

Home & School Association Meeting Minutes

August 24, 2011

Present: Lauren Beckmann, Jane Boland, Jessica Carlson, Merridith Frediani, Barb Henderson, Karen Hunt, Susan Joy, Lisa Lesjak, Yvonne Luzney, Mary Poorman, Dennis Reilly, Zular Rodriguez, Joan Schramka, Wendy Wallace, Kathy Wyatt

I. Reflection

II. President's Report – Wendy Wallace

- **Committee Chair – Open Positions:** The President Elect position is still vacant. Wendy has been talking to several people over the summer and has offered to help the President Elect as long as they would need help. What she is finding is that there are many people that would like to serve on the board, but not starting at this position right away. Wendy passed out the listing of all the events and chairs showing quite a few vacancies. Some of the vacancies include the Emerald Auction chairs, Catholic Schools Week chairs, World of Work chairs, Mother/Son bowling, etc. VP's should try to get these vacancies filled in the next coming months.
- **Committee Chair Binders and Procedures**
Feedback Forms, Event Safety Guidelines, Financial Procedures
Wendy would like all the VP's to review the Home & School policies and procedures that were sent out by her earlier this summer. Dennis & Merridith will go over the highlights of the Financial Procedures later in the meeting. It is important that VP's communicate this information to all their event chairs. Event chairs are welcome to come to H&S meetings to report out on progress and success of their event(s). However, at minimum VP's should make contact with the chairs before and after the event and additionally they should make sure the event feedback form is completed after the event. Wendy encouraged everyone to read through the feedback form and become familiar with it. Please read through the Event Safety Guidelines as well and go over these items and discuss with your event chairs.
- **Fundraising Calendar:** Lisa is currently responsible for the fundraising calendar that was put together last year to keep track of the Parish, School, Home & School and Athletic Association fundraising events. This year there is a new Calendar Raffle that is being started by Amy & Matt Hietpas. Amy thought that it would be nice to have some information on the fundraisers on the calendar so everyone can be informed about the fundraising events at the school and what they help support. The thought is that it would help families plan in terms of giving. Wendy wanted to know how we think we should communicate this information. Jane suggested putting a page together in the Blue Book. The message needs to come out in different forms at different times throughout the year. Someone suggested putting this information on the website. Wendy and Lisa will work on a communication idea and possibly put in the Blue Book and website.
- **Blue Book:** This year they will be offering the Blue Book in a PDF format as well as the paper copy. They haven't yet decided on how they will distribute it but, they may put the PDF version on Edline. Wendy asked if there is a need to put all of the Home & School event dates and the school calendar (vacations, holidays, half days) in the blue book. She mentioned that it is very time consuming to format the calendar for the different shades of gray that show up for all the special/vacation days. Lauren mentioned that the website has all school events on the calendar and why don't we use the technology that is out there already to communicate this information. Everyone agreed that we need to embrace technology and use

the dynamic calendar on the School website. As a result, we will not put the calendar and events in the Blue Book.

- **Emerald Auction – New Venue:** The deposit has been paid on the new location for the Emerald Auction at the Italian Conference Center (ICC). Two rooms will be available, one for the silent auction and one for the dinner. The silent auction room will be available on Friday for set up. It was necessary to change the venue because we have exceeded the capacity of the school and if we didn't move it, we would have to limit attendance and we don't want to exclude anyone from attending. Mary Poorman asked what the cost would be to rent the ICC. Wendy didn't have all of the details handy but it is expected to be less.

III. Principal's Report- Lauren Beckmann

- It turned out to be a very busy summer despite the fact there weren't any major building projects or an accreditation to prepare for this year. Lauren expected it to be quieter but it turned out to be a busier than expected in a good way as they had at least 3 to 5 perspective families come to visit the school every week. They spent anywhere from 1 to 2 hours talking to people about our programs and it was very gratifying and exciting. So many people came in from far flung places all over the Milwaukee area and surrounding suburbs. Many of the perspective families heard about our school through word of mouth from current families.
- We had a pretty seamless and uneventful registration process this summer and about three-fourths of the families showed up which was to be expected because several people are on vacation during this time. In fact, some people are still coming in to register.
- They did more hiring than they had anticipated due to Mrs. Dodge leaving unexpectedly. They practically rebuilt the music program. It was a difficult process to try to find a candidate of the caliber that would move the music program forward the way they were hoping. Just recently they have found a candidate. She had previously taught in the Shorewood Public Schools and she didn't know that they had a position that was suited to her credentials. They restructured divisional responsibilities of the music program and separated out the Kindergarten through 5th grade general music program. They decided to improve the choir program from two positions to one position with a certified teacher as an assistant (parish director and general music teacher each half time). This will lead to a more cohesive choir program.
- In addition, they have hired a new director of the string ensemble. He's a very dynamic individual that will take on the challenge of building up the program. The program was near the edge of extinction because most of the students have graduated out of the program and there weren't many new students coming up. They have structured a new arrangement with him to incentivize the recruitment process so he can make more money as he recruits students up to a certain point then he will be on the salary scale as well. He teaches a variety of styles of music, teaches at another school, and performs professionally. There are 4 students this year. They are thinking about starting a beginner program as an after school program to recruit younger students.
- The teachers came back today. Tomorrow they will be at an all day off site in-service day program for the new archdiocese Religious Ed curriculum called Sustaining the Mission. They will be busy going through a strategic set of courses and working hard toward a new framework for a launch of the new language arts curriculum as well.

