**Ecole Publique John Fisher**

**School Council Meeting Minutes**

**October 20th, 2015**

**In attendance:**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Maria Morianou | Tanya Razek | Erika Schwengers |
| Victoria Bailey | Ivy Tham | Susan Shinkoda |
| Urs Bill | Cindy Fraiser | Terrence Chu |
| Eva Emmemgger | Shazela Robinson | Mary Mowbray |
| Wendy Fisher | Jodie Wolkoff | Marisa Hawkings |
| Ally Ereltz | Sogol Zamanian | Meredith Weir |
| Shamira Kassam | Anne Harkness | Peter Gliddema |
| Christina Thomas | Mandy Kibel | Sharon Gregory |
| Maryam Meffe | Anne Carty | Sandra Kwon |
| Jennifer Boudreau |  |  |

**Principal:** Marlene Harroun

**Vice Principal:** Lee-Anne Maier

**Teachers:** None

**1. Welcome**

Anne Carty called the meeting to order at 6:48pm.

**2. Minutes from September 29 meeting.**

Motion: For approval of the Minutes from the Sept. 29, 2015 meeting.

Moved by: Sharon Gregory

Seconded by: Urs Bill

Motion approved.

**3. Principal and Vice Principal’s Remarks (Harroun & Maier)**

Marlene Harroun began by thanking the parents for attending, especially with the Blue Jays game on! There were two main items that Marlene spoke to:

1. Job action by elementary teachers in Ontario continues. Currently, ETFO is not in talks with the province; CUPE (clerical, ECE, lunch supervisors, caretaking staff, etc.) is meeting with the province. Teachers are waiting for direction from their union about preparing progress reports for students (Nov.) and arranging parent-teacher interviews. Teachers are not working within the 30 day deadline to have Individual Education Plans (IEP) prepared; these plans are typically created, reviewed and checked in the office, and sent home to parents. Some IEP’s have been submitted, and Marlene is continuing to encourage teachers to get them done, as she knows they are a vital part of the education for many John Fisher students. Marlene is grateful for the several student and parent volunteers who contribute to keeping the school running smoothly, helping handle all the struck work by teachers. She notes that many staff members feel a fracture, and a loss of connectivity and communication, but all are doing their best in the circumstances. Further job action may include rotating one-day strikes between boards, where 48-hours notice would be provided to families in the event they occur for the TDSB.
2. Lee-Anne updated attending members about the recent numerous technology purchases. Thirty-six Chromebooks (and charging carts) have arrived: half are kept in the basement, half are kept upstairs. They are mostly being used by the grade 6 classes, and Lee-Anne was excited to see that they were put into use immediately! She was invited to visit Mme Tyrie’s class as the students were researching different art techniques to try for their Acorn Cards designs. Lee-Anne and the teachers are exploring ways to share the Chromebooks with the grade 5 and 4 classes. Every student grade 4 and up has a TDSB email and student number, which are used to sign-in on the computers. Primary grades have 30 new iPad Airs with Grip cases; a MacBook Pro was purchased to configure and support the new iPads. Twelve new desktop computers were purchased for classroom use. Lee-Anne mentioned that the TDSB restricts schools on the retailers and products that can be bought; she provided hard-copies of product information and prices of the items purchased. Also, she reminded those present that $0 went towards technology last year; this was intentional, to plan for the large purchases to be made for this year.

A parent asked about whether teachers were receiving any professional development in integrating technology into their teaching. She expressed that technology alone does not enhance learning, but teacher training is the key determinant in technology enhancing learning. Lee-Anne responded that teachers are not receiving any PD this year (due to job action), though several have participated in self-directed PD on technology; notably, some John Fisher teachers attended a Google Docs Camp over the summer. Lee-Anne, as the technology lead in the school, certainly promotes the use of technology, visits classrooms, and models the use of technology in her role as VP.

**4. Presentation of the budget requests**

Marlene compiled the budget requests from teachers; not all teachers responded to Marlene about submitting their budget requests, in which case, she will be asking on their behalf, for amounts similar to last year. The council budget (approximately $83K) is the sum of monies raised through fundraising and various events during the 2014-2015 school year ($69K), plus money from an HST refund ($14K). This year, the school budget is $83K, with a surplus of $20K (to be added at the end of October). Large sums have already been spent on replacing classroom furniture, levelled readers (two sets) for SK classes, and money will continue to be spent on photocopying (typically 30% of the budget). Those in attendance were provided with a green sheet, listing the budget request plan, with money allocated to each initiative. White handouts provided more detail on the products (wish list or already purchased) and their respective costs.

**Agendas ($1500, see invoice):** John Fisher does not charge their students for the agendas, but there may be a partial charge in the future; they are available to all students grade 1 and up, but are up to the discretion of the teacher whether to distribute them or not. Next year, Marlene would like to see more consistency school-wide, i.e. all use agendas, or none at all.

**Athletics ($3215, see copy of product specs):** $600 has already been spent bussing the 120 cross country participants in October, and an additional $600 will go towards bussing for track & field. M. Masko and M. Roi would like to purchase indoor hockey nets ($935). Other costs include ice hockey rental, and track and field ribbons (Maier and Masko have discussed having a school-wide track and field day for all students).

**Carnaval ($1800):** Request submitted by Marlene, but run by Mme. Jetha and Mme. DiLorenzi last year. This is typically a large event; Marlene has included the cost of a DJ for a school dance, in the event teacher-run activities cannot occur (job action?).

