

Farmington River Elementary



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Thursday, April 14, 2016

Meeting Start: 3:15 pm

Motion made to approve minutes from March's meeting approved.

In attendance: Wendy Berman, President; Craig Drenga, Vice President; Kathy Adams, Secretary; Ilona Packie, Treasurer; Tom Nadolny, Principal; Meaghan Martin and Chris Keller, Faculty; Ashley Nelson, Aimeé Magovern, Sherry DeCelle, Alicia Dunaj, Dawn Lemon, Dana Pustinger and Pete Adams, Parents and Committee Heads; Bob Rosen, Commissioner and Patricia Richard, Director of the Otis Recreation Center, Guests.

FOR OUR CALENDARS: Events

M May 2 – F May 6 Staff Appreciation Week

M May 16 – F May 20 Screen Free Week

F May 20 – Su May 22 1700s Colonial Soldier Reenactment by *Ye Old Lebanon Militia*

F June 3 Field Day (Rain Date: Th June 2)

FOR OUR CALENDARS: PTA Meetings, 3:15 pm in the School Library

Th May 12 May PTA Meeting

FOR OUR CALENDARS: School Committee Meetings, 7 pm in the School Library

TBA May School Committee Meeting date to be announced on FRRSD website

ENDING SOON!

Target Rewards Program This program will end on May 14 of this year

Labels for Education Get your Labels in! This program will end in June of this year

Bob Rosen and Patricia Richards of Otis Recreation Center Commission, guests

The Otis Recreation Center representatives spoke about the Town of Otis Community Garden; residents buy shares in the garden located at the Otis Poultry Farm, on land donated by the Pyenson's. Eve Kummel, who runs the Community Garden, is interested in helping to create some sort of gardening program with local kids. Various categories of helpers needed for the Community Garden: seed starters, work crews, distribution to shelters, advertising, etc. Chris Keller's hiking program is a great and effective activity for the children; the Otis Rec Center is hoping to drum up similar interest with children getting involved in aspects of gardening. A limited number of people are available who can help in this effort; therefore, the children would need parental supervision. The Community Garden has been very popular in town, and the Otis Rec Center is interested in opening the door to assist with funding. It was noted it can be hard to schedule volunteer work efforts, with busy families.

The Rec Center also seeks proposals for suggested programs; most would run 6 weeks. Alicia suggested to reach out for possible instruction by a Tae Kwan Do demo group from Great Barrington.

The Rec Center is in dire need of a swim instructor. The Town Select Board wants to keep the free swim lesson program going at Big Pond.

Interest was expressed in perhaps a "safe" biking club, on more remote roads away from busy traffic, to either bike on the Ashintully trail or Upper Spectacle Pond, etc.

We are reminded that Bingo Night is hosted by the Rec Center during the upcoming Screen Free Week. It is usually held on Monday night; however, if it is moved to Wednesday, the Rec Center needs 1 or 2 extra volunteers for serving popcorn. The PTA agreed to help with serving popcorn; we already will need volunteers to serve salad and pizza that same evening.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Wendy
Scholastic Purchase Wrap-Up

List for library books has been compiled; the cost is under \$800.

Thank You Card Received

The PTA received thank you note from Rebecca Beham for helping to sponsor the PreK Puppet Show. More families showed than expected.

Online Book Fair Proceeds Update

Teacher's Wish Lists were fulfilled and books were bought for their classrooms.

