

Jean Little Public School
School Council Minutes - October 2011

Present: Lisa Doering, Randal Wagner, Sue Shaw, Ilka Boecker, Claudia Berke, Catherine Bowman, Fiona Armbruster, Valerie Smith, Lynda Timms, Ainsley Thompson, Heather Harris, Jayne Godfrey, Greg Cawsey, April Nejedly, Gail Francis, Dana Stantec

1. Call to order

Greg called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

2. Approval of Agenda, Approval of Minutes of September meeting

(approved)

3. Review of Council Processes

Greg explained that School Council runs on a consensus model. This process allows for all voices to be heard and consensus to be reached, and encourages transparency.

4. Budget/Treasurer's Report

Council looked at the proposed expenditures for this year, based on funds raised last year. For those new to Jean Little and not here for the decisions made last year, the following discussion was held:

a) Families in Need Fund

This was an item in the F.A.Hamilton budget that does not appear in the Jean Little budget. Dedicated by School Council, it was used at the Principal's discretion to help students pay for field trips, milk and hot lunches. At Jean Little, Principals have always had discretionary funds that have been used for this purpose, ensuring that no student goes without because of financial concerns. School Council has sometimes set aside a particular amount to support this (for example, the \$700 contribution to cover field trips this year), and at other times there has been specific fundraising initiatives (e.g., chocolate bar sales to help offset the cost of the Quebec trip) or "as needed" subsidies.

b) Field Trip Support

School Council offered \$700 to help cover the cost of field trips this year. Several parents expressed the hope that each class would be able to go on one field trip this year at no cost to families.

c) Breakfast Club

School Council will support the Breakfast program with \$1000 to purchase supplies.

d) *Grad Rock Memento*

Since the start of the Green Jean plan for playground enhancement, we have been purchasing boulders for climbing and playing. One boulder each year has been engraved to honour our outgoing Grade 8 class. "Project Green Jean" is a long-term plan for ecologically responsible playground enhancement, which came together as a result of several years of planning, consultation and research. To provide background for new Jean Little parents, we will invite Heather van der Schaaf, a former Jean Little parent and planner on the Green Jean committee from the beginning, to attend a Council meeting. In addition, later this year we will discuss at Council alternatives for the Grade 8 memento.

d) *Music Program*

The instrumental music program benefits every student at the school, provides superior preparation for high school music, and provides top-quality music experiences that many students would never otherwise have the opportunity to have. In spite of these benefits, the music program is not formally endorsed or funded by the School Board. It has been the focus of much of our fundraising over the last few years, and the amount dedicated by School Council is higher this year because of the increase in number of students at the school.

e) *Forest of Reading Program*

The school teacher-librarian, Linda Stockton-Wigmore, did not require as much financial support this year as she did last year for this important literacy program, so the amount dedicated by School Council is lower than expected.

f) *Scientist in the School*

School Council has always funded this excellent program, allowing one session per class per year. Many teachers choose to bring the program in a second time, at a cost of \$2-5 per student. Again, students are never excluded because they can't pay for this program.

g) *Grade 8 Field Trip Support*

Based on the needs assessed for this year, approximately \$1500 has been set aside to support students going on the Quebec trip in June. Concerns were expressed about how much money is involved in supporting this trip. Again, some background information: when Grade 8 students first came to Jean Little, along with a teaching team from College Ave P.S., the decision was made to continue their long-standing tradition of a Quebec trip with the goal of encouraging students to continue with French in high school, and bringing the History curriculum to life for them. Each year, there has been a discussion at School Council as to whether or not this should be the destination given the costs involved, and up to this point it has been supported each year and specific fundraising initiatives have been planned to help bring the costs down. It has never been a "closed door" in the sense that this discussion is held every year, and other options are always on the table.

