

St. Gerald School Board Meeting Minutes
April 16, 2015

Present

Fr. Malcom, Pastor
Al Theis, Principal
Jen O'Reilly, President
Gail Stearns Hussein, Vice-President
Paulina Bednarek, Secretary
Joanne Chavez Buchanan
Daniel Cerceo
Jennifer Cronin
Theresa Munoz
Nicholas Suh

Absent

Michael Johnson

Guests

Theresa Fiscella
MaryAnn Horn
Karolyn Horn
Kathleen Hennessy

Called to order at: 7:01pm

Opening Prayer

Al Theis

Motion to approve minutes from March 2015 meeting

- 1st motion: Gail Stearns Hussein, 2nd motion: Dan Cerceo

Principal's Report

- Tomorrow morning there will be the annual tornado drill, it is normally in March
 - Most students go to Chapel Hall, some go by the maintenance area
 - The students still crouch
 - We are required to do 1 drill annually
- We had a 2nd lockdown drill on 3/18
 - Supervised by sergeant Passetti
 - We did well
 - There were a few minor tweaks
- We are working with the county to keep traffic flowing during construction on central ave
 - They sent a brochure regarding the construction home to all students
 - Hopefully by mid-May we can move the traffic back to the West side

- Kiss and Ride will be back to West as soon as we are allowed
- Next week
 - Sports World will be sending a motivational speaker to our school
 - The speaker will be Michael Cobb and it is a free presentation
 - He is a former Chicago Bears player
 - He will talk about faith and good choices
 - There will be 2 assemblies: 1 for grades 4/5 and a 2nd for grades 6/7/8
 - Ken Johnson from the CN Bengals has been out in previous years

President's Report

- We are looking for more applicants for the Board for next year
 - So far we only have 1 application in
- Applicants do not have to be school parents
 - They can be parish members
- Nominations for next year
 - Jen O'Reilly nominated Paulina Bednarek for Vice-President (accepted)
 - Gail Stearns Hussein nominated Dan Cerceo for President (accepted)
 - Jen O'Reilly nominated Theresa Munoz for Secretary (declined) Nicholas Suh (declined) Jen Cronin (declined), Gail Stearns Hussein (accepted)
 - As there were no objections and only one accepted nomination per position, no vote will be held. The 2015/2016 Executive Board is:
 - President - Dan Cerceo
 - VP - Paulina Bednarek
 - Secretary - Gail Stearns Hussein

Old Business

- Theresa Munoz presented sample tuition contracts from St Daniels
- We are having trouble collecting tuition
 - It might be more effective to have a separate contract on Curriculum Fee Day
 - Tuition has to be in on time and if you are having difficulty you have to contact Mr. Theis to make arrangements otherwise exclusions do go into effect (exclusions can be no extra activities or graduation activities for example)
 - When families are behind they would not pay directly to Smart Tuition but rather to the office
 - Theresa will type our initial draft and have it available at the next meeting
 - She spoke to a few St. Daniel families and they believe it works
- Jen O'Reilly agreed that there should be ramifications but asked for clarification as to how far delinquent a family must be before a child is excluded.
- Jen Cronin said maybe when they make good faith effort no exclusions will be put into place

