

Mills River Elementary School Parent Teacher Organization
PTO Meeting Minutes
December 14th, 2023 @ 1:00 p.m.

Meeting Called to Order/Attendance Jessica Lucas

- Already December! Happy holidays and thanks to everyone for all you do!
- Attendees: Jessica Lucas, Tracy Klaes, Stacey Klepp, Beth Campbell, Katie Foley, Betsy Casebolt, Kacie Tilley, Marylou Socha, Amy McKinstry, Jennifer Stalling, Lauren Klocko, Katherine Dare (phone)

President's Welcome Jessica Lucas

- Mills River Fire Department Santa sighting on 12/9 was a huge success with 50-60 people in attendance.
 - o Kept it low-key/low investment with games (ring toss and bean bags), hot cocoa, marshmallows, and candy cane stir sticks – Santa showed up right at 4pm
 - o Ideas for next year: Hot cocoa bar?
 - o This means A LOT to Mr. Auten and it doesn't seem optional for us to participate, we should continue with this event.
- Discussion about family photos with Santa as a potential event next year – thinking early December?
 - o PTO has done this in the past. Described as "Very cute with huge turnout!"
 - o Maybe this could be combined with the Santa Sighting in some way?
 - o Suggestions: Decorate the gym as the North Pole or Santa's Workshop; Low cost admission/tickets; Crafts for kids to do; Cookies for sale; Food truck; Snow machine for an evergreen planted outside
 - o Parents can take photos of children with Santa – Free if no photographer, \$20-\$25/family for a photographer to take them?
 - Amy to find about the photographer she knows who did this in the past and donated the proceeds back to the school
 - Utilize a teacher who does photography?
- Post-Christmas Christmas Event Planning Meeting – Maybe early January. Betsy will send an email to schedule.

Treasurer's Report Tracy Klaes

- Not much happened this month
- Paper for poster maker was deducted from the account
- Huge donations from Blue Ridge Bicycle Co. & Seth Alvo from Burn Peaks to get the bike program kicked off. Still short \$1,000 but Tracy isn't concerned. We have funds available and Tracy is still working on funding.
 - o Helmets: \$2,000 annual expense – we want students to be able to keep their helmet annually
- Tracy wants to seek sponsorships/donations for \$6,000 to cover the remaining expenses of the gym fan (she does not want to use fundraiser money for this unless she has to)
 - o Mr. Auten says sponsors/donors could put their names on it?? "Tracy has notes"

Vice President's Report Lauren Klocko

- See below

Secretary's Report Katherine Dare

- Nothing to report

Dads Group Kevin Ensley

- Nothing to report

Fundraising Committee (The Rock & Fast Pass) Campbell, Dare

- Next fundraiser planning meeting: Wednesday, January 10th, 9 a.m. @ Cognitive Brew House, 3771 Brevard Road, Hendersonville, NC 28791
- Give Butter platform information has been sent out or is being sent out soon

- Spirit Night – Yes will happen, Jessica is setting up
 - o Dari-O, February 20th, 5 – 8:00 p.m., 10% of all sales inside and drive thru, Anyone that comes, Name of school does not have to be mentioned

Katherine – Spring Fundraiser – Decisions made at last meeting, thanks all!! Kick off: Feb. 29th, Run: March 15th

Approved by administration: Video kick-off February 29th; Run on March 15th (not on March 14th because that's Picture Day); Fundraising goal 100% towards playground & committee will make decisions to help with wording re: our request; GetMovin platform; If students meet Base Goal, each student will be able to shop at the School Store, will be broken into 2 days; Run will be inside the gym; We discussed possibility of a Color Run during Field Day as an alternative (with Ms. Fletcher & Coach Starling) but they don't like the idea, but suggested an afterschool event in the fall (to be discussed later or Kacie can explain a little better)

- o They did not want to do a color run as part of field day because field day is supposed to be fun; kids with sensory issues might not enjoy the run. Better suited as a fundraiser – maybe do this right before back-to-school – we could even do it at the MR park or a Brewery (this is allowed now – YAY for alcohol at fundraising events!)
 - Mrs. Socha has a contact at MRB, maybe we could do it there?

