

**Farmington River Elementary**



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Thursday November 12, 2015

Meeting Start: 3:15 pm

Motion to approve minutes from October's meeting was approved.

In attendance: Wendy Berman, President; Craig Drenga, Vice President; Kathy Adams, Secretary; Ilona Packie, Treasurer; Thomas Nadolny, Principal; Meaghan Martin, Teacher; Chris Keller, Teacher; Kenly Brozman, Kathy Couch, Ashley Nelson, Stacey Schultze, Sherry DeCelle, Aimeé Magovern and Dana Pustinger, Parents / Committee Heads.

**FOR OUR CALENDARS**

**Nov 9–23** Children's online bookstore, ongoing orders

**F Nov 20** Family Fun Night with pizza and salad, 5:30-6:30; presentation by Arlene Kiesler on bird rehab, 6:30-7:30; screens available meanwhile in library for online bookstore

**T Nov 24** Dedication ceremony for Cora Barrett at 3:15; new playground equipment installed in her memory

**Th Dec 3** Next PTA Meeting, 3:15 pm in the Library

**Wed Dec 9** Holiday Shop setup, 11 am to 1 pm

**Th Dec 10 + F Dec 11** Holiday Shop hours TBA

**WANTED!** Volunteers to help with Family Fun Night and Holiday Shop. Online SignupGenius.com forthcoming to schedule volunteers for both events.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT: WENDY**

**Staff Dinner Follow-up.** Thank you for all who helped and donated for Tuesday 11/10 staff dinner. Italian dinner, including GF and desserts.

**Dedication ceremony for Cora Barrett.** Playground equipment in memory of Cora has arrived and is installed. There is a dedication ceremony in her memory at 3:15 on Tuesday 11/24.

**Flying Deer final report.** Not a lot of response online questionnaire. 9 responses total: 6 in half day program, 3 in full day program. Overall, 56% described as excellent; one person thought it was mildly good. People felt it was too short; some were not aware of what their role was supposed to be, and want more info up front; some complained about time of year as a bit cold, especially for younger kids, and said it's better to have in spring. Described as pretty organized; info shared pretty clearly; length of program about right; and most said they were likely to recommend to friend. 67% would like to see as a regular event for students (only one said no).

Mr. Keller described it as an excellent experience. Scientific facts, not fluff. Education beyond 5th grade, up to 8-9th grade level. Not patronizing. Can tell they worked a lot with kids; great connection. Building shelter, finding foods, brainstorming and problem solving: very hands on. As a teacher presence, he felt no pressure to participate, yet could hang back if desired. Votes to see it happen again.

Mrs. Martin said 3rd and 4th grades loved it. She heard from other staff that the full day program was much better received than the half day; perhaps going forward, it is better to hold with older students as opposed to younger. Received thoughtful thank you cards from third grade. Thank you, Mrs. Martin!

Kenly spoke with Devin. He was very impressed that he didn't have to manage kids, as he said they often must do at other schools. He said he would love to come back, it was much fun! Waiting on invoice, Ilona has not yet received.

**Mahaiwe opportunity.** recommended K-12 acrobatics show. Every year, Mahaiwe comes up with 3-4 programs with broad appeal. Date of upcoming show TBD: Friday, March 11, 2016. Wendy will look into it more and email update.

**VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT: CRAIG**

Family Fun Night is set with a presentation by Arlene Kiesler on bird rehabilitation.

**TREASURER'S REPORT: ILONA**

Busy month. PTA dues all received for 48 members; all sent in to MA PTA.

A couple of Sunshine Gifts for staff. Flying Deer, awaiting invoice.

\$13,158 - classroom accounts = T \$6,489

**Snack Bar.** Money for PTA childcare (\$30/mo) was traditionally taken out of the snack bar kitty; Wendy will write a note of reminder to staff to donate to the costs of snack bar upkeep.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT: KATHY A.**

Will discuss Holiday Shop in detail in upcoming Old Business section; thinking of student activities for indoor-recess days. Board games such as Battleship and Monopoly are too long and involved for a short, 20-minute duration; brief games like Trouble, Hacky Sack or Bean Bag Toss (Corn Hole, down south) okay. Mr. Keller said his students really enjoy playing cards. Dominoes in kid's hands are also helpful for practicing math facts.

