

Valley Inquiry Charter School

February Meeting Minutes

February 10, 2025 | Zoom Meeting, 6:30 PM

Board Members

Board President & Chair	Cammi Carriere
Vice Chair	Terry Rohse
Treasurer	Stephen Staten
Secretary	BJ Foster
At-Large	Ed Austin
At-Large	Vacant
At-Large	Vacant
At-Large	Vacant
At-Large	Vacant
Non-Voting Member	Lacey McNay

Meeting Agenda Minutes

6:32pm Call to Order

6:32pm Approving meeting minutes

January 13, 2025 meeting: Ed motions to approve minutes as written. Stephen seconds motion. Vote: 4 yes / 0 no / 1 abstain. Motion passes.

January 22, 2025 meeting: Stephen motions to approve minutes as written. Ed seconds motion. Vote: 5 yes / 0 no / 0 abstain. Motion passes.

6:35pm Finance presentation with LRB

Cammi: David is finance advisor from LRB, helping us navigate possible purchase and expansion.

David Robertson: School navigating a possible purchase with the district. Nothing tonight is guaranteeing a purchase, simply positioning to act quickly. Tax exempt securities would be sold in the market, IRS steps, etc. We have legal counsel, bond counsel and borrower's counsel. Underwriter would be selling bonds to the public. First steps involve a variety of documents drafted and due diligence steps. Preliminary Memorandum document as part of this. Aiming toward a

bond closing in May or June. Selling bonds in the June time-frame has historically been a good time.

For the underwriters, we found three most active: DA Davidson, HJ Simms and Piper. Experience working with all of them, all good firms. Looked at finance team, bankers, history, how they recommend sizing and scoping bonds. Two of the firms did a nice job trying to understand the school--HJ and Piper. Received pricing from all, got indicative rates to give us an idea of how strong we can price the bond. Fees are important too. In structuring and selling the bonds, at times it makes sense to pay a few thousand extra in a fee to get 10k savings in execution.

Piper really came through on having lowest proposed interest rate, competitive fee, and nice job on proposing how to structure the transaction to make it more efficient. Spoke with Cammi and Stephen about this, and they didn't have familiarity with any of those firms. All good proposals, but Piper's rose to the top.

Cammi: Were any of these the same as what we looked at last time around?

David: No, was working with bank placements in prior work. Bank offerings aren't aligning well with our needs. If we go that direction, they'd give us an engagement letter, invite them to a call on Thursday and proceed from there.

Stephen: Did you say Piper showed the most understanding of the school?

David: Yes, they asked a lot of questions and did a lot of work ahead. HJ did a similar transaction last year, and DA Davidson did a similar size and scope of offer before. Fine to proceed with Piper?

Board all indicated approval.

David: Understand VICS is getting bids on some of the work.

6:48pm

Principal's report

Lacey McNay showed photos from first day of inquiry clubs. Great to have kids of different ages mix and enjoy clubs together. Going very well.

Upcoming PTC Family Night: PTC hosting event 3/7/25, Brazilian Carnival Dance.

Early Literacy/SIA Grants 24-25: Currently working with SKPS and PERS to submit reimbursement requests for this year's grant funds.

Staffing Update: Our office manager resigned her position on Friday. We have posted the OM job on Indeed and have received 24 applications. I have begun screening applications and will be interviewing for the position this week.

BJ: Who is sitting in as interim office manager?

Lacey: I am short-term, took steps to be able to fill the role for now, but if vacancy continues will look at another option.

Kindergarten 25-26 Enrollment:

- Jan 31: Kindergarten applications are live
- Feb 19: Kindergarten info night 6-7pm (on site)
- Mar 5: 2025-26 Kindergarten applications due by 5pm (wait list for late applications)
- Mar 12: Kindergarten lottery, 10am via Zoom; Link will be posted right before event

SKPS Charter School Community Survey: We got our results back from the survey I sent out last week. I will share the PDF with the Board. Here is a summary:

- Strong sense of community – Parents appreciate the small school environment where teachers know students personally, fostering a welcoming atmosphere
- Effective Communication – Open and frequent updates from teachers and staff are valued, though some parents request more transparency and advance notice for events.
- Supportive Teachers & Student Well-Being – Many teachers are praised for their care, but some parents feel more emotional support is needed to help students feel secure and motivated.
- Extracurricular & Engagement Opportunities – After-school clubs, family events, and hands-on learning help students feel connected, but some parents seek more inclusive activities.
- Governance & Logistics Concerns – Some parents express frustration with leadership transparency, attendance policies, and the lack of transportation options.

6:57pm

IB/teacher update

Stacy Boost: Friday there was an in-service about Toddle. Getting positive feedback.

Student counsel: this group of kids is absolutely amazing. Officers sitting at Board table, following structure. Focused on making lunchtime a more pleasant experience, perhaps modeling after a restaurant environment. Very respectful and collaborative. Putting together proposals such as having themed tablecloths, perhaps having a VIP table, lighting options, etc. Measuring cafeteria by counting off 1' square tiles on the floor. Voted on putting together background music that

wouldn't result in spontaneous dancing. Looking up pricing info, durability and care aspects, rules for food areas, etc.

