

**Board Meeting –** June 21,2022, 5:30pm – 7:00pm

Pacific West Bank 1300 SW 5th Ave 9th Floor

**Regular Minutes**

**Present:** Kristin Bauer, Matty Berryessa, Shannon Dale, Paul Fields, Rachel Gardell, Rachel Gitner, Michael Hsu, Haley Jacobs, Rick Larson, Eric Robertson, Erika Schwartz, Lori Silverman, Mark Takehara, SY Wong, Patrick Wrobel.

**Absent:** Wendy Ricketts,Dan Smith

**Meeting opens:** 5:41 PM

**Welcome: Paul** opened the meeting, welcomed Haley to the meeting, and thanked PacWest Bank for use of their space. He then welcomed the Board back to in-person meetings and gave his thanks to everyone for coming.

**Approval of May Minutes: Paul** asked if anyone had changes to the minutes as submitted. No changes. **Kristin** motioned to approve the minutes, **Rick** seconded. Minutes unanimously approved as submitted.

**Program Report (Haley J—Lower School Teacher):**

* **Introduction:** **Haley** introduced herself and gave an opening summary as to why she does this work and what she loves about our school. Continuous training and collaboration. A closeness lacking in other organizations, including public school.
* **Presentation: Haley** discussed strengths and challenges of the program and her daily experience, giving the Board an overview of issues and opportunities. She notes our specific population gives particular challenges, and an biographic overview of a student who has improved enough to return to his home district. Focus on perspective-learning & social skills, repetition of needed learning. Two this year returning to home district (our goal) possibly three. Goal is to help students in the most therapeutic way possible.
* **Q & A:**

**Eric** asked **Haley** to expound on “perspective skills” – teaching students how others feel about situations (looking outside of themselves). Haley gave examples to the Board of how these skills are reinforced.

**Shannon** asked if most children wanted to return to public school, or if they find security at Serendipity. **Haley** noted that not all of them want to return, but plenty do. Many express a desire to go back at first, then she has ongoing interactions with them about what is required. Some are too terrified to go back. The student must WANT to go back for this process to commence. So much going on where they don’t feel successful.

**Lori** gave her praise to **Haley** for teaching middle school at Serendipity, and asked **Haley** what her favorite thing is about her work. **Haley** specifically notes it is the collaboration among Serendipity staff that is utmost among her list of favorite reasons to work there – everyone has something to do, or be focused on, all the time. She loves the kids who go to our school – we help kids who have a history of trauma, and we help them heal from that and see another side.

**Rachel Gitner** asked **Haley** about difficulties in teaching to academic level – Haley notes she has students with all different academic levels, even within one student, from K-12. Complicates group teaching very much.

**Patrick** asked about the process for referring a student back to their home district, with Haley explaining the specific steps necessary, starting with case manager meetings, then outreach to the referring district. Continuous communication with the student. Necessary for them to get used to the idea. Referral back to home district can be anytime during the school year. Safety is our main concern.

**Paul** asked about what is very important for those not in the day-to-day of Serendipity to understand about our work and our activities. **Haley** notes that explosive behavior can be commonplace with our students – they will do well if they can and lack basic skills (such as perspective learning). Long process to learn skill – can’t punish students for not knowing how these skills work. Calm environment to teach kids how to keep safe themselves. **Kristin** notes that regulation around coping skills is vital, and connecting the dots is vital. **Haley** expounded on this point with an example from her students, who is trying hard but is very dysregulated all the time – he needs to practice breathing even when reading. Needs to use all his strategies. Struggles to make friends, and these struggles roll into each other. Triage necessary to re-regulate. Kids must focus on the most important thing – which is safety.

**Paul** asked **Haley** what Serendipity can aspire to in the future – either next year or five years from now. **Haley** notes we could be bigger and do more of what currently works. She notes our lengthy waiting list, with parents desperate for our help. We need more resources to help. **Mark** followed up with this, asking **Haley** what resources could be provided, to help students and help her work more. Sensory stuff, and a sensory room, would be a big help. On-site occupational therapist would be of major assistance. Curriculum assistance (in the works).

**Erika** asked if **Haley** was responsible for modifying curriculum – Haley notes she heads this up as a team effort in-classroom. **Haley** explained the full level of supports students can receive. She is responsible for organizing her in-room team to respond appropriately to each student’s intellectual and emotional needs. **Matty** followed up by discussing our campus expansion needs, including building out our SPED team to help with specially designed instruction (SDI). Every child needs this SDI. Matty notes the salary scale increases approved by the Board last fall was vital to maintaining our experienced staff to assist with this work. More resources needed for SDI work.

**Lori** asked **Haley** about her professional experience, including certificates and endorsements for general education. **Kristin** asked **Haley** to expound on her on-the-ground experience, with **Haley** noting that six months at Serendipity has given her more of an education than her formal training.

**The Board** then thanked **Haley** for coming in and for her work.

**Finance Report: SY**

* **May Financials \* SY** noted May was a loss of $115K versus last year, mainly due to drop in enrollment (lack of teachers and program staff). Cash position is strong. Need is out there. We seem hesitant regarding growth and recovery from deep COVID and comprehensive distance learning. Important for us to plan for growth. Enrollment is not going up – very concerning for our future financials. SY feels we have stabilized from COVID and need to grow. Our cash position gives us the ability to put time and effort into acquiring teachers and program staff, as well as how to reconfigure the new building. He urged the Board to start thinking about capital expansion issues now, rather than when we start building.

