



MINUTES
Ecole PJ PAC General Meeting
Wednesday, April 1, 2015
9:00 am, PJ Library

Present: Michael Sutcliffe, Monika Wilson, Chantal Trudeau, Nicole Brown, Connie Hart, Eileen Huster, Jill Whitehead, Jane Lord, Karen Saunders, Victoria Mendes, Stefani Stoch, Genevieve Hassan, Linda Gour, Kristin Asrar Haghighi, Betty Sajjadi, Emma Tucker, Grigore Vettrici, Julie Barbati, Farzana Logan.

1. Chair's Remarks - (Michael S.)

Michael welcomed PAC members and called the meeting to order at 9:03am.

2. Approval of Agenda - (Michael S.)

Motion to approve Agenda as presented: 1st Eileen, 2nd Kristin, approved.

3. Approval of February Minutes - (Michael S.)

Motion to approve the February 25, 2015 Minutes as presented: 1st Connie, 2nd Monika, approved.

4. Business Arising from the Minutes - (Michael S.)

There was a motion tabled during the Treasurer's Report at the last meeting (Feb 25) in relation to the subsidies provided to parents. As there was no quorum, discussion on the motion was tabled for further discussion at this PAC meeting. It will be discussed under 'New Business'.

5. Principal's Report - (Chantal T.)

Chantal shared the following highlights:

- There will be early dismissal on April 8th so that parents can participate in student-led conferences from 1:30 to 5:00pm. Online signup has been set up, and has proven to be an effective tool for scheduling such events. One-on-one appointments with teachers should be set up separately.
- Athletics: Intramurals for floor ball are wrapping up, and the Ultimate season started yesterday, and our team won many games. It's the only school sport with co-ed teams.
- Art: On April 10th, Intermediate students will attend the performance of "Bouge de Là" at Kay Meek as part of the SD 45 Series. On April 14, Marimba Muzuva will be featured at the ArtStarts performance for the whole school. Artist in Residence, Kunda Music, will be at the school the week of April 20-24. The PJ Choir and Div. 1 & Div. 2 classes will perform at the Lighthouse Festival, which will take place at Park Royal on April 21st at 2:30pm under

- the leadership of Mlle. Liu. Artwork from schools will also be on display there.
- Special programs: Thanks to the funding provided by PAC, Body Science with Saleema Noon will take place on April 14, 15, 16. Parent session is at 9am on April 14th.
 - The Sentinel/PJ Homework Club continues to be well attended by Intermediate students on Mondays. M. Yin is usually present to monitor the children, and students are encouraged to come prepared with the work they want to do.
 - Ministry Satisfaction Surveys have been sent to parents of Grade 4 and Grade 7 students, with a personal letter with a login code. Grade 4 and 7 students will also do the surveys, but in their classroom. Parents are encouraged to provide feedback about the school.
 - All students in Grades 5 to 7 will complete comprehensive Health Surveys at school. Data from these surveys are very helpful to school administration and teachers.
 - The 365give Challenge continues with ongoing 'gives' from participating divisions. There has been a lot of creativity expressed in this initiative, for example, with the Kindergarten's 'no child left to play alone' day on Monday.

6. Treasurer's Report - (Connie H.)

Connie reviewed the Treasurer's Report. Complete financial reporting is attached to the minutes. Highlights of the Report included:

- Fundraising income is slightly lower than in 2013/2014 but this number will improve as we complete the Fun Lunch year and also include revenues from the Gala. Note that there has been a decrease in sales for Gelato Fridays, no poinsettia sales or Directory sales.
- Other income is about as expected.
- Legacy expenditures are funds we sock away for future use like laptops we might have to replace or playground improvements. We have \$1500 for Library for e-books, etc. and \$1,000 for the Music program. Chantal expressed that these monies are appreciated and will be used.
- In terms of other expenses, we still have money budgeted for Parent Appreciation, Teacher Appreciation, Teacher's wish list, and traffic committee. Discussion on whether we could combine the 'Parent Appreciation' with the 'Family BBQ'. Chantal said the teachers' wish list will also be used up, and the teachers value these funds as well as the classroom discretionary fund. It was suggested that teachers use the monies earlier in the year, and latest by March break, so that this year's children benefit from the funds. There is often a scramble to submit receipts to the Assistant Treasurer in June that could be avoided. Action item: Ask teachers to submit their receipts for Classroom Discretionary funds by March 31 in 2015/2016 school year.
- With respect to PJ School Events, the Crepe lunch expenses came in at half the budgeted amount. Students were asked to bring their own plate/cutlery that saved on waste as well. Kudos to Liisa Wagner, Noelene Blue, and their team for a job well done!
- This year, the Sports Day and Family BBQ will be held on separate days. Date for Sports Day TBD.
- There isn't a Community Parade this year, so \$1500 has been freed up from the budget. Schools participate in the Parade every second so our next one will be 2016. The kids love it, it is a positive way to promote PJ in West Vancouver and the

event is a great community builder.

