

Elizabeth Simcoe School Council

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 6, 2024 School Library | 6:30 pm – 9:20 pm

Attendance Elected Officers & Elected Members at Large (Voting):

Robyn Bluestein, Beth Brooks (Fundraising Chair), Katie Eley (Chair), Chantal Elward, Megan Fitzpatrick (Treasurer), Amanda Formentini, Tammy Hewitt, Elizabeth Hyland, Stuart Rogers, Amanda Young

Regrets:

Sabrina Hayden, Raluca Kostovski, Jennifer Masters, Haley MacDonald, Melissa So, Jake Urbanek

Members at Large & Representatives (Non-Voting):

Ruth Coulter (School Principal), Effie Tsioutsoulas (Eliopoulos) (Teacher Rep), Kim Rogers (Sunshine Childcare Supervisor)

Other Attendees:

Sharmila Sivasankaran

1. Welcome & Land Acknowledgement

– Katie Eley

- The TDSB Land Acknowledgement was read: *We acknowledge we are hosted on the lands of the Mississaugas of the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Wendat. We also recognize the enduring presence of all First Nations, Métis and the Inuit peoples.*

2. Approval of Minutes

– Amanda Formentini

- Haley MacDonald has stepped down as Secretary as her child is leaving the school.
- Amanda Formentini volunteered to take minutes.
- Robyn Bluestein moved to approve the May 5, 2024 Minutes, seconded by Stuart Rogers, thereby passing the motion.

3. Principal's Report

– Ruth Coulter

- Ruth thanks council for supporting Dance n' Culture workshops. Feedback was that it was enjoyed by students.
- Grade 6 Farewell at Sir Wilfrid Laurier Collegiate Institute on June 26th at 1:30pm. No restrictions on number of guests. Thanks the council for supporting the event financially.
- EQAO currently taking place. Primary began June 3rd, Junior began June 5th. New forms and testing done fully online. Grade 3 assessments are 8 sections with Ruth requesting assessment to be spread out over 4 days with 2 sections per day. Grade 3 mostly finished assessment with Grade 6s to finish next week. Final submission to take place June 12th.
- June 11th City Track Finals with 9 kids advancing. September cross country begins.
- June 13th Parent Volunteer Tea in the Library 9:30-11:00.am with bone China and fascinators.
- June 14th Student Dance Party sponsored by Simcoe Council and last pizza lunch.
- June 18th Play Day @ 1:00pm.

4. Sunshine Childcare Report

– Kim Rogers

- Kim thanks council for collecting food donations at the Fun Fair. Took 4 boxes to donate to Moore's Your Independent Grocer.
- Summer enrollment: pre-school 24, Kindie 13 (one staff vs 2 which allows for staff vacation), school age 20 or below. 14 kids going to Kindergarten and a lot of new pre-schoolers.

5. Treasurer's Report

– Megan Fitzpatrick

Fun Fair Financial Report:

- Final income and expense summary shared. Profit of \$17,341 compared to \$20,318 in 2023 (See Appendix A for full financial report). Expect hard costs to be significantly less next year. Inflatables were the largest expense with increased number of inflatables for further enjoyment of attendees.
- Ruth mentioned all feedback from parents and guardians was that event was fantastic, well run and well organized.
- School cash online can be open to other schools. Guildwood Jr Public School sent out details about Fun Fair in their Friday email.
- Ruth open to dunk tank for next year's Fun Fair. Chantel to investigate whether Main Events has.

Council Financial Report:

- As of June 6, 2024, our bank balance was \$30,197.50 (see Appendix B for full financial report).
- Instrument purchase paid and 14 of 17 teachers reimbursed for classroom enrichment. Last call to be sent out for remaining teachers to submit.
- New Simcoe banner was ordered and used at Guildwood Day.
- Sales from one more pizza lunch left to come in.
- Projected bank balance \$29,329.61.

