
Monthly Land Trust Board Meeting

Monday, January 22, 2024

Attendees

Blake Clark - Executive Director
Kevin Peterson - GWA Board of Directors
Anjanae Merida - GWA Counselor
Sara Lamb - Teacher
Amanda Mortensen - PTO Representative/Parent
Josh (?) - Parent
Cami Boudwin - Parent

Agenda

Last Meeting Follow-up

Blake called the meeting to order at 3:05 PM.

The purpose of today's meeting is to come up with a draft to present to the Board for the 2024-25 school year. Kevin explained how the money we currently have in the budget is allocated, going into detail about the four goals already in place in the financial plan. Kevin reminded board members that all four goals are linked to items intended to better support teachers and ensure student success.

New Business

Chrome books: Discussion ensued about the possibility of purchasing new chrome books for students. At present, there are 650-700 chrome books used by students. The school is scheduled to replace the chrome books every five years, but it was suggested that we replace 130 chrome books each year to ensure there is a flow of newer chrome books at all times.

Student enrollment: The current GWA charter allows for enrollment of 1075 students. At present, the current enrollment is 1011 students. Plans for the new school, which will be built on the property east of George Washington Academy, can take 12-18 months for approval. In

addition to the time allowed for construction, a new building could potentially take up to two years before opening. Should GWA acquire additional students beyond the Charter's required number of 1075, an appeal would be sent to the State for the new expansion. Blake reminded us that we need to look at sustainability to fund a new building, citing the example of another school basing their funds on an increase of 200 students which they did not receive. At this time there is no plan to increase enrollment at GWA. It is possible GWA will keep the same number of students, but move two grades to a new building.

Possible allocations: Sara Lamb had compiled a list from teachers and students of possible fund allocations. Discussion and input about each item provided by those present.

Some of the possible allocations and comments are as follows:

1. **Fix the grease trap outside the lunch room** - A new interceptor was installed, but constantly needs new filters to overcome the smell. We will continue to monitor this issue.
2. **Chrome books available for student use at home** - This is a matter for Tech to handle, but chrome books are now available for any student who requests one for home use.
3. **Increase teacher supply budget** - The State threshold for teacher supply budgets is \$375, with the amount increasing based on number of years teaching. GWA grants each teacher \$1000.00, no matter how long s/he has been teaching.
4. **New sidewalk on 3000 East** - This is not feasible, as a new sidewalk would be torn up once 3000 East is expanded. The City of St. George would be the one to approve this anyway.
5. **Soccer and football lines painted on the soccer field** - The Board approves of this idea, but feels it would best be something the PTO should focus on.
6. **New lunch tables** - This would come out of the Furniture and Fixtures Budget.
7. **New tables in classrooms** - This would come out of the Furniture and Fixtures Budget.
8. **More comfortable desk chairs for students** - This would also come out of the Furniture and Fixtures Budget.
9. **Vending machine** - State law prohibits vending machines, unless they offer gluten-free food items.
10. **Lockers** - Land Trust funds cannot be spent on lockers. Those previously at GWA were dismantled and taken away due to the need for distance between students during COVID. It was also determined that the rate of bullying decreased once lockers were taken away.
11. **Water fountain in front of school** - This is a matter for the PTO to take up if interested. Amanda Mortensen pointed out that it had already been discussed among the PTO members, but it had been determined that the plumbing in front of the school did not allow for placement of a water fountain.
12. **After-school activities** - Land Trust funds must be used to support academics, based on the ability to track student data, and it was determined that certain after-school activities meeting this requirement would be a positive addition to programs already offered at GWA. Those currently offered are Choir, Musical, Math and Reading Tutoring,

Lego/Robotics. Suggested additions to GWA's after-school activities are piano lessons (taught by Mr. Weber), a foreign languages class (German - taught by Sara Lamb, or Spanish), an extension of lego robotics, and a beginners' sports program (taught by Mr. Dower). It was also suggested that we contact Utah Tech University for ideas on STEM classes. Cami pointed out the convenience of offering any new activity to take place directly after school, as it is too difficult to convince children to participate in activities once they are settled at home after school.


Kevin pointed out there was \$13,000 in excess funds due to increase for next year, and suggested that these funds be used for after-school activities. The funds would be used to pay stipends to teachers coordinating these activities, as well as for resources used. The possibility of non-employees coordinating after-school activities was discouraged, as there are strict rules to be followed and liabilities to be considered. It was decided that employees only would be the activities coordinators. Blake offered to draft a list of ideas to send to the Board of Directors for approval, focusing on STEM, music, reading - language, math, science.

The Board also approved more academic-based field trips offered to students as a means to increase student education, engagement, but also to keep alive valuable traditions. There is currently \$3,000 allocated in the budget for field trips. The question of transporting students was discussed. Most parents carpool anyway, and it has not been a problem to coordinate rides for students to and from field trip destinations. Both Blake and Kevin supported the idea of possibly busing students on a field trip to Las Vegas to see exhibits on ancient Egypt, or the Titanic. A public bus would cost the school \$550.00 each way, and we would need two buses per field trip to transport an entire grade of students, at the same time. Even with a discount, admission to museums or exhibits would still cost a small stipend per student. Blake supported paying this fee so that our students could have a memorable experience.

Kevin said that more funds could be allocated for the after-school activities and field trips if necessary.

Josh brought up the WiFi issue, as there are connection challenges upstairs in the upper grades. Additional repeaters have been installed, but we need additional access points. GWA hired a contracted tech company with two employees on site at the school to address connectivity issues and other challenges. Each classroom has its own access point, but Kevin thinks the problem is that the line coming into the building is not large enough to handle the number of students. Installing a fiber connection was suggested. Blake brought up that we are an elementary and intermediate school, which is wired differently than a high school. He is aware that what we have doesn't handle the connectivity requests from students. Once the new school is built, a fiber line will be installed with a capacity so large that it is unlikely we will have these issues. But we still need to address the current problem, and Blake stated that it is being handled.

The need for Teacher's Assistants was brought up, with Blake insisting they are very much needed. All K-1 have a TA in each classroom, and there are three TA's to share in grades 2-3.



Fourth grade was given the option of being given chrome books or TA's and chose chrome books. However, with additional teachers' assistants in each grade, they are better able to support extreme behavior and support students with their classwork. Blake wants to keep the Teachers' Assistant goal the same as last year, as well as Teacher Development and Technology. We will add a 4th Goal of "After-School Activities" to the current Land Trust financial plan. It was decided to keep all the financial amounts the same as last year, but increase the 4th goal of \$12,000 for stipends and supplies. The draft will be in the February Board packet, and it is hoped they will approve it before sending it to the State for final approval.

Amanda agreed to take the following items back to the PTO for consideration:

- Pickleball Court
- Drinking fountain in front of the school with bottle-filling station
- Soccer and football lines on the turf field

Upon revisiting the list provided by Sara Lamb, Kevin emphatically stated that teachers should not be using their own money for classroom supplies, to which all Board members agreed. Blake asked Sara to send a faculty email inquiring if more money is needed for the teacher budget.

Blake made the motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Amanda. It was determined that all were in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM.