

GSF General Meeting Minutes

May 10, 2017

Call to order: 7:09 p.m.

Present: John, Dasher, Kim Goodhope, Adam Treewater, Tami McCall, Cielo Kirk, Wilhelm Klesius, Stephen Roth, Anne Mueller, Nicole Klock, Heather Hutchinson, Sarah Brewer, Karen Russillo, Katie Pohl, Keala Landry, Denise Pesavento, Jaclyn Guelfi, Kathryn Elia, Katie O'Donnell, Sondra Lewis

New members: Cielo Kirk – welcome!

Approval of April 2017 Meeting Minutes: Will Klesius moves to approve, Jaclyn Guelfi seconds the motion, minutes approved.

Principal's Report – Kim Goodhope: Consistent achiever awards are being given out. 2 students are selected from every 5th grade on the basis of giving 110% and working really hard to succeed. Our two recipients this year are Osbaldo Gonzalez and Marguerite Walden-Kaufman. The Kathy O'Keefe Friendship Award was given out last week to 4th graders Sami Riley, Phoebe Cowlin, and Sebastian Schultz. Kathy came and gave a speech about them. We have also announced the Golden Bell winner, Mrs. Mont-Eton. San Rafael City Schools Board Member of the Year is Linda Jackson. We have extended kindergarten starting next year. Also happening in kindy and 1st grade is the Seal Program. Teachers are going through a huge PD piece, then the older grades get rolled in. This is about looking at integrated language. Bell schedule – there are rumors that this may be changing. The issue is we have one bus that we have to share. We still have a hard start at 8:45 and we are looking at end time still between 3:15 and 3:30. We will announce this when it's finalized. There will be morning care offered next year, as well as the Rise and Shine class and before-school Spanish. Aftercare will continue to be the same. Surveys are coming out soon (end of the year) which helps our site team. It lets us know things we need to shift.

Teachers report - Adam Treewater: Thanks to GSF for Teachers Appreciation Week. We had great Sol Food lunch and a snack cart. The outings for auction winners happen next Wednesday. We had a volunteer lunch today and had a great turnout. Mr. D's afternoon singing class entertained at the lunch. Kindy is studying oviparous animals (that lay eggs). There are some chicks in the classes. Kindy classes will be going to Wild Care. 1st graders are going to Marine Mammal Center. 2nd graders are going to the zoo and doing animal reports and doing skits. They will be having an end-of-the-year party. 3rd graders are heading to the Civic Center and getting ready for SBAC testing. 5th graders are working on water cycle and terrariums. 4th graders did the wax museum project and are heading to Sacramento on June 4. They are also working on science and engineering projects. Spring Sing is coming up and Mr. D is looking for volunteers. The school is still looking at flexible seating plans with standing tables and other options for student success. Paddle raise at the auction – we are taking the iPads in for repair and surveying teachers to see what they want and what else needs fixing.

President's Report – John Dasher: We sent out a survey a few months ago about GSF, do they know or care what it is, what fundraisers do they like, etc., and requesting general comments and feedback. Sarah Brewer is going to share some of that feedback now. Our goal is to serve our community the best we can.

Sarah Brewer– The 2 main reasons for the survey were to find out how to get higher attendance at these meetings and why they choose not to attend if they don't and questions on fundraising. We got 87 responses. I will give themes here.

Meeting attendance – 60% have never attended a meeting, 17% attend 1 or 2 per year. Biggest reason for not was the time, the hour and day of the week. 46% was time of meeting and 47% was other. Comments were mostly conflicting priorities or commitments. Say it goes too late so childcare is a problem, especially if there are other kids at home. A lot of feedback was “I would love to, but...” What change could prompt attendance? Highest was to have meeting in the morning after drop-off. Could perhaps have a couple in the morning after drop-off. Some said we need more guest speakers, some say have it at a park so kids could come, and some said the location was fine. A handful said maybe we should publish the agenda (which we do) so maybe we need to make it more prominent.

Fundraising side – Question on who participates in what fundraisers. 78% auction, 74% Thrive, 72% book fair, 69% read a thon...(get rest from Sarah). 28% crab feed, poker night. On which they think is worthwhile, 84% said book fair (get rest from Sarah). Comments were not that it's the fundraisers that we do, but that there are so many. Some people thought it would be great to have more community-building. On which fundraisers people feel are not worthwhile, most said all were fine, but 61% said could do without poker night. Not one person said Thrive wasn't worthwhile. Only 3% said book fair not worthwhile. Comments indicated that the variety was fine, but some people feel overwhelmed. Some say they just don't feel part of the in-crowd when they go. Some say they don't like using the kids to raise money. Last part was suggestions for fundraisers and any other suggestions. Suggestions included– Show Your Love at Valentine's day (direct donations), push corporation matching, make it easy, put on an outdoor concert where performers donate their talent, and date nights.

John Dasher: The biggest complaint we get is that there's incessant “noise” thru emails, hip pockets.

Cielo Kirk – We want to remind people that to have what we do have, we do this fundraising. This is why there are the asks. There are people willing to step up and continue this process. If you want a great public school, you must step up. I think there needs to be more honesty and communication around this. If you want Glenwood to be Glenwood, this is what we need to do.

John Dasher – This is a good jumping off point for my report. What I have this month to share is that we are having a volunteer crisis. Mr. Duffy is worried about having people there to help with Spring Sing. The question is how do we as the GSF get it out there that we do need people to step up. Things will go by the wayside. We as the GSF need to remind people that the volunteering is just as important as the financial contribution. If these things aren't supported, then things fall by the wayside.

