

Harris Mill School Council Meeting November 3, 2020 (Virtual)

In attendance (council): Jen Tulloch, Amanda Samms, Jen MacLeod, Angie Mochrie, Charlotte Kerby, Vanessa Ireson, Abi Coote, Martha Turner

In attendance (school): Madame Shashana Hare, Madame Suzanne Webster

Regrets: Marylynn Sabbagh

Meeting commenced: 7:05pm

1. Committee Updates

A. School Yard Committee (Jen Macleod; notes presented initially by Jen Tulloch as Jen M joined later)

- Finished building and inspections; just signage remains to be put up
- Playground account currently has \$44,423.49
- There is an outstanding invoice of \$10,537.25
- 10% will need to be retained for ongoing repairs (see Dispersal of Funds section later in minutes), but we are well situated to cover this amount
- Charlotte asked for status on any further plans/discussion on paving the back path between Parkinson crescent and the school parking lot. This is now a prime drop-off site