School Store

Amanda Ledbetter & Kacie Tilley

- Not much to report. Will start planning with 5th grade parents in January.
- Currently has \$3,200 to use (maybe just \$2,700, it is unclear if the end of year balance is supposed to be left at \$500 or \$1,000). Kacie says the end of year balance has to be left at \$500 and PTO donates another \$500, making it \$1,000

Staff Appreciation Committee

Jaquez, McKinstry & Rusert

- Amy says we're good on wrapping paper; might be short on gift cards
 - o We are short 4 – Katie to bring to school Friday morning
- Hot cocoa and cookies galore! Each staff member will get 2 sweets
- Tracy, please arrive @ 10 a.m., starts @ 10:45 a.m. – There is plenty of help; should be covered
- It's going to be great. If anyone complains, they don't deserve to be appreciated after all the hard work and thought has been put into this day.
- Amy is not worried, she will indulge heavily after

Spiritwear

Tracy Klaes

- We've been selling things!

Volunteer Coordinator

Betsy Casebolt

- Thanks to all book fair volunteers!
- Sign-up Genius has a "thank you" feature – we should use this for future sign-ups!

Duty-free lunch in January, tentative date: Friday 1/26

- Ms. Fletcher to confirm date
- Betsy wants to get her hands on a class schedule to spread out the scheduling of volunteers if possible
 - o Lauren has the rolling list – will send it to Betsy
- Make sure teachers know to come back for their classes
- Another volunteer breakfast happening 2/2/24 @ 7:30 a.m.
 - o Thinking "Winter Blues" or Love/Valentines theme
 - o Last one went well, just need more help with set-up and tear-down
 - o Potentially use this as an opportunity to recruit parent sponsors – If we do this, how do we do this nicely? Maybe just a sign or letter that asks for sponsors? Maybe we don't ask for sponsors, but use this as an opportunity to make sure volunteers are aware of all upcoming fundraisers, events, etc.

Leader In Me

Kacie Tilley

- Haven't heard anything from Leader In Me – all good there

- Ideas from other schools, thought would be good for our PTO/school to consider:
 - o Fletcher planted a Douglas Fir (or close) & they get a snow machine for their Santa event, something for the Playground Committee to consider
 - o Glenn Marlowe splits their Thanksgiving Lunch into 2 days, K-2 & 3rd – 5th; no standing in line for more time than there is to eat with the kids
 - o Gratitude Tree, each kid gets a leaf & writes a note to someone they're thankful for in the school – the pics were adorable
- School Calendars – Drafts for the next 2 school years are out, each are similar to this year, Superintendent plans to put out and School Board plans to approve 2 years in advance for better future planning

New Business and Other Topics

Purchase Request Team funding for Ms. Stertzbach

- Ms. Stertzbach passed her National Boards
 - o She can be reimbursed partially for this and has submitted the paperwork. Huge congratulations!
 - o Board votes YES to approving her reimbursement
- Mrs. Socha to spread the word that there are lots of opportunities like this available to all teachers!

Playground update:

- Lauren is going to meet with Ashley Barr, our local rep from the company that did the last playground project – they will be discussing the following:
 - o Lead-times and storage – Mr. Auten definitely wants something installed by the end of this year for this years' 5th graders
 - o Pricing – Do the prices online reflect installation? If not, how much should we budget for this?
 - o Ashley's involvement with past playground project
- Lighthouse Team:
 - o Brainstormed which pieces of equipment they wanted to propose to the student body as new options & agreed they liked the motion or electronic play pieces the most
 - Electronic play not happening
 - PTO all agrees we really like the Spinetic (from Burke) – similar to big spinning piece at Jackson Park
 - o Cost est. \$22,000 (not sure what's included) – estimating about \$30,000 to spend on this?
 - o This leaves about \$10,000 for benches/shade/tables/etc.
 - Soccer goals would be another great idea for 5th graders
- Tracy – Grant writing team:
 - o Grants will likely not get us any playground equipment; this is more for the walking/bike track and other structural things
- Scott Burwell (Ms. Burwell's husband) is still interested in helping with the playground project. Lauren is hoping to meet with him in January. PTO would not have to pay for his work, just his associate. Lauren will update later with more information.
- Ms. Fletcher has info on the adaptive swing and sandbox
 - o There is a grant for an adaptive swing, so funds that were originally donated for it are going to be used for a sandbox. Tracy to reach out to Ms. Fletcher to figure out what's going on here

Meeting Adjourned

Next Meeting: Thursday, January 18th @ 1:00 pm

Workshop Meeting: Spring Fundraiser Planning Meeting, Wednesday, January 10th @ 9 a.m., Cognitive Brew House, 3771 Brevard Rd, Hendersonville, NC 28791