Heather Hutchinson – Do we have data on how many volunteer hours are needed?

John Dasher – We were talking about this as a board and we were thinking that 5 hours per month of volunteering in any capacity would be good. We need volunteers for everything in the classrooms – centers, party parent, etc, as well as things like Spring Sing. We have talked about having that ask. Everything is on that program and you can sign up and it has the time commitment.

Nicole Klock – It is important to create a culture that volunteerism is the expectation because it has slowed down quite a bit since I have been here.

Cielo Kirk – I came from a charter school where you had to sign up for hours. Tracking hours is really hard, people don't like it. You had to guarantee that you would do it. It wasn't helping. The last year, I came up with a form of what our events were. It was turned in with names and emails and the volunteer coordinator would organize volunteers.

Katie Pohl – But is the sign up stuff an accurate indicator of who we get.

John Dasher – We had some programs we didn't do this year because people didn't step up to do them. We have had people not present for centers. We need to build a better culture about volunteering.

Kathryn Elia – We need to get diverse groups running these things. People call on their friends. We don't have enough men/dads supporting and that's half the community. I think there's a need to tap other resources. I feel like we are getting some parents of younger kids starting to get involved, especially as an example with the daughter dance.

Heather Hutchinsin – I have been talking to Heather Woolen and Molly Nute and we have been talking about the culture of setting an expectation for volunteering. Like Thrive, it isn't mandatory, but we can say the expectation is that people volunteer 5 hours per month. Help people know where they can fit in. I get the tracking is difficult so maybe it's more of the honor system. People can find their niche.

Keala Landry – Focusing on the younger grades will be great. I have had some parents come up to me to say they are ready to start coming to GSF meetings. Gathering as a Nest group, suggesting the group will staff book fair on a particular day, etc. Feel people want to help but need to feel comfortable.

Cielo Kirk – People may not know or understand the real need for help.

Dasher – I want to emphasize that we are aware of the deficit and we are trying to change it. I will send out an email and if you know people who might want to volunteer, you can have them contact me and I can get them in the right direction. Any volunteering helps.

Board Nominations – Traditionally we have nominations come in and are given out at the May meeting and new Board is sworn in at the June meeting. We set up a gmail account and were hoping to get nominations. We don't have a full slate of volunteers right now, including President. We will nominate the people tonight who have expressed interest. I will send out communication. For tonight we will go around the room and commemorate them for the minutes. If you have people in your life you feel would be a good fit, then please let me know. Without further ado...

President – Open

VP, Fundraising – Anne Mueller and Heather Hutchinson for Thrive, and the other arm will be run by Kathryn Elia

VP, Community Building – Jaclyn Guelfi and Keala Landry

Secretary - Tami McCall

VP, Communications – Sarah Brewer

Treasurer – Molly McEvoy is interested in being the “super assistant” to the Treasurer but is concerned that she might not be able to make the meetings. We are still in need of a Treasurer

To be nominated, typically you have had to attend 2 meetings consecutively and to have made a Thrive donation (per the bylaws).

Nicole Klock – If people are hesitant about attending, or feel they can't make all the meetings, could the meetings be reduced in number, or could people occasionally conference call in?

John Dasher – That could be considered but would have to be determined by the incoming President.

Cielo Kirk has nominated herself for School Programs, which includes Green Team, Author Days, Walk and Roll, Field Trip Coordinator, Community Service.

In summary, open positions are President and Treasurer. The preference for these is that we have co-leaders.

Induction of new roles will be at our next meeting on May 31.

New Business: No new business.

Old Business: Katie Pohl – Rock and Run was a huge success as far as turnout and the kids enjoying it. The donations however are on the low side. I want to send out one more notification to turn in money. People can also donate online. I will make that clear in the communication.

Denise Pesavento – Maybe there needs to be a better explanation of what the organizations are and where the donations go so it is clear where people are putting their money.

John Dasher – Agreed, and it should be clear that the money goes to our consultants, to field trips, and all the other places it goes. All the money goes into the same pot.

Nicole Klock – Other schools don't have the donations we have and they don't have all the great things we have. Public schools don't have the funding they used to and we have to have the donations in order to have all of the "extras" that we are fortunate enough to now have.

Heather Hutchinson – Seems that people are experiencing "email burnout." People have stopped reading them. Maybe we need posters, visuals, etc to get people hearing about these things.

Katie Pohl – Think we need a new marquee.

Cielo Kirk – Car magnets?

Nicole Klock – We did magnets a couple of years ago and they were not successful.

John Dasher – Tonight's meeting has been a great example of how we can get people together and coming up with great ideas. Take away is that at the very least we have people in the room who want to get there, find solutions. I will send an email out in the next few days.

Denise Pesavento – I wanted to throw out the idea of paying for field trips and buying school supplies rather than the Thrive donation.

John Dasher – We want everyone to feel invested. I have had the conversations with people who say "when is it ever enough?" as far as the donations, the volunteering. There is no perfect solution. We

hear all of it, we don't want people to feel defensive about their suggestions. I don't want to engage negativity.

Nicole Klock— I want to end on a high note. This year, people really stepped up, the kids had great programs, the kids are thriving at this school, and people should be proud of what they have done. We have parents who care and who are willing to dive in.

John Dasher – thank you all for being here tonight. Our next meeting is Wednesday, May 31.

Adjourned 8:35 p.m.

Submitted by Sondra Lewis, Secretary/Parliamentarian