This discussion led to concerns being raised about the Grade 6 trip to Camp Onanadaga in Brantford. Randal explained that, again, no student is denied access to this trip based on financial restrictions. We have always provided subsidies as needed, as well as a grant that supports students in need.

h) *Inscription costs*

A question was raised about the high cost of inscription for this year (e.g., on awards and plaques at the end of the year). As with all expenditures, there will be discussion about this for next year.

i) *Teacher Wish List*

F.A. Hamilton School Council donated money to the Jean Little School Council, and the suggestion was made that teachers be asked for a “wish list” of things that would help in their classrooms that could be purchased with this \$4000.

Motion to accept the Treasurer’s Report - Dana/Heather.

5. Community Matters

a) *Ice Rink*

We have always had an ice rink for both school and community use, using hoses installed by the City of Guelph. The parent who took responsibility for the rink for years is no longer a Jean Little parent, as his youngest child is now in Grade 9. The search is on for volunteers to take on this project. A group of parents who had done the rink at F. A. Hamilton is willing to do this as long as children are allowed to skate during school hours. This has always been the case, with physical education classes, DPA and supervised recess skating. Helmets are mandatory when students are skating as part of their school program. The former “hoser”, Steve Conway, has materials to pass on to the new team of volunteers. Valerie will ask the “F.A. Hamilton Hosers” if they would still be willing to flood the rink here.

b) *Hanlon Creek Neighbourhood Group*

The HCNG includes most of the Jean Little catchment area. Others, who live in the Priory Park area, are always welcome at HCNG events, as well. Upcoming events include a Halloween party at Jean Little on Oct. 27, and an information night about student rental housing on November 7 at F.A. Hamilton. A flyer has gone home with the details about these events. Also, the HCNG supports Garden Fresh Boxes, a Public Health program through which people can purchase a box of fresh produce once a month. Three subsidies are available for half-price boxes. Families in need can contact the HCNG to ask about this.

6. P.A.C. Report

Jayne gave an update on fundraising and community building initiatives discussed at the last PAC meeting. Last year, we offered many different fundraising sales and the decision was made this year to reduce the number of events that involve buying something.

Upcoming PAC events include a movie night in November and Fundscrip cards that will be available for December.

There is always a fundraising initiative that is specifically geared toward the Grade 8 Quebec trip, to bring down the cost of the trip. Grade 8 students, teachers and parents will decide on the form this fundraising will take this year.

It was mentioned that another way of donating to the school (and one that results in a tax deduction) is to do so through the Learning Foundation at the Board, noting on the cheque that the money should be directed to Jean Little.

7. Walking School Bus/Safe Arrival at School

Greg reported that he had an update from the School Board about the crossing guards and traffic lights at the corner of Edinburgh and Youngman. The City of Guelph has made all the changes the plan to make, and consider the crossing time to be adequate. The school has asked the City to consider several other options, including “No Parking” signs along Youngman Dr., making it a “no parking” zone from 8:00-9:00 am and 3:00-4:00 pm. For this to occur, School Council has to apply to the City asking for a survey of the neighbours. Greg will follow up on this.

We will continue to strongly encourage walking rather than driving to school as an option for safety as well as fitness.

8. Principal’s Report

Randal reported that the Breakfast program is now up and running. They had approximately 15 students use it in the first two weeks, but expect these numbers to increase as people become more familiar with it.

The music portable is now being used for classes, but security remains an issue. The school will be paying for an ADT alarm system, which is \$1000 plus \$300 per year for monitoring. Long term storage solutions for instruments should be discussed at a later date.

Student Council - we now have a Student Council again at Jean Little, organized by Mrs. Reay and Ms. Clarke. This should be a good way to give students a voice in what happens at the school, and will encourage good citizenship. Questions were raised about the process for students being selected for Student Council; it was a transparent process through which students “applied”, writing why they thought they should be on the Council and what they would offer. There were many excellent “applicants”, but unfortunately not everyone could be selected or the Council would have been too large to be manageable or effective. The Student Council will attend an upcoming School Council meeting to talk about their activities.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Next meeting: November 29, 2011 7:00 pm

Thanks to Valerie Smith for stepping in as secretary for this evening's meeting in my absence.

K. Kirkconnell