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# April 12, 2023

Salt Lake School for the Performing Arts Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Board Chair, Doug Keefe convened the meeting at 5:04 PM.

Meeting style: Face to Face

Attendees Included:

Board Officers: Doug Keefe; Steve Barth; Kari Plaster

In Attendance: Board Members:

Tina Gillman

Tracy Evans

Kit Anderton

Ilana Harrus (Late)

Anne Tuckett

Administration:

Angela Pontius

Mike Stumph

Bethany Hansen

Red Apple: Business Manager

Not in Attendance:

Tim Porter

Kristy Swett

Other Teachers, Parents and Students – well attended

Past minutes review and approval: Steve Barth moved and Kari Plaster seconded approval of past meeting minutes. Passed unanimously.

PTO Update: Anne Tuckett introduced as the new PTO President. Mike and Anne are co-PTO Presidents at Canyon Rim Academy. Many new events, tripled parent volunteers and for every parent who volunteered they got to put their name in for a nice stove. Nice sense of community and Anne feels SPA needs this. Her company has been sponsoring concession events. They will be here through the end of the year and would potentially leave if things don’t work. PTO President is a member of the Board.

Doug shared how important the PTO Presidency is. If you are a parent, you are an automatic part of this organization. All parents and care givers should feel included, they don’t need to sign-up.

SPA Charter Building and Lease: Kari introduced Jodie Osofsky who helped to find the building. She will support me in reviewing the building. We had some handouts for the meeting. Looking at options since November. Our lease is expiring from the District, and they reaffirmed to us that they wouldn’t extend for a year. We tried to go with Westminster but this had complications. They notified us that wouldn’t work out.

Oquirrh School Building, 350 South and 400 East was built in 1894, built by same architect as the person who designed the Capitol. Building was originally a Women’s School. Now being leased to the Children’s Center. We walked the group through a virtual tour, attached. Building is LEED certified, was updated in 2009 and seismically retrofitted. Has fire curtain both ends of the building in front of exits. The foyer would most likely be used as the primary performance space which has to be remodeled. Some of the rooms will need to have modifications – wall removals and removal of observation windows. May need to raise the ceilings in a few rooms as well for those being used for dance. Building has 14 bathrooms, showers, as well as a laundry room. The furniture is being offered to us (if we want to keep it). On the top floor there is another space which could also be a large performance area. All the floors are accessible using the elevator, except the very top of the building (which is a small space and also does not have HVAC). Could put in a mini-split if we want to use this space. Each classroom has sinks. There are two large kitchen spaces. Here is the link for anyone who would like to take the virtual tour: <https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=kpjRm3xceLb>

Discussion Summary: Discussion ranged from core academics to safety as well as the overall location of the school. Points were made and debated about the space not being perfect (performance spaces will have to be remodeled and adjusted over time).

It was noted that Westminster still wants to partner with us, likely with more limited rental of larger performance spaces and potentially as Charter Authorizer.

Will we lose students: discussed how many people did we lose when we went online? Doug thinks we lost around 100 during Covid. There was confusion about whether or not we would be moving back to an online option or not. This was clarified by Doug and others, no one definitively said we are moving back online. Discussed Highland and whether or not kids can still go there. Doug clarified that this site is large enough to support onsite academics. The view right now is that the drive to Highland is too far to accommodate. Discussion about whether or not the class periods could be structured in such a way so that kids could still go back and forth to Highland. This is all possible and the administrative team needs time to work all of that out.

Options we have been reviewing as a Board all have trade-offs. Discussed the performance spaces and it was voiced that as we are a performing arts school, we should focus on this aspect. We have to build sufficient performing spaces here. This building is going to require construction to do this. There are options inside the building for performances now, but this is the best place we have seen so far. Kari clarified that by the beginning of next year, the foyer space will not be done. We will have walls done, demo done, ceilings fixed (if required) as well as the flooring laid which would be necessary for dance. All of this needs to be reviewed and further planned.

Another parent voiced that academics are very important to her. Kids love the performing arts. That is why they come to SPA, but need to make sure academics are taken care of. Colleges require some advanced courses and/or honors courses. Students may choose to do dual enrollment if they want to and this is always an option. The student can dual enroll with the District. Long-term our goal would be to have strong academic options, will take time to build that or partner with someone to provide it. We won’t have that fully implemented in year one, will need a transition.

Another question was whether or not there is enough parking spaces for our kids. There were about 90. There is a back parking lot by the church as well as the lot adjacent to the West that can potentially be used.

Broad safety concern was raised. There is a homeless population around this area. There are gates around the school, so should be manageable. This is right next to TRAX.

Revisited performance spaces. Would Highland allow us to use their space? Doug hasn’t asked that. One Board member shared that when we started SPA in Highland, that was very rough. Couldn’t work this out. There are other options downtown, but will take time to establish this.

