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**Friends of Essex Elementary School Meeting Minutes**

November 2, 2023 -- Zoom meeting

**Attendance:**

In Person: Mandy Beausoleil- Co-President; Maggie Gleason-VP; Heather Harrell - Treasurer; Bradley Cooke - Secretary; Lisa Shotwell - parent; Julia Orlando - 3rd grade teacher

Zoom: Betsy McKeen- Co-President; Beth Prince, Parent; Abigail Hough, Parent; Sheila McAdams - School Principal; Caroline Gressler, parent; Rachel McInnis-Social Media Coordinator; Samantha Silag-librarian; Caitlin McShera - parent

**Welcome/Introductions:**

Maggie Gleason called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

**Welcome/remarks from Mrs. McAdams:**

The Monster Mash video and Kindergarten parade were a success! Since the Community Read Parade was such a success before Thanksgiving break we are hosting a vocabulary parade this year. The student leadership council kids kicked it off and plans are in motion.

**Julia Orlando, 3rd Grade Teacher:**

Julia asked if we will be organizing an author visit and noted that Ms. Silag is happy to help plan it. On behalf of 1st grade teacher Beth Kelley, she shared that the community read books have arrived. Books already have stickers in them from the Student Council.

**Approval of minutes and Cross-District Fundraising Discussion**

Betsy McKeen ran through the key topics covered in the last meeting and the minutes were approved.

* Sheila clarified that CIS is happening for Memorial via Cell Signaling grant. Ms. Silag asked if anyone has asked the question of why they are working with only one school from the same district.
* It was discussed if this could be a starting point to streamline enrichment programs across the district and whether there was guidance for working together.
* Perhaps have a joint fundraiser?
* There seem to be two buckets: one that includes community -based events (stem night, hoedown, messy art) and the other for more curriculum/programming (…author visits, CIS) The latter bucket *should* be more equitable.

Ms. Silag noted that the goal is always to provide equitable experience. She asked what’s going on with author visits, esp DEI-based authors. She suggested a Read-a-thon fundraiser to help sponsor this for EES. Perhaps Sheila can parents spearhead this?

Caitlin McShera, parent, also suggested that The Spaulding Ed Grant and Meyer Tree in Essex could be good funding options for CIS.

**Hoedown Update**

* Lisa Shotwell helped execute this with donations from Corliss Brothers and Russel Orchards.
* Venmo was helpful fundraising - $107 cash + $86 = $193 in change raised!
* Jasmine Catalano was super helpful and does grant work for Mass General.
* Thank you to Lisa for managing!
* Betsy McKeen added that while the balloons were festive they proved too distracting.
* Thank you to Max and Lucy, our middle school helpers!
* Lisa is happy to run it again and orchestrate with Book Fair as well!

**Book Fair Update**

Maggie Gleason met with Laura Campbell and Jess Webb and they will be taking it over next year. Raised $3442.61 in cash and checks + $3697.49 in cards for $7140! The roundups totaled $92.07 and funded 7 books for Ms. Silag (she shared that books have already arrived!)

Funds will be used for each classroom teacher and staff with a classroom library to spend $200 shopping on their own via Scholastic link that is sent to staff. Laura will submit the wishlist - two dates available, one soon and one near the end of the year. This is NOT a use it or lose it.

We are looking for other book fair providers since they take nearly 50% of money made. Also not a huge fan of the # of chachkies sold by Scholastic! Follet is Ms. Silag’s distributor and offers book fairs. Maggie asked about BestBookFairs.com as well.

Need to have a conversation with Hannah at Beverly BookShop to get her to get things electronic as that is the one benefit of Scholastic.

Beth Prince, parent, asked about the 25% given back to EES noted on the web site and why this didn't match the 50% we are keeping. Maggie explained that since we made more we crossed a threshold we got to keep 50%.

**Enrichment Update**

We need to resurrect conversation with Sam Silag, Beth Kelley, and Hillary for an author visit. Hillary Mattison, enrichment coordinator, could not attend the meeting and provide other updates.

