

GSF General Meeting Minutes

December 14, 2016

Called to order: 7:04 p.m.

Present: John Dasher, Suzanne Maloney, Karen Russillo, Sarah Brewer, Nicole Klock, Adam Treewater, Jaclyn Guelfi, Tami McCall, Sondra Lewis, Kim Goodhope, Keala Landry, Heather Hutchinson, Michael Mink, Katie Pohl, Dan Lyons, Andrea de la Fuente

Approval of November 2016 Meeting Minutes: Sarah Brewer moved to approve, Suzanne Maloney seconds the motion, minutes approved

New members to induct: Beth Sauls and Heather Hutchinson. Reminder, membership is achieved by attendance at 2 consecutive meetings and a Thrive donation.

Principal's report – Kim Goodhope: Holiday sing-a-long will be next Thursday, December 22. 3rd 4th 5th graders will be performing during the first half hour of school. Mr. Duffy is asking if parents could be here at 7:30 that morning to help set up. Teachers are doing report cards right now and these will go out on the last day before break.

Teacher Liaison report – Adam Treewater – In Kindergarten, the tradition continues; Mary accidentally left the gingerbread oven open and we have an escaped gingerbread person. 1st graders are collecting money for extra chores and are making a donation to St Vincent De Paul. 2nd graders visited fire department and got a tour in connection with government unit. They will also be doing a unit on companion pets. 3rd graders went to the California Academy of Science and are using Chromebooks. 4th graders are going to Buck Center and are collecting for people in need. 5th graders got back from Outdoor Ed and apparently the highlights were the food and the all-day hike. 5th graders are doing blogs on their experiences at outdoor ed. Art- Mrs. Blauvelt using ceramics, 1st graders are working with wood. For music, Mr. D is working on a sing-a-long and a visit to the symphony. The standing desks for 2nd grade going great and there will be a fundraiser to get the rest of the rest of the 2nd graders these desks. Mrs. Murphy has also expressed interest in standing desks. iPads in the computer lab are part of the buy that we were able to do with GSF money. Our goal is to help Kristen do more in the computer lab, such as provision of green screens.

VP Community Building – Tami McCall/Jaclyn Guelfi - Caroling has been postponed again due to rain and will now be Tuesday, December 20. Toy drive – this year we have 33 kids participating. There will be a pick-up time at Pickleweed this year as opposed to the drop-off of gifts that was done by Glenwood families in the past.

President's report – John Dasher - I have been meeting in a parent-leader capacity with the district on what our parents are doing and info they want us to disseminate. At the district level, one thing I have talked about is that there was a high school charter school petition (Ipsos school) for a new charter school starting in 2017 with approx. 120 kids. The school would have received a representative portion of the money that goes to the schools. They had a year to prepare for it. The SR school district voted against it for deficiencies in the proposal and they thought the programs were already represented at SRHS and TLHS. They went to the County Board of education who also voted it down. They were then able to appeal to the State Board of Education who typically allows it in, but at the end of November

they found out they didn't get a grant they anticipated getting which would have helped them go forward, so at least for this year they have abandoned their appeal. Architect for new multi-purpose room - we are touring several different MP rooms and we have our next meeting with an architect in January. There is a pool of money that we get allocated, but when it comes to actual construction it is substantially smaller because of all the other costs. Our architect, Wally Gordon, and Dan Zaich will come out and present what he has come up with and in Jan or Feb we will have this happen. We have a team of parents/teachers who are working on the review (John Dasher, Tami McCall, Bret Goldman, Adam Treewater, Nicole Cibellis, Jenni Conte). We are in the infancy of seeing what is possible. Timeline – this next year will be spent in planning, creation of blueprints etc., and with each step the City of SR has to approve it. Then has to be submitted to the State Board, which currently has a big backlog. The hope is to have it turned in at the end of summer. They can work on it during the schoolyear. There is a moratorium on construction during the rainy season. There are also environmental personnel working on it. Last things from the district – at the board meeting on Monday night will be a discussion on whether the kindergarten will go to full day, which would be the same length as the rest of the school days. It is not a done deal and is not universally loved by parents or teachers, but wanted to let you know it's out there. Finally wanted to share that Heads Up, which is responsible for paying for music for 2nd-5th and we supplement K-1, they are having a big day on Friday. All the Marin Whole Foods are giving 5% of all sales to Schools Rule, a parent organization that gives money to the schools. We want to make sure our community knows about this.

Main Event of this Meeting – Fundraising Feedback – John Dasher – We wanted to reserve most of the time at this meeting to a “fundraising forum.” We agree we are all invested in our kids and want to listen to community feedback about how we do what we do, why we do what we do and hear your feedback and where the end result is how best to continue our mission for the kids.

Nicole Klock will open this by reporting on the success of the Thrive drive we have had so far.

Nicole- we are wrapping up this Friday. We have reached our dollar goal and have exceeded it by close to \$10,000. This was the first time that we strategically tried to do it in the first 3 months of school and didn't conflict with other fundraising later in the year and also because it is taxing. We are happy we were able to raise what we did. We are at 71% participation. By comparison, Sun Valley is at 90 percent participation. They did a lot of outreach and talked about what it funds and how parents could donate. I was nervous to do this in 100 days but I am pleased we were able to reach our goals. I am grateful for the help of Anne Mueller and Kelli Kiernan as they were a lot of help.