6. Events and Activities Updates

- **Scholastic Book Fair:** Amanda F asked how book fair is funded and if funds go to council. Funds go to a fund that is used for book purchases for library. There are funds remaining from 2023 Book Fair. Looking at holding Book Fair in late November 2024 and align with Teacher x Parent Interviews. Ms. Mark will be Librarian next year.
- **Construction:** Ruth is meeting with them weekly and expects that shovels will go into ground in 2025. Complete first phase by 2027 with Jack Miner closing 2027. Chantel asked how construction would impact Fun Fair, which needs to be further investigated. Conversation about Sunshine playground and moving it closer to the daycare exit door. Where playground currently is, is where the new gym extension will be.
- **Roseneath:** Ruth said kids loved it and felt it was cleverly done. It was very popular with kids from Kindie. If having to run two shows, would be more costly.
- **Staff Appreciation:** Amanda Y - Went well and had lots of volunteers. Teachers gave positive feedback and emails. Was worried about style but went really well. Gift was cupcakes and a \$5 Starbucks gift card for each teacher. Ruth thought it was brilliantly done and that teachers appreciated that they didn't have to plan a lunch and could socialize. Food was really good. For improvements, include Sunshine staff initially in invite.

- **Guildwood Day:** Purchased a new banner for parade. Guildwood JPS had school shirts that were handed out to those participating in the parade. Recommendation for next year: a.) Drive more engagement/participation/theming: suggestion to call out when having Spirit Wear sales. b.) To connect with Parade Marshall and register and to receive where to be placed in parade line.
- **School Council Town Hall:** Katie attended the second Town Hall of the year, PCCE Parents Caregiver and Community Engagement event hosted by TDSB.
 - A lot of schools applied for grants and didn't spend it as directed so it was taken away. Need to ensure to follow explicitly how funds can be utilized.
 - TDSB to provide school council communication tools including Messenger and Teams account for next year, and a direct IT line for councils for IT related issues.
 - As of September, for after-hour events, such as Fun Fairs, TDSB will not be paying for custodian extra hours. This would need to come from council. Ruth to look at how much it costs for caretaker wage at time and a half.

7. Fundraising Update

– Beth Brooks

- Pizza lunch went well. Beth loves the new volunteer form and structure. Recommendation for next year: Will not be splitting up purchases twice a year as it has caused some issues. First pizza lunch of 2024/2025 school year is booked for September 27th. There is the ability to add people and add an extra slice later in the year.
- Recommendation from parent to ask for donation to some families who are unable to purchase pizza lunch, like what Jack Miner does. Simcoe does supplement if there is a need, but consensus was that if we opened request for donations, we would likely have more donations than need.

8. Fun Fair Update

– Robyn Bluestein & Chantal Elward

- Debrief scheduled for Tuesday, June 11th at Megan's house.
- Event went really well. Two surveys were sent out to get feedback from attendees (Simcoe parents) and sponsors.
- Mary mentioned she received negative feedback from a neighbouring resident about parking on street in front of their house during Fair. A suggestion was given to put a flyer in mailboxes about the Fair. Discussion indicated that city limit for parking is three hours.
- Tammy is donating gardening basket back to school, as well as some Kindie items (e.g. chalk).
- Approximately 9 or 10 gift cards did not make it into silent auction due to a mix up with supply staff providing to Council on-time. Gift cards include Chapters, Amazon, McDonalds, Home Depot. Pre-paid Mastercard does have a fee once expired. A suggested was given that Council members can purchase gift cards for cash value and donate cash back to Council. Council will start with offering to Council members first and anything remaining can be offered to staff and/or bring to Volunteer Tea. E-transfer to be used for payment.

9. 2024/2025 School Year Planning

- Katie Eley

- Katie to summarize list and put to plan, and send to Council end of school year.
- Council is committed to spending \$12K for Lego. Estimated to make \$10K for pizza lunches in 2024/2024 school year, leaving Council with approximately \$27K.

