

# St. Bernadette School PTO Executive Board Meeting February 1, 2011

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7:00 pm

Meeting Minutes

## **Attendance:**

President	Geoff Bacino	Present
Vice President	Erin Moore	Present
Secretary	Andrea O'Grady	Present
Treasurer	Mike Hickman	Present
Ways and Means	Joe Bury	Absent
Principal	Mrs. Beeks	Present
Vice Principal	Mrs. Richard	Present
Faculty Representative	Sandy Barrick	Absent
Grade Representative	Tracey Pilone	Present
Volunteer Coordinator	Jill Hardek	Present
Cultural Arts	Christine Gacharna	Absent
Charter Chair	Joan Cantarelli	Present

**Copy to:** Donna Feerst      Church  
Fr. Larsen  
Fr. Pollard  
All Committee Members

The following constitutes our understanding of the matters discussed and conclusions reached. If there are any errors or omissions in the basic discussions, please notify the writer.

## **MEETING NOTES:**

**Opening Prayer: Geoff Bacino**

**President's Report: Geoff Bacino**

*Diocesan Science Fair*

--Received a request to donate \$50 to the Science Fair. Board unanimously approves giving \$50.

*Accelerated Reader Program*

This is a reading program that can be done in the classroom and at home. Mrs. Potochny says they read books and can go on the computer program and test reading comprehension, etc...

Geoff says last year we budgeted 5,000 to take out of the Race for Education, earmarked for something to help the school. This program runs about \$5,000. Maybe this is something we can use the money for.

*Microwave and Oven*

Fr. Kevin approved the new industrial strength microwave and oven.

## **Treasurer's Report: Mike Hickman**

*Fundraising:*

Last month we were behind in collecting money from SCRIP—it is way up now. We still have money trickling in from Race for Education. Poinsettia sales were down from last year.

*Lunch program:*

The lunch program is doing well.

*Other Treasurer Business:*

Mike will be reconciling through December with Donna Feerst on Friday.

Mrs. Beeks asks Mike if he can write a check for Race for Education after he meets with Donna. Fr. Kevin has approved. \$43,694 less \$5,000.

Geoff says he's waiting for cancelled checks from Mike from the Fall Festival, Big Country cashed 3 checks accidentally and now may owe us about \$1,000.

## **Grade Representative: Tracey Pilone**

*Volunteer Survey:*

We have 121 responses so far--about half the families. Two things everyone agrees on—basically they are happy with the level of service at school and the fundraising.

However, there are still two differing viewpoints on volunteering:

Some say they work full time and can't help out, others say they stay at home and say they help out too much

Tuition increase came out this past week:

Mrs. Beeks says, to clarify, the increase of tuition pays for salaries and operating costs, not for the volunteer duties. Every year, tuition increases and it has been held

the last few years around 3 %. We are able to control costs and able to pay people what they deserve—but they deserve WAY more! Books and fees and extended day rates have not increased. We are working hard to control the increase in tuition by working hard to control our costs.

*Opt-out:*

Mrs. Beeks says it is clear we need to discuss where the opt-out money is going. In order to control the number of people on duty, we need to hire people the last 7 or so weeks of the year to cover those positions.

*Number of people on playground:*

Mrs. Beeks said the reason why we went to an additional number this year is because risk management says we need 2 adults on the playground. The PTO Board last year increased the number of times per year that parents have to volunteer per child. We need to give parents guidelines about playground duty and opt-out fees, in a letter to the community.

*Race for Education and renovations:*

Why do we have to do more during these tough times? Mrs. Beeks said, we need to move forward as other schools are expanding and renovating. It was this school's time to do sweeping renovations. We still need a new roof, which falls under operating costs.

*Open House:*

The PTO no longer has the expense of open houses. The school is now paying the cost of providing the reception, etc...

Other valid points on the survey about the fundraisers and events such as the:

Band reception

Class parties

Joan says she does not think parents mind bringing in cookies and drinks for events such as the band concerts.

Mrs. Beeks says we can look at these survey results and start scaling down on some of the events we have—maybe we need to think about how much is too much, where can we pare down a little bit and have a little less.

There were good and valid points looking at fundraisers.

She is not sure about Race for Education—if we can all get on the Scrip bandwagon, we could forgo some fundraisers.