Jaskiran Kaur: Presentation on Toddle. Geared toward IB schools, streamlines entire teaching process within IB framework. Simple and clean interface. Allows us to align our lessons and assessments with IB standards and framework in mind. Example: Just started in 1st grade new transdisciplinary unit of where we are in place and time. Has AI component to help fill in appropriate language to match standards. Gives unit flow, but teacher is able to go in and adjust based on how teaching is progressing.

Allows for evidencing and reflection, rubrics and feedback. Made collaborative posters, learned CVC words, had STEAM lesson about making a game. Kids who normally don't talk to each other were interacting and playing together. Great sense of unity.

Multicultural club: Very similar to IB learning, very collaborative, learning about MLK Jr. Day, write/draw/create about equality. Older kids got to take on leadership roles with the younger kids.

Stephen: Thanks to both. Have a first grader, got to play a very unique game that was brought home and really enjoyed it.

Lacey: Thank you to both of you.

Stephen: On chat, it was asked if Toddle was something we have now, and Lacey responded that we are using it now.

Lacey: Melody Reed took it upon herself to familiarize herself and lead PD around this at the in-service and IB collaboration times.

7:11pm Treasurer's report

Stephen: Cash flows look good, no concerns. With a key staff role departing, we had to change access controls to financial info. Looking forward to 2025-26 budget, typically approving in our June board meeting so want to give time for that. If we purchase the building from SKSD, there will be a large impact, and planning and more to come on that over the next few months.

7:13pm Public comment

(Chat) Crystal: Will changes to DEI affect IEP or 504?

Stacy: No effect.

(Chat) Ozric: Is there anything going on with Mrs. R? Boost has been filling in for a while, was told R might be teaching a different grade.

Lacey: Mrs. R had taken a leave for a while, illnesses are going around, and after filled in a spot where we hadn't been able to find a sub. No permanent change.

(Chat) Crystal: Will things with DOE have an effect on us?

Lacey: We've heard from Salem-Keizer superintendant that we'll continue to support students as we have been. Most of funding comes through state, don't foresee it having a large impact on us but we don't know all of the variables yet.

Stephen: Keeping a close eye on impacts. Read something around 92% of school funding comes from state sources, and remaining 8% isn't only DOE, as some comes from agriculture and such. Might be some impact, likely court challenges and such, so we'll try to keep an eye on it but keep asking questions so we can stay on top of it.

7:22pm Executive session

ORS 192.660 (2) (e) To conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to negotiate real estate property transactions.

8:01pm General session resumes

8:01pm Items to discuss/vote: Board position progress

Stephen: Have met with a number of applicants, have some good candidates in place. Not quite ready to bring forward recommendation tonight, as one more interview is pending, but should have it wrapped up within a week or two weeks, may do a special meeting if there's a desire to not wait until the March meeting. Always willing to take more applications.

8:03pm Items to discuss/vote: Expansion project update

Cammi: PGE project moving along. They have the mechanical piece, looking to install in May or June. Expansion bidding started, looking to move portables according to the plans shown in our last meeting. Mandatory site visit for bidders with AC&Co on site to answer questions. Should close in late February, which should give board 60 days to consider and vote on which contractor to move forward with. Should know more from the district on our offer at that point. May need to call a special meeting at that point to keep to timeline.

8:05pm Video recording policy

Stephen: Emailed out draft policy. Talked about posting videos to YouTube as free data storage. His reading of Oregon law is that we may need to retain a copy for a mandatory length of time. Would probably want to use YouTube for distribution but need to keep for at least 1 year period in our own storage such as Google Drive or OneDrive. Likely negligible cost if we only retain for a year. Recordings would not be the official record; written meeting minutes would still be the official meeting record.

BJ: Didn't see anything objectionable in draft. Likely could not do recordings myself as Zoom won't launch on my PC, only on my phone.

Cammi: Could we send the file if needed?

Stephen: Yes if we got a public records request, though distribution through YouTube generally easier.

Ed: Looked good to me.

Terry: Would feel better about making sure that we only give out recordings with a request.

Stephen: Will need to consider aspects like having pictures of students posted online if pictures are shared in presentations to the board.

Terry: Good to keep a master copy in case something is inappropriately edited and then released online.

Lacey: Could pictures be blurred before distribution?

Stephen: Yes, there are tools that allow that, though it requires someone to take those steps.

Terry: Would like to hold off on a vote.

Stephen: Don't want to drive for transparency but then find out parents aren't wanting to speak at meetings due to not wanting to be on YouTube. However, would be nice to offer recordings after the fact for those with scheduling conflicts. Would be good to get parent feedback on this.

Terry: Would like to limit to public records requests.

Stephen: Another alternative is to list video as private instead of public.

Cammi: Might have some concern when students present at board meetings.

BJ: Sounds like there is need to get additional feedback from parents and ensure policy aligns with our photo disclosure rules, and takes into consideration both potential concerns from parents not wanting to participate if recordings are distributed and the needs of those who cannot attend at the scheduled meeting times.

Cammi: Thank you all for your feedback.

8:20pm Next meeting info

Next meeting: March 10, 2025 at 6:30pm in-person at Valley Inquiry.

8:20pm Meeting Adjourn