

Morningstar Mystery School

Board of Directors

March 2024 Meeting

Minutes

3/9/24

Present: Jenn, Laura, Sandra, Ealasaid

Facilitator: Laura

Called to Order at

- Facilitator leads everyone in taking a breath together and reciting the Holy Mother prayer, inviting Lux
- Brief checkin
- Approve minutes from previous meeting – unanimous
- Pillar and other standing reports
 - Teaching & Curriculum Pillar (Breven) not here
 - Research & Alumni Pillar (Jenn)
 - Nothing to report
 - Temple & Tech Pillar (Laura)
 - Not much to report. Been meeting.
 - Newsletter is coming out shortly.
 - Retreat Committee (Jenn)
 - Working on a budget to send to the board. Will do later today.
 - Not that complicated, there will be an ask around what the school will pay for the retreat and what attendees will pay. Sliding flexibility because we don't know how many people we're going to have.
 - IRS/Business Stuff (Sandra)
 - Taxes were filed
 - We're supposed to send in our updated bylaws at some point but not sure if he sent them in too. Sandra to follow up
 - Registrar (Jenn)
 - Nothing to report unless anybody needs anything.
 - Sandra: we were going to look at participation and who is and isn't paying.
 - Added to to-do
 - Treasurer – via email
- Updates on action items from the previous meeting

- Jenn - look at registrar stuff - yes
- Sandra
 - Complete budget history – not yet.
 - Made some headway. Got info from John but looks like some info is missing.
 - Reach out to Teaching pillar – sent email to the pillar, cc'd the board
 - Maybe they'll just want a budget and they can spend it how they like? Asked them if that's something they'd like.
 - Take next step for D&O insurance - contact brokers – submitted for the insurance, gotten an email back from a broker, will set time to talk with them next week.
- Ealasaid
 - Set up stuff for social media – not yet, will post SOMETHING tomorrow for new moon.
 - Check notes, is board in charge of socials? - yes, board is in charge of socials.
- SPECIAL MEETING: Long-Term Planning

What do we want to do over the next couple of years?

 - Did anybody pull cards? Sandra had pulled them back in January
 - What are we bringing to the conversation?
 - Laura: Looking ahead can be hard for personal reasons
 - Ealasaid: Structure is good! We haven't had an annual meeting and I got asked about it
 - Sandra: we haven't had a board volunteer step forward, hesitant to start the process around what we do if we don't have enough members on the board
 - Things are moving along, we're staying in the black, we're accomplishing things
 - Some dissonance around it, hasn't been able to do much for the mystical work of the school for quite a while. Trying to be reflective.
 - Is it time to bring back a more bold action plan or is it time to let things happen? How do we do that without running into entropy?
 - Jenn
 - We do have a lot of structure, but we don't have a lot of people invested in it. We have bylaws and nonprofit status and the board meets every month, but we don't have people investing inspiration into that structure and bringing fire to it. Elements class is when most feel connected to the mystical work of Morningstar, but don't feel it much outside of that.
 - Like if we're hosting a party and putting a ton of effort in but then nobody shows up – but everybody expects there to be a party every year.
 - Laura: contemplating how to recognize where am in my body, curious about how to better do that as a school together and as individuals. There have been all-school chat arcs that felt mystical and beautiful and like the school but can't be the one to make that happen all the time. Can't always be there 100% of the time.

Party metaphor is great, can't always be the one to bring a huge vegan casserole and then everyone else only brings a tub of humus!

- E: it's hard because of the times we're in, it's hard right now. But the school is really rewarding and maybe if people showed up more they'd be fed by it more. But they don't because of where they're at and that's okay? But also sometimes at the social hour only one person shows up and that sucks
- Sandra: what does it mean to be a member of Morningstar? What're the expectations of that? Hearing a lot of understanding around people giving what they can but is that really the best they can do? Do we need to step back and say "ok, maybe we won't rent out a huge hall and spend a ton on party decorations for this party where nobody shows up, we'll just host it in our living room and if only one person comes that's fine" Are we overshooting and being disappointed?
- Laura: planning bigger things is overshooting. Even just the living room you have to clean and do things, that's an ask. It's still an ask. When we do things like have the chat arcs, the people who step up are the ones who are already super engaged. But we don't want to assign people?
- Sandra: Understand the resistance to assigning people, but sees a board full of people burning out. Thorn left in large part because they were burning out and not getting what they needed from the school, we don't want that to happen with more people. How do we avoid burnout? Part of that is expectation, part is being accepting of people saying it's too much. But then maybe some things have to not happen if nobody has the bandwidth. If there isn't enough participation in the social hour maybe Ealasaid could do something else with that time. Maybe we need to address the fact that nobody stepped up to join the board. We never got a volunteer so maybe we set the annual meeting for April and say "if we don't have a volunteer before then, then at the annual meeting we have to address if we're continuing as a school." maybe that will get people who have been sitting on the fence to actually commit
- Jenn: likes that plan. Let's have this conversation with the larger school. It's not just holding space for people who don't show up, it's not acknowledged of our work by everybody else. Things like checking in with people who are doing a lot of the work and offering help isn't happening. Good to have this conversation with the rest of the school.
- Laura: sounds like we're talking about having some frank conversations about where we are and what needs to happen. In terms of visioning, what are things to call in? Things for this year?
- Sandra: hasn't been at the last few all school chats, John attended (only one can do things at a time bc of child care). Did the discussion around Lux stay personal?
- Laura: there was a cool ritual. How do we want to share that kind of things with people who don't make it? It was really personal but also cumulative stuff for the school.

