

**EES PTO Meeting Minutes**  
**April 8, 2021 -- Zoom meeting**

**Attendance:** Zoom meeting (Betsy McKeen, Carla Christensen, Jessie Palm, Hilary Mattison, Maggie Gleason, Letizia Donati, Jennifer Roberts, Jess Yurwitz)

**Welcome/Introductions:** Carla Christensen called the meeting to order at 7:33 pm.

**Welcome/remarks from Dr. Roberts:**

The kids are back in school full-time (approx. 2 weeks only). There are different processes in place and the kids and staff are adjusting. The school is louder in the cafeteria, since kids have to talk loudly to their friends. Traffic flow within the building is changed, but the staff are doing a good job with problem solving. Kids are staying safe, but it has been harder to keep them apart; the school continues to be quite strict about trying to stay at 6 ft. as much as possible, as it helps with contact tracing (minimizes the need for quarantining when students are in large groups). The teachers are working hard (physical changes, strain on voices, management, etc.). MCAS testing for this year is still questionable. The school is waiting until after April vacation (dates keep getting pushed back) to start actively planning for these tests.

Dr. Roberts shared a general reminder that April 26th is a remote only day for students so that Med-Bot submissions can be reviewed.

The staff appreciates the lunches that were provided in March! The school is getting excited about the new playground (equipment/materials will arrive during April vacation) so the students will be using the hot-top and soccer field for recess after the break; the gaga pit may be out of bounds and off limits during construction.

**Happy as a Clam Story Stroll - Maggie Gleason:**

This event is scheduled for next weekend April 10/11 and the weather is better on Saturday than Sunday. The Curious Garden was chosen. The book pages will be posted on poles along the walking path at the Cox Reservation. Set up will start on Friday 4/9 at 4:30 pm (28 pages text and pictures). The book will be taken down on Sunday after last walkers.

Sponsors: 12 local businesses thus far; more may come in tomorrow.

\$1500 raised so far

Notes for future planning: Getting payment set up through Sign Up Genius was difficult but is complete. We will need to do a refund to a VT woman who accidentally donated money. There is no need to man a table at the event.

**Playground Update and Possible Vote on Donation of Funds:**

Jess Yurwitz/Jessie Palm: members of the Playground Working Group

The playground will be going in soon, approximately late April/May for surface preparation (structure is projected to be open for play by mid-June).

The full design of the playground was larger than just the equipment. It originally included designing the surrounding spaces/environment that included pathways, picnic tables, seating for adults, plantings, etc. Only the structure and poured in place surface preparation under the equipment has been approved by the district. None of the additional design was approved by the school committee yet.

The delay in approval seems to be around whether or not community donations are permitted and this continues to be waiting on clarification of rules and precedent. The school committee has not made a definitive decision to allow donations. The policy review hasn't happened yet.

The PTO will continue to monitor the process.

### **Staff Gift Drive Update - Hilary Mattison:**

Nicole Meyer and Jen Thompson are helping Hilary with this project.

This event has turned into Teacher Appreciation Week, with the Gift Drive as part of the week. Additional activities/events for the week include:

- Swag for staff (pen)
- Breakfast (bagels, half baked)
- The Yankee swap (Gift Drive): we currently have 24 gifts and need 48
- ice cream bar
- and a Tropical theme Day with a lunch

We will check with Donna and BOH to determine how to manage a luncheon

Hilary stated that Teacher Appreciation donations can be sent into school with the kids (Maggie Morriss is collecting them) or can be dropped at her (Hilary's) house, 35 Addison St, Essex.

### **Book Fair**

This event will be 100% virtual with The Bookshop of Beverly Farms. The event will happen in the second half of May. We will need to plan for advertising. The teachers will each have a virtual "bookshelf," and gift cards will be available for purchase as well if families would like to do that for staff and teachers.

### **Community Read Day**

This event is being coordinated by Mrs. Russo and Ms. Cucuru, with PTO support. It will occur during the first week of June (currently planning for June 7). Carla Christensen applied to the Hooper Fund and we won't have notification of the approval of the grant until June 1. The cost for the books will be about \$950, and we will need to pre-order before June 1. Betsy McKeen made a motion to approve the use of these funds, and Letizia Donati seconded. A vote was taken and passed. Carla will order the books through Scholastic.

### **MCBA Books**

There is money set aside in the annual budget for this. Carla reached out to the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers and all are on board to receive the books. Carla will place the order (will not have to go through Follet this year) and the books will be shipped directly to the school. Four (4) copies of each book will be purchased.

### **Treasurer's Update**

In terms of finance items, the old Follet book orders/invoice has been taken care of and resolved. Our Amazon Prime Account has expired and will cost \$130 if we want to renew it, but may not be worth it since the PTO as an organization doesn't need streaming services. The decision was made to let this expire. Our benefit through Amazon Smile will not be affected.

Budget: This year, the PTO has raised \$3360, and expenses have been \$3789. These are much smaller numbers than in previous years.

### **Teacher Stipends/Funding Requests:**

There is one teacher stipend request that has come in over the last month.

Ms. Kasmarcik's StoryJumper book project funding (approved at February's PTO meeting) has been purchased and Ms. K just needs to go forward with selecting the books to be printed.

--We may need an Amazon Wish List from Mrs. Cucuru, but she may have already used her stipend. Francesca will look into this.

### **March Teacher Appreciation Lunch**

This event happened on Wednesday 3/31/21 and the food was ordered from Cape Ann Pizza. Dr. Roberts shared her thanks for this lunch and for prior lunches.

### **Family Appreciation Gift Bags**

We will end this program with a combination of March/April – winner bags will be delivered this week.

### **PTO Gear Spring Gear Sale**

This will open either this coming week or the week after vacation. All the items will be shipped to one location (either Betsy's home or Letizia's) and then will be delivered to families by PTO members to save shipping costs.

### **VP Search**

We have still not been able to identify a new VP to take over for 2021-2022. Carla has asked a few individuals directly and has not had anyone agree yet. We agreed to brainstorm more names outside of the meeting and continue to search.

### **Approval of prior meeting's minutes:**

The meeting minutes from the March 2021 meeting were approved by Betsy McKeen as written.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Betsy McKeen and seconded by Carla Christensen. The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 pm.