****

**Friends of Essex Elementary School Meeting Minutes**

**October 6, 2022 -- In-Person/Zoom meeting**

**Attendance:**

**In-person:** Betsy McKeen-President, Rachel McInnis-Social Media Coordinator; Maggie Gleason-Vice President; Heather Harrell-Treasurer; Bradley Cooke -Secretary; John Skiba (5th Grade)

**Via Zoom:** Jessica Torcicolo, Rich Carpenter (Music), Amanda Derushe, Nicole Cucuru (3rd Grade)

**Welcome/Introductions:**

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

**Remarks from Mr. Skiba, 5th Grade Teacher re. MCBA:**

Mr. Skiba followed up on his 4th and 5th grade funding proposal for classroom book titles. He shared that the teachers have requested they procure nonfiction books for the 4th grade, as the history and science books in particular are quite old and could be updated. These would be in lieu of the MCBA books. They have not yet found titles, as they were waiting for the “OK” from FoEES as well as budget details. Maggie Gleason suggested they create a wishlist on Amazon. She also suggested he reach out to Hannah Harlow at the Beverly Book Shop as she may have the titles they want at a lower price point.

**Remarks from Ms. Cucuru, 3rd Grade Teacher re. CIS:**

Ms. Cucuru asked FoEES how much we can contribute to the CIS program this year. She noted that they are currently $6000+ short on funds and hoping FoEES could help by contributing a reasonable amount. Betsy McKeen explained that as of now we have not budgeted any funds but after learning it was going to be more expensive, FoEES is trying to get a grant to help with costs. Ms. Cucuru threw out the idea of charging the kids like a field trip ($10/student) to help bridge the gap. Ms. Cucuru would love to have an update on our progress in the next two weeks.

On a separate note, she asked that we share a copy of the FoEES event calendar with Maggie / teachers to be sure there are no conflicting events occurring. Specifically there was a concern over the 5th grade pancake breakfast coinciding with the Dec 2 staff Gingerbread House event. Betsy noted the breakfast could possibly be on Saturday morning, Dec 3rd, and would not be a conflict. She also confirmed an updated event calendar would be shared.

**Approval of prior meeting’s minutes:**

The September 2022 meeting minutes were approved by Betsy McKeen and Maggie Gleason, with a few minor grammatical corrections.

**Remarks from Mr. Carpenter, music teacher re. Daisy Nell and Hoedown:**

Mr. Carpenter confirmed he has begun his Daisy Nell program. He reached out to Bank Gloucester re. funding but has not heard back. He also was considering asking Manchester Essex Community Arts (MECA). Betsy McKeen confirmed that FoEES will plan to use reserve funds to cover whatever isn’t funded by grants, as the cost for this event is much less than CIS. Jess Torciollo shared that she applied for a grant from the Essex Cultural Council and will hear back in late October. She also said that MECA *might* be willing to split the remaining costs with us. Jess recommends we wait to see what comes out of grant requests from the Bank and ECC before connecting with MECA.

Mr. Carpenter confirmed the hoedown will occur Oct 21. There will be no snacks besides apples and water available. He noted that there is a need for parent volunteers and recommended we make some posters to help hype up the event. Betsy said that the two parents who have been involved in years past Melanie Healey and Beth Koeplin are very good with the decorations and hyping up of the event. Ms. Cucuru also volunteered a scarecrow for decor. A suggestion was made to have a donation jar out at the event to help fund enrichment activities like these.

The Daisy Nell program will culminate in a holiday concert performance on Dec 22. Mr. Carpenter is very grateful this program can continue to exist as it’s a very unique opportunity the town of Essex has.

**Playground Update:**

Heather Harrell, treasurer, provided an update on the playground. Benches and tables, etc. were all ordered including some which are wheelchair accessible. Shipping will take roughly 12 weeks. This weekend a tree from Corliss Brothers will be planted and hydroseeding by Jeffreys Creek will occur. Maggie Gleason suggested we host a big event in the spring with a ribbon cutting to celebrate the finalized playground.

**Enrichment Update:**

The K teachers opted NOT to go to Smolak Farms this year, since so many students go apple picking with their families.

The Victoria Jamieson Author Visit is scheduled for next Tuesday.

CIS and Daisy Nell/Hoedown updates are above.

The 3rd grade is hoping to go to the Cape Ann Historical Museum. Ms. Cucuru is working with Ms. McAdams on transportation costs as the rest of the field trip is free.

Mr. Carpenter is working on a Cape Ann Symphony field trip for 4th grade in January. Betsy noted that traditionally 4th graders haven't done many field trips and are low users of the enrichment budget, so there should be funds available for them to do this. Mr. Skiba suggested that the 5th grade attend too since they missed this opportunity last year, and Mr. Carpenter agreed.

Community Read Day is Wed Nov. 23, and Mrs. Russo requests books arrive the week of Nov. 7.

There is also a schoolwide stem project in the pipeline which will resemble a Macy's Day type parade that will occur at or near dismissal time.

