

**Journey School**  
**A California Public Charter School**

April 28, 2011

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**  
**APPROVED ON 5/26/2011**

6:30 p.m.

At Journey School

**ROOM 7**

27102 Foxborough

Aliso Viejo, Ca 92656

Journey School Office: (949) 448-7232

[www.journeyschool.net](http://www.journeyschool.net)

*Roll Call:*

*Marc Damikolas, Council President: Absent*

*Dr. Kris Powell, Council Vice President: Absent*

*Jon Kaplan, Council Treasurer: Present*

*Jan Geisendorfer, Council Secretary: Present, left at 9:15pm*

*Kimberly Brown, Council Member: Present*

*Diana Graber, Council Member: Present*

*Cheryl Moe, Council Member: Absent*

*Bettina Spretke, Parent Cabinet Member: Present*

*Bonnie River, Educational Trustee Member: Present*

<b>AGENDA ITEM</b>	
<b>1</b>	<b>Call to Order, Roll Call and Review of Norms/Roles</b>  Meeting called to order at: 6:35 pm
<b>2</b>	<b>Inspirational Passage</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Approval of Agenda*</b>  Motion by: Jan to approve agenda with the following changes:  <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Move 8 A and B (closed session) and 11 A immediately after budget report</li><li>2. Table Items 5 A ii and iii (Feb 24 and March 6 minutes) because revised minutes were not available</li></ol> Seconded by: Diana

	Approved unanimously
4	<p><b>PUBLIC COMMENT:</b></p> <p>Name of person: Jackie _____</p> <p>Brief description of comment: She asked to put an item on future agenda for the science program. With tough budget cuts, she feels science is “core” and not held in high enough esteem and so wants to see more emphasis on this. She wants to see a Middle School full curriculum and program and more trained teacher time. This may mean that some of the other programs are put on hold.</p>
5	<p><b>Consent Agenda Items:</b></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><b>A. Approval of Minutes:*</b></p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">i. January 21, 2011 (Special Meeting)</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">ii. February 24, 2011-approve revisions</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">iii. March 6, 2011 (Special Meeting)-approve revisions</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">iv. March 24, 2011</p> <p>Discussion: A correction to the March 24 minutes is needed: Jon was not present, so make a revision to reflect that.</p> <p>MOTION TO APPROVE Minutes from January 21 as submitted, and March 24 with correction made by Diana, Seconded by Jan and approved unanimously</p>
6	<p><b>INFORMATION ITEMS:</b></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><b>A. Financial Report:</b></p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">1. Report from ExED on March financials*.</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">Larry reviewed the financial statements. Good news from March. ADA was budgeted at 234 and actual P2 was 242.9, so translates to about 50K more in funding. Despite a dip in Jan/Feb, the average came in higher than budgeted. Cash is in good shape. About 400K, forecasting about 99K in the black for 10-11. Close the Gap is coming in about 22K behind, 180K of pledges but shy of collecting all of this through March and likely will decrease as the year ends. Larry noted that 40K was put into reserves last year and expect additional 99K this year.</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">2. Review of expenditure detail</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">Bettina had asked for copies of WF credit card from Dec thru current and also copies of all of the food items purchased. ExED prepared and passed out backup details on these items.</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">Bettina asked what is the school credit card being used for? Her understanding is that it is</p>

for emergency only. She also saw a “food for board meetings” and does not remember getting food at a board meeting.

Shaheer commented that over the year so far, \$279 has been spent on food. Examples include working lunches prior to meetings, etc. Shaheer often works from 7 am and works through dinner, so some food is considered a legitimate business expense. The credit card is also sometimes used to take out potential or visiting staff members. There was also a rental of a U haul to move a valuable donation of furniture.

Bettina recommended that the school should have a line item in the budget.

Shaheer noted that there is a large amount saved by the school by using volunteer services. He tries to leverage the use of volunteers, and there are occasional miscellaneous small expenses involved.

Diana noted that the use of a credit card has been up and down over the years. Jon promised that the Budget Committee would make a separate line item for hospitality.

Larry suggested that the school add some policies on limits and guidelines for credit card usage and what are appropriate expenditures.

### *3. P2 submission*

See above for discussion of P2 ADA

### *B. Administrator’s Budget Committee Update*

Larry presented info regarding the state budget. He went over the history of the Governor’s recommendation and proposed ballot measure. Legislature did not reach agreement and so the Governor pulled the ballot measure effort. Therefore the school cuts next year will be at least \$350 per ADA, therefore to JS it would be 97K decrease in funding. Then in April the state saw that the situation is even worse, and since education funding is such a major part of state budget, they are proposing additional cuts to education funding. Therefore the state may suspend Prop 98 and therefore there is no guarantee for funding, so more cuts can go to education. No one knows exactly the amount, estimates varies from \$400 to \$1000 per ADA. The more common amount for now is about \$650, so that is 180K decrease in funding to JS. ExED is recommending to use that number, but there is a lot of discussion on what to use. However, Larry believes that the school would be in trouble if did not plan for it.