Idea is to get kids up out of their seats to move around, away from the screen. Monday, Weds and Friday are the tough days without gym access. Getting someone to supervise the hall or classroom is the concern. Teachers try to avoid giving students the option of computers EVERY day of the week, if a cold snap is upcoming; pick one game to avoid a free-for-all. Nobody can monitor everything, so one game is much easier on staff. Soft bowling sets/pins to do in the hallway a possible idea.

Karen Yvon wanted to know if PTA could fund an upstairs and downstairs box with these items; Wendy suggested Karen ask teachers what types of games/equipment would be workable. Wendy will follow up with Karen towards this end.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Square One Art Final Results: Kenly.** Final tally yesterday: \$2,271.50 online; paper \$1,703 = \$3,974. Profit at 33% is \$1,311.58; \$304.50 received also turned in on paper orders. JoAnn Austin sent in a \$20 donation. Proceeds will come when products come in.

Top 3 student sales: Landon Havens \$363.53; Logan Pease \$263.50; Thatcher Berman \$257. Mrs. Farella's class did very well. Best average sale across classrooms. This fundraiser made less than previous years, with Flower Power \$2,300; Coupon Books \$3,000 (50% profit, quick transaction). One Coupon Book problem: some places stopped taking coupons, said nobody called to see if they still wanted to be involved. Not an exciting fundraiser. Last year, we had discussed it as having run its course.

Not a great fundraiser, but with Square One Art the value is in the children's involvement. They were excited about making art. One sticker was taken from every child and placed on a poster by Superintendent's office. Very time-intensive for Laura Catullo and the kids. Window of time was very short, just 1.5 weeks. Company wants to get it done rapidly, before Thanksgiving. If the artwork could have been done at home instead, a more relaxed environment with more of a selection, some parents mentioned they would have bought more. Also mentioned were lack of many practical things, such as notepads, nor was there guy stuff. Limited with sales appeal to just the family. If parents ordering feel artwork is striking and age-appropriate, maybe more would be

ordered. What about tying children's artwork into redesigning and personalizing Field Day t-shirts, came the question? Deemed too expensive.

Kathy C. said biggest all-time fundraiser was the Christmas Wreaths and swags. Worth revising/discussing next year. Krispy Kreme donuts were a big hit, but ... probably not appropriate with Wellness Committee. Lightbulbs were sold through WMECO. Idea perhaps to sell coffee next year: 50% profit, and everybody wants it: tea and seasonal coffees by New England Coffee.

Sherry reminded us of the big-picture objective: classes are building funds each year, so aim is to be fully paid for by 6th grade, which is as of this writing \$150 per person.

**Author Visit/Book Sale: Wendy** (for Mary, who could not be present)  
Ashley Nelson connected with Mary to help assist with the Author Visit.

**Online Book Fair & 11/20 Family Fun Night:** Wendy.

Wendy will send reminder about online book fair via email. Did not discuss how we wish to use the funds. Straight 30% profit. In past with Scholastic, Librarian bought books for library. How to help teachers gain books? Suggestion of Scholastic Dollars given to teachers to purchase on their own, or funds to purchase how and where they wish individually. What does our library need? Suggestion is to donate books to the library, so everybody can access.

With Scholastic, not enough appeal for older kids: mentioned need for more serious, older chapter books for 3rd grade and up. Maybe for next year, try Scholastic again if they will *not* skew toward younger; just don't put out the little cheap nick-knacks. Physical book fair retains appeal; something about the tactile experience of browsing, holding books in hand. Foot traffic, kids persist and parents give in. Should be 20% junk books, 80% quality (not the other way around). Dana suggested investigating Usborne Books and More (<http://www.theusbornebookstore.com>) for next year. They have nice books said to be of much better quality than Scholastic, and titles also older kids.

