**Minutes of the Board Meeting of the JSSPVA**

**April 19, 2016**

**In attendance:** Julie Kalainov, Kath Lyman, Adrienne Weisenberger, Michele Bacik, Emily Tzur, Stephanie Henry, Donna Brunso, Angie Veber, Brooke Timmerman, Lisa O’Rourke, Kendra Wallace, Melissa Ross, Suzanne Nelson, Beth Beeler, Carrie Beeman, Julie Ruck

The meeting was called to order at 8:35 a.m. by Julie Kalainov, President.

Julie stated that the first order of business was to approve the minutes from the board meeting in March.  Kath Lyman motioned to approve the minutes. Lisa O’Rourke seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved.

**World Link**

Beth Beeler passed around a sign up for the Urban Gateways event on May 2nd.  The younger grades will be making Mayan flutes, and the older grades will do printmaking.  The Mariachi band has cancelled, and they are not likely to find another performer.

**Principal’s Report**

Mrs. Wallace reported that she had met with teachers the day before to solicit for PVA requests.  Teachers are being modest but have had some great ideas.  She explained that the teachers were told that they could request supplements the curriculum to run the classroom with rigor.  They should not be requesting materials that the school should be able to pay for basic needs; this is the icing on the cake.  The kindergarten team is requesting imagination blocks, which will be a nice compliment to the Maker Space.  The blocks are innovation-focused and are used at the Kohl Children’s Museum.  They will add a neat extension for the children to create and build.  The school plans to maintain other JSSPVA donated spaces such as the Outdoor Classroom and Ropes Course.  Mrs. Wallace thanked the board for making all of these extras possible.  She also thanked the group in advance for Teacher Appreciation Week.  The teachers are looking forward to the week, and the recognition helps them feel special and important. Mrs. Wallace then thanked the board for all of the behind the scenes work over the course of the year.  She thanked World Link for bringing in the Apache Healer today.  To recognize Earth Day, former Sears student, Stella Cook, will come to talk to school, and the Environmental team has organized another walk/bike to school week next week.  Field day is coming up and will be run more like a track and field meet.  Points will be tracked and reported throughout the day, and the winner will be announced at the end of the day.  The administration is still planning to host a series of Parent Forums and is trying to come up with a good name for these discussions (Parent Panther Forums is one idea).  The school wants to make sure it is meeting the needs of parents.  Coffees do not tend to invite open discussion, and people may not reach the right person at Sears.  The first forum will be for the fifth grade class and will serve as a transition meeting that will elaborate on math placement.  There will be a 20-25 minute presentation with Q&A and then a coffee afterward.  Differentiation in the classroom will be addressed next year.  The plan is to hold these sessions at 8:30am, as this seems to be the time that is most convenient for parents.  Kath added that the school would be adding stickers to acknowledge items donated by the JSSPVA.

**Treasurer’s Report / Past Treasurer’s Report**

Michele Bacik stated that she had nothing new to report.  Things are winding down, and receipts should be submitted as soon as possible.  If anyone has any upcoming large costs, it would be helpful to know in advance.

Lisa asked about the Makers Space and whether there are plans to spend more money. Michele said there is still a lot of remaining budget for this year, which can be spent.  She will check with Trish.  Michele reported for Kristin, who recently updated the D&O policy and finalized benefit insurance policies.

**Field Day**

Julie Ruck spoke to the group about plans for field day.  Senior Field Day will be held on Friday, May 27 for grades 5-8. Junior Field Day for grades 1-4 will be on Wednesday, June 1.  Rain dates for both are the day before the scheduled date. Senior Field Day starts at the beginning of the school day, and children should come to school dressed for the day. Parties in classrooms will include face paint, hair spray, t-shirts, and breakfast.  This year, a banner competition will also be held.  This will include everyone and will use up an hour of extra time.  A pep rally will be held after the party, then the events will follow.  Julie is taking care of the breakfast, and she will try to make it a balanced meal.  Children will go back to their classrooms for lunch.  Room parents will be there to help.  They will make spirit bracelets, and this is when the junior students will receive t-shirts, face paint, hair spray, etc.  No pizza will be provided; children should plan on Marla's or bring a packed lunch.  Julie is still trying to find a treat.  She will use her budget or get a business to underwrite this portion.  The biggest change to be aware of is that kids need to provide their own lunches.  This will be communicated through Stephanie in the JSSPVA newsletter, and Stephanie suggested that she would do an additional e-mail blast just for field day.  Stacy raised the concern that not providing lunch sometimes spirals into small group lunches and can then become exclusive.  It should be clarified that this is not allowed.  Lisa said that the budget seems very large, and that $500 was used for ice cream truck last year.  The Booster club is donating t-shirts.  Lisa said that the ice cream truck was a bit hit and that the budget should easily cover it.  She also suggested that we just pay for pizza and that it seems silly to try to communicate all of these issues.  Stephanie seconded that the pizza creates a festive party atmosphere.  Lisa proposed that there are ample funds in the special project budget, which could cover the cost of lunch.  Julie Kalainov suggested the board take a vote.  Lisa estimated that $1000 would cover the expense.  Stephanie motioned that the JSSPVA purchase pizza for the students on Field Day.  Angie seconded the motion, and it was approved.

