

# Friends of EES



## Friends of Essex Elementary School Meeting Minutes May 9, 2022 -- In-Person/Zoom meeting

**Attendance:** Zoom meeting (Jennifer Roberts, Rachel McInnis, Laura Eurich, Hilary Mattison, Bradley Cooke, Kerrie Blanchette)

**In-person:** Betsy McKeen-President, Maggie Gleason-Vice President, Suzanne Bediz-Secretary, Letizia Donati - Enrichment Coordinator, Jessie Palm - Playground Committee

### **Welcome/Introductions:**

Maggie Gleason called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm.

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

Dr. Roberts began the meeting with gratitude for the Teacher Appreciation week. It is a lot of work, but the outpouring was great. Everything, including the food, and the flowers, was incredible. The recent author visit was all-day and was well received and the kids had fun. Letizia helped out during the day.

The Beautification Project plant sale is great (using Sign Up Genius)! The donations are taking off in one day ... and almost all of the needed items are selected. There have been some time and equipment volunteers (e.g., stump grinding). Maggie and Betsy will send out thank you cards. There is some feedback on the Facebook pages. The district is planning on hot topping the driveway this summer which should add to the overall look of the front of the building. The Beautification Project Timeline should be shared with Jason (Facilities Manager). Steve Hunt has volunteered his truck and it can be used to pick up plants. The memorial garden in the front of the school was checked on and determined that it is no longer being kept by local volunteers.

The Grade 5 classes have worked out a week of celebrations for the end of the year. These will include Project Adventure Day, Field day, and an egg drop. The Math MCAS was held again today. Grades 4 and 5 tested today and Grade 3 will test next week and then Science for grade 5.

The school needs members for the School Council and Dr. Roberts answered questions about School Council and what is involved in this important advisory opportunity. The FoEES will post information looking for potential individuals to join School Council for the 2022 - 2023 school year and beyond. The terms are usually 3 years. The current model includes Zoom meetings of 3 parents and 3 teachers to

help review and build the school improvement plan and parent survey and use the results to help shape the curriculum. They meet monthly (October - May).

#### **Field Day:**

In the past, this event has been an all-day activity on the last day of school, which is a ½ day. There was a watermelon table that was manned by parent volunteers. Trader Joe's cannot donate the watermelon due to an increase in prices this year. Greg Marche organizes this event and Dr. Roberts will connect with him and he will get in touch with the FoEES for any needed support.

#### **Spring Community Read option:**

The school and FoEES is not able to fit it into the schedule for this spring. The event is moving to fall 2022. Kate Koch will be joining this event as the event organizer.

#### **Teacher Appreciation Week Recap:**

Hilary Mattison, the current chair, would like to pass it off to a new member as she is taking on new responsibilities within FoEES. She has completed a spreadsheet/templates for the event so that it should be an easy event to chair and organize. The flower sale made about \$500, even with difficulty sourcing the flowers and this part of Appreciation Week needs a separate person to coordinate and run. Overall, this is a fun event!

#### **Playground Committee Update:**

- At the most recent SC meeting, the district agreed to pay for loam and seed (at the end of the school year). The FoEES monies will go toward benches/trees (big-ticket items). The goal is to put in trees and benches prior to loam and seed.
- The district will submit invoices for the purchases and FoEES.
- The FoEES may assist and organize additional plantings after Jess Yurwitz/Playground Committee has developed a plan.
- The Playground Committee and the district want to have a grand opening but are not sure when this will happen.
- The district will need a watering plan for the summer months.

#### **Enrichment Opportunities:**

- **Jerry Pallotta visit:** The kids enjoyed it so much. The second and third grades laughed so much! The author visit was coordinated and shared with Memorial (continue to connect with Samantha Silag and reach out that she can continue to organize and keep in the loop for funding).
- **Whalemobile visit:** This event is scheduled for May 12, 2022. The whale along with Ocean Alliance (snot bot, whale artifacts) is an all-day visit, and each class will sign-up for a visit. There is a preference for the outdoors, however, if there is inclement weather the whale will be indoors in ½ of the gym. If it is outdoors, there will be 2 tents, 1 table, and a couple of chairs along with the whale. Betsy will help out between 8-9 for the set up.
  - Next steps: funding sources: \$1000 was awarded FY20; there was an additional \$1000 in the budget (FoEES did not apply for the grant again in April 2020). An additional funding

source is needed to cover the total cost: \$2400. (There are additional grants that are being applied for and are pending approval.)

- **Potato Hill visit:** This event is scheduled for 2 days in May (5/26 and 5/27) for grades 3/4/5 and will be presented to each class. Samantha Silag reached out to start the plan. The enrichment focuses on poetry.

Next steps: FoEES/Potato Hill needs a letter of confirmation from Hooper Fund (\$1500) as this event is funded by a Hooper Fund grant.