Budget committee has worked on a budget with \$650 per ADA cut, but which would be currently about 50K in the red at the end of the year. There would be no negative cash flow for 11-12, but the school must also look at the longer term. Passing a negative budget is not good for grants, and can cause issues with fiscal solvency questions.

There was a discussion regarding the Close the Gap efforts for this year and plans and projections for next year. Shaheer noted that the Budget Committee is being prudent and

conservative. He also suggests that the Council pursue development work and the school make additional efforts to the community to increase revenue.

Jon noted that the Budget Committee goals are to try to keep positive momentum in the improvements in the school's program going, by keeping some programs in place that are for designed for the future of the school, such as an Ed Director and the teacher training program, etc.

*C. Administrative Update\**

In addition to the updates sent to the Council, Shaheer noted that the STAR tests would begin on May 10<sup>th</sup>. A letter will be going home. Test prep has included released items, schedule improvements, and guidance on home assistance and prep.

Bettina asked what pre-tests were done? What were the results?

Bonnie noted that pre-tests were done, and the teachers have results, but those have only been shared at the moment with individual parents.

*D. Faculty Update*

Bonnie led a brief discussion of the role of faculty in providing Waldorf education.

She noted that the digital literacy program is beginning to expand as faculty have more understanding of the new curriculum. Faculty going through a lot lately with personnel issue but it is a solid group, continuing their good work even though it is challenging.

Diana noted that she would like to see more parent education, especially on the JS Middle School curriculum.

Bonnie explained that she will be doing more of this parent ed next year, and that she will also be sending out a survey monkey to collect the parental expectations of Waldorf education. All stakeholders will gain info from this. It also helps with planning adult ed and how to best align the two.

*E. Parent Cabinet Presentation and Update*

Bettina will send out the minutes from the PC meeting and PC also has a presentation

Marie and Megan attended session at RSC on Waldorf PTA type organizations. Volunteerism is not unpaid labor. It should be used to build emotional ownership and capacity. Should be done with joy and understanding. Based on that premise, the parent association should not be for fundraising, but rather that should be a foundation (501 c 3) role. PC could hold events that generate funds, but the focus of the association would rather be community education, support of parents, faculty, and administration, including training for Waldorf, and providing events that people want to attend and contribute to.

Marie and Megan will be leading a discussion at PC, the group is hanging on by a thread

right now, there are not many active parents so this could help, and have some PC members switch their efforts to a foundation. They noted that classroom fundraising is not a good idea if it is not socially healthy, pitting one class against another, and when there is not good representation for each class. One idea is to generate all monies for 8<sup>th</sup> grade, but PC will be discussing other ideas. Having set activities for each class and knowing up front the cost is important so all students have same access. They also suggest always having 2 classes working on larger fundraisers so have continuity from year to year.

There was a question on the food fundraisers. Marie noted that they are successful because parents like it and the funds are going ½ to 8<sup>th</sup> grade and the rest for scholarships for other grades.

Marie read the list of events PC is involved with. It is a long list and small group who are burned out and looking for a better way.

*F. Report on Follow-up for Previous Board Items\*: What commitments were made and did we follow through?*

*Final Chaperone Guidelines and Protocols\**

Shaheer noted that the teachers have the final instructions and will be providing lots of direction for their chaperones. The teachers are grateful for the guidelines and will only be using a handful of parents, especially for the older grades, where trust with the teachers and developing independence are important.

NOTE: Shaheer will send out clean copy without the marked up changes showing so it is easier to read.

Jan doesn't have anything additional to report.

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**DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS**

- A. *“Sunshine” of Initial Contract Proposal\* from Journey School Teachers’ Association: Initial Proposal has been made public and now written and/or verbal public input to the Council will be received*

Shaheer reminded everyone of the requirement to do ‘sunshine’ to have school community to understand the initial proposal and provide input. This was done through the newsletter, and through Council agendas.

Several Council members noted that they had received requests for the document via email, but were unsure if they were allowed to do that. Shaheer responded that it was a public document. There was additional discussion regarding how best to communicate with the general community regarding the contract proposal and how the Council could receive input from the community. It seemed to the Council as if more clarity in the process would be better. Several ideas were discussed, including using the newsletter, community meetings, email letters, etc.

At this point there was a request for public comment on this item by Lisa Crow.

Lisa stated that she had drafted a document with her questions/concerns—she emailed it to council & faculty but maybe it did not make it to everyone as she did not have all the email addresses.

Lisa noted that she has a bias because of the CTA lawsuit against JS in past. She made comments on the following areas of the contract:

15.1: probationary period—after 3 years can teacher be released?