**President’s Report**

Julie Kalainov thanked Stacy and rest of the committee for their hard work on the slate for next year.  They were able to complete the slate for the most part.  Thank you to Angie for all of the planning for the benefit thank you party.  There are lots of details--permits, liquor licenses, etc.  This is the last board meeting before the benefit.  Kath Lyman and Sarah Mohr have volunteered to serve on KCAC for the next two years.  The next meeting is our annual meeting where we will recap the year.  If you haven’t submitted your job description, please do so, and start working on a transition report for successors.  Please prepare both electronic files and binders. Transition should occur after the next meeting.  May 24 is the budget allocation meeting, which is a mandatory meeting.  There will be a line-by-line review of the budget.  If you think your position budget needs to be adjusted, please let Julie know as soon as possible.  Please submit receipts promptly.  Many have heard that Joyce Toan is retiring.  There will be a reception for her after school on May 18th from 3:15-4:30pm.  The JSSPVA will provide her with a token retirement gift.  She has been here since 1999.

Adrienne asked about special requests for budget items.  The 8th grade is looking to cover the cost of t-shirts that were purchased for the play ticket rally.  Kath said that in the past the JSSPVA has donated to the 8th grade play, and she is unsure of why this was discontinued.  Carrie Beeman ran the play last year and said that this would be very welcome. There isn't enough money raised to cover the costs of the play.  Lisa said that the play was taken out of the budget because the PVA always covered the audio system costs, but now we have our own.  Dues for 8th grade are $250 and a lot of this goes to the play.  The numbers were low a few years ago, and 8th grade parents asked for more money.  Lisa encouraged the parents to present information at the May board meeting.  Sometimes parents donate items, but we cannot count on this. A donation could be considered.  Lisa suggested that this should be documented for next year. There is always a small pool of people who do all of the volunteer work.  Lisa also said that we have to be careful not to open the door to funding unnecessary items.  Melissa said that last year we had money returned from 8th grade, which could have gone to play overage.  Current and future 8th grade parents should meet and come up with a plan and specific budget.  Lisa said we have to be prudent because we are spending donated money. Suzanne said ticket sales must be somewhat consistent year to year.  Last year $7k was raised, and this year $10k was raised, and most funds are contributed by 8th grade parents.  Suzanne said that there should be a standard budget year to year and that parents should not go into this blind year to year.  Carrie said that the class size varies year to year, and the play expenses can also vary.  The play had an assistant director last year, which ate up a significant amount of the budget.  Suzanne said that there should be a budget outlined and history from past years.  Adrienne is not a room parent, so she was not sure what had been provided.  Carrie said that the materials and history were not well organized last year.  The set last year was big and complicated, so the play exceeded the budget.  Mrs. Wallace said a group should get together to help provide guidelines for the future.

**Vice President Reports**

Kath reported the following for the subcommittee chairs:

Book Fair

The Spring Book Fair will take place in the LTC on Tuesday, May 24th and Wednesday, May 25th. We will be promoting "Stock Up for Summer Reading." More details to come.

Skate Exchange

They are considering asking families to donate skates at the end of the school year (and will record their names so they get credit when the exchange takes place) to try to generate better inventory. Another option is to ask for donations ahead of the actual exchange, consistent with history.

