

# SJCA Board of Directors

Minutes | 3.22.21 | Recorded by John Hogan

## **Present:**

Kyle Vitkus, Beth Bahr (late), Christine Genthner, Bruce Varick (late), Matthew Rizzo, Brock Portilia, John Moyer, John Hogan, Eric Kenesie, Paul Marik, Peter Specca, Kerstin Santarelli, Mike Bain, Bob Freund, Fr. Robert McDermott

## **Excused:**

Theresa LaMacchia, , Susie Harron, Paul Krumrie, Jeanne Kessler

## **Called to Order:**

Kyle Vitkus, 6:02 pm

## **Prayer:**

Father McDermott

## **Open Public Forum:**

- Parent (Mandy) brought to attention issues with BLM messaging at school, issues with Grace Lutheran partnership, and issues with Kamala Harris as Black History Month person of distinction. She said that she sent an email to Bob Freund on these matters and did not reply. Also raised an issue with a “black club” being allowed to gather while other clubs were not allowed and questioned the purpose/actions of the club.
- Krista Mazer(?) thanked teachers and supporters for everything they did to keep the school running during COVID. She has an issue with us spending \$30K on a principal search committee; she believes we already have a viable candidate with Matt Rizzo. She said students were chastised for bringing a petition around seeking Matt Rizzo's approval for the position. Believes the administrator sent the wrong message with that action. Then, she brought up issues with having BLM messaging in school, stating the BLM movement is not in line with Catholic values. Then discussed specifics of the Jacob Blake case. She commented that “Maybe the BLM messages were to show support of the African-American community? But did you support the others that were hurt by the ensuing civil arrest?” She was not aware that you did. She also took issue with having Kamala Harris as Black History Month selection. She says she sent emails to administrators but did not receive a reply. Then read a statement previously emailed to Bob Freund.
- Eric Kenesie, a board member, wanted to know why Kyle Vitkus, board president, had not replied to previous emails. Asked Kyle directly. Kyle did not reply.
- Several people from the public forum voiced issues with board transparency.
- Eric K. reiterated that there needs to be greater transparency.
- From both the public forum and board members, several people vocalized their concerns with transparency, especially about emails being filtered to board members.

- Another parent voiced they are not here about other issues previously voiced but wanted to support Matt Rizzo.
- Someone else vocalized their support for Matt Rizzo and wanted to know why there hasn't been more communication on the presidential search.
- Another parent wanted to know how the board put the search firm together. They were curious about the overall search process. Eric Kenesie stated that the board allocated money for the search, but, in his opinion, this approval process was not authorized by the by-laws.
- Mike Bain, board member, and Eric Kenesie debated whether it was allowable to use a search firm without getting 3 vendor quotes. Eric K. said you would hear many "trust the process," but how can you trust the process when there isn't transparency?
- Mindy McTernan asked how one gets selected to be on the board? Kyle replied that one could be asked or apply on their own. Mindy wanted to know where the board information is made available to the public. She is very disappointed about how the money is being spent. She said she has never seen a hiring process like this before. She said, "If you are not interested in hiring someone in the building, then why are they in the building?"
- Jenny Kenesie said that if we lose these good people, this school will no longer exist.
- Someone else voiced the financial difficulties she incurred to send her son to SJCA. Parents should have a stake and be able to help make these crucial decisions.
- Jenny Kenesie said we want transparency, and we want good values.
- Someone else wanted to know about accountability? He said he had sent two emails and did not receive any replies. Found it suspicious that he did not get a response.
- Kerstin Santarelli thanked people for their questions and appreciated their comments. Agrees, we need greater transparency. Said that everyone in this room does want the best for SJCA.
- Mike Higgins said he came here to say he supports Matt Rizzo. He said we could have used the money spent (on the search committee) for more useful purposes. Matt is a fine individual.
- Kyle V. answered that he is the one who gets the board emails; and then makes a decision on who to funnel the emails to.
- Mike Higgins said he is not here to attack you (Kyle V.). But it bothers him that the emails are not going to everyone on the board.
- Eric Kenesie then said, "my biggest issue is that you (Kyle V.) did not respond to my emails."
- 7:03: the public forum was dismissed.