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Craig

The Farmington River Regional School District's School Committee is seeking another person to volunteer for the Board. Requirements are to be a town resident and to attend to meetings the first Monday of the month, as well as to attend occasional special meetings. It would be good to have parents with a finger on the pulse of the school, particularly those who have young children that will be involved with FRRSD for a number of years, become involved. Those interested can apply with a letter, and the Select Board will choose among applicants. Currently, there are 4 current members from Otis, 3 members from Sandisfield. Serving on board the School Committee is a 3-year commitment. Ilona suggested a blurb be sent to be placed in the FR newsletter seeking applicants. Potential applicants cannot be an employee of the school.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Ilona

State of the Treasury

March is done; it was a busy month for the Treasurer! A list of all Cash Calendar winners as well as their winning ticket numbers has been recorded. Most kept their winnings, this year. The third grade account used their money for the teacher's Scholastic order; the Teacher's Wish List was spent. Otis Ridge Ski Program was paid \$2,805; PreK Puppet Show Fun Night was paid; and a donation was made to the Town Fire Department on behalf of the Saloomey family.

Reserve is \$21,055.48 minus classroom accounts of \$7,621.18 = a net of \$13,434.31. It is unprecedented to have this amount in our coffers; the PTA has enough to pay for next year, if no other funds are raised.

The Otis Cultural Council is involved with Kiwanis for the effort of recycling bottles; the OCC gets one quarter per bottle donation in proceeds. Usually, the OCC receives about \$2,500 per year from this fundraiser; because they will still be volunteering in the program and getting the proceeds, the OCC is willing to donate this money to the PTA. The additional money to the PTA might also provide a way to advertise local events, such as Amber Alerts or weather emergencies, or even fund and install a high-tech enhancement for our school (as well as the Town) by having an electronic billboard at the end of our driveway. Much research has been conducted, and the cost is about 20k for a two-sided electronic sign. Tom suggested in going forward, the PTA could organize a fundraiser to kick off the recycling effort or perhaps a matching fund drive. Tom also suggested perhaps a benefactor in town may be found, willing to donate or match funds.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: Kathy A.

No new business or updates to report.

OLD BUSINESS

Nominating Committee. The PTA Nominating Committee presented a slate of nominated individuals at this present April meeting, which was recommended as the optimum procedural opportunity to do so. It was recommended that at next month, during May's meeting, a motion to officially approve the ballot be put forth; if uncontested, we have a new committee. Finally, the conclusion of the final PTA meeting in June of the present school year is when the new committee takes over for the upcoming school year. The current committee runs the June committee, and any meeting up until June 30th; any additional summer meetings will take place with the new slate. A first executive planning meeting for the upcoming school year has in the past been held in August.

Tom, part of the Nominating Committee, highly recommended Dawn Lemon for Treasurer, if she is agreeable. Dawn was present at the meeting and has confirmed interest.

Aimée Magovern has expressed interest in serving for the Secretarial position. Amy was present at the meeting and has confirmed interest.

Therefore, upcoming school year 2016-17 PTA Officers slate is: Wendy Berman, President, second year of service; Craig Drenga, Vice President, second year of service; Dawn Lemon, Treasurer, incoming; Aimée Magovern, Secretary incoming.

Classroom Pedal Tool

The Classroom Pedal Tool, brought forth by Stacey Schultze, is being tried out and assessed in Meaghan's class. The purpose of the tool is to assist and focus kids with fidgeting issues in class. Tom feels it is an okay tool to try.

Indoor Recess Kits & New Ideas: Wendy

Two teachers have responded with ideas for indoor recess kits; we need to price out what was on Meaghan's and Chris's lists at Amazon.com, etc. Karen Yvon has forwarded information from a company headquartered in Connecticut; for \$50, the PTA could obtain a five-foot pallet stuffed with toys. The toys are kind of random; we can't really pick. S & S Worldwide is the company who sells the pallet. A volunteer must go pick up the pallet; there is option for delivery. Location is 1.5 hours away in Colchester, CT. Included are outdoor play, indoor play, and arts & crafts; we could end up with a variety of goodies to explore, and give remainder away. Consensus was it sounds like a reasonable and interesting opportunity to try to bring fun to the kids. Wendy will follow up.