**Grant Writing Update**

Jess Torcicolo applied for the Mass Cultural Council STARS program for Daisy Nell for $3650. They give an automatic amount dependent upon the number of sessions, so it was more than Daisy's fee. If we get it, it could roll over to next year?

* Applied for New England Biolabs for Mass Audubon - $1750
* Applied for National Grid Foundation for Mass Audubon - $1750
* Submitted application for a replacement IRS Letter of Determination for grant applications. Should be mailed to Betsy in the next 60 days. This is a common grant requirement and we don't have one that Jess could find.
* Need a more detailed description of “Artist in Residence” to apply, was unable to write a solid grant for it. She'll keep it on the back burner until a more flexible grant arises.

**Treasurer Update**

* Heather created a Board Directory with term start and end dates, cell phone, email address, and roles - The Secretary will keep this up to date moving forward.
* PTO insurance was paid
* Changed over Prime membership - it’s now the annual fee
* Ms K’s rug came from Lakeshore - share on social media? Shipping was $80 so Heather called and we can get free shipping from the district! We have over 8000 points at Lakeshore = $80 off the next purchase
* Sheila’s closet - need a reimbursement - Heather needs to send an email with a number
* Stephen - math specialist - use stipend for math subscription (its lessons / activities ) so would the district pay for this? Ask for some examples from it?

**Appeal Updates**

* Donations are coming in!
* From the Family Appeal, $123 in venmo and probably more on Paypal
* We budgeted for $2500 for family appeal
* Blast on social media next week / and email?
* HAAC - finally got all of the payments done, and profit was $1058 over planned!
* Hoedown profit was more than we predicted
* School Supply fundraiser profit was under what was raised in 2022
* Total income 21,304 thus far and expenses are office (874 - budgeted 900)/ (staff stipends 966 - need teachers to use them!) netting $19,463 as of now…
* Dispensary money - it was written into the contract for BB Botanics that they would donate $5000 per year to Friends of EES/PTO. Might not kick in until after a year of business.

**Teacher Appreciate Lunches**

* Next one is Tues Nov 7 (Grades 3-5 sponsor it - soup theme - sign up looks good)
* March will be (K-2) date TBD
* May for Teacher appreciation (May 6-10) details TBD

**Community Read**

* Books delivered - Vocabulary Parade happening before Thanksgiving instead
* Teacher meeting to brainstorm ideas for January Community Read

**Restaurant Night**

* CK Pearl - November 15th!
* Woodmans (working with Rhonda) not ready to pick date

**Messy Art Night**

Mandy, Elle, Betsy have been brainstorming timing issues because of ski season.

Looking to do a Thursday Night instead (3/14) or Thursday (2/15) which is too cold.

Planning now for March 14th.

**Stem Night**

Mandy B. said that last year there was talk of a district wide STEM night since last year there was a separate one at the middle/high school. There is some concern that this won't cater to the lower school crowd. Sheila shared that the 1st graders are performing at district stem night - date?

**EES Gear Sale**

Rachel McInnis should get an email next week with a link.

The store is open for 10 days (The first weekend of November will get things in before Christmas).

**Winter Book Warmup for Staff**

Maggie worked with Beverly Bookshop for this last year but many felt uncomfortable asking for more. Switch it to Teacher Appreciation time! Maggie to work with BB on making sure books are labeled accurately for delivery to the correct teacher.

**Polar Plunge**

In January - Saturday 1/6 - Betsy will talk to the chief of police. Need someone to take this over. Ask the local moms who are cold water plungers?!

**Board Positions Turnover**

* Mandy will be taking over for Betsy.
* Need Maggie, Heather, and Jess (maybe) replacements.
* ACTION ITEM → Exiting Board Members need to make a concrete plan to make a video and blurb

**Ideas for future**

* Should we have room parents?
* Suggestion box?
* Questions for interests - do you like to throw parties?

**New Funding Request**

Math coordinator request (mentioned above)

Maggie made a motion to adjourn at 9:10 pm. Betsy seconded.

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Next meeting: Thursday December 7th, 2023 at 7:30 pm in person and on Zoom.