

RFCA General Membership Meeting

March 25, 2021
Minutes
(Zoom Meeting)

Introduction

The March 25, 2021, General Membership Meeting was held via Zoom Call. Marcie Winitt, President, called the meeting to order at 7:34 PM. The minutes from the October 15, 2020, General Membership Meeting were approved.

Business Meeting

Budget:

John Ritchie advised the membership that the board made the decision this year to run at a loss due to problems encountered in printing *The Farmer*. Previously, Key School Students printed it for us at approximately \$200/issue. Due to the pandemic, with the school closed, the board agreed that the newsletter was important enough to outsource the printing at an additional cost of approximately \$400 per issue. Hopefully, Key School will resume classes in the fall, and we can again have them produce *The Farmer*. John is projecting a \$3,500 loss by the end of the year. However, the loss could be offset with an increase in membership. Currently, the association has a higher percentage than at this time last year, from sales due to the door hangers, the Election Booth on Election Day, and an increase in the number of members that paid via PayPal.

The association had budgeted for \$5500 in revenue from advertising for the Directory and *The Farmer* but have received only \$4500 to date. Currently there is \$13K in the checking account and \$50K in a money market.

Announcements/Updates:

Nominating Committee - Allan Robertson announced that a new committee, The Nominating Committee, had been formed to search for volunteers to fill various Board of Director positions, specifically, First Vice President and Recording Secretary. All board positions are open and up for election at the May 27, 2021, General Membership Meeting. Please let Allan know if you are interested in being on the search committee or running for any of the board positions. The Duties of each position are outlined in the By-Laws, available on the Ravensworth Farm web site.

Additional non-board positions open include the Editor of *The Farmer* and the Directory.

Lake Accotink Update – Allan described the timeline for the dredging of the lake:

- Assessment begins in 2021
- Complete alternative analysis – Summer 2021
- Complete construction plan – Summer 2022
- Begin construction – Fall 2022
- Construction on-going through 2025
- Monitoring – 2025-2030

The lake will not be drained but dredged. Waste will be pumped through a temporary pipeline to a location not yet designated, possibly Wakefield Park, Howary Field, or area around Braddock Road.

Additional information may be found at : fairfaxcounty.gov/stormwater/plans-projects

Pollinator Garden Dedication – Allan advised that the Pollinator Garden at Lake Accotink Park, will be dedicated to Margaret Kinder next week.

Ravenworth Farm Swim and Racquet Club Update – Jen Aubel advised the pool will open on Memorial Day. Open registration begins March 26, 2021, for the Swim Team, Dive Team, and Fledglings. To participate, you must be a member of the pool. Ravens Camp will be held from 11 AM – 1 PM hosting activities such as Bingo, bubbles with Melanie, lunch, and open swim; spaces are limited for both the Ravens Camp and Fledglings, so sign up early!

The pool will follow pandemic restrictions in effect for the state of Virginia. Not sure if the number of swimmers will be limited for the open swim. Also, not sure about guest passes or hours of operation.

Membership Levels:

- Family: 2 adults + children
- 2-person membership: 2 adults, children under 2 years old
- Seniors

Early bird prices end on March 31, 2021, Reactivation Fee: \$50.

How many members does the club have?

- 2019: 312
- 2020: 150
- 2021: 112 to date

How many people can be in the pool at one time?

Last year, in Phase III, chairs had to be spaced and open swim required social distancing. In Virginia, 75% of capacity.

Will there be time slots? TBD

Protocol for Pandemic:

If we are still at Phase III (open swim):

- Masks will be needed when entering/leaving/or in the bathroom.
- Two to three families in the baby pool area
- No Mushroom (water feature)

Will the Snack Bar be open? Yes, we are planning on it. It may be open just during the breaks and will be operated by the lifeguards.

Feature Presentation:

Megan McLaughlin – Braddock District School Board Member

Megan is the longest serving school board member having served for the past ten years. The Fairfax County School System is the tenth largest in the nation.

Prior to becoming a board member, Megan worked as a Social Worker and before that as an Admissions Officer at Georgetown University. She, her husband and three sons live here; her husband and his brother raised here. Her sons attended school in the Fairfax County School System.

