Gate City Charter School for the Arts

Friends of Gate City Meeting Minutes

**Date:** Thursday, April 14, 2016

**Location:** 7 Henry Clay Drive, Merrimack, NH, Kindergarten room

**Attendance:**

Nadia Doty

Heather Tyler

Melanie Butler

Sarah Hall

Charisa Martin

Hilary Henderson

Bill Spinelli

Megan King

Courtney Warren

Kim Luongo

Jenny Hitzeman

Kristin Kaplan

Karin Cevasco

Amy Savoie

Meredith Chicklis

1. **Minutes Reviewed from last meeting- Charisa Martin (1:30pm)**
2. **Margaritas Fundraiser** **Update- Jenny Hitzeman, Sarah Hall (1:40pm)**
3. The fundraiser was a huge success, earning the school $325. The manager was gracious, and let fliers be passed out at the door so that anyone could mention the school and a portion of their bill would go to the school.
4. They were able to set up a GCCSA table with business cards, art work, and they were able to answer questions people had.
5. The manager of Margaritas offered an invitation to the school to come quarterly for a fundraiser.
6. **General Introductions for the people new to the school/Friends meeting (1:50pm)**
7. **Yearbook- Hilary Henderson (1:55pm)**
8. Orders are slowly trickling in; the club stopped meeting, but they will briefly reconvene to help distribute the yearbooks.
9. So far, the school has earned $40 from them, which Hilary asked if that money could be used to purchase yearbooks for the teachers
10. Sarah said she could, and Jenny suggested that the school have one too for records.
11. **School Dance** **Update- Charisa Martin (1:58pm)**
12. In speaking with Jenn Blanchette yesterday, I learned that Betsy Moore can’t run the dance, and it was pitched to the people in Friends to see if anyone was passionate about it.
13. It was decided that since time is running out that the dance would be tabled until next year.
14. **Spirit Wear/Box Tops- Nadia Doty (2:00pm)**
15. Nadia tried contacting the people who we order spirit wear from several times (it’s been a month), but they haven’t gotten back to her.
16. She will put out another order since some parents missed the extended deadline, and she will communicate that deadline several times through the school’s facebook page.
17. She will start pitching it next week, and she will set the deadline for after Spring Break, and they will be in for June.
18. The Box Tops are due Friday, May 6th. She will put out a form people can fill with Box Tops all throughout the summer.
19. **Getting More Volunteers- Charisa Martin (2:05pm)**
20. Charisa mentioned to Friends that we need to somehow encourage more parents to get involved in volunteering
21. Karin added that word of mouth is the best way possible, and everyone agreed.
22. Sarah brought up the need for a parent volunteer coordinator who would make sure we had all the parent volunteer forms in, keep track of volunteer hours, and would be a point person for getting volunteers for events.
23. **Field Day- Sarah Hall (2:07pm)**
24. Sarah sent a message to Karin to solicit feedback from the teachers.
25. She mentioned that Field Day (June 2) will be at the field next to the Merrimack YMCA from 10am-2pm. She’ll have four stations set up, and rotate every 45 minutes or so.
26. She mentioned how things were run last year: parent volunteers , class distinction through t-shirt colors, and a picnic lunch on the field.
27. She said she has key organizers, but will need parent volunteers.
28. Last year, the entire day cost $50 to run. Sarah proposed that we bring in an African drummer that she knows of named Theo Marty. He can bring in 40 drums and teach the children African dance, culture, drumming, etc. His normal rate is $600, but he is generously reducing his rate for the school to $400.
29. Heather asked if the music/dance portion of field day from last year would be replaced by the African drumming presentation, and Sarah said that she wasn’t sure, but it might.
30. Sarah mentioned that last year there were water games, dry games, mystery block (the boom box dancing), and an art block. She mentioned Rebecca would take over the art block, Hilary would take the water games block, and Kristin would take the dry game block. She is thinking of splitting up the stations to add variety and break up the time.
31. She mentioned that instead of how the tents were on the edges of the field last year, this year the tents would be moved to the center of the field. There would be no awards for anything, just play and a good time.
32. There will be watermelon/oranges as treats again, and every student would bring a bag lunch.
33. Students will head over to the field just before 10am, and she’ll make sure that Theo Marty is in a shaded area.
34. **Budget- Sarah Hall (2:20pm)**
35. We earned $325 from the Margarita’s fundraiser. She is working with Christina in finance to make sure that they are on the same page, and that Friends stays in their lane financially.