John Dasher – we have a higher budget with a smaller student body that Sun Valley. Kudos to Nicole, Anne, and Kelli for all the work that they did. We have heard feedback that the way we did it wasn't appreciated by some. This is a conversation that is important for us to have as a community. We hear there are criticisms, we want to hear it and make a good experience but at the same time we realize we won't be able to do this in a perfect way for every family. I have received emails that the amount of solicitation and phone calls and emails was overwhelming and they felt singled out. Also felt that when the email went out thanking parents it felt like a shaming to those who had not donate. It did lead to more donations but I understand that the class leads let parents know it was coming out. I also heard that not everyone is in the same financial boat. As the GSF, we have responses to all those things and reasons for conducting our business the way we do. We don't take this job lightly and we think about

how people will receive the messaging. I backed them 100% but I do hear the criticisms. Want to know how we can best respond in the future asking for money and for time.

Parent comment - Katie Pohl – I never realized the importance of the donation when my now 2nd grader was in kindy. The only criticism I heard was the email. I did hear the new kindy parents say that the email felt like shaming.

Nicole Klock – We put a lot of thought into what went out to get to our goals. We are from the Venetia Valley area, which has a school without a lot of resources. I see what it takes to raise the money we need and I took a lot of care in designing this campaign to raise as much as we can. In making it shorter this year, we wanted to purposely inundate parents with information. We purposely did not send repeat info to those who had already donated and only targeted repeat requests to those who had not. I also am a believer in thanking those who DO donate. There is a wide range of donations that come through. I agree with John that we are never going to make everyone feel happy. People will feel singled out if they don't donate. We made it easy with options for small donations divided up.

Parent comment - Heather Hutchinson- I have nieces that went to Basich and my sister-in-law says the campaign there is a lot more intense.

Parent comment – Michael Mink – The word is that they publically shame you at some of the schools in southern Marin.

John Dasher – Before the thank you went out, there was an email sent to class leads saying to tell parents in the class to consider participating because an email was going to go out thanking those who have donated. Did that email feel different than the thank you email in terms of “shaming?” Does it feel wrong to have class lead parents involved in contacting the parents?

Parent comment -Heather Hutchinson – I am uncomfortable with parent leads having to do the asking. What I saw felt appropriate and non-shaming and enough info about the idea that if \$700 is too much then give what you can. I am not comfortable with families knowing names of other families who have not donated.

Nicole Klock – Sometimes the ask is stronger coming from a parent you know, however.

Sarah Brewer – The email was definitely an attention-getter.

John Dasher – Could it be a more generic ask?

Nicole Klock – We are open to other ways of running this

Parent comment – Keala Landry - At Sun Valley, they send letters home with the children saying who has donated, and at Mary Silvera they give tee shirts to the kids whose parents have donated. It was never published who didn't.

Suzanne Maloney – We know who hasn't because of who has and we don't target those who have already given.

Kim Goodhope- When the list comes out you know who has and has not donated.

Parent comment -Michael Mink – There is no right answer. This conversation happens every year. 71% is a good result. We have had results in the 40s 50s etc. Sun Valley has created a culture. People are always going to be upset.

Parent comment – Keala Landry – I agree that people should be acknowledged. I like the parent leads sending a general message. Think it should be coupled with side conversations.

John Dasher – a slightly different point here...do we feel there is a broad understanding by parents of where this money goes toward?

Nicole Klock – We have tried to build a culture of people understanding – how do we drill into that this is where this money is going. \$220k goes to Encore teachers, community programs and expenses, field trips, etc.

John Dasher – We have always put out there that people can donate what they can, but that message might not be reaching the whole population. We know that this is an ongoing discussion. We do want to do the ask in the most respectful way as we all know that what we are doing is for the good of the kids. This board is dedicated to this year responding to the criticisms so that the parent body is heard. We will continue to look at the conversation every year.

Parent comment - Heather Hutchinson – I am going to meet with Heather Woolen and Molly McEvoy about “behavioral finance” – research on what motivates people to take action. Tons of info on how to build a culture. Why people volunteer, etc. How to put the info out there, for example, “8 of 10 Glenwood parents meet the match.” The focus is on creation of messages that are based on science. Effort to change peoples’ minds from “oh geez” to “oh, this is what I need to do.”

Suzanne Maloney – I want to be clear that we want to have the conversations face to face rather than behind peoples’ backs.

Nicole Klock– My next job is going to be contacting the parents who didn’t donate to find out why. What are we missing, why are 30% of the population NOT donating? We want to get people to participate and join the community.

Parent comment - Katie Pohl – GSF meetings are small, with low attendance.

John Dasher – We know. I truly feel we are on the same team and we all want the best for our kids. As we move forward that is the message I want to carry forward. It is from a place of good intentions. I don’t want for any families to think they are a bad parent because they don’t do this or that. My mindset is how can we come together. Thank you for a civil discussion. We have had great parent participation, and there is probably still more money to come in.

Nicole Klock– We have to make lots of decisions with the money we have had come in.

Kim Goodhope – I appreciate how hard everyone works – with the volunteering and fundraising and without you we would not be able to do all of the things we do. We want to create a feel-good sense and we have looked at ways of doing that and we could move forward with that. Sun Valley put something out to their parents as a thank you for donating. We may be missing some of the ownership and may want to think about what else we can do. Thank you for participating in this discussion.

Meeting adjourned 9:00 p.m.

Submitted by Sondra Lewis, Secretary/Parliamentarian