- Sandra: We often have nothing in the newsletter, but we're doing things at the chats, it would be great if we could use the newsletter to share that kind of thing?
- Laura: when we have such a skeleton crew, we sometimes don't have anybody to take notes as scribe. Can't always be Ealasaid taking notes for everything! If we're going to have writeups we need someone who isn't leading the thing to do that. We're shorthanded. How do we handle this? What are the risks vs rewards to various solutions?
- Sandra: we don't want AI notes for things, we want a sense of "what happened? Did anything come out of it?" we often get that from forum posts and maybe that's sufficient? Forum has been inconsistent though. We can't use it to transmit info without engagement.
- Laura: Yeah, if we're going to have a writeup we need someone to be officially going to do it,.
- Sandra: yeah, someone who's assigned to report back to the school. Needs to be someone where we can trust their discretion, that things getting reported back to the school are appropriate for someone who didn't attend the event. Someone who will commit to being at the all-school chat and doing the writeup.
- Jenn: maybe we need a standard practice where when we're saying "who's going to cast, who's going to call" we can say "who's going to report back?" we can standardize what our expectations are for it. Like, it's just one of the roles to assign for ritual.
- Sandra: Agrees, that would probably work. Nervous about it but also nervous about the idea that we often don't have a facilitator set up
- Laura: when we were doing the arcs, we had a good sense of someone facilitating, but we don't always have that in advance.
- Sandra: has a sense the retreat will be fruitful. It's so hard to make the kind of connection we're all looking for online. We've all gotten a lot better at it, things have come a long way, but the amount of work we could get done if we were meeting face to face dwarfs what we can do online. Really looking forward to the retreat. Is there a theme for this discussion?
- Laura: seems like, connection. The school is a bit disconnected from the structure and timeline, the chats are disconnected from people who aren't there.
- We're all good at unbinding, we need binding.
- Jenn: in reclaiming they talk about spidering, about weaving the web of connection.
- Laura: thinks of that sending out Morningstar spores ritual. We do such cool magic!
- E: we need to flesh out our skeleton crew. People who aren't on the committees aren't really aware of how much work it is, and they're busy
- Jenn: shadow of the school where we're this perfect badass witch, when we ask people to volunteer we need to tell them it's ok to fuck up sometimes, asking for

help is valuable. Would be good to have this in the ask so people don't feel like they're going to have to be amazing and 110% perfect. We give each other a lot of leeway, people should know that.

- Sandra: thanks for naming that shadow, it goes way back even to before Morningstar. We do aspire to that badassery but what does it mean? Trying to maintain that front of perfection at all times is a sure way to guarantee eventual disintegration.
- Laura: check in, is there other stuff to talk about?
- Sandra: something about our hesitance to have expectations of other people. If you don't have expectations then that's what you'll get. Maybe we should set an expectation where we expect members to be on a pillar or on the board where there's an expectation to give back to the school.
- [discussion of vulnerability inherent in expectations. What if people leave and they're the people we like? But we can't go on as we have been.]
- Jenn: aren't there expectations of the membership written up somewhere? Something about a sabbatical where you take time away and then come back?
- Laura: we haven't been doing that, holding people accountable. Maybe that's a thing to bring up to the school, we need accountability. Feels scary and useful. Hesitancy about the retreat because when people aren't engaged but then are super engaged for the retreats, I get in my feelings about it. They only show up for the fun, juicy things and not the work.
- E: fi you don't state your needs they can't get filled. We can put out a list of expectations at the meeting. Who's going to post the announcement about the meetings?
- Sandra: can do that. Checking bylaws. We do have another board meeting between now and the chat. Thinking about how much time we allow for the election. We give 30 days notice about the meeting, then we have a week to close the volunteers for the board, then election stuff after that. If we post about the meeting now we have more than enough time in advance. Will make a call for volunteers.
- Laura: action plan?
- Sandra: proposes: will send out notice of meeting at all school chat in April, which is a month behind schedule but that's not bad. In that, will indicate we never got a volunteer for the board at our last meeting and if we don't get a volunteer at this one we're going to have to have a discussion around whether to go forward. Proposes as a board next month we discuss reasonable expectations of the membership that we want to propose at the meeting as a discussion point for the meeting. Our Bylaws talk about what members can do or may do but not what they must do. We need to figure out what we think is a reasonable ask and make a proposal to the membership.

- [discussion about how making asks is really hard. And it's not coincidence the four of us are the ones who've been on the board a lot. Our individual work pulled together is the work of the school both good and bad, our collective shadow is the shadow of the school. A bright light casts a dark shadow.]
- Sandra: hoping that giving the teaching pillar money will incentivize them to do things that draw in the membership. We could fund someone to come in and do something for the school.
- Action Items
 - Everybody
 - Think about what our expectations are for the membership.
 - Ealasaid
 - Socials
 - Sandra
 - Post all school chat announcement
 - Follow up with John re: sending bylaws in
 - Get reply email from teaching pillar
 - D&O Insurance - talk with broker
 - Jenn
 - Check that registrar list has updated payment info
 - Check which members have been posting to the forum
- Confirm next month's call – April 13, 2024 10am
- Facilitator leads everyone in taking a breath together, thanking Lux, and reciting the Holy Mother prayer.