Connie encourages PAC to spend the funds it raises with the exception of legacy projects. Put those dollars to work on projects and programs that our students can benefit from right away.

The Principal's Discretionary Fund of \$5,000 and the Grade 7 Quebec trip subsidy of \$18,720, make up a significant part of our expenditures, and this needs to be looked at more closely. These two subsidies, while serving an important purpose, do come at a cost. The PAC is left with far fewer fundraising dollars to support many of the signature PJ events such as Fete d'Hiver, Artist in Residence, Saleema Noon, etc. and it limits the opportunity to pursue new programs and special projects.

7. Gala Report - (Jill L)

Jill reported that the Gala is going ahead, but needs 100 tickets to be sold to break even. Currently 80 tickets have been sold, but momentum has picked up this past week and the committee feels confident they will sell out the event at 190 tickets. The Eventbrite online ticketing system has made it easy for parents to purchase tickets.

Art projects are in the works with some parent, teacher and artist led creations. Artist and parent Bobbie Burgers is doing two pieces this year, and outside artists such as Stacey Bodnaruk and Jen Brisson have also been brought in to help the classes with their projects.

Suggestion was made to display art projects during the student-led conferences to generate interest, and also to sell gala tickets. Promotional flyers to be left in the classroom for parents to read.

Silent auction items are not easy to obtain, and help is needed to canvass items. Local businesses seem to be feeling fundraising fatigue. The gala team expressed that there has been little participation from the actual Grade 7 parent population in terms of donations or volunteering time. A push is on to engage this group since 30% of monies raised goes to support their children's Quebec trip. Right now, a team of 3-4 people has the responsibility for this massive undertaking.

- Discussion ensued about the lack of participation by Grade 7 parents in volunteer roles even though they are the primary benefactors of this fundraising event. Parents of younger grade students said that they would have gotten involved if it weren't just a Grade 7 event.
- There was also discussion about the inability to communicate directly with parents about the gala due to the limitations of the E-Bulletin/E-Bulletin+ system.

8. New Business – (Nicole B, Karen S, Connie H, Michael S, PAC Meeting Attendees)

Thank you to Candi (Nicole B): Nicole reported that Candi Novak has left PJ to move back to Australia with her family. As a token of appreciation for her hard work during her time here, PAC Exec presented Candi with a card and gift. PAC will need a new volunteer coordinator and a new IGA Coordinator, as well as someone to oversee school supplies.

DPAC (Michael): Michael reported that at the SD45 DPAC-Trustee Annual Liaison Meeting, the

focus was to go beyond the introduction of technology and move towards Classroom 2.0. This would include initiatives such as redesigning school libraries towards a 'learning commons' concept. Another area of interest was taking the classroom outside. We have an empty room near the library where the former computer lab existed. It should be repurposed for a new 'learning commons' centre and modernization of the library. With that project, combined with the new plan for the playground, we are poised to fit that vision, but we need money.

PAC Budget Constraints (Connie H): Connie agreed that these expensive legacy projects would benefit the entire school population, and to do this, we would need to look at how money is currently being spent. The two big fundraisers for PAC are Fun Lunch and Gala. Fun Lunch is on track – thank you Hoda. But last Monday, there were serious concerns about cancelling the gala due to lack of ticket sales and auction items. Fortunately, people have started stepping up and this event is moving forward. However, this situation highlights the fact that from year to year, it may not be sustainable to rely so heavily on Gala revenues to meet our fundraising goals.

Discussion ensued about the fact that the majority of parents don't attend PAC meetings, so it makes it difficult to communicate about how PAC dollars are raised and spent. Galas are fabulous but very time-intensive. Suggestion was put forth that instead of Gala each year, we alternate years with a series of smaller events like a wine/cheese night in the gym while selling the class art projects, pub nights, etc. It is possible that this new approach will still promote community spirit that is so important at PJ. But the introduction of more casual and affordable initiatives might be an opportunity to engage parents that are new to the school or who typically don't get highly involved.

Connie said that if we look at the budget, the line items have been almost the same for an extended period of a decade or more. Pre-2008 PAC raised well over \$100,000 year after year. Today's situation is very different with fewer funds coming in, bigger projects to pay for and fewer volunteers available to contribute.