During 3 year time what happens if the school doesn’t have enough students in that class? If enrollment drops in ONE class what happens to that teacher, what is obligation to keep that teacher in system?

18: evaluation—has to be stringent so that low performing teacher won’t be kept on, as this has a lot of impact on students and families, and has happened in past, so the school must be very careful during probationary period.

Lisa asked, what is reason that teachers need CTA for protection? How do we work towards getting teachers what they need, in a more cost effective manner since union negotiations are costly , and at the end, the teachers may not get what they want anyway. She asked if the parties were willing to explore alternative options.

Jackie [redacted] also had a public comment. She asked what the measuring tools for evals for teachers were?

She noted that moving forward the school must put things in place so that parents do not have to step forward with concerns regarding the teachers, since the school should have things in place

so that administration can monitor teachers effectively and make changes when needed.

Marie Kenney made a public comment that whatever performance ratings are in place must be consistent, so if teachers get into 3 year contracts, there is an ability to see performance based on metrics that everyone understands, so that it is clear and measurable and everyone understands the expectations.

Additional questions from the Council were discussed. It was noted that the contract presented was a template and so many areas still needed to be filled in or discussed. Jan asked about the clause for 20 days leave for union business? Plus 15 additional days? IT seems like a lot of missed teaching? Is this a standard clause?

Diana noted that it is hard to have a discussion about something so far off from what is realistic, there needs to be a proposal that is more tailored. She also thinks the school needs to have community meeting to inform parents during this early window of opportunity. The Council discussed conferring with legal counsel regarding the negotiations and the role of the general community in giving input.

Shaheer commented that everyone is working hard to establish climate of mutual regard and trust and to maintain that tone at all times.

Robin Davis (teacher member on JTA's negotiating team) noted that the period of 'sunshine' is over since it started from last board meeting.

Shaheer confirmed that it was publicly notified last month, he sent out info, so he believes the school has met the threshold for sunshining. It is OK to move forward with negotiations now. If the Council wants to take additional steps to get input from community is probably OK.

There was extensive discussion about the communication surrounding the negotiation process. Many felt that there was not an open dialogue and there were many questions in the community about the process as well as the ultimate results. Some Council members stated that if this topic is not addressed better in public manner it will come back to be problem in the future. The pros and cons of a community meeting on the topic were debated.

Diana made a motion to hold community meeting on this topic, it was seconded by Bettina. Bonnie commented that she believes it is premature to hold a community meeting, that the negotiations need more time, no one is ready, and she would prefer to hold special session of Council instead. Another comment was that this could be a topic for a bigger community meeting.

The vote was as follows:

Kim abstained; Bonnie voted NO; Jon, Diana, Bettina and Jan voted YES. The motion passed.

Following the vote, Robin Davis requested to comment to the Council. She noted that this was a rough draft and articles were missing purposely. The portion in there now comes from boiler plate proposal from union. What you do with it is to alter with the group until it is mutually agreeable. Nothing is set in stone. Negotiation can go on a long time and may take class time. The Union is only the teachers. They do not want to create contract that would make the school insolvent or harm the school in other ways. They want something that dictates terms of employment, but not governance, philosophy, sense of community, or how students are taught. They do want to know how they will be compensated and what they are being asked to do. They need to look at the budget before discussing salary. They need to collaborate with administration on the evaluation process before more language is written. The teachers want to create something together and have something reasonable.

NOTE Jan left at 9:15 pm at this point in the discussion.

Diana asked if the teachers feel that they can do that without the CTA?

Robin replied that there has been a lot of turnover at the school and nothing in its history says JS has ability to be able to do solve these issues on its own.

Bonnie commented that this could turn into something that is not community building. She wants to be careful about who belongs at the table for the conversation? The community should trust in leadership to take this on and have professionals at the table rather than empowering those who don't have expertise. However, if meetings are only for providing info, that may be ok.

Shaheer reiterated that he needs the clear direction of council for what he should do.

Laura Bujjoni (teacher) cautioned not to veil a meeting on this in something else. Don't hide it if the school is going to do it.

*B. Facilities and Proposition 39: Update on discussions with CUSD regarding final Prop 39 offer and lease negotiations*

The Council has a written update already. There was a brief discussion, and Bettina asked about status of lease funding.

*C. Council Business, Development and Training:*

1. *Board Review Council Ethics Policy\**: Focus question: *In contemplating this policy with respect to the Journey Council, where are the Council's strengths and weaknesses?*

SF asked where the Council is in relation to this document?

Jon noted that he thinks one idea missing that once a decision is made, all must live with the decision even if he/she disagreed with the decision. He would recommend that "speak in one voice" be included in the ethics policy.