SPIRIT

1. **Pancake Breakfast:** Continue to execute next year. Elizabeth to lead with and Amanda M to support.
2. **Grade 6 Grad:** Currently at \$3K spend, \$500 over estimated budget due to increased costs of items. Hood: \$1,684.24, Cupcakes: \$200, Cookies: \$246, Gift bags: \$50, Year books: \$4 per year book (TDSB printer), MCs: \$100. 47 graduates this year. Estimating 42 graduates in 2024/2025 school year- 21 gr 6 gifted and 21 regular.
3. **DJ Dance Party:** Organized by Katie.
4. **Movie Night:** Megan to lead, with Katie and Raluca as support. Request by Ruth not to have in winter due to wet winter boots. Believe license is good until February. Look at executing in Fall.
5. **Fun Fair:** Aligned to having it as the first event in Guildwood in spring (before garage sale, Strawberry Festival) – May 23rd 2025. Recommend to confirm inflatables as early as possible.
6. **Welcome BBQ:** Tentatively scheduled for September 19th. Katie suggested a new vendor, Mr. Corn - does corn roast, slightly cheaper option. Meal options include: beef and chicken burgers (approx. \$8-\$10), corn, Halal, Gluten-free. \$1K minimum for school. M&M was minimum 400 orders. Did not have very positive feedback on M&M, including food was mediocre, order mix ups, and not super friendly. Amanda Y / Megan to lead.
7. **Council Membership Drive:** Submitted by Amanda F. Drive awareness and membership signup at Welcome BBQ. Katie to develop one page summary packages to be sent out to Simcoe families via email from Ruth to educate on Council roles. Discussed that first Council meeting is not supposed to hold a position. Council rules stipulate that Council must have elected Council members by 30 school day mark; thus can hold voting meeting at second meeting. Ruth doesn't like to do it early as parents do not know what they're committing too. First Council meeting is September 17th. Hold elections Oct 10th and maintain current positions until elections.
8. **Freeze Fridays:** Submitted by Chantel. Students to buy freezes for \$1/\$2 with funds going to Council. Recommended to take place in May/June as too many days may go against food of beverage rules. Tammy to possibly lead.
9. **Earth Day / Month Simcoe Cleanup:** Submitted by Amanda Y. Program tied to Ontario curriculum. Classes rotate and take turns to help pick up trash. Require garbage bag and plastic gloves, estimated cost \$200.
10. **Krispy Kream Fundraiser:** Submitted by Robyn. Krispy Kream offers donuts to non-profit at reduced prices, which are resold for full price. Fundraiser last year made \$2,600. To confirm minimum and maximum order and date requirements. Possibly minimum order 50 and maximum order 500. Cost is now \$8 per box. Look into November date.
11. **Spirit Wear:** Submitted by Megan. New vendor suggested which would allow ordering year-round. Recommend aligning spirit wear with Pizza Day, which could drive more sales. Potential for new vendor sizes start at 2T, smaller than what is currently offered. Receive 10% back on orders.

12. **Move-a-thon for Cedar Drive:** Submitted by Elizabeth. To be called "move-a-thon" vs. "dance-a-thon" to align with physical activity as per mandated by TDSB. Students from Simcoe and Cedar Drive can participate in. Align to teach kids about helping and giving to others. It was discussed that by donating funds raised at Fun Fair to Cedar Drive, it does not involve the kids and to separate funds raised at Fair. Suggestion to put a cap on raised amount to be donated to neighbouring school, as well as create a goal chart to align to various levels raised. Look at executing in the second half of year, possibly around Valentine's Day. Discussion on continuing with Cedar Drive or possibly other school/charity once Council sees how 2024 Fun Fair donation is utilized.

CURRICULUM RELATED

13. **Scientists in the School:** Appreciated and enjoyed by school. 13 classes next year. Good to move forward with.
14. **Classroom Enrichment Funds:** To be used to purchase a variety of things. Suggestion to increase donation amount and happen earlier in the school year. Funding amount to be voted on. Suggestion was given to have more stipulations around what funds can be utilized for in order for Council to have more control of what type of items purchased and provide clarity that items stay in classroom.
15. **Pawsitively Pets:** Submitted by Robyn. Teach children about responsibility and empathy though caring and being in company of animals. Board approved vendor. Robyn to get more information on program.
16. **Roots of Empathy:** Submitted by Robyn. Raises empathy resulting in more respectful and caring relationships. Ability to execute across all grades. Ruth suggested start focus on grade 2/3 class. Ruth speaks very highly of it. \$500 for entire session.
17. **Code Ninjas:** Submitted by Sharmila. Teach coding in class. \$350 per class. Look at ability to come to school during as lunch program. Ruth likes lunch programs as it takes pressure off of the lunch time staff.