- Gail Stearns Hussein said we are a charitable school and will work with the family to the best of our ability to avoid the child/children being excluded from activities.
- Kathleen Hennessy was concerned that the children might be embarrassed.
- Dan Cerceo said an internal step needs to be made and discretion needs to be used.
- Jen O'Reilly mentioned that we have families who are very delinquent
 - This not in reference to someone who is 24 hours behind
 - Details of exclusions and such would need to be in the contract
 - detailed paperwork would need to be kept and be kept confidential
- Nicholas Suh agreed and said as long as you are willing to work with the school something can be worked out
- Mr. Theis said we have piece meal ways now of how we do it but it needs to be laid out and more structured and Father has seen it work at past parishes
 - Mr. Theis said just like St. Daniel has it laid out so will we. We will also include the no sports provision just like St. Germaine.
 - The Wisdom Fund is available for some struggling families
 - Funds from that need to be warranted
 - It would be confidential
 - For example if a student was excluded from a field trip the teacher would not tell the other students why
 - We are in a financial bind due to delinquent tuition and need to get out.
- Jen O'Reilly asked Theresa Munoz to rewrite our contract.
 - Jen Cronin said there needs to specific language and Paulina Bednarek said if sports are to be excluded to put that in there also
 - Jen O'Reilly also said to include language on good faith efforts made and Jen Cronin suggested language on the Wisdom Fund to be included
- Theresa Munoz said she will get it together and present it next month
 - She asked if she should include the tuition price and book fee
 - Mr. Theis said yes
 - They are recommending a 4% raise to tuition based on the expected figures for salaries and insurance
 - The insurance cost will increase
 - Tom Forbes and Father will make a final number decision
 - Father did say it will go up
- Nicholas Suh asked what insurance plan do we have
 - Mr. Theis said we go with the Archdiocese and one of the plans is BCBS of IL for example
 - Only full time contracted teachers are on our budget for insurance
- Jen O'Reilly asked if everyone looked at the new website Nicholas Such designed
 - Gail Stearns Hussein said we need to organize it more and make it more user friendly like the other schools and new images
 - Dan Cerceo said he has access to the yearbook images
 - He will check with Mrs. Hosty
 - Nicholas Suh asked if all the students have signed a release

- Paulina Bednarek said they should check that they all did and that they are all on file
- Nicholas Suh said he will get this information from Mr. Theis
- Jen Cronin said we could get some ideas from St. Catherine and St. Linus' websites
 - For example we could have links to recommended websites for students and the Accelerated Reading List
- The price for all the tests to all books for AR is \$1500
 - 10% of St. Gerald Market can go towards this
 - Nicholas Suh bought the Market IP address
 - It will be a Pay pal platform therefore school protection is there
- Gail Stearns Hussein mentioned that we could have new flyers for Open House and reach out to families for blurbs as well as let families know we have a new website
- Jen Cronin mentioned St. Germaine's website has a "Why Choose" section
- Nicholas Suh said we could have a prospective students tab

New Business

- Kathleen Hennessy brought up some concerns: no maternity leave subs for the 6th grade classroom, concerns regarding the gym teacher and concerns regarding the junior high science teacher.
 - Mr. Theis said there is a substitute problem because of money.
 - We pay our substitute teachers low and it is only \$80 a day
 - Gail Stearns Hussein said that is actually standard and her school district also pays their subs that amount
 - Mr. Theis said that amounts to \$400 a week so we need \$800 a week for both the 3rd and 6th grade classrooms and that money is not in the budget
 - Tom Forbes who does our finances said we do not have it
 - We have Mrs. Fortuna now for 2 weeks in 3rd grade on a week to week basis and Mr. Theis himself is subbing in 6th grade
 - The school can only afford \$440 a month currently so that is why Mr. Theis has been subbing in 6th grade.
 - Mr. Theis mentioned that Father Malcolm went to the Holy Name Society to ask if they would cover the cost of a substitute teacher
 - Our tuition recovery has been stronger in the last few weeks we have partial success
 - Paulina Bednarek asked Mr. Theis if the parents have been notified of the circumstances regarding the status of the subbing situation
 - Theresa Munoz said the parents have not been notified and consistency is needed

- Kathleen Hennessy mentioned that we do out of uniform days for other causes maybe this is one such instance where they could be used.
 - She also asked why was the walk a thon taken away as that generated funds and was enjoyable
 - Mr. Theis said they replaced with the Hoop a Thon to try something new
- Gail Stearns Hussein said the students need structure and need a consistent teacher
- Paulina Bednarek asked if the tarp for the gym has already been bought and if not maybe we could ask the Mother's Club to help procure funds for teachers in the 3rd and 6th grade classrooms
 - Jen O'Reilly said the floor covering was already bought but maybe we could still ask Mother's Club
- Jen Cronin said we can't take a teacher away from students and that it is too inconsistent to have random subs
- Father Malcolm said we are now \$80,000 in debt and we don't want to get behind on paying health care
 - Our toughest month is July and we need the money set aside for teachers' salaries
 - Mr. Theis is a certified teacher
 - The idea of combining both classes and having Mrs. Arnold teach them was not feasible
- Paulina Bednarek said if we have \$440 and need \$800 we need to come up the remainder somehow
 - Paulina Bednarek said we could try the out of the uniform days to procure funds
 - Jen O'Reilly agreed we could try
- Discussion ensued regarding the dire situation and it was mentioned that 36 students is the cut off for classroom and 3rd grade is right on that cusp.
 - Kathleen Hennessy said not having teachers available is a huge concern and her family is waiting to re register as things are not stable with the teaching currently.
 - Another idea was given to do a 2nd collection at church for the school.
 - Father Malcolm said it is not just us that are behind St. Linus is also \$60,000 behind as is another local school \$70,000 behind
 - Paulina Bednarek asked since we were behind from last by \$35,000 are we behind already by \$45,000?
 - Yes we are behind by a total of \$80,000 but some is being recovered.
 - Dan Cerceo asked who can give us an exact amount.
 - Mr. Theis said he could ask Tom Forbes.
 - Father Malcolm asked don't we have a permanent sub?

