



Board Meeting Minutes – March 30, 2022,

Present: Paul Fields, Lori Silverman, Erika Schwartz, Dan Smith, Rick Larson, Eric Robertson, Rachel Gardell, Michael Hsu, Patrick Wrobel, Mark Takehara, Matty Berryessa, Rachel Gitner

Absent: Wendy Ricketts, Shannon Dale

Guest presenter: Nicolas Townsend

Paul Fields calls the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m.

Approval of February Minutes. Rick motions to approve, Patrick seconds. Unanimously approved as submitted.

Program Report: Nicolas Townsend, Garden Supervisor

- Mission Moment: The Garden Program produced over 4000 lbs of produce in 2021, and delivered 300+ food shares from Spring 2020 to Spring 2021 (including garden produce and donated goods). The Garden Program has hosted 7 garden interns from University of Portland and PSU.
- Programs Update: Taylor Crevola has been the garden program assistant since January 2020. She spearheaded our transition to online learning. She made our materials accessible online. She designed and implemented a choice board model that supports students with visuals for transition to and between activities in the garden. High schoolers take a Food Science course. Currently doing outreach for garden interns. Existing partnerships with East Portland Resilience Coalition. Pending grant with Whole Kids Foundation. Matching has begun for JV/AmeriCorps assistance in the garden, beginning Fall 2021. The ODE Farm to School grant is delayed until Fall 2021.

Questions & Answers: **Lori** asks about the difference between therapeutic garden and growing garden. Difference between therapeutic garden and growing garden: space was naturally divided into two spaces and the first space students enter when they come to the garden is the therapeutic space. The plants are perennial, the paths are wide, fruit trees, the washing station and greenhouse are there. Students can explore in a less structured environment. The growing garden has beds all in a row and narrow pathways.

Rachel Gitner acknowledges that Nicholas is a great partner for philanthropy and making connections in the community.

Finance Report (Dan): Reports were sent out early due to Spring Break

- February Financials: Nothing stands out. The accounting staff is doing a great job getting updated financials to committee.
- Budget vs. Actuals: About \$100K less income compared to February 2021. Salary is the same.
- Initial 22/23 Budget Assumptions (Mark/Matty): Mark and Matty are working on the budget assumptions for 22/23 budget.
- Synergy PM Update—12-12 bonuses: Barb the Synergy Project Manager left after a month and did not use all of the money that was allocated for her position. The leftover money will be reallocated for the staff who were not affected by the payscale adoption. 12-12 hourly salary employees. It will total about \$21K in bonuses and staff will receive it April 15th.
- DEI Training: Restructured DEI committee and today 12-13 people attended the meeting (both program and management). Looking into companies to provide the training.

Questions & Answers:

Paul asks about candidates for teaching and support positions. **Matty** shares that there was an uptick in applicants before

Spring Break and there are good candidates for teachers and ansped coordinator just accepted the position. We are focusing on assessing how many of our staff are planning on returning next year to know how many positions we will need to fill and how to focus our recruiting efforts. We are maintaining Instructional Assistants; we have been hiring some and losing some. Plan to bring on more IAs during ESY to give them a good onboard. **Mark** shares that we are planning for an uptick in enrollment in the next couple months. **Matty** shares that the classrooms have stabilized and morale is improving.

Lori asks Matty to explain ESY. Extended School Year is summer school for students who are eligible based on regression. It's 4 days a week for 4 weeks. Lori highlights that the plan to bring IAs on during ESY will be helpful for getting them up to speed before the school year begins. Matty shares that the hope is that it will also reduce attrition at the beginning of the school year.

Rick asks about the negative accounts receivable of \$290K. Dan reports that it is a re-up for a payment that was applied in the wrong account.