IV. Other Reports

- **Marketing & Development** – Lisa Lesjak:

The Annual Fund did very well with a total of \$191,765. Thank you all for your support. It was very close to the goal of \$200,000. The real happy story is enrollment! Lisa passed around her recruitment numbers. We finished last year with 336 students. We will start our current school year with 57 new students. They budgeted for 335. There was a point where they decided to go for a goal of 350 students and they have been able to surpass that goal this year. This is a 19 to 20% increase over 5 years. (Just updated on 9/6, the school is at 358) Lisa mentioned that Mary Poorman gave her some advice when she first started at St. Robert and told her that all she needs to do is to be friendly and responsive and that has been her mantra going forward. They continue to be astounded by the geographic diversity that has been coming to our school. The interesting thing as they talk to families that come from faraway places when they ask why they are looking at our school, they answer that existing parents have told them that they have to check out St. Robert School. The overwhelming message is word of mouth from school parents. The other recruitment tool is the school website. The 3rd and 4th grade are now the largest classes in the school with over 41 students each. Dennis asked how this is affecting the bottom line with the additional students and with the additional hiring. Lauren has not been able to run the numbers because the enrollment isn't completed and they just finished the hiring. She will run the numbers in the next few weeks to see where we are at and then report on it in the next meeting. There was a budget shortfall with 335 students so hopefully there will be a positive effect on the budget now with the additional students.

- **Parish Council** – Kathy Wyatt:
Kathy has nothing to report because she was on vacation last week. Scrip is Kathy's special mission. She can take your scrip card order at meetings and usually has an inventory with her for purchase.

- **School Advisory Board** – Karen Hunt:
Karen wasn't able to make the meeting because she was out of town. Lisa reporting. Lisa is pleased about meeting the challenge put forward by archdiocese that the school advisory board should not just be made up of current parents but should have some alumni parents as well. There are currently two Alumni parents on the school advisory board. Chair of the development committee and the Chair of the education formation committee. The State of the School Meeting is on the calendar this fall on Oct. 20th at 7pm (Thursday). This meeting is for all school stakeholders who include parents as well as parish members. The challenge is that it needs to be shorter and they are trying to nail down the topics. Parent preview night still not scheduled. New parent orientations will be part of this, so check the calendar, it should be posted soon.

- **Treasurer's Report** – Dennis Reilly & Merridith Frediani:
Dennis passed out the H&S Budget that shows this year's budget ('11-'12) compared to the actual from the last 3 years. Dennis emphasized the need to stay within budgets for all events. Budgeted dollars might have changed slightly from last year so please make sure you look at what is budgeted for your event(s) for this year. This year's budget was largely based on actual numbers from last year's run rate. This year's budgeted fiscal year income is \$181,400 with \$174,300 of that total coming from fundraising revenue. The budget has been balanced with commitments to the school operating fund of \$171,100 and event expenses of \$10,300 for a total of \$181,400. For last year's actuals ('10-'11), we had a net loss of \$5,038 but it turned out to be better than what actually had been budgeted of a net loss of \$17,440. The board was very conscious of not budgeting a net loss for this year's budget. The details of the budget are published on the school website in the Home & School section.

Dennis passed around the financial statement for August 15th. We are starting the year from July 1st with total assets of \$199,128. Under Funds & Reserves we have the Technology improvement fund for \$11,895, but they are planning to set aside another \$10K to make that a total of \$21,895 minus the Smart Board costs that were approved in May. Available discretionary funds are negative because we don't have the reserves available for any large discretionary expenses and we haven't had income yet from H&S fundraising events. Anyone can ask the board for discretionary items for the school. We will listen to all requests and consider them. Lauren has done a lot of research on iPads and the use of these in the school curriculum. It is possible Lauren will be bringing a proposal forward for a cart of iPads sometime in the future. Dennis reviewed the income statement next commenting that it is early in the year so there is not much activity. The most notable being the down payment for the new Emerald Auction venue at the Italian Conference Center (ICC).

