



Friends of Bluffview Notes April 27, 2021

Attendees: Phil McIlrath, Jeff Van Fossen, Gina Henderson, Crystal Hegge, Nicole Schossow, Lindsey Abrahams, Abigail Kugel, Erin Gervais, Henry Schantzen, Brianna Pyka

I. Thank you & introductions

Brianna kicked off the meeting with introductions with each member covering their connection to Bluffview and their interest in support of the mission. Henry covered briefly the goal of the group is ultimately to provide sustainable revenue for the school and build off of a \$1M gift.

II. Review role description & answer questions

Next, we covered what each person is interested in doing and has time for to understand opportunity areas and potential activities.

- Erin; co-chair to help lead the group, solicitations, strategic thinker
- Abigail; 8 years of experience with WSU Foundation, donor relations, focuses on appreciating donors, event planning for foundations, details person, enjoys writing, not a frontline fundraiser
- Lindsey; comfortable with frontline fundraising, major and minor event planning, centered around family-focused event planning
- Nicole; works at the Chamber, runs business education, can't necessarily make the asks, corporate event planning
- Crystal; grant writing and infrastructure focus, donor stewardship, work with EDs, can't necessarily make the ask, but can make the introductions, freelance event planning, doesn't love running fundraisers
- Gina; managed event space, work history with hospitality in general, making introductions, big picture, and the details
- Jeff; business owner, marketing, operations, etc. really all areas of
- Phil; on air reporter and anchor, journalism, emcee, and super comfortable getting people to talk, behind a camera, not strong with asking for money and would like solicitation support if that's a needed role

III. What we've done so far

- Year-end ask that resulted in about \$15,000 from last year from mailing
- Following up on major solicitations at Alliance, WNB, Merchants from previous work to jumpstart process
- Edited Case & created a mini version
- Started refining the goal
- Purchased Bloomerang software to organize prospects
- Kicked off Friends group

IV. Discuss goal

Henry provided a thorough overview of the many elements of funding.



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Major gifts solicitation approach and annual giving strategy
Explain the various options/flexibility present but also need for funds and the timing
Tools to support us: Bloomerang

Annual giving would support upgrades, curriculum expansion
Endowment is ongoing and supports teacher/assistant salaries
Pull 5% from the endowment each year ideally
Hope/goal would be that the endowment would meet the shortfall on an ongoing basis

Multiple goals
#1 to be able to sustain that & grow teacher compensation
#2 goal to support annual upgrades

Henry covered the various ways he has options to bridge: 2024 bonds, Continued Legislative action with MACS, Federal money like the American Rescue Act, budget shuffling and reallocations

Other programs: Hiawatha Valley Mental Health, Manitou for mindfulness, ADSIS program for intervention services, we invest according to our mission statement. Henry wants to filter back to teachers since they're a bedrock of Bluffview

How do you stay informed of policies, Jeff asked? MN Association of Charter Schools
Commissioner of Education of MDE; big proponent of all public schools, including Charters

Jeff added, in the last couple days, the Census revealed that population growth is the lowest it's been.
"Tomorrow's labor force is in these walls." Jeff added, he would imagine other funding still may be coming to mediate this.

Henry added, potentially looking at a high school in 2025. Henry added that's where there's a huge opportunity. Planning would have to start within the next 2-3 years as well.

Lindsey asked, what are the major solicitations that have happened to date? Alliance Bank, WNB, Merchants are follow-ups from last year. After these follow ups, we'll begin developing a new prospect list.

Jeff added; make up the shortfall is one approach to help provide support for endowments. That inspires people to fuel the endowment and "all children are essentially receiving financial aid"

- V. Discuss mini-case feedback from group
 - A couple technical questions; didactic is a teaching term
 - What are high-touch elements? Can also be called project-based learning.
- VI. Next steps
 - Erin added, ask and share with others that we're growing our contacts so if you know alumni, please share contacts and ask for connections and make introductions.
 - Follow up on asks from WNB, Merchants, Alliance



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- May-June share case feedback, create prospect lists from network, determine priority list
- July-August validate mini-case with prospect list
- September-October collaborate on communications approach