Not a lot of action reported yet on current online book fair, but it is early yet and people are busy. Parents might feel hit back to back with two online fundraisers (Square One and Online Book Fair) that both took place later in the fall. Great to stretch and try something new. Anyone can still purchase after our book fair is over and earn 15%. Some students do not have internet; they can purchase when they hopefully join in on Family Fun night on Friday 11/20. Shipping fees with the online book fair.

**Holiday Shop:** Kathy A.

Annual Holiday Shop 2015 event being planned and prepared. SignupGenius.com will be available for volunteers; teachers will have signup sheet in lounge. Wrote to Laura Catullo seeking Art Room permission for hosting event. Letter home to parents with shopping list for kids attached. Cash box from Jane, courtesy of Ilona. Begin with \$100 in mostly ones, with some quarters and fives. More shopping left to do: men's, pets, some girls, grandmother fuzzy booties, teacher's gifts. Try Claire's for girls, BJs for wrap paper. No more candles/office supplies. More Hot Wheels. Chocolate Mints boxes on sale at Big Y for \$1. Check later with Kathy C. about bows on hand. Obtain assorted supplies and sundries; clipboards to update inventory (list to be printed for all). Sherry sent coupon for Christmas Tree Shop. Sherry will lend reusable shopper totes from home — or baskets?

Check in with Mary about her reading activity with the kids coinciding with Holiday Shop; shift Friday classroom shopping up later in the day, then have breakdown late afternoon.

Holiday Shop not intended to be a fundraiser, but typically breaks even. Roughly \$640 spent so far this year on Holiday Shop items. Advice is to not go much beyond \$1,200.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Ski Program:** Sherry. Mark been in touch with Jamie at Ridge. As introduction to new PTA members, the PTA partners with Otis Ridge for 5-6 years now. \$65 fee for 6-week ski lesson; PTA subsidizes \$25 for a child to get lessons, ski rental and lift pass. Ski lesson class eligibility begins at Kindergarten age; preschoolers may rent equipment and learn on the bunny slope, but must have their parents accompany. Cost for preschoolers is lesser amount (\$40 or \$50). Jamie wants same format. First two weeks were lesson-intense at 1.5 hours each lesson; then 1 hour lessons in weeks after. Final week is a free-for-all, capped off with a pizza party served by PTA. Pricing same as previous years. Paperwork will come out right after Thanksgiving holiday. Begins Wednesday Jan 6. Hoping Grouse will be open! Voted yes that PTA will subsidize \$25 per student this season.

**Cash Calendar:** Sherry. Dawn Lemon and Jessica Havens assisting Sherry on Cash Calendar, supporting production behind the scenes. As introduction to new PTA members, donations are collected from various local businesses; each day of the month in March, prizes are awarded from bucket. Over \$3,000 in prizes last year. Net profit was \$11,000 last year. The Cash Calendar is the fuel for funding all the events we do throughout the year. This is accumulating over time in PTA account and the reason why there is a reserve.

Have lost some families from school who were contributors from last year. A great marketing opportunity for businesses. Great exposure, small investment. Minimum contribution \$50 to be on the calendar square.

51 Park, Jen LaBarre, Manager interested. Suggestion of Kwik Print and the new dentist in town.

**Otis Cultural Council:** Ilona. Grant written by David Reed and the Trio Traumatix (community, family-friendly musical performance: calypso, folk, jazz, etc). Wide appealing repertoire. BA in music education, established performer; instrument builder. Not instructional, but community-engaging. Might be a band idea for the chili cookoff. They are seeking \$500 from OCC for funding if we are interested. 90 min performance. Chris Keller will ask Alicia Dunaj about the fiddlers availability, also. OCC would pay if we wanted to hire Reed's band. Suggestion of Friday, February 19, 2016. Investigate Knox. TambouraProductions.com to sample David Reed's music.

Kathy C. conceived of and prepared an Event Evaluation & Planning Form for all to review, by way of suggestion for planning future events, based on feedback and experience.

Meeting Adjourned: 4:45 pm