

January 15, 2020

Meeting Start: 3:17 pm

December minutes were approved. Jennifer Catolane motioned and Jennifer Salzano seconded. All approved.

In attendance: Aimee Magovern; President, Dana Pustinger; Vice President, Jennifer Catolane; Treasurer, Linda Curtiss; Secretary, Katherine Silk, Nanette Higgins, Laura Catullo, Meaghan Martin, Amy Maxton, Jenna Bessey, Alicia Newsome, Sarah Pease, Jennifer Hibbins Salzano, Sharon Hryckvich, Julie Andrus

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

- Knox fundraiser: There is no information on the proceeds from last night's fundraiser as of yet.
- School Supplies Survey: Dana has a few samples of school supply kits from a few different companies. If we decide to use the kits, they would take the place of parents purchasing school supplies each year. Parents would pay the school for the kits. The teachers find it helpful to use these because the supplies arrive by the first day of school and each student has the same supplies to use. However, it is possible that some school supplies can be found for cheaper prices at stores such as Staples when big sales happen right before school starts. A survey will be sent out to parents. Supplies need to be ordered by March to receive by August.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

- Otis Cultural Counsel Grant: the grant for \$800 was approved by the OCC for an author visit. Linda contacted Rhonda Boulette, an author/illustrator of children's books, and she is willing to come and do a presentation with the students. Possibly February would be a good time. Linda will check with Tom on when to schedule a visit. Nanette said the last time she came she went into each classroom, possibly up to 2nd grade, and spent about a half hour per class.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

- Bank Account Balance: Right now we have just over \$13,000 in our account including all the cash calendar money. Holiday shop sales were \$2,470, but we spent about \$2,580, so just around \$100 was actually spent on the whole event. We spent some money on staff treats around the holidays, as well as some gifts for the music teacher for the concert. Sixth grade currently has \$1920.01. That is not including anything from the last fundraiser. Jennifer only received money for Pre-k through 5 from Eric.
- Box Tops: the last box top check has not come in yet. The feedback is that some people are getting more with the new system than they used to and some are getting less. They are still accepting the paper box tops. Just send them in a bag or envelope.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Ski Program update: The first lesson was last week. The feedback from parents is that there were not enough instructors. Parents felt it was chaotic. Two children rode the lift alone and one fell off. Apparently some instructors didn't show up. Aimee will ask Craig to contact Jamie to let her know of the issues from last week. Dana is willing to take over the ski program next year if Craig doesn't continue, as his son will be out of the school next year. Jennifer noticed

that on the website there are all the forms and slips that can be printed out and sent home, so we can make use of that next year.

