

June 1, 2015 St. Giles Board of Specified Jurisdiction Meeting

Present: Tanya Castrogiovanni, Ann Clements, Beth Fegan, Heather Pflederer, Julia Harmon-Bell, Mike MacKinnon, Flavia Morrissey, Liz Moroney, Chris Verni, Sue Poetzel, Tracy Wysockey, Father Carl Morello

Absent: Doug Aller, Janet Coffey, Kent Pflederer, Rachel Rettberg, Barb Schulz

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 PM; the opening prayer was offered by Father Carl. New members Tanya Castrogiovanni, Kent Pflederer, and Tracy Wysockey were welcomed. Doug Aller has finished his term with the BSJ and was thanked for his service. BSJ members presented Mrs. Poetzel with a gift to thank her for her years at St. Giles.

Wellness Committee

Muriel Quinn and Jennifer Fox made a presentation to the BSJ regarding the Wellness Committee, focusing on what it has accomplished and what it is working toward. The committee has formed an alliance with Seven Generations Ahead, a premier organization in the field of environmentally sound and sustainable practices. The program and curriculum are being funded by the Oak Park Community Foundation. Using lessons in the curriculum, St. Giles students were able to reduce their lunchtime waste from 100% into a landfill to 15%. The Wellness Committee plans to spread this success to all activities at the school through lessons about composting, recycling, and zero waste. Science, math, and religion come into play when the students learn to value the earth and its resources. A vegetable garden that would include outdoor learning space is now being planned by the Committee, and plans have been drawn up. Functionality, as well as beauty and seamless integration into the campus, is integral to the proposed garden.

To further the short and long term goals of the Wellness Committee, Ms. Quinn and Mrs. Fox suggested that a member of the BSJ also be a member of the Committee. They also proposed that the Wellness Committee be the beneficiary of the paddle raise at the 2016 Black and Gold Gala to finance the construction of the vegetable garden. Beth Fegan said that going through the Development Office would be helpful, as would marketing the proposed projects to the entire parish, as these are issues that concern all parishioners.

Principal's Report

Sue Poetzel distributed Terra Nova testing results to BSJ members and reviewed the numbers with them. While the scores were excellent overall, Mrs. Poetzel was especially pleased with the 5th grade, a year when students often have had a dip in test results. Next year students will

take the Aspire test instead of the Terra Nova. Also next year, St. Giles will reapply for Blue Ribbon status. Enrollment now stands at 492 students. Regarding warnings about problem websites that are currently popular among elementary-age school children, BSJ members agreed that a general statement to parents regarding parental vigilance would be preferable to naming specific sites of which students may not even be aware. The facilitation of communication between principals during the current time of transition was also discussed.

Finance

Mike MacKinnon summarized St. Giles' financial position, including the uptick in enrollment and end of year tuition collection. He noted that the year's maintenance and repair expenses were markedly higher than budgeted. He also reported that the Black and Gold Gala raised \$105,000 for the school, \$27,000 of which is earmarked for technology. Contributing parishioner auditing was discussed, and consensus was that a letter from Father Carl, supported by the BSJ, will be sent out this week, emphasizing that school families who do not honor their contributing parishioner agreement cause financial hardship to the school and the parish.

Development

Julia Harmon-Bell reported that she and Tanya Castrogiovanni have met with Director of Development Beth Linnen for planning purposes; their next meeting will focus on the 2016 Black and Gold Gala. Discussion ensued regarding attendance at BSJ meetings for interested parties; consensus was that attendance would be appropriate when a matter in which the person has an interest is on the agenda.

Technology

Technology infrastructure improvements are being made with the funds provided by the paddle raise at the Black and Gold Gala, and the improvements should be complete by summer's end. The school's email conversion should be completed this week, with a full transfer from ALIS by July 1. The new website conversion is ready to go. Chromebook has been recommended for grades 4, 5, and 6 to replace Netbooks. The new principal will make the final decision. The iPad orientation meeting for incoming 7th graders will be held in the fall, and an iPad survey will be going out to families who are presently in the program. Mac Hero has suggested that 10 spare iPads be on hand at all times as backup. Mrs. Fegan noted that the Technology Committee has a substantial workload, and it is unrealistic to continue depending on volunteers to keep up the standard that Mrs. Verni and her committee have established. A full-time IT person is needed.

Marketing

Ann Clements reported that the new grey uniform shirt for the boys has been launched, and updated signage has been installed. The Marketing Committee is working on bringing in more responses to the parish survey, and the Committee will be working with Technology on the website over the summer.

PTO

Liz Moroney reported that Heather Pflederer will be PTO president for the 2015-16 school year. She also reported regarding the ongoing work PTO is doing to replace the mulch in the primary playground. The cost is significant, as the material that is there must first be removed, and several inches of new material put down. Lower cost providers and alternative materials are being investigated. Planning for the farewell party for Mrs. Poetzel is going well. A process for requesting PTO funds has been instituted.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Capone