Development Report (Rachel Gitner)

- In an effort to grow donor list: Postcard going to 2,500 school aides, psychologists, teachers, therapists, principals and superintendents that are also homeowners, living in the counties we serve. The idea will be to encourage folks to sign up for occasional updates. Rachel Gardell gave great feedback about the postcard.
- Fundraising update: continue to receive donations in memory of Kata Arnerich, which are all new donors. We are doing really well this year. Have surpassed our overall goal of \$400K but we still have \$50K to make up for individual giving to reach the \$200K goal for individuals.
- Four Pillar Campaign plans: Big final push in May, with personalized appeals going to folks that haven't supported the campaign yet. Will include a Board phone banking session. Rachel Gitner would like board members to think about incentives that their contacts may have access to. Matty shared that he reached out to a lot of folks for silent auction items for the Pearls of Hope auction and he still has the contacts. The incentives could be a single large item or smaller prizes.
- Upcoming Events: April 19th rescheduled Meet & Greet with Belinda and Mark. This will be a virtual event.
- Shea accepted a new position. He will be the Development and Communications Coordinator. He has done an amazing job and we are excited to offer him an opportunity for advancement.
- Case statement is almost ready.
- Rachel Gardell's videos are turning out great.

Committee Reports

- Capital Committee (Rick): Did not meet this month, meeting every other month. Will report at next board meeting.
- Donor Advisory Committee (Erika): up 44% in fundraising compared to 19/20 school year. Rachel Gardell and Rachel Gitner are doing amazing work. Calls to thank donors are very helpful and donors seem to appreciate it. Legislative work is continuing.
- Programs Committee (Michael): Echoes Matty's sentiment that staff morale has been improving. There have been some things that board members can do to support the staff: volunteering on non-student days; Shea sent email with dates. Staff members are always looking for self care opportunities, board members can donate items (gift cards, letters of support, something personal to show that the board knows and supports the program). If board members want to donate a gift card, it can be sent directly to Shea. Lori can provide a template letter for board members who would like to write a letter to a staff member and management will provide specific information about the difference the staff member is making. Mark is working with Kevin and Jackie to identify staff members and will notify the Program Development Committee.
- Nominations and Equity Committee (Wendy not present): Paul shares that there are a few board candidates.
- Data and Outcomes Committee (Paul & Mark): Barb left a good road map for the project for Mark to take over. The project is going well. Barb did a good job trimming down who is involved with the implementation project to just the people who are doing the work and we have made a lot of progress. Christy was the admin assistant for Kevin and Megan and she is now the Synergy administrator. Project has been broken down into three phases and we are now finishing phase 2. Rachel Gitner got her first report from Synergy.

Questions & Answers:

Erika asks how many programs Synergy will be replacing. **Mark**: a lot! Student demographics, attendance, parent calls. Replacing ETO (which was expensive), Care Monkey, a lot of little stragglers. **Lori** asks Mark to explain how Synergy will

help with the transfer of student records. **Mark** shares that Synergy is the system that all other school districts use, so it will be seamless. Parents will be able to register their students online and use the ParentVue app to view grades and communication from teachers. **Matty** shares that we have had some of these capabilities in various other softwares, so this will consolidate and make it easier for staff and families. Deb Schultz is working on the data integration from other systems to Synergy so that we can achieve our goal of performance reporting.

Board Officer Elections

- Initial discussion of upcoming Board executive elections, slated for June (Paul): Paul sent an email to board requesting nominations for executive committee.

Executive Director Report:

Things are going really well. Rachel Gitner has done an amazing job fundraising. Matty is working hard to prepare for the upcoming school year. Pleased overall with the trends. Staff is happy that we are focusing on DEI. Staff were happy to see board members and the staff breakfast.

Questions & Answers:

Rick asks about the outline for the budget process. **Mark** explains that the two major metrics are predicting enrollment and staffing. If we knew that we were going to have enough staff to support more students, we would feel comfortable budgeting for that. We will budget for 9 classrooms to start the beginning of the year and expand as quickly as possible. Mark and Matty have a rough draft of the budget which will be updated after the intent to return information comes back from the staff. A rough draft will be shared with the board at the next meeting. **Matty** shares that a draft budget is typically shared with the board in May. Commercial and health insurance renewals occur late in the school year, targets for fundraising solidifies towards the end of the year, and expenses continue, which impact budget projections. The tuition and staffing projections can be finetuned with a draft budget and a final budget is typically provided to the board in September.

Meeting adjourned with the reading of Serendipity’s Mission at 6:54 p.m.

Upcoming Dates of Importance

Upcoming Events:

Rescheduled Meet & Greet event with Mark and Belinda:
April 19th at 12PM.

Upcoming Meetings:

April Board Meeting: Wednesday 4/27 @ 5:30pm