**Grant Writer Update:**

Jessica Torcicolllo looked into the Yellow School Bus Grant from Arbella Insurance (Ms. McAdams had recommended this last meeting), but this is no longer an open grant for this year. She did set up an account, however, and she will now be notified of future grant opportunities.

Jessica did not apply for any funding re: author visit but worked with April Wanner to apply for ECC grant to help fund Daisy Nell (see Daisy Nell update above for more details).

Jessica also connected with Patrick Belmonte, contact for CIS, and he shared they get a lot of funding from New England Biolabs already so this is not an option. Instead, she is applying for an Essex County Land Initiative Grant (should hear back in Dec) and an Institutions for Savings Grant, both for CIS.

Ms. McAdams and Jessica connected and she updated all planned asks for this year with dates and amounts in FoEEs shared drive.

Finally, Jessica asked if the check from our awarded Cell Signaling grant has arrived yet, and it has not. Jessica noted that she asked for the maximum amount, so the STEM night money may be able to be stretched for other stem-related enrichment activities this year, perhaps even CIS.

**Treasurer Update**

Quickbooks has upped their price by $5/month. Heather is transferring paypal and venmo transactions to the operations account once per month. She also requested that we ask people to notate what their payments are for when using these two services. We also received two bills for police and insurance.

**Calendar Planning & Updates**

We discussed potential dates for upcoming events this school year.

These \*tentative\* dates are as follows (if date is finalized, it’s been **bolded)**:

–**Hoedown - Friday, October 21**

**–Messy Art Night - Friday, November 18**

–Community Read Day - November 23

–**Teacher Appreciation lunches** - Amanda Derushe shared that the first lunch will be **November 9** (half day for conferences) then others in March and May. This first one will likely be sponsored by grades 2 and 3. She is hoping to send out a preliminary email next week. Betsy will help her with using SignUpGenius.

–Polar Plunge - Saturday, January 6

–Restaurant NIghts - Caitlin Caan will be planning these seasonally. She has reached out to CK Pearl and Bravo for the fall season and is waiting to see who responds.

–STEM Night - March 17 vs April 7. Discussed pros and cons of March vs April last meeting.

–Spring Book Fair - Wed-Fri March 29-31 (would be more desirable to have it later in the spring but difficult due to MCAS dates)

–Teacher Appreciation Week - May 1-5

**Happy as a Clam Update:**

Betsy McKeen reports that the races produced a profit of over $14,000! This is a HUGE increase from last year due mostly to business sponsorship. Participant numbers were pretty stable, but there was a nice increase in Fun Dash participation with approximately 200 kids participating!

**Messy Art Night Planning:**

Jade Gideon and Natasha Taylor have agreed to lead this event again, however Natasha cannot attend the actual event. Betsy has submitted a building use request. Maggie Gleason shared that we were hoping to combine with the Scholastic Book Fair but Scholastic is fully booked. Mr. Skiba suggested we reach out to Beverly Bookshop for the Fall Book Fair, focusing on the upcoming holiday season, and then try Scholastic for the spring.

**Book Fair Planning:**

The fall book fair that we were hoping for with Scholastic cannot happen since they are already fully booked. Maggie is working to secure a date for fall 2023. Thus, it’s possible that our only book fair this year will be with the Bookshop of Beverly Farms, hopefully occurring in March. There is a balance from Scholastic which will be donated to teachers, likely through $50 gift cards.

Looking ahead to next year, the plan is to attempt to host an earlier book fair to coincide with the Hoedown rather than Messy Art Night. Maggie will work with Mr. Carpenter to lock down a date for 2023, perhaps the 3rd Friday in October.

Jeremy McElwain will be the new FoEES parent to be in charge of book fairs moving forward. This year he will assist Maggie, and then take over for the 2023-24 school year.

**EES Gear**

Kindergarten playdate led to lots of gear sales. There is a high demand for the pink and purple sweatshirts. Jungle only keeps gear sales open for two weeks to ensure they have items in stock. The next sale will be at the end of October.

**Family and Business Appeal Planning:**

We stuffed 100+ envelopes tonight so that business appeals could be mailed out this week. Two different letters are going out, one for businesses that already donated, and one for those that have not yet donated. We also chose not to mail letters to our Happy as a Clam donors. Next step is to send out family appeals. We want to do this now, so not to be too close to the holidays. It was also recommended that Rachel McInnis post the appeal to social media with a link to easy donating.

**New Funding Requests:**

Daniella Demitri and Sandra Jordan have requested reimbursement for classroom supplies (roughly half their stipends).

Betsy asked Mr. Skiba to spread the word to teachers to send us photos of any items/activities that get funded as it would be great to share with the community…”Look where your funds are going toward in an effort to help our students!”

Maggie Gleason made a motion to adjourn, and Betsy McKeen seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:51 pm.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Next meeting: Thursday Nov 3, 2022 at 7:30 pm in person and on Zoom.**