Environmental

Due to the 8th grade play, Earth week was moved to the week of April 25th. They are hoping that Stella Cook (Sears alumnus and NT freshman) will come and give a presentation on what all of us can do to save the earth. Other activities will be Walk & Bike week and "Bring a Waste Free Lunch". The Trex Plastic Bag recycling challenge had its last day today. We already received a big planter (it should be in the outdoor classroom by now) made from recycled plastic bags!

Outdoor Classroom

During recess on April 13, students worked The Organic Gardener to prepare the soil in raised beds, low beds and pots during recess.

Other Volunteer Opportunities in the Outdoor Classroom

Volunteers needed to:

Work for a week, Monday-Sunday, in the Joseph Sears Outdoor Classroom. Spring responsibilities include: weeding in prairie, butterfly and rain garden, and general clean up. There may be some harvesting. (More instructions will follow.)

Volunteer with Kindergarten – May 18 at 10:00-12:00 for spring planting;

Volunteer with 4th grade – May 20 at 1:15-3:15pm for summer planting;

Save the dates: May 31 - June 3, 8:30am at 3:15pm - garden week programming - K-7-additional

assistance TBA!

Staff Appreciation

Monday, May 2 - simple bagel fruit breakfast

Tuesday, May 3 - flower sale

Wednesday, May 4 - Lunch by Grateful Bites

Thursday & Friday (5-6) - chair massages & a gift drawing (if anyone has anything to add I have a few full body massage gift certificates)

Volunteers Needed:

- 3-4 volunteers to sell flowers

- someone(s) who enjoys floral arrangement so I can have a few pretty center pieces for lunch tables on Wednesday (and possibly Monday breakfast)

- bakers for lunch on Wednesday, May 4

Chess Club

We have started a chess team session which is on Thursday mornings at 7.30 am - 8.15am. This is at an additional cost of $70 ($10 per session). We are hoping to continue this next year but the current session will finish at the end of May. The team meets in the Link area and is learning tournament etiquette, notation and more advanced chess moves. There are currently 13 members, from K - 5th grade, and we may have more starting this week. This is for intermediate and advanced players and the hope is we compete in local tournaments as Sears School Chess Team.

It was necessary to do a morning session given the staggered lunch schedule. We are still waiting some checks to come in as some players wanted to try it out before committing.

The Chess Club has the Spring Tournament coming up on 19th May.

Stephanie asked about the Earth Day celebration.  The date for Stella Cook to visit is April 25, and there will be two assemblies. The date was incorrect in the last newsletter.

**Benefit**

Angie Veber reported that she is in the home stretch.  Total participation for the school is around 61% (43% of families), with 65-70% participation in most grades.  She has met with the village and police to obtain the permit and liquor license.  There will be a food truck or two, one will be Grateful Bites and they are also looking into a taco truck.  Mrs. Wallace said that she has a taco truck contact should it be needed.  For beverages, only beer and wine will be served. Please bring cash for food trucks.  Because beer and wine are provided, there is no money accepted at the door due to liquor commission rules.  April 30 is a firm deadline for receiving an invitation to the event.  The party will be from 7-11pm and will take place north of police driveway.  There is no rain date, and the party will still be held in the event of light rain or cold temperatures.  The plan is to cancel by 3pm in case of inclement weather, and this will be done by e-mail blast.  The invitation focuses on party details on the front.  The back of the invitation notes all of the philanthropic organizations that have benefited from our service projects.  Angie then passed around a signup sheet to help with upcoming tasks including assembling invitations, distribution on May 2 or 3, and help during the day of the event.  She showed a map of the event from her meeting with the police.  They plan to begin barricading the area after cars clear on Friday night.  There will be two access points, one by bike path and one at south end.  By 3pm on May 14, the whole area will be blocked off.  The village building will be open during the event, and the bathrooms can be used by the public.  The village doesn’t want anyone on park district property, so the village house cannot be used.  The village is requesting for the JSSPVA to rent portable toilets.  Kath asked about money transfer and why it’s allowed for food trucks.  Angie said that people couldn’t donate at the door because it’s seen as paying for liquor since liquor is provided based on the donation.  Stephanie requested information for one final push for the newsletter.  Angie said that the music would be turned off at 11pm per village request.  She will need a cleanup crew that night and one at 9am Sunday. Angie said that money has come in steadily since the fall and that a pure write-in campaign has raised plenty of money without all of the hoopla surrounding a fancy party.  She is very impressed with the service element.  The kids have gotten so much out of it and parents have come up with so many amazing ideas for the projects.  Lisa is working on a banner to put in front of the school. Kath asked if the percentage of families is low, and Lisa said it seems consistent with prior years.  Angie said those who give do so generously, and some people have given multiple times.  Overall participation seems a little higher than in past years.  The final push to be sent out will encourage 100% participation at any level in hopes that this will encourage future participation.  Angie has reached out to local papers about service projects.