Discussion on Proposed Motions (Michael S): Michael said there are two areas where PAC Executive has identified where changes could be made that would have a meaningful impact on the bottom line: the Principals Discretionary Fund and the Quebec trip subsidy to parents of Grade 7 students. Discussion on the subject was open to the floor.

Eileen gave members some history on the subsidies: Both these subsidy programs were originally instated more than a decade ago when large budget surpluses were the norm. At a time of surplus revenues, the PAC felt it was a good idea to support these subsidies to provide extra funding relief to parents. But, as discussed earlier, today's PAC revenue situation is much different.

Connie concurred. The two subsidies constituted 36-47%* of our PAC spending in the past few years. If PAC can reduce this number to around 15%, it would have a significant impact on PAC's ability to support big ticket projects and pursue great new initiatives.

Discussion started about the issues surrounding the Principal's Discretionary Fund. PAC asked

Chantal to explain how the Principal's Fund is currently administered. Chantal said that parents could confidentially request up to 50% for the cost of school field trips and up to 25% of the costs for the Quebec trip. No supporting financial information or application process is required and all requests are granted until the fund is depleted. However, the number of requests is trending up for regular school field trips and there have already been 14 requests for the Quebec trip. Because the trip happens at the end of the school year, the fund is typically very low and those applicants receive very small contributions.

Michael noted we are the only school that has this type of assistance fund that comes out of fundraised dollars by PAC. Parents care about including families that are in need of assistance, but the scale of the program is too great to sustain. In addition, it is concerning that we have no idea how this money is being spent. Victoria expressed concern that we should continue to have some support for families that have financial difficulty. Another parent also submitted an email correspondence with the same message. Victoria also suggested that it would be helpful for teachers to give parents a ballpark number in September for the cost of trips may allow families to budget for these costs in advance.

Discussions about the best way to restructure the fund:

- Submission of a more formal financial application for requests. Chantal is busy and does not need to be administrating this program. It is PAC money and the Treasurer along with the support of one other Executive Member (e.g. Vice Chair) should be charged with managing this fund in a confidential manner, but with a more formal process to vet requests.
- It is recommended that Quebec Trip funding support be removed from this area of the subsidy. Separate it entirely from day to day school field trips and Outdoor School.
- All attendees agreed that to eliminate the Principal's Discretionary fund altogether was undesirable but that the amount of dollars available should be reduced. The amount of \$1,500 was suggested. There are families at PJ that do need support and it is important to have some funds available to assist them.
- The focus was on restructuring the fund under a new name (eg. PAC Family Assistance Fund) making it clear that it is PAC that provides this subsidy and is accountable for it. The Treasurer/Vice Chair will investigate best practices in terms of ensuring that monies are going to families in need and always respecting the confidentiality of the applicants. The motion will be voted on at the May PAC meeting.

In terms of the Quebec subsidy, it's a moving target for our Treasurer to calculate based on the 30% formula of fundraising dollars.

- The suggestion is to commit to a set amount up front as a permanent line item of \$12,000 in our budget. The Quebec Trip Committee can use these funds to offset part of the cost of the trip. PAC's one request is that some of the funds be used to pay for the Grad Hoodies that all Grade 7's enjoy whether they go on the trip or

not.

The motion to move to a \$12,000 fixed line item in support of the Quebec Trip starting in 2016 will be voted on at the next PAC meeting in May.

- There was some discussion about Grade 7s having their own student-led fundraising initiatives to make them feel more responsible for covering the costs of their event (eg. car wash, bottle drive). However, it is important to be mindful to not choose something that would detract from PAC's larger fundraising efforts for the entire school. Some guidelines could be put in place regarding this.

Proposed motions to be voted on at the next meeting will be circulated to the parents by email from Chantal. As well, it was suggested to have some coffee morning discussions to engage as much of the school population as possible.

PJ Community Account (Victoria M): Victoria informed the PAC that the playground committee will be setting up another bank account called the 'PJ Community Account', which will enable them to get non-profit status, and the ability to pay by PayPal. This will greatly enhance their fundraising efforts. The signatories on the account will be Victoria Mendes and Kyra Smiljanic.

9. Any Other Business – (Karen S)

Karen informed PAC that there is a wealth of French and English language films available online, free of charge, to teachers and school administrators. This may be a better way to get films for Movie Night and save the costs incurred with first-run movies.

9. Correspondence – (Michael S)

There was feedback on proposed motions communicated to parents via email from Chantal, and comments will be summarized and presented at the next PAC meeting.

10. Adjournment –

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:00 a.m.: 1st Eileen, 2nd Farzana, approved.