Another concern was how many students do you need? We want 300. We were at 300 pre-Covid. 300 students allows for enough additional revenue to cover the additional building costs. We have 194 right now. We are looking at all the financial options.

We reviewed other buildings; this was the best fit. We looked in Murray, Sandy and went as far south as we thought parents would be willing to go.

A Board member suggested we take this and solve around problems we are facing and then try to solve them. View raised that this area is not unsafe and was countered by commentary around what seems unsafe to one parent is not the same as for another. May need to have a security guard, should be looked at. SLARTS is down there too.

The academic consideration: Are we going to hire more FTEs for this and broader student growth? We will need to. If you make it less desirable for students, then how would you increase to 300? No one is trying to make this less desirable for students. There are a lot of opinions, and those factor into looking at what our options are.

Back to safety concerns. Right downtown, haven’t had serious concerns there. A student added that she lives in Tooele and takes all forms of public transportation including TRAX, a bus, she is in the downtown area every morning. There are times when I feel unsafe, but for the most part, I even feel I could walk up to complete strangers and they would be willing to help me. She takes public transportation every day and feels safe.

Our name is Salt Lake School for Performing Arts: our assumption is that we still want to be in SLC. Should that still drive things here or should we pull out and go somewhere else? There were limited to no practical options outside of SLC, regardless.

Board comment: Another issue, something losing sleep over for the past several months. There are not great options and we are kind of down to whether or not SPA can survive this. This is an exciting option and there is a lot of potential here. We could be similar to other successful performing arts schools we have looked at. We have fantastic staff here and they are willing to make this happen.

Teacher Comment: Moving to this location is an incredible opportunity. This is a giant and beautiful space, this space can be favorably marketed. We will lose some students, but we are opening up a market on the north side of SLC we wouldn’t normally have. We also have people in this area willing to come. In terms of small spaces and classrooms, our building is barely standing. It will be difficult during the first two years; will experience growing pains. This will be challenging. Have to figure out how to make it work. This is the perfect opportunity to rebuild SPA. We can use this school, bring in new students and we could possibly become our own entity with our own own academics. Yes, the performance spaces aren’t perfect and will be improved over time, but artists do this, they know how to do this. This is what artists do.

Administration Comments: The fourth floor in the new building is very eclectic for rock bands, and things like that, but no one thought we could do what we did here. Would have two performing spaces and may need to use Westminster or other venues for bigger performances. Administration has put lots of work into making this building happen. This building would be more of a final place to stay.

The safety concerns exist everywhere, crime is different in different communities. Downtown is not an unsafe place unless you put yourself into risky situations. Crime lives in crime ridden areas and those don’t directly associate with schools unless, potentially, you are in an underprivileged area. There are many high-end apartments going up right around this area.

Would like to close Board meeting now for discussion of new building lease financial considerations and negotiations. Motion to close the meeting by Kit, Steve seconded. Motion unanimously passed. Meeting closed at 5:52 pm.

Doug Keefe reopened the meeting

Steve Barth moved that we tell the Oquirrh Building owners we would like to move in there next year. We ask if they

are willing to consider seller finance to buy the building, If not, move on with Governance Committee negotiating the lease deal. Kari Plaster seconded. Discussion: none All in favor: Doug Keefe, Kit Anderton, Tracy Evans, Steve Barth, Kari Plaster, Tina Gillman, Ilana Harrus. Opposed: Anne Tuckett. Abstained: none. Motion passed. The Governance Committee will continue to manage this process, bring final draft lease back to the Board for review and approval prior to execution.

Finance Report briefly: covered the one-page financial summary. Not much changed, projection is the same as we discussed. We are at 194 in current enrollment. Need to be at 200+.

Marketing and Fundraising: Angela had a shadow day on April 5th, had 9 students and 4 showed up. Poor weather.

Two more planned for April 25 and May 12th, limited sign ups. Discussion about how many students who attend shadow days become students. Need to compile these estimates.

Collide Festival: working on fund raising, but working on collide on May 20th . This group meets every other week but will begin every week. Lindsay and Cara are doing a great job. Looking for community performers as well as our own students. There are two confirmed food trucks and working on five more. Anne had several that she used for the

elementary school, and they gave her a significant credit. The letter for tax exemption needs to be re-signed by

Angela.

Artistic Director Update: Bethany reported on State competitions and all year-end events.

Student Fee schedule: we have sent it through rounds of public comment. With the school changing, could change a some in the future. Steve Barth moved we approved the fee schedule. Tracy Evans seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Closed session for discussion of principal evaluation and search plan. Steve Barth moved we close meeting and Anne Tuckett seconded. Unanimously passed.

Doug reopened the meeting. Steve Barth motioned to offer Angela Pontious the permanent Principal position and discontinue the search. The Governance Committee to negotiate her new contract within financial parameters discussed. Tracy seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 PM.