:12 pm