

**MINISTRY LEADERSHIP COUNCIL
MINUTES**

April 24, 2017

6 p.m.

Attending: Paul Beckman, Darren Kelso, Pam Hansen, Matt Noel, Skip Raymond, Ann Roberts, Pastor Frick. Absent: Bryon Meyer

Invited Guests: Meredith Arldt, Craig Olson, Matt Hansen and Sarah Woody

Call to Order

Opening Prayer - Pastor Frick

Approval (Ratification) of Minutes - March

Motion to approve: Darren 1st, Paul 2nd. All in favor, none opposed. Minutes approved.

Matt Hansen and Sarah Woody - Board of Education

Matt presented a snapshot of Salem School enrollment over last few years. It showed decreasing enrollment, dropping 23% over the last 5 years. Lutheran Schools in our area have dropped 1% per year over the same timeframe. The population of school-age children in our area is dropping about 1% year. He also included a list (compiled in May 2016) of previous ideas/suggestions/solutions from the BOE members to help increase enrollment. BOE wants to make sure Salem is pursuing all possible avenues for increased enrollment.

Question: MOPS Program - Why are we not doing it at Salem? Per Meredith, we don't have the bandwidth to do it at this time.

Question: Why didn't the Open Houses happen earlier than they were scheduled? The timing of events was changed to try do things differently than what has been done historically.

Sarah Woody then spoke about marketing strategy. She talked about Salem's online footprint. Does Salem look like what we say it is? Sarah reviewed everything online and gave items that needed to be updated to Greg Busch. She also looked at Yelp, where there were some negative ratings. Sarah then had some school parents give additional Yelp reviews.

Question: Do we know what customers "buying preferences" are? Are we marketing to that? Need to be surveying people as to what they want. Per Meredith most productive marketing strategy is word of mouth. Sarah cautioned to not have that be the only marketing strategy.

Discussion on enrollment numbers. Staff is working to get commitments from prospective students. Would it help to have tuition payments due earlier? Move 10 month pay to an 11 month payment? Or spread out tuition over 12 months?

Request for additional clarification on students numbers. Need to all have the same numbers. Meredith stated that the numbers on Matt's spreadsheet do not match her numbers. Matt stated the numbers he presented matched the numbers in our WASC document. Meredith pointed to large number of 8th graders graduating vs. kindergarteners coming in. Bottom line is that there is a drop off in enrollment. Pastor stated that in Region 3 all the principals and schools give enrollment info. 87-92% retention rate is stable. Salem is at 90% retention according to Region 3 statistics from the District office, putting us in line with other schools in the area.

It was noted that we need to have a strategic plan in place that allows growth. Meredith stated that we need to sell families on the value of Salem. She is talking to teachers for their input. It takes time to put all of this into place. From the vision piece we are hitting a roadblock. Where are we going strategically? So absent that, what are we doing to get there? According to Meredith, it's foreign language and smaller class sizes that attract people. The only way to have smaller class size is to increase tuition. We are already at the top in tuition. The only other option is to reduce costs. We need to be spending money on the right things and build a superior product and then market it.

Sarah added that we also need to look beyond the other Lutheran schools as competition. If a large enough population comes here and are not churching, then there is a bigger pool than just the other Lutheran schools. Also, the faculty is the other arm of the marketing tool. Need to get them to buy in to the fact that they have an impact on whether a child comes back to the school. Maybe more than anyone else. They need to buy in to the vision that gets developed. Need to get marketing and outreach events out there as well.

It was suggested that Meredith, in conjunction with the BOE, come up with a strategic plan. Make it a priority to find out what our existing families want in the school. Survey them and keep it simple. Also, conduct exit interviews with families leaving to collect data on what they liked/disliked. Possibly this would give us insight into what we need to change. Sarah agreed to put together a summary report of data collected from parents. Idea was floated to have a "Job Description" for each grade. It would state what each grade provides and then show how the 8th graders are prepared for high school. This could also be used as a marketing tool.

Additionally, BOE would like clarification on the following:

What is the BOE's role in regards to the principal? How do the BOE and the MLC and the principal work together? What does the charter say? Is the BOE policy driven or board driven?

BOE will be put on the June MLC agenda to discuss where they are with the strategic plan.

Matt Hansen and Sarah Woody were dismissed.

Principal's Report (submitted in advance of meeting)

Question: What concerns would have been helped by the families reading the newsletters?
Response was deadlines, dates, etc. Currently emailing families. Need additional way to get the information out to the families. An app was suggested as a possible vehicle.

Question: How will the dual 1st/2nd grade class be presented to parents? Present in a way that will allow us to reduce class size and provide them with data that shows there is no negative impact on learning with a combined class. Also, speak as to how we will deal with the challenges of a combined class.

Question: How will 2nd graders for the combined class be identified? Teachers will suggest candidates. Then we will reach out to the parents to see if we can get their buy in.

Question: Kindergarten Information Night. Why was it so late? Date was changed to do something different than what we had done historically. It has now been moved back to February for next year.

Mission Board Report (submitted in advance of meeting)

No Discussion

Pastor's Report (submitted in advance of meeting)

No Discussion

Officer's Reports:

President's Report

Update on Nominating Committee. Phil Duerr is continuing to work on identifying candidates for open positions.

Vice President's Report - None

Treasurer's Report

Church - YTD in the black. Total income is just below budget due to Other Contributions. Total expenses were below budget. Monthly giving continues to remain a concern.

Question: Going forward, has anyone ever stood up and said why they love Salem and why they give? Possibly this might motivate people?

School - YTD in the black. Total income is \$72K behind budget. This is driven by lower than expected tuition for K-8, but bolstered by better than expected Pre-School income. Total Expenses are \$109K better than budget.

Motion to approve 3rd quarter Financials. Pam 1st, Paul 2nd. All in favor. Approved.

Craig Olson

Review and discussion of preliminary school budget. Motion to approve salary assumptions in the draft budget and the restructuring of the church/school office duties. Pam 1st, Matt 2nd. All in favor, none opposed. Motion passes.

Old Business - None

New Business - None

Future MLC Meetings:

May 15th

June 19th

Voter's Meeting:

June 11th

Closing Prayer - Pastor Frick

Meeting ended at 9:45 p.m.