



**Arizona School for the Arts**  
**Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**  
 Monday, February 23, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.  
On Campus: Building A, Room 129

**Attendance** (Voting Members in **Bold**)

<b>Allison Otu, President</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Michelle Davidson, Vice President</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Leola Abraham, Secretary</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Scott S. Stone, Treasurer</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Melvin (Mel) Brown</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Michelle Buckley</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Carrie Larson</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Michael Medici, AIA</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Dr. Lorisa Pombo</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Marcelino Quiñonez</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Nonnie Shivers</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Annette Zinky</b>	<b>P</b>
David Alderslade	A	Jennifer Delgado	A	Elizabeth (Liz) Goodman	A
Joshua Pierce, Honorary Arts Faculty	P	Todd Webster, Honorary Academic Faculty	P	Eva Luz Pombo, Honorary Student	P
Liam Wohlert, Honorary Student	P	David Lujan, Executive Director	P	Leslie Tan Religioso, Development Director	P
Elizabeth (Liz) Shaw, Business Director	P	Carolyn Smith, Executive Assistant	P		

**Agenda Items**

<b>  Call to the Public</b>	
	Allison Otu
<b>  Mission Moment</b>	
Duet Performance: "Tico Tico no Fubá"	Eva Pombo & Liam Wohlert
<b>  Board Recognition</b>	
	Allison Otu
<b>  Discussion Items</b>	
Finance Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial Reports</li> <li>• Fiscal Year 2025-2026 ADE Budget Revision</li> </ul>	Scott Stone & Elizabeth Shaw
Resource Development Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Dashboard</li> <li>• Showcase Sponsorship</li> </ul>	Allison Otu & Leslie Religioso
Strategic Plan	David Lujan

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Planning Retreat Recap</li> <li>• Next Steps</li> </ul>	
<b>  Consent Agenda</b>	
Board President Updates	Allison Otu
Executive Director Report	David Lujan
Development & Marketing Director Report	Leslie Religioso
<b>  Action Items</b>	
Approval of the January 26, 2026 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes	
Approval of the Revised Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget via Roll Call Vote	
Approval of the School Year 2026-2027 Student Fees	
<p><b> </b> The Board of Directors may vote to hold an executive session for the purpose of discussing negotiations for the purchase, sale or lease of real property pursuant to: ARS §38-431.03 (A)(7) Property</p>	
<p><b> </b> The Board of Directors may vote to hold an executive session for the purpose of obtaining legal advice from the Board's attorney on any matter listed on the agenda pursuant to: ARS §38-431.03 (A)(3) Legal Advice</p>	

## Minutes

Board President Allison Otu called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

### **Call to the Public**

No members of the public were present at the meeting to make comments on the agenda, but Allison asked everyone present to introduce themselves for the benefit of present guests.

### **Mission Moment**

Eva Pombo and Liam Wohlert introduced Seniors Justin Pansing and Robert Peters who beautifully performed a very skilled guitar duet of "Tico Tico no Fubá" by Brazilian composer Zequinha Abreu.

### **Board Recognition**

Allison recognized new board member Elizabeth Goodman who arranged two tour groups of parents from Desert View Learning Center in Paradise Valley, which has been a feeder school for ASA in the past. Allison also noted that David Lujan celebrated his one-year anniversary with ASA this month and she thanked Todd Webster for spending time with her staffing the ASA booth at the Willo Home Tour on February 15th.

David introduced Jaime Dempsey who is considering joining the ASA Board of Directors. Jaime was formerly Executive Director of Arizona Commission on the Arts followed by a year as Acting Chief Program and Community Engagement Officer of Arizona Community Foundation. She is also Founder and Strategist of Welcome Strategies, a consulting practice specializing in civic health, community engagement, network development, and strategic advising.

### **Discussion Items**

*Finance Committee*

- Scott Stone discussed the January 2026 financial reports informing the Board that while ASA's daily cash on hand is safely above our bond requirements, our debt service ratio (DSR) is below what is needed for the covenant. David will be speaking with our bond holders to update them on our current budget status and share the proactive efforts we are making to both raise cash and enrollment in order to improve our DSR. Scott reminded the Board that while enrollment has been down, we have been relying on our healthy cash reserves that were built up in years past by our usual careful fiscal management. In order to keep the cash reserves healthy, fundraising remains key along with careful and conservative budgeting which is why the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 budget will be set at 650 students.
- Elizabeth Shaw further explained that when ASA went below the DSR covenant last year, we knew we would be going into the cash reserves this year. Spending is kept tight as always, but we know we will be facing sharp increases in health insurance and liability insurance due to recent claims; fundraising and student recruitment will help counteract these rises. Elizabeth also let the Board know that the revised budget reflecting the 100th day ADM will be voted on during the Action Items.
- David added that working together on enrollment plus fundraising is the formula and the focus right now. Speaking with the bondholders is also important; he wanted the Board to be aware that they report our status to the Arizona Department of Education and the DSR can affect our rating with the state.
- Allison acknowledged that the ins and outs of the budget and bonds is a lot for Administration to manage every day and she reinforced that the Board is here to help support the staff in the efforts to get the school's finances back on track.