**Presentation from Thomas Grooms - Premier Asset Management:**

- SJCA fund began in 2012 with about \$1M in investment; today is worth about \$4M.
- Thomas discussed that PAM could make changes to the fund as long as a 60/40 (stock/bond) ratio is maintained.
- John Hogan asked why the board set up the fund originally? Kyle V. replied that it was originally for scholarships, still for scholarships, but has not had to draw upon it.
- Thomas said the overall economic outlook continues to be bullish because of government spending, money printing, and interest rate controls, and increases in income, auto sales, and other consumables. He believes that with the vaccine, we

- should continue to see economic growth going forward. He also believed that the stimulus coming in 2021 is going to be even larger than in 2020.
- We should push the additional cash into equities, not going beyond the allowed policy of 60/40.
  - The board decided to redeploy maturing bonds into equities.

### Principal Reports:

- Kerstin Santarelli:
  - Shared board report on Saturday. Had called Kyle V. this afternoon to talk about future enrollment. Maybe another increase at the elementary level. Some wanted to know if we should cap class sizes. Kerstin shared suggested capping sizes. Said there is a lot more that goes into this than just space. On adding another class to the lower campus, we don't have another room and would need an increase in supplies.
  - Kerstin asked if it is possible to have a sub-committee of the board address our plans with increased enrollment? Is it to continue growing and expand?
  - Motion made to create a sub-committee by Eric K., seconded by John H. Motion passed.
  
- Matt Rizzo:
  - Middle school is 98% back in person.
  - We added another 7th grader.
  - Kudos to our admissions team. We had a class preview date (March 16th) led by ambassadors. Overwhelming positive feedback. 70% are committed to attending middle school.
  - **Registration and Enrollment (direct from Jen Santelli email):**
    - As of this morning, our academy-wide returning registration has topped 75%!
    - Please continue to urge your families to complete registration, and if you hear of any chatter of students not returning, please let us know so that we can follow up.
  - **Admissions Events Update (direct from Jen Santelli email):**
    - Our Middle School Preview Day on Tuesday was a great success! Our feedback from students, parents, and teachers has been overwhelmingly positive - 77% of our current 5th graders are already committed to SJCA Middle School!
    - On the heels of our preview day and in response to many requests for a High School preview day, we will be hosting 'Future Freshman Friday' on April 16, May 7, and May 14. The event is open to current SJ 8th graders and those looking to enroll from other middle schools. We will be reaching out to a few High School teachers to ask for a small commitment of time (during a Friday class period) - you can expect to hear from us next week! 8th-grade teachers - we will communicate as students sign up, but they will be expected to make up any assignments if they miss your class that day. I've attached the flyer for the event.
    - Placement tests for incoming 9th graders (only students new to SJCA) will begin taking place next week.\