Regarding indoor recess ideas, Meaghan suggested it can be very difficult to put a lot of children in the gym to run for what only amounts to about 15 minutes, if there is no organized fashion and structure applied. Turning a large group of kids loose can be dangerous, as some try activities like gymnastics on mats, and others want to bounce a ball and play catch. There is just not a lot of time available for them to begin new games, so the results can be chaotic. It is strongly suggested the PTA find items to occupy kids in the classroom, in their effort to provide indoor recess activities.

Screen Free Week

Screen Free Week commences on Monday May 16. For Chris's hike, he could use help putting together details and gathering water bottles and snacks; Sherry has volunteered to assist Chris with procuring these items. Sherry suggested putting together a one-page event sheet (Ilona has template), detailing the week's events with how many attending, the seeking volunteers, etc. to give people an opportunity to think about how they can donate. This upcoming Screen Free Week event sheet can be sent home by the first week of May.

Wednesday May 18 is Bingo: we need two volunteers to help serve popcorn with the Rec Center. Also, the PTA puts out a salad and pizza meal. Again, we can get a template sheet from Ilona for an idea of how this popular event has been organized in the past. During Bingo night, the first activity is that everyone eats; afterward, everyone sits down to play bingo, and there are prizes. The PTA buys the prizes: puzzles, etc. Sherry will include Wendy and Anastasia in an email update and recap of this event.

A reminder that we need to be off school grounds on Friday night, May 21 of Screen Free Week, due to Chris needing to set up his Reenactment weekend. There is an easy, very popular event to be held same night: the Berkshire South Swim and Dinner, with salad and chicken dinner from GB Price Chopper. We just need to let Berkshire South know how many will attend. The PTA sets up dinner as the kids swim; parents are invited, and there are life guards. There is a shallow pool and whirlpool, as well as a lap lane. After the swim, the kids dry off and dress, and come out and eat.

[Confidential]

Teacher Appreciation Week

For Teacher Appreciation Week, Wendy will email the group regarding ideas and to solicit a chair person/chair people and volunteers. Teachers will receive a note in their mailbox (as well as an email) during the week of April 25th so they have a rough idea of what to expect.

NEW BUSINESS

Box Tops Year-End Classroom Awards: Wendy

Last year, there was a drive that promoted; some teachers opted in. It was begun during winter. Suggested that it is getting a bit late to begin a concentrated program this year. Some teachers were sending Box Tops down to the office without saying what class they represent. Suggested to have a 9-month competition, keeping records and keeping track, starting in the fall and ending with rewards in the spring. One reward would be to have an ice cream social with a fruit option; to schedule in May, would be a nice event to reward everybody for their fundraising efforts. Perhaps the Thursday or Friday prior to Memorial Day Weekend.

Recess Needs: Sherry

Complaints were received about flat balls for soccer and basketball. The PTA has the resources to beef up the supply; it was suggested we purchase some new balls for the playground. Craig, while working as a substitute gym teacher, pumped up 10 low balls; however, the outdoors recess bin is a separate concern. Probably the balls are cracked, it was suggested. Sherry proposed willingness to purchase balls, if the PTA can agree to a number to spend. Generally, a decent basketball is estimated to be about \$15. The Gaga Pit will soon go up to enhance playground activities, Tom reports. Chris suggested kick balls and Nerf footballs, found at Target or Walmart. Sherry will gather up items and speak with Wendy.

Terracycle: Wendy

Karen Yvon suggested the Terracycle recycling program. Ilona described our school's involvement already being in place for this program, for many years now; Terracycle has a "juice brigade," a "chip bag brigade," etc. There are many options; we can pick one to try. Ilona said we must track and see what kinds of recycles are mostly generated; whatever is most used is what makes most sense to collect. There is not a ton of money generated, but a good idea and principle to set this example for the children. Meaghan offered there are a lot of Goldfish bags. Items must be a certain weight; something close to 10 lbs. No need to be cut or rinsed; one only needs to remove straws. Any juice bag can be used. Specifically, this applies to JUST JUICE BAGS, not boxes.

Meeting Adjourned: 4:30 pm