#### *Resource Development Council*

- Allison informed the Board that future RDC meetings are cancelled in favor of a more targeted approach involving each board member. Allison, David, and Leslie will be doing a deeper dive into numbers and cultivation opportunities and meeting with each member individually to make more effective use of everyone's time. Fundraising is to be integrated into all committees and councils. She requested that all board members reach out to Carolyn Smith to schedule a meeting with them. Allison, David, and board members then shared their fundraising efforts over the past month.
- Leslie Religioso said that grant applications by ASA were a larger part of fundraising in the past when enrollment was lower. As enrollment grew, the model changed to more family involvement in supporting the Annual Fund. Now that enrollment is lower, we are once again going to apply for mission-aligned grants with the aid of a grant writer and parental support including Liam's mother, Beverly Wohlert.
- Leslie reviewed the fundraising numbers as they stand at mid-year. We are running behind benchmarks and Leslie laid out the strategy over the next three months which is crucial to meet last year's number: Signature Series, Tax Credit, and Showcase. To that end, she distributed personalized dashboards to each board member highlighting their activity and goals and provided the Board with upcoming fundraising task deadlines.
- The Board then discussed strategies to increase family involvement in contributing to the Annual Fund regularly, for both large and small donors. Right now only about 25%-30% of our families have contributed to the Annual Fund this year against a 100% giving goal.

#### *Strategic Plan*

David thanked the board members who participated in the Strategic Planning retreat on February 2nd and informed them that the next component will be surveys going out to families and faculty based on the results of the feedback collected at the retreat. There will be another planning session at the end of April or the beginning of May.

#### **Consent Agenda**

##### *Board President Updates*

In the interest of time, Allison tabled her updates until the next meeting.

*Executive Director Report*

David had nothing to add to his report, but asked those interested in attending a 3rd Quarter Presentation to reach out to Carolyn to get on the schedule; 3QPs are an excellent opportunity to see students perform on the academic side of ASA's mission.

*Development & Marketing Director Report*

Leslie had nothing to add to her report that had not been already covered. Allison mentioned that she would like board members to keep the hard copies of the report that were printed for them as it contains excellent resources.

**Action Items**

*Approval of the January 26, 2026 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes*

Annette Zinky moved to approve the January 26, 2026 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Mel Brown and passed unanimously without further discussion. [Otu, Davidson, Abraham, Stone, Brown, Buckley, Larson, Medici, Pombo, Quiñonez, and Zinky voting in favor.]

*Approval of the Revised Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget via Roll Call Vote*

Michelle Davidson moved to approve the Revised Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget. The motion was seconded by Michael Medici and passed unanimously via roll call vote without further discussion. [Otu, Davidson, Abraham, Stone, Brown, Buckley, Larson, Medici, Pombo, Quiñonez, and Zinky voting in favor.]

*Approval of the School Year 2026-2027 Student Fees*

Michelle Davidson moved to approve the School Year 2026-2027 Student Fees. Marcelino Quiñonez requested clarification on the differences in the fees from this year to next. When the questions was satisfactorily answered, the motion was seconded by Annette Zinky and passed unanimously without further discussion. [Otu, Davidson, Abraham, Stone, Brown, Buckley, Larson, Medici, Pombo, Quiñonez, and Zinky voting in favor.]

*Executive Session*

At 7:06 p.m. Marcelino Quiñonez moved that the Board of Directors commence an executive session in order to discuss the purchase, sale, or lease of real property pursuant to: ARS §38-431.03 (A)(7). The motion was seconded by Scott Stone and passed unanimously without further discussion. [Otu, Davidson, Abraham, Stone, Brown, Buckley, Larson, Medici, Pombo, Quiñonez, and Zinky voting in favor.]

The executive session ended at 7:35 p.m.

**Adjournment**

Michael Medici moved to end the meeting. The motion was seconded by Michelle Davidson and passed unanimously without further discussion. [Otu, Davidson, Abraham, Stone, Brown, Buckley, Larson, Medici, Pombo, Quiñonez, and Zinky voting in favor.]

The meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

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Minutes reviewed and accepted on: March 23, 2026

Signed by: \_\_\_\_\_, Board Member