**Cultural Enrichment ($4300):** Enrichment, valued by John Fisher families, usually consists of two major events: Carnaval and a visit/performance by a French artist. With the absence of field trips this year, Marlene feels a greater need to invite performers into the school for cultural enrichment. Cost varies depending on the performance; previous years included a visit by Prologue, a performing arts education organization.

**Fridge ($510, see invoice):** already purchased, to support the lunch program (Real Food for Real Kids) and replace the staff room fridge (in poor condition)

**Graduation ($500):** for trophies and keeper plaques, plus engraving

**Information Technology ($36 162.90, see copies of product specs and quantities):** the inclusive technology plan resulted in the purchase of 36 Chromebooks (grade 4 and up) and 30 iPad Airs (primary grades).

**Mental Health Initiative ($2000):** the hope is to continue the program that was begun last year (mindful minute, twice a week over the PA system). This initiative provided a great sense of community, camaraderie, and instilled gratitude in the students.

**Music, Band/Strings ($5102):** This is a large decrease from last year, because it was a mandatory program for grade 5 and 6 students. Staff realized it was impractical for the grade fives (took place in the basement lunch rooms, disruptive to two basement classrooms) and the time not as productive as hoped for. This year, the band and strings will be for grade six only, taking place in their classrooms (or strings only in the basement), for 1.5 hours per week. The instruments are new, and insurance will be purchased.

**Music Program ($8255):** similar to last year, the request includes choir folders, and instruments for both small and big kids. On the wish list this year is the purchase of ‘flip forms’, a set of risers to outfit the stage (instead of repeatedly moving the risers from the music room back and forth every time there is a performance).

**School Spirit ($2500):** Marlene hopes to add more signage, decorations, posters, etc in French.

**School Trip Subsidies ($2500):** this fund helps cover the costs of events/trips that families cannot afford to pay for on their own; typically well supported by the Parent Council

**Scientists in School ($8536):** based on each of the 22 classes having two scientist visits at $194 per visit. Typically, the council funds the first visit, the school the second visit, and classroom parents for the third visit.

**Teacher’s Discretionary Fund ($7000):** based on $250 for each of the 28 teachers.

**Technology Team ($500):** most major equipment was bought last year; this year’s expenses cover minor items such as t-shirts, microphones, cords, cables, etc.

**Water filling stations ($7000, see quote):** installation of the filling stations in schools will be by lottery, due to the overwhelming demand by schools to have the stations

**5. Budget requests, Committees**

**Graduation ($3400),** Victoria Bailey and Erika Schwengers, co-chairs: graduation will take place in the North Toronto C.I. auditorium in June. Major costs include the memory book (~$1800), DJ (~$430), food (~$550) and photobooth (~$550). Estimates for overall cost are closer to $4000, but the co-chairs feel the graduating students should participate in fundraising to supplement the funds that go towards graduation.

**Welcome & Recognition ($1250),** Tanya Razek and Jodie Wolkoff, co-chairs: this committee’s two major events include the welcome back BBQ (Sept.) and the staff appreciation luncheon (June). Other expenses include flowers for teachers involved in the spring & winter concerts, cards and gifts for retiring teachers or arrival of a new baby, etc. The co-chairs hope to re-introduce a “kindergarten” booklet (or for new John Fisher families) that provides important information about the program, daily schedule, procedures, etc.

**Green Committee ($1900),** no chair, reported by Anne Carty (the previous chair served for several years; her children have now left John Fisher): ancillary to the garden, items such as soil, feeders, compost, new annuals

**Finance Committee ($1241),** Maryam Meffe, chair: the chair hopes to purchase Quickbooks software and reduce the volume of manual bookkeeping. The software cost is $406, but may be able to obtain it from Techsoup for just $51. Other expenses include postage ($200), bank fees ($200), insurance renewal ($150) and purchasing computerized cheques.

**Health and Safety Committee ($300)**, Tanya Razek, chair: mainly having to do with Kiss & Ride, the chair would like to have sandwich-board signs in the drop-off zone to more clearly indicate where parents can use the service.

All budget requests will be discussed when the Finance Committee meets. They will make their budget recommendations to the Parent Council in the November meeting, where the voting members will vote on the recommendations.

A parent asked whether the budget requests would be published in the Squawk, in the hope that some families may be able to donate some items, or be able to provide services or products at discounted rates. Marlene and Lee-Anne agreed it would be a good idea, though many things (i.e. IT, sound system, etc.) would need to be compatible with existing systems in the school.

**6. Other business**

**Council meeting dates:** the next meeting will be on Nov. 24. The remaining meeting dates will likely all need to change, to avoid conflicts with council meetings at Glenview.

**Wizard of Oz:** A parent expressed her discontent about having the Wizard of Oz performance date changed. She felt that “when the school sends out a date, they should stick to it”. Marlene responded that Alex (the man who runs the Wizard of Oz program, and is a third party), was responsible for the decision to change the date. She explained that Alex will check with her about any possible conflicts with school events on the dates he has in mind, and he makes the final decision about the performance date. A second parent commented that this was similar to the decision about the creation of the third grade six class, that perhaps the administration responded to a small number of vocal parents, where there may exist a silent majority whose concerns are not considered. She questioned their “responsiveness to squeaky wheels”; Marlene said the administration tries to accommodate all parents, and will continue to do their best.

**Motion to close the meeting:** meeting adjourned at 8:30pm

Moved by: Tanya Razek

Seconded by: Peter Gliddema

Motion approved.

Minutes prepared by Sandra Kwon