-**Grade 3 Essex Shipbuilding Museum:** Grade 3 is requesting funding for the bus costs, but if it isn't approved, Letizia will remind them that teachers can ask parents for funding for field trips.

Already doing Essex River Cruise \$300; Virginia Lee Gloucester \$225; Woodmans (invoice still outstanding)

-**Grade 1 Bus to local beaches:** The first grade is traveling to White Beach and Conomo Point and requested funding for the transportation. The total cost is \$730 for 2 days of transportation. Betsy McKeen made a motion to approve this request and Maggie Gleason seconded the motion. The motion carried and the funding was approved.

**Grade 2 Bus to Chebacco Woods:** Mr. Burtnett's class trip is requesting funding for transportation to Chebacco Woods. The cost will be \$385. Betsy McKeen made a motion to approve this request and Maggie Gleason seconded the motion. The motion was carried and the funding was approved.

#### **K Playdate:**

Rachel McInnis will host the K Playdate this summer (August 2022). FoEES will think about a date in mid-August, after teacher letters are sent home. Consideration should be given to the tides. A Grounds Use form (get from Maggie Safrine) should be submitted soon.

- Hand out flyers for the family directory
- Still have books and water bottles
- Order gear and have a table to sell at the playdate

#### **Business and Family Appeal:**

- Family Appeal - do again in the fall.
- Business Appeal - the checks are slowly coming in. A successful mailing went out this year as only a few more letters have come back. There is a new donation. Make a note to send the appeal out to businesses again in October 2022.

#### **Restaurant Night:**

- Possible dates (include spring dates and out into the summer)
- The Farm
- Riversbend
- Shea's
- Cala's

#### **Family Directory:**

The FoEES used a paper directory in the past. We are currently using a protected Google Sheets document. Some grades have higher participation than others and some are only about  $\frac{2}{3}$  participating. Ideas for the Fall include:

- QR code for the form to feed the directory

FoEES is looking for someone to organize this. There is some work at the end of the year and you would need to manage entries at the beginning of the year.

**Grant Proposal Updates:** Jess Torcicollo (update via email)

- Received New England Biolabs grant for Whalemobile in the amount of \$1395 - the check should have been mailed to the school. It will be deposited shortly.
- Applied for \$4820 from Cell Signaling Technologies for STEM Night 2023, will hear back in August. If we do not get the CST funds for STEM Night my backup grant is New England Biolabs in November, but their grant max is \$2,000. For the STEM Night, the grant budget was \$4,975
- Putting out two applications this week (both due by 5/15)
  - Hooper Fund - Community Read Day (Mrs. Russo)
  - Cape Ann Community Foundation - Daisy Nell program (Mr. Carpenter) for 2022-23
- Still attempting to connect with the Manchester Essex Rotary Club. I was connected with the President through email, but haven't heard back. I'm going to talk to my clients who are members to help get further connected. I will continue to try to build this relationship because I'd love to see what kind of opportunities we may be able to develop with them.

**Update to Bylaws:**

FoEES has posted the proposed amendments to the Bylaws on the website for 4 weeks and reviewed the amendments at the May 2022 meeting. These Bylaws were reviewed by an attorney (DeRoshier). Maggie Gleason made a motion to accept the proposed amendments and Letizia Donati seconded. The motion was carried out by unanimous vote. The Bylaws have been amended and will be posted on the website.

**Budget Approval for FY2023:**

The FoEES reviewed the FY23 proposed budget Betsy McKeen made a motion to approve the fiscal year 2023 budget as submitted. Maggie Gleason seconded the motion and the motion carried.

**Treasurer's Update:**

- **Taxes:** Jeff Sulard, an accountant, is volunteering to complete the 2021 FoEES taxes and will continue to do the taxes. The treasurer is looking into other ways to access QuickBooks.
  - QuickBooks: if we consider moving payments over to Jess's company we could save the monthly fee

**Positions to be filled for next year:**

- Secretary: Bradley Cooke was nominated by Betsy McKeen.
- Enrichment: Hilary Mattinson was nominated and would like to do a co-chair if an additional person can be found. Letizia nominated Hilary.
- Social Media Coordinator: Maggie nominated Rachel McInnis for the open position.
- Grant Writer: Jessica Toricollo was nominated by Betsy McKeen.
  
- Additional Event Organizers for next year include
- Community Read: Kate Koch
- Teacher Appreciation Luncheon: Amand Desrosiers

**Stipend:**

No new stipend information.

**New Funding Requests:**

Transportation requests were approved in the Enrichment notes section. See above.

**Prior Meeting minutes approval:**

The minutes from the April 2022 meeting were approved.

Betsy McKeen made a motion to adjourn and Letizia Donati seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 9:13 pm.

**Next meeting: June 6, 2022 at 7:30 pm (Zoom meeting)**

**Elections will be held and a summer meeting will be planned.**