Joan says there are some schools where Scrip is mandatory. Geoff says eventually this would be it pretty easy and routine if the time came to have Scrip be mandatory. It's all stuff we use. Its gas, groceries, etc...Geoff would like to see a rundown of how many families currently do it and what the average profit is. We have to get it to a

self-sustaining business. We have to figure out how to do it. How about doing it through Pay Pal? Mrs. Beeks says it would be a good idea for Mary Fedorochko to be in on this conversation to discuss the options.

Can Scrip be sold in the office? Mrs. Beeks says no. Scrip must be handled by volunteers only. Anyone paid by the parish in any capacity is not allowed to sell Scrip.

Tracey Pilone asks about the lunch program. Since it has made money, can we leverage that money into some of the volunteers?

Mrs. Beeks says the profits from there are needed for other PTO things...hiring a cafeteria person would be helpful.

*Teacher Aides:*

Joan Cantarelli asks about aides for the lower grades. Years ago there were aides. Then enrollment went down and there were no longer aides. Now that enrollment is up, will we have aides again?

Mrs. Beeks says we have aides in Kindergarten. We now have a learning resource teacher. We also have a remedial support teacher for the lower grades. Hiring an assistant to cut, paste and help with bulletin boards is not an efficient use of our money. Would she like to have more hands on deck, yes, but our money is better spent in resource teachers at this time.

Tracey's big takeaway from the survey is that there are two camps that are not happy with each other: The ones that work full time and the stay at home parents that are feeling burdened.

Mrs. Beeks says everyone has to do playground duty or opt-out. For those parents who are feeling burdened by the number of hours they volunteer, perhaps we should cut back on the number of things that are done.

Joan says we need to talk with Room parents. The hardest part for room parents is to ask for 5 parents to do a class party or fall festival, etc... Mrs. Beeks says if we don't have the parents, then we have to start scaling back.

Geoff says breaking tradition is the hardest thing to do but maybe we don't need a Halloween party, etc...

Joan says Mrs. Prince and the 8<sup>th</sup> grade do Family Night. What if these events are opened up to the Band, or other grades.

Geoff says, we need to examine over the next few months what programs we have and what needs to be eliminated. It might be easier to get people to volunteer if we have fewer events.

*Fall Festival money:*  
Did it go to the Band?

## **Principal's report: Mrs. Beeks**

### *Teacher's Wish Lists:*

The point came up a couple of months ago about not having a teacher wish list and instead giving teachers Scrip cards. For the last month and a half, Sally Mernah and Mary Fedorochko have been looking into Lakeshore Learning gift cards. We could have Barnes and Noble, Target and Lakeshore. We're doing more investigating on this. We are trying to make this an easier job and whether we make money or not, we need to make it easy for the person that is volunteering to do this.

### *School Web Site:*

Erin says changes will be made on the web site.

### *School Closings:*

Mrs. Beeks explained why St. Bernadette School follows Fairfax County for school closings. The Diocese encourages us to follow the county we're in. When Fairfax County decides, they take a great deal into account in making that decision. Do we want to be the only school open when others are closed? If downtown is closed and we're open then we would have problems.

Today there was a two-hour delay. On a day like today when Fairfax is already closed, nine principals are on a call at 5am. It was a nine-school decision to do a two-hour delay.

Mrs. Beeks says having her make the decision from her home is not practical and we have to stay with the county and the decisions that are made.

### *Blue Ribbon: School:*

We missed the cut off to be a Blue Ribbon School by 2 percentage points in 2 classes and one subject. The Department of Education decided to look at all scores in math in reading in grades 2-7. We came up a wee bit short. When the Terra Nova scores come out this year we will apply. We do not teach to a test and that is not our focus.

### *Other Business:*

Joan asks about whether the PTO could buy a set of books that the kids keep at home instead of bringing these huge books home. Mrs. Beeks said up until this year, parents could rent books for \$10 but keeping track of the inventory was problematic. It would be easier for the parents to go online and find the books using the ISBN numbers. We could recommend parents go online and buy these books. It

would be cheaper than the PTO purchasing them. Mrs. Beeks says we are trying to compile the ISBN numbers of books. Maybe we could put that in the Cardinal Flyer.

### **Closing Prayer—Geoff Bacino**

Meeting Adjourned: 8:32