36. There is $5,526.31 in the Friends account right now. Megan King asked how to get the money from clubs into Christina’s field of view, and Sarah explained the reimbursement process.
37. **Playground Update- Meredith Chicklis (2:25pm)**
38. She called Morris Landscape about mulch, and she said she wants to add climbing structures that have a solid base. She said the bases will be added in the spring, and the climbing structures would be added in the fall.
39. She is looking into either hemlock mulch or playground mulch (wood chips) to cover an area of 20 feet by 20 feet and 6” deep ($800).
40. Sarah asked Megan King to have her husband inquire specs on landscaping timber (to border the playground area). We need a 6-8” height to hold in the wood chips. They explored the idea of railroad ties, but it was a no go.
41. Amy brought up that Amherst Earth would be a good contact for landscaping, and everyone agreed that we should shop around and get quotes from a few places. All this is pending the building owner’s final say. The climbing structures all need to have adequate fall zones.
42. Kim Luongo suggested that sometimes the Home Depot and Lowe’s donate to public schools, and that donations should be explored first before quotes obtained. Meredith agreed, and said that the Home Depot donated some of the playground already last year. She said she’d explore asking for a donation since it’s been a year since the last one. Kim advised her to give them her grand vision for the playground and let them see how they can help.
43. Sarah said we have $1600 in the budget for the playground. She would contact Andrea Srinivas (who has 2 daughters in the school) to give an artistic visualization for the playground. Nadia mentioned that visualization should be added to the school’s facebook page.
44. Sarah brought up the idea of a morning glory teepee to go into the playground. She tried in her yard last year and it was a success. She said it could be a teepee or a tunnel.
45. Amy warned that morning glories are toxic to some people, but that we could try other climbing plants
46. Meredith will check with Home Depot and get an update to us.
47. **Teacher Appreciation- Hilary Henderson/Sarah Hall (2:30pm)**
48. Sarah said we have $200 in the budget for Teacher Appreciation, and that Hilary is spearheading it.
49. Hilary said that what the teachers want/need most is planning time. She is thinking that it would be the week of May 2-6th. She would offer refreshments of some kind to the teachers in the café, and they could have an hour to plan while two parents per teacher watch their kids.
50. Hilary would count on the parents to donate food for the week. Every day of the week would be a theme (breakfast, cookies, beverages, fresh fruit)
51. Every day the students would show their appreciation to their teachers in different ways (surprises on their desks, encouraging words written on flower petals)
52. The Volunteer luncheon is Friday, May 6th.
53. Hilary will create a Volunteer Spot for it so parents can see the needs and decide how to meet them.
54. Nadia had questions about Volunteer Spot, and Sarah reinforced the need for someone to spearhead it and help troubleshoot
55. **Minecraft Club- Megan King (2:35pm)**
56. The club has one more week left, and Megan said that she wanted to revisit with Mr Swann, because he committed to being there for the club on Mondays, but he hasn’t been able to with his schedule. Logins and logistics have been difficult, but at least there have been other adults to help.
57. Heather said there should be more regulations next time.
58. **Closing Thoughts/Wrap Up (2:45pm)**
59. Marty Kelley, the author who some of the students wanted to have visit will not be.
60. Amy Savoie’s teacher update was the excitement shared among the teachers at the board’s unanimous decision to change the classrooms to single grades beginning in the 2016-17 school year. She said that the conversations with parents she has been having are all favorable to the decision passed down by the board.
61. One parent at the meeting expressed disappointment at the decision, but the parents at the meeting were able to lay out the pros and cons for her, and she understood why it was decided.
62. Heather said she checked the Scholastic book fair balance, and that the money still hadn’t shown up. She estimated that it earned the school $1700-$1800 that they have opted to take as Scholastic Bucks. This profit exceeded last years’ by $1000, even with the stomach illness that went through the school that week.
63. Scholastic would like to have a book fair twice a year, but Heather can only commit to a book fair held in the spring. She said another parent would have to take on one held in the fall.
64. **Meeting adjourned (2:55pm).**
65. **Next month’s meeting is scheduled for May 12, 2016 in the Kindergarten room.**