- Kathleen Hennessy said the students cannot go a quarter of the year without a teacher.
 - Mr. Theis said he couldn't promise Mrs. Fortuna a permanent position so she is on a week to week basis and he does not know if she will be available to sub for the rest of the year.
 - Theresa Munoz said we need a solution.
 - Kathleen Hennessy said we need a consistent teacher.
- Paulina Bednarek asked if we knew there were be 2 teachers going on maternity leave why was a plan not in place for getting teachers to replace them.
 - Jen O'Reilly made an official recommendation that funds be used from out of uniform days to obtain substitute teachers.
- Paulina Bednarek asked if the walk a thon money is already designated to go towards something.
 - It is to be used for teacher salaries in the summer
- Theresa Munoz brought up the need of a discipline policy. There have been problems in Extended Day.
 - Discussion ensued regarding the current discipline policy for grades 4 and up.
 - Theresa Munoz asked if the Discipline Policy could always be in place not just during school hours but also for Extended Day as well as Sports.
 - Mr. Theis said the policy has been in place informally.
 - Jen Cronin asked who oversees Extended Day now.
 - Mr. Theis said Leeann LaCoco does
 - It was mentioned Extended Day discipline policies used to be different and no hitting or touching was allowed.
 - Mr. Theis said he is still in charge of immediate concerns at Extended.
 - Jen Cronin asked if there was an incident at Extended who would a parent contact
 - Mr. Theis said both he and Ms. Leeann should be contacted
- Gail Stearns Hussein mentioned that in the State of IL within 3 years it is going to system of restorative justice and is the Archdiocese pushing that
 - Mr. Theis said currently the Archdiocese only consults and gives the schools leeway in terms of discipline policy
 - Theresa Munoz once again asked if we could extend the discipline policy to Extended Day
 - Mr. Theis said he would ask the faculty to weigh in
 - Jen O'Reilly officially recommended that the policy extend to beyond the school day to other school functions

- Trivia night made between \$3100/3200 they had 159 people, usually they have 200. This year fell during spring break which is believed to have hurt attendance. Overall it went well
- The Hoop a thon needs volunteers
 - Junior High is still going on the downtown walking trip
- Next year the Board would like to focus on grant writing
 - Gail Stearns Hussein mentioned that St. Linus has a grant writer on their Board
 - Rudy Perez
 - Mr. Theis said we can contact them for more information
 - Paulina Bednarek said she would like to help organize the UIC Science bus to come out next year
 - Jen O'Reilly said grant writing should be one of the Board's goals for next year.

Pastor's Report

- Father Malcolm asked about St. Daniel's tuition contract and Jen O'Reilly recapped what was said earlier
- Father just came from the Sports Meeting and they have the same problem that people are not paying fees
- The furniture from the law firm was delivered, the parish paid half and the firm paid half
 - Paulina Bednarek asked how much was our portion
 - Father said around \$5000 was our cost
- Father said the parish is thriving and we are having a lot of baptisms and had 108 Confirmed

Announcements

- None

Comments/Questions from the Floor

- Kathleen Hennessy brought up some concerns: tuition exclusions, no maternity leave subs for the 6th grade classroom, concerns regarding the gym teacher and concerns regarding the part time Science junior high teacher (see specific comments regarding these issues in the Principal and New Business section)

Motion to Adjourn: Jen Cronin **Second:** Nicholas Suh

Closing Prayer: Fr. Malcom

Adjourned: 8:21 pm