- Cash Calendar: We will need to order more. There have been many requests for more and we only have around 40 left at this point. Since the calendar has grown to over 50 days and many of the cash prizes are large, Tom mentioned to Jennifer Catolane and Aimee that maybe we could split it up into 2 calendars to be sold at two different times a year. Jennifer thought we should ask Dawn about the idea to see if it would be doable, or if it might be twice the work. She would still only have to collect the money once a year, then we would just split the larger prizes between two days. Meaghan Martin said that the braided bread and cookie dough fundraiser she did for the 6th grade did really well, and they made a good profit even though it was back to back with another fundraiser.
- Energy Save Grant: Jennifer Salzano applied for a grant and was accepted for \$300 to purchase a reusable silverware set for each student. Linda purchased two sets that Jennifer had found on Amazon to see what the quality is before going forward with one for each student. Jennifer's plan included sending one home with each student with a letter explaining that if they didn't wish to participate they could return it. She is working with student council on putting signs up near the garbage can and/or adding an announcement near the end of the lunch period reminding students not to throw the utensils away. Mrs. Catullo said that the student council's focus this year is on the environment, and they are willing to go to each classroom to explain the importance of bringing them home and bringing them back every day. They are also willing to monitor lunch time at the beginning of this process so that kids don't accidentally throw them away. They are also willing to present something at the Berkshire Earth Expo at the Berkshire Museum on April 4th. The sets are \$3.50 each. If we do purchase sets for the whole school, she will need a little help from the PTA to cover the cost that goes over the \$300 the grant will cover. Aimee mentioned that this idea was going to be discussed at the Parent Advisory Council rather than the PTA meeting. However, Jennifer stated that she had asked Tom in December if it was ok to submit this grant and what the idea was, and he said yes, as long as she understood that he does not have staff members to monitor the trash. Linda also felt that it needed to be discussed with the teachers because the students will need their support, as some will be coming in from recess before lunch. Meaghan is concerned about the utensils never making it back to school once they go home. Others are concerned about them not getting washed at home and coming back dirty, or getting dirty in backpacks during transport. Mrs. Catullo suggested that we could pilot it with the older grades first and see how it goes. Mrs. Higgins asked if they can be run through the dishwasher at school, but we explained that our school doesn't have the staff for that, otherwise we could be using metal silverware. Linda did recently suggest to Kendra that she have the students start putting their plastic silverware in a soapy water bin when they clear their trays in order to try to get them used to that practice, so that in the future if we ever do go back to metal there won't be the fear of it all getting thrown in the trash out of habit. Jennifer Catolane suggested that the students could even sort the spoons from the forks when they clear their tray so that the staff wouldn't have to do any sorting after washing. Mrs. Catullo said that the student council would like to put a bin near the trash in the cafeteria and encourage all the children to put all their plastic ware into the bin so that they can do a before and after experiment to compare how much plastic waste is in the bin before this project gets started, to how much is in the bin after the project gets started.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Mrs. Catullo – The Musical: The Cowhands and the Aliens Rescue Earth: The Drama Project at FRRSD will be funded by Otis LCC grant. Guests from Berkshire County Theater and Performing

Arts groups will meet seven times in March after school to work with the students and anyone interested in learning about the dramatic arts. Friday, January 24th we will have a potluck dinner and do a reading of the entire play. Everyone is welcome to come to see what it's all about. Alicia Newsome will do a lot of the costumes, but she might need help. Mrs. Catullo will also need some help with scenery and backdrops, as well as with organizing fundraisers, possibly bake sales, as there will be many small expenses to cover for various parts of making the musical happen. Monday through Thursday, April 27th – 30th, the week after Earth Day, she would like to hold an informational Earth day fair in which local Berkshire County Environmental Organizations will be able to share information on how we can help with environmental issues (as well as a bake sale). The student council is doing another fundraiser called Flight for our Future, in which the students will get sponsors, make paper airplanes and see how far they can fly. Half of the money raised from that will be donated to local environmental groups in Berkshire County and the other half will be used to pay for some of the costs of the musical. Jenna Bessey suggested that "penny wars" is another fun idea for a fundraiser to get the children involved. Mrs. Catullo is working on getting the piano fixed. She still needs help with publicity: Getting information to the Otis Observer, the Shopper's guide, Sandisfield Times, Berkshire Eagle, Berkshire Record, radio stations, and contacting the person in charge of publicizing events. Linda is willing to help with find contacts for the different radio stations and magazines. Mrs. Catullo is still looking for help setting up a sign-up genius for the bake sales.

- Mrs. Higgins – story teller: Mrs. Higgins got a grant for \$585 to have Rona Leventhal, a story teller to come and do a presentation for the preschool children because they don't go on field trips or go tubing. Rona said for another \$300 she could do it for the whole school. April 14th or 16th during school or after school? It is during the week of MCAS testing though. Mrs. Higgins will talk to Tom about the scheduling. It is possible that part of the grant for the author/illustrator from the OCC can help cover the cost. Linda will have to check on that.
- School Council Meeting: A chance for Mr. Nadolny, teachers and parents to meet once a month to discuss issues at the school. Tom told Jennifer Catolane that he would be delighted to have anyone show up, but no one ever does. The next one is Tuesday, January 21st at 3:00pm. It is usually the 2nd Tuesday of the month. Aimee will send Tom an email to see if something can be sent out to notify parents of the meeting. Meaghan said usually the items they work on are projects for the whole year, such as the before and after school program, not for parents to come to discuss issues as they come up.

Next meeting: February 5, 2020 at 3:15.

Meeting adjourned: 4:35 pm. Aimee motioned, Jennifer Catolane seconded.