2. *Expiration of Board terms and filling upcoming vacancies\**

Shaheer noted that there is no need to take action, but he wants everyone to review the document provided to see if there is any misinformation or clarification on terms. The next step is for Marc to get the Nominating committee moving, so that the Council can have candidates coming forward in the next meetings.

Shaheer wants everyone to confirm if their terms are correct. Jon asked about how to "fix" terms that are not on the usual cycle.

3. *Board Schedule for 2011-12—proposed*

Discussion: The schedule looks OK to the Council members.

Motion was made by Jon to approve the regular meeting schedule as set forth.

Seconded by Kim and approved unanimously.

8	<p><b>CLOSED SESSION:</b> <i>The meeting will now convene to closed session to discuss the matters described below:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. <i>Pursuant to Government Code §54956.9: Anticipated Litigation; Number of Cases: 1</i></li> <li>B. <i>Pursuant to Government Code §54957: Public Employment , Title: Teacher</i></li> <li>C. <i>Pursuant to Government Code §54957: Public Employee Performance Evaluation, Title: Administrator</i></li> <li>D. <i>Pursuant to Government Code §54957: Public Employment, Title: Administrator</i></li> </ul> <p><b>NOTE: Items A and B were heard early in the meeting, then at the end of the meeting items C and D were heard.</b></p> <p>A MOTION was made by Jon to adjourn into Closed Session made at 6:40 pm. It was seconded by Jan and approved unanimously.</p> <p>Guests who were invited into closed session: Shaheer and Franci. At 6:42 Franci and Shaheer were in closed session, Bettina and Diana recused themselves from Item A and left closed session at 6:53. At 6:54 the Council accepted a request from Leila Harding to address the Council in closed session. Leila left at 7:04. At 7:06 Diana and Bettina returned for Item B. First part of closed session ended at 7:18 pm.</p> <p>A MOTION was made by Jon to adjourn into Closed Session for items C and D at 9:35 pm. It was seconded by Diana and approved unanimously.</p> <p>Guests who were invited into closed session for items C and D were Shaheer and Franci who entered closed session at 9:38 pm. All other attendees left the Council meeting at this time.</p> <p>Then, at 10:15 pm Shaheer and France left closed session.</p>
9	<p><b>RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION:</b> <i>The meeting was reconvened to open session at 7:18 p.m. after the first portion of closed session, and at 10:23pm after the second portion.</i></p>
10	<p><b>PUBLIC REPORT ON ACTION TAKEN IN CLOSED SESSION</b> <i>(includes the vote or abstention of every member present).</i> No action was taken but the Council reported that Mark will prepare a contract for Shaheer for next year.</p>
11	<p><b>DISCUSSION/ACTION:</b></p>

*A. Certificated Staff Hiring: Approval of administrative recommendation for certificated positions*

**NOTE: This item done at 7:20 pm due to change in agenda**

Shaheer made the following recommendations:

Hire Teresa Velasquez for 4<sup>th</sup> kindy position for 2011-12. He gave background on her qualifications and rationale and hiring process and her recommendations/references. She has been volunteer intern over most of the year in kindergarten with Bonnie. And she has been a substitute.

Hire Kim Torrey as first grade teacher for 2011-12. He gave background on her qualifications and rationale and hiring process. She has good recommendations/references. She has a Waldorf background. She has teaching experience. She was a student teacher in first grade and looks forward to teaching that grade.

These actions will conclude the Main Class Teacher hiring for JS for 2011-12.

Motion was made by Jan to approve administrator recommendation to offer contracts to Kim and Teresa for 2011-12. It was seconded by Diana and approved unanimously.

*B. Administrator Position: Consideration of contract renewal for Administrator for 2011-12*

This item will need to come back again at next meeting, and Marc will follow up on contract.

**12 INFORMATION ITEM: JSC meeting self-assessment**

1. *What best practices did we implement in relation to Section IV of the school's charter, Governance?*

Brief description of discussion: NONE

2. *What needs to get better? How will this get done?*

Brief description of discussion: NONE

3. *Council Communications: **COUNCIL MEMBERS ANNOUNCEMENTS***

Brief description of announcements: NONE

*4. Pending/upcoming/continued agenda items:*

- A. Bylaw updates (ASAP)*
- B. Gift Receipt portion of IRS 990 policies*
- C. Update to LEA Plan for Title funds*
- D. Education Director Job Description*
- E. Fiscal and Hiring Policies*
- F. School Handbook Update (including addition of Student free speech policies as per new law)*
- G. Employee Handbook Update*
- H. School and Teacher Calendars*
- I. Specialty Teacher and Administrative Assistants Hiring*
- J. Strategic Plan*
- K. 2011-12 Budget*

**12** *The meeting was adjourned at 10:23 pm*

*\*Refers to agenda items which had supporting documentation in Council packet*