**Communications**

Stephanie reported that the next JSSPVA newsletter would be going out tomorrow.  Field Day, Alliance Events, and benefit information will be included.  Julie suggested that Stephanie get in touch with Bobbi about staff appreciation.

**Community Liaison**

Adrienne reported on the BOE meeting the night before. Live stream was not great last night but she was able to catch the important portions.  The board had been planning to hold a community forum to introduce the board and administration on May 9th but is going to find an alternate date.  The state of the district was discussed and focused on the board, booster club, and JSSPVA.  Mrs. Wallace talked about the master schedule.  Mrs. Wallace then elaborated on Adrienne’s report.  There has been feedback from students and teachers on the master schedule.  They are looking for opportunities within the core curriculum for teachers to differentiate, as enrichment blocks do not necessarily work out. At the junior high level, all core classes will be 60 minutes in length.  Having band, orchestra, and chorus during day has been great for those programs and will continue.  There will be one day per week to get the entire body together to practice.  Junior high will be more academic with four sixty-minute blocks each day, but this will prepare the students well for high school and also encourages student learning.  RTI will take place in the core classes or pull out in specials. Mrs. Wallace is reforming the RTI program.  The intention is that 80-90% of kids are able to understand material the first time.  Tier 2 interventions involve extra support in classroom, and Tier 3 provides ongoing support outside of classroom. They are adding advisory back to the morning schedule.  These 8 minutes serve as a transition and help set the tone of day.  Announcements can be done at this time, and birthday announcements will return.  There will be a common 40-minute lunch period throughout the school with an extra five-minute transition for smaller kids.  This will help with clubs and chess.  Adrienne reported that a parent institute day for 5th grade parents was discussed and that math placement would be covered.  Julia Jones suggested hiring a social worker for kids with anxiety.  Another prospective hire would be an outdoor classroom coordinator.

Adrienne also reported that The Alliance is looking for people to honor teachers through their teacher tribute program. A mailing will be sent this month.

Suzanne reported that the board approved the associate director of education position, and this person will serve as an assistant to Kendra.  This will be a teacher on special assignment who will help manage the workload of the administrative team.  Kath asked if this teacher will also have a classroom and Suzanne said he or she would not.  This may not be a permanent position.  There has been a lot of turnover, and we need to establish policies and stability.  The parent survey will be going out soon.  Please share your options.  Facility plans will be presented.  Melissa inquired about replacing Julia Jones, and Suzanne said there is an ongoing search.  Stephanie asked when priorities would be identified for the facility update.  Suzanne replied that the board has been surveying faculty, administration, and has records of past parent concerns.  The first draft is being compiled.  The goal is to do major construction during the summer of 2017.

**Enrichment**

Melissa reported for the team.  There will be a new program this week with 4th grade and the Organic Gardener. Kindergarten will go to the Lincoln Park Zoo on May 2nd.  3rd grade will visit Archer Farm.  On May 10th and 11th first grade will have poetry visits.  Michele Harradine suggested that the international film group host a family film evening with French films relating to North America.  They are working on possible days and films.

**FAN**

Brooke reported that there is an event on Friday, April 29, “Our Kids: the American Dream in Crisis” at Evanston High School.

**New Trier Liaison**

Donna Brunso shared that there will be a New Trier neighborhood meeting and construction tour on April 27th at 5pm. On May 10th, the community is invited to say goodbye to McGee Theater and the 1912 cafeteria.  There is a Sender school art exhibit from area schools April 4-28th.

**Nominating**

Stacy Smith thanked the nominating committee for their hard work and presented the slate.  The benefit chairs have still not been identified, but there are some people who may be interested.

**Sears Cafe**

Carrie Beeman nothing to report.  The last day of Marla’s for the year will be discussed at the next meeting.  All is going well.

**Secretary**

Nothing to report.

Meeting adjourned at 10:04am.

*Respectfully submitted by:*

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*Julie Kalainov, President*

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*Emily Tzur, Secretary*