- **Bob Freund (direct from his notes):**
  - Emergency Assistance for Non-Public Schools (EANS) Program.
    - A federal program available to eligible private schools to provide reimbursement for services and assistance due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. This potential reimbursement is for expenses incurred on or before March 13, 2020. The program's application is due by April 12, and all EANS funds must be obligated by August 10, 2021. SJCA's total allocation is \$437,085. This allocation is based on an enrollment of 773 students, \$480 per student, and double for students who fall under the ESSER low income formula.
    - The non-binding Letters of Intent were distributed in late February. The UC faculty results were 26 plans on returning next school year, 3 are unsure at this time, and 3 have stated they will not be returning. Those 3 positions are a counselor, our Director of Student Conduct, and our Athletic Director. The positions have all been posted, with the Director of Student Conduct being posted as an Assistant Principal position. We are looking for a candidate with the appropriate licensure to assist the new 6-12 Principal with classroom observations and teacher evaluations. The LC responded with 9 teachers, and the administrator was unsure of their intentions at this time.
    - 3 SJCA seniors were recently honored in the Herb Kohl Scholarship program. Robert Jenewein was selected as a Student Excellence Scholarship recipient. The award is a \$10,000 scholarship. Sa'id Robinson was selected as a Student Initiative Scholarship winner. The award is a \$10,000 scholarship. Hannah Altergott was a state finalist for a Student Excellence Scholarship.
    - On March 1, our high school students attended a presentation by the archdiocese entitled "The Gift of Sunday." It is a theological reflection, endorsed by Archbishop ListECKI, that addresses the true gift of attending mass on Sunday. This program is being presented to every high school in the archdiocese as well as selected parishes.
    - The "Circle of Grace" is a curriculum supplied by the archdiocese that focuses on our students' safe environment. This curriculum covers all grade levels, PK - 12, and will be part of our Safeguarding report to the archdiocese at the end of the school year. This curriculum has been shared with our UC Theology department and will be taught in theology classes during the week of April 12.
    - I am currently in my second round of classroom observations and teacher evaluations. It will be completed before we leave on Easter break. I will meet with Department Chairs for the last two weeks in March to review student course selections and determine the number of teaching sections needed in each department. We plan to distribute teacher contracts on April 15. According to archdiocesan

policy, any non-renewal notice for administrators must be issued by April 1, and teachers' notice must be made by April 15.

- The administrative team has met and discussed the 2021- 2022 school calendar. It is near completion and must be submitted to the archdiocese and the DPI by the end of April. Requirements that we must meet include a minimum of 177 student contact days and 13 in-service days through the archdiocese, and instructional hours of 1050 for grades 1-6 and 1137 for grades 7-12 through the DPI.
- There have been discussions with the Math department regarding offering a two-week "boot camp" for incoming freshmen. Proper placement of these students can be difficult depending on the feeder school and their recommendation. This would be voluntary on the student's part and could expand to include sophomores.
- All of our juniors took the ACT exam on March 9. The testing window for the WPCP Forward Exam begins on March 22 and extends through April 30. We are targeting the week of April 19 for ACT Aspire Summative testing. That testing involves grades 6 through 10 at the UC. Advanced Placement exams will cover the first two weeks in May, with the option of exams being extended into the last week of May.
- We are investigating our possible food service options for lunch periods next school year. We had utilized the services of Taher for several years up until March 13, 2020. We asked students to "brown bag" it during this school year and did not utilize a food service. Ta has treated several archdiocesan schools very poorly during this year, and the archdiocese has strongly recommended that we refrain from doing business with them in the future.
- Through an arrangement with Froedtert South Hospital, most of our faculty/staff have received the first round of the vaccine, and many have received the second vaccine shot.
- Positions for the 2021 - 2022 school year that are presently posted:
  - LC - Music and Physical Education
  - UC - Math, MS Spanish, Music, Guidance Counselor, Athletic Director, 6-12 Assistant Principal,
  - 6-12 Principal and President, MS Science/Theology

#### **Approval of 2021-2022 Budget:**

- Eric Kenesie wanted to discuss the school organizational structure. The President should absorb a lot of the administrative function and move the money under the two principals.
- Eric Kenesie made a motion to approve the budget (pending a full review of all of the changes of the operation committee; Kim said ) Christine G. seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Review and Approval of the Consent Agenda:**

- Mike Bain made a motion to approve. Beth Bahr seconded. Motion passes.
- One item needs to be removed: For the boiler's repair, we're looking to approve up to \$20K. Motion to approve not to exceed \$20K from Kyle V. Paul Marik seconded. Motion passes.

**Seeking New Board Members:**

- Nominations for board officers and board members are open. We are seeking qualified candidates. Send potential candidates to Peter Specca. Will bring back nominees to the board in the May board meeting. If you nominate someone, please provide some form of reference and if they have an interest.
- Eric would like to know if the top donors should be allowed to submit. Kyle V. said they could submit to Peter Specca.

The board meeting adjourned at 8:10.