The current Superintendent of the Fairfax County School System, Scott Brabrand announced his retirement but his contract, normally four years, will be extend one year, until June 30, 2022, to give the board an opportunity to conduct a nationwide search to replace him.

Why did the schools open 2 days per week? Fairfax County had to rely on better data to open. The Superintendent is still reviewing the CDC data regarding the change in social distancing from 6' to 3'. Loudoun, Stafford, and Montgomery Counties have moved to 4 days/week. Fairfax needs to strive towards the goal of 4 days “in person” schooling by the 4th Quarter. It has 200 schools, 150 of which are elementary schools. The Covid rates in Fairfax County must be viewed in comparison with the data in the surrounding districts.

Wide ranging themes discussed during the Q&A session included:

- The number of in-school days for students.
- Cost savings due to Covid school closure, if any.
- County Executive Budget, Revenues, Operating Costs, and raises for teachers.
- School Calendar and Religious Holidays

Q&A

1..Is the current plan to have the classes 5 days/week in the Fall?

Looking to have 5 day “in school” learning, not concurrent; concurrent learning will be limited to students that are unable to attend in person. (In school = in person learning; concurrent = in person and virtual.)

2. The communications from the Superintendent regarding the CDC change from 6' to 3' was a bit “wonky.”

Megan said she had just received the e-mail today and it seemed a bit unclear. She will be reviewing it over the Spring Break and thinks she needs more details. The county needs to offer 4 day in school in the 4th quarter unless there are medical restriction. The county is striving for 4 day/4th Q after spring break.

3. Has there been a financial analysis to determine if there was a cost savings to having schools closed?

The Fiscal Year ends on June 30, 2021, which will give us a chance to look at the costs and operational expenses. Expenses are \$15K/student. If we had fewer students, what were the costs? For example, it cost \$1.5M this month to run the food program; \$10M transferred to food services; 50% comes from paying students, and we had no students. Needed 110,000 meals for 1 day from paying students but did not have that many. \$3.1B budget.

4. What do we do now? How do we prepare for the Fall?

We have 25% in school now, how do we get to 100%? Based on the Covid results last summer, we could have had children in school in September and October. How we handle the 4th Q and how we bring children to school and the CDC guidelines will help parents.

5. We have a rising Kindergartner which we have enrolled in a Catholic school since we were unsure the school would be open, and we did not know what to do.

We are sorry parents were put in this situation and understand every family must make its own decision. I understand that the date for cancellation may not coincide with Fairfax County decision for school reopening, but please monitor our progress as our goal is to have 5 days in school by the Fall. Per the General Assembly, state funding will be tied to 5-day instruction and I welcome this decision.

6. There are the pros for having virtual learning. How can they be continued as students go back to school? Examples: decrease in bullying, the students can sleep longer, and introverts are flourishing.

The board recognizes the needs to monitor the overall mental health of students, especially in the age of bullying, intolerance, hate, and racism. Federal dollars are available to deal with learning, mental gaps, and creating a healthy, respectful, inclusive learning environment. The old K-12 curriculum is no longer appropriate for today's students. They do not need to learn by rote, but by being taught to find information and determine if it is fact or opinion.

When Megan visits schools, she hears comments such as "I love being in school!" from the children.

7. What can the Ravensworth community do to support teachers? What is their "wish list"?

The Civic Association can contact the Principal and the PTA to determine their current needs.

8. Can the principal bring in more students?

Megan wants to see principals have more autonomy. If one school can do it other schools should be able to decide if they can or not.

9. What can we do to help about teacher raises? The County Executive does not have the money to pay the raises. Would it help for us to contact our supervisor?

Megan has discussed with James Walkinshaw. It is a challenge. Fairfax County is at a disadvantage due to the formula used to disburse funds to the counties. And, due to our large commercial real estate, the pandemic hit us hard – net revenue was down 2%. Where do we find the funds for raises? The Board of Supervisors and the School Board wrote to the Governor who gave 5% raises for teachers. But we must match with \$70M which we cannot. It is not that the Board of Supervisors does not care, it is that the revenue is not there, and it cannot cut services. However, the question is, how was the State able to give state employees a 5% raise and there is no data on why they are getting the raise.

Adjourn: 9:48 PM