ARTS AND CULTURE

18. **School Garden / Green House:** Submitted by Amanda F. Support in teaching students responsibility and plant biology. Teachers can utilize garden to teach lessons in science. The school previously ran an Eco Club sponsored by a staff member (Mme. Sass has led in the past). Guided by TDSB's EcoSchools programming. Audits are performed looking at power usage, etc. Ruth mentioned it is a big commitment and requires staff advocacy. Suggestion was given to use Kindie playground planters to plant tulips as biology lessons. Feel there would be support from Kindie parents. Ruth mentioned Mr. Acoba may be interested in putting in a request to purchase an incubator for chicks, as current incubator is borrowed.
19. **Puppets Cool:** Submitted by Chantel and Elizabeth. Teaches students about active story telling, learn how puppets move and make own puppets. \$20 per student. Possibility to supplement by council. Suggestion limit to younger grades.

20. **Pride Month Drag Queen Storytime:** Submitted by Amanda Y. Storytime nurturs creativity, breaks down stereotypes, and creates inclusive space. Council is supportive. Ruth mentioned that she has received significant number of questions from parents regarding non-binary and trans education as part of the Human Development and Sexual Health program. May need to hold during lunch or make other arrangements for those students who do not want to participate.
21. **Book Fair:** Submitted by Robyn. Look at aligning in November with Teacher x Parent Interviews. Ms. Mark will be Librarian next year.
22. **Lunch Time Art Club:** Submitted by Robyn. There are other options for lunch so pass for next year.
23. **Nitwits:** Continue program.
24. **Wheelchair Basketball:** Submitted by Katie. Beth to speak with husband who has association with Variety Village for more details.
25. **Little Yogis:** Submitted by Chantel. Ruth mentioned that a number of students are struggling with mental health. Council discussed making it a priority to determine various options to support.
26. **Everblast Play Company:** Submitted by Chantel. To confirm if board approved.
27. **JungleSport:** Submitted by Megan. Provided over 4-5 days. Safety equipment is provided. To confirm if board approved.
28. **Rocks and Rings:** Submitted by Stuart. Cost is less than \$2 per child – up to 32 kids, 9 times. Grade 1 to 6. Only needs 2 weeks notice. Not many spots in February. Ruth said Ms. Navatril will likely be very interested in doing. Good value.
29. **YouthSpeak:** Submitted by Katie. Topics can include inclusivity, mental health. Sessions are \$500 each. Looking at executing one in fall and one 1 in winter.
30. **Money School Canada:** Submitted by Katie. To look further into costs and possibility of grants.

OTHER

31. **Misc. admin expenses:** Ruth to speak to contact on clarity on liability insurance.
32. **Movie License:** Expires in February.
33. **Popcorn / Cotton Candy Machine:** Purchasing would give Council the ability to sell popcorn at various events, such as movie night. Suggestion to look at Costco Business for prices and store in Staff Room.
34. **Deep Freezer:** Purchase to be used for various programs. Ruth to get Marco to get locksmith in to remove lock on old fridge and remove. Tammy has contact at Home Depot for possible discount.

35. **Donation to Cedar Drive:** Will vote on amount at next meeting. Fun Fair letter said up to 10% if Council exceed our goal.

Other Council Business:

- Ruth mentioned that next year most classes are looking at around 20 students.
- There is \$95.05 left over from Teacher Appreciation Lunch. Elizabeth to use for teacher appreciation initiatives next year.
- VOTE: Eligible members approved the decision to donate \$300 to Ms. Moss's retirement gift on behalf of Council by a vote of 10 Yes, 0 No, and 0 Abstain.
- Council year-end get together to be planned end of June.
- Sabrina and Melissa will not be returning to Council next year as their children will be going to new schools. We thank them for their support over the years. Jake unable to continue with Council due to work commitments.
- Next Meeting: Tuesday, September 17 at 6:30pm.