Most of May’s loss due to loss of tuition. Expenditures not much worse than April, most due to end of year activities. Only blip is insurance & SAIF adjustments, Dr. Deeney’s fees.

* **Budget vs. Actuals \*** Profit & loss - going forward, we will start year better than last year. Get momentum rolling and build it up to where were at pre-COVID. **Matty** gave a quick update on enrollment, including our scenarios for next year’s enrollment. He notes there are ebbs and flows in staffing – issues everywhere. Critical shortage of applicants. He mentioned hiring of a second HR person, whose job is specifically recruiting. 6 instructional assistants (IAs) hired in the last month and two teachers given hiring offers. Therapeutic recreation teacher hired. Many reasons to be optimistic, hiring is trending positively. We have faced droughts before. We can build back this coming year. We can get ourselves into a position where we can welcome referrals. We need to worry about safety – we can’t bring students in when we don’t have the staff to safely support them.

The budget as presented includes tiers of enrollment and the staff required to maintain those tiers. Supplemental support staff are necessary. Irresponsible to add costs without adding revenue. We can open ten classrooms next year, we started with a budget to open nine classrooms. Very good position. A great number starting for Extended School Year (ESY). We have two months to get to the level we need to be – we will likely open with 77-78 students. We will be aggressively adding students & staff as we can – getting the right staff for their needs. We need staff who believe students will do well if they can. HR efforts are not light and continuing over break. **Mark** believes we will easily reach 77 students per budget and exceed these levels. **Mark** feels **SY** is correct to invest the cash in hiring staff, while being responsible to our students’ needs.

**Eric** asked what the break-even point is for us with profit, with **Matty** noting it hovers around 94, but depends on where the student is placed – could be 91. Depends on student supports. Our break-even is much lower than in the past – used to be 99/100. Mark notes that our staff have been very cost-conscious this year and have controlled costs.

**Patrick** thanked **Matty** and the HR team for their service in doing this work, then asked when the new IAs will start, with **Matty** noting their start date is during the Extended School Year. **Rachel Gitner** expounded on the summer grant money supporting staff hiring and retention.

**Paul** thanked **Matty** for presenting a well-reasoned summary of staff hiring and retention efforts. **Paul** further noted **SY’s** concerns are well-taken, but that no stones have been left unturned.

**Kristin** asked about new avenues to consider in terms of sourcing, with **Matty** noting that each new approach has its own new set of challenges. Need for “unicorns” who fit well with our program. Eric asked about the hiring season, with **Matty** noting that the hiring season is at its peak right now, and we are competing with bigger districts who have more resources – the difficulty is that these districts are slower in making offers and can poach staff in August. Lots of issues.

**Rick** thanked **SY** for his solid financials and recognized his efforts in front of the Board, with Paul mentioning **SY’s** thoughtful notes and accelerated time frame.

**Nomination of Board Officers: Paul opened the nomination of Board officers.**

* **Thank You to Paul and Dan for their service: Mark** formally recognized **Paul and Dan** for their service, with **Paul** serving 8 years on the Board, including two years as Chair during troubling times. **Paul** has set the Board up for success, including with Synergy implementation. **Mark** presented **Paul** with his award, **Paul** then spoke to the challenges and rewards of his service, noting we are greater together rather than separate. **Paul** will be staying on Executive Committee as Immediate Past Chair.
* **Secretary: Michael** self-nominated as Board Secretary. **Erika** motioned to approve **Michael, Rachel Gardell** seconded. Unanimous approval.
* **Treasurer: Shannon** self-nominated as Board Treasurer. **Rachel Gardell** motioned to approve **Shannon, Eric** seconded. Unanimous approval.
* **Vice Chair: Erika** nominated **Lori** for Vice-Chair. **Rick** seconded. Unanimous approval.
* **Chair: Lori** nominated **Erika** for Chair. **Kristin** seconded. Unanimous approval.

**Q&A: Paul asked for questions from the Board.**

**Shannon** asked about inclusion of students in the Yearbook, with **Matty** noting that all students, including those referred to home districts, were included. Photos taken all year long, including those of children who just started. Some children draw their own pictures.

**Erika** asked **Matty** about providing coverage now that Dr. Deeney has passed. **Matty** mentioned he needs to converse with Megan Pine & Jackie Trussell (Compliance & Treatment Directors) to see how to proceed going forward. May be a nurse practitioner. More to be revealed. **Rachel Gitner** apologized for the shock of Dr. Deeney’s passing to the Board, noting we are waiting for family OK before putting out public notice.

**Patrick** asked about the summer Oregon Department of Education grant money, with **Rachel Gitner** noting the money is available now – 90% up front, 10% after. $300K awarded. The Board discussed uses of this award with managers present.

Paul thanked the Board members for their service.

**Meeting closes:** 6:35 PM

**Upcoming Dates of Importance**

Upcoming Events: Upcoming Meetings:

Graduation 6/22 @5pm.

Serendipity Community Garden Party 7/16 11am-2pm.

 *\*See attached documents for review*