Dennis highlighted the most important parts about the H&S Financial Policies & Procedures. Once again it is important to stay within budget when running an event. Another is that the school is tax exempt for state sales tax, so please tell your chairs to make sure they use the schools tax exempt number when possible. He passed around cards with the sales tax number for everyone to use. Please also note the money collection procedure. Remind your chairs to have 2 people count it before Dennis gets the money. He wants his deposit to match what they are telling him. There might be some errors, but hopefully 2 people can get it correct. Please remember that the 2 people should not be related. Dennis is usually available to pick up the money from an event and he can get the money and he has the ability to make a night deposit. Otherwise the money with the count sheet should be kept overnight in the school office safe until Dennis can take it to the bank. In the past, we had talked about the possibility of having a safe at the school for H&S money which we might still want to pursue.

Laura Nikolich approached Dennis about taking care of the funds raised by a new fundraiser for the Allen Family. Jane mentioned setting up an account at a bank for a fund. Dennis said he would be the point person for this if needed.

- **Volunteers** – Susan Joy:

Susan still has 15 families left to assign. This is the first year she showed up for registration and it worked very well in terms of getting more volunteer commitments filled. She has also been making phone calls to get these filled. VP's should have lists of volunteers for each of their events from Wendy. If your committees are student contact, Susan has tried to make sure that the parents are SEC certified. Not many parents need to be certified. Susan has checked the lists already and has noted if they are in process of SEC certification. We are still in need of health aides. There will be a notice in the church bulletin to see if parish members or past parents could volunteer for this assignment. After school aides are also needed to help move the children to pick up or milestones after enrichment programs. She needs to find two parents to volunteer for this position.

V. Event Wrap up

- **School Registration** – This went very smoothly. Wendy was there to update the data for blue book. They didn't have spirit wear this year but there will be an order form coming out this fall.
- **The Uniform Resale** – *Joan Schramka* - The resale raised \$627 and it went very well.

VI. Ongoing Committees/Events

- **Room Parents/New Financial Procedure** – *Joan Schramka*: It was determined that our procedure for collecting money from parents for the for room parents to buy gifts for the

teacher was not following our financial procedures. Instead, checks should be made out to Home & School and they will be given to Dennis. The money collected will be divided evenly to all classrooms. The room parents will spend the money for a Christmas gift and end of year gift. The rest of the money will be going to the Emerald Auction class/school donation project. Cash will be allocated to Room parents for purchasing the presents.

- **Art for Youth**– *Mary Poorman*: They were able to find another chair to help Martha Flaherty. Margaret DeMichele will also chair this enrichment activity. Susan mentioned that they are still short volunteers. It seems like many volunteers might have been scared away because the description had said it required 5 presentations during the school year. Susan Joy will check to see if it said 5 presentations vs. at least 3 presentations.

VII. Upcoming Events

- **Icebreaker/New Family Ice Cream Social** – *Jessica Carlson*: Rhiana Vella had a hard job finding host families for all the new families.
- **Welcome Back Coffee** – *Jessica Carlson/Yvonne Luzney*: Everything is ready. Yvonne was given the go ahead to buy two cambro's of Alterra coffee for the welcome back coffee because last year they ran out so early.
- **Fall Social** – *Zular Rodriguez*: Carrie Kohloff and Jen O'Keef are doing the same format as last year. They should check if they have enough volunteers clean-up. Barb suggested making sure to get everyone out by 10pm for cleanup.
- **Magazine Sale** – *Jane Boland*: Joe sent a flyer and wanted it to be added to the registration packet. It was included, although Lauren mentioned that was a mistake and that the registration packet should not include fundraising flyers in the future. Lauren was trying to be sensitive to deluging everyone with fundraising and events right at the beginning of the year. Dennis suggested we put the magazine fundraiser on the agenda for the March/April time frame. The new magazine vendor this year is Hearst.
- **Rummage Sale** – *Jane Boland*: We have a new rummage sale team of chairs this year. The team consists of Diane Cepukenas, Grace Collopy, Jennifer O'Keef and Carol Walsh. There will only be two days for rummage drop-off this year.
- **Apple Sale** – *Jane Boland*: Lisa raised her concern about the Apple Sale appearing to be another nickel & dime fundraiser that we were trying to avoid as an organization. This was budgeted last year and it made a lot of money for the 8th grade class. It was put forward as an easy fundraiser that everyone would like. After some debate pro and con it was decided to go ahead with the apple sale as planned but the message should be that that you don't need to participate and it is not required. The kids don't have to go out and sell, but if you like apples, please buy some.
- **Calendar Raffle**-*Jane Boland*: This is a new fundraising initiative this year. Starting at the beginning of the year there will be a daily drawing. How many volunteers for calendar raffle. Only 4 people. Dennis also questioned maybe not doing the apple sale and putting the manpower behind the calendar raffle instead. This idea was discussed, but the Board decided to keep the Apple Sale.

- **Superintendent Visit:** Lauren announced on that for the all school Mass on September 16th the superintendent will be there, so please attend if you can make it.

Next H&S Meeting – Wednesday, September 21st 6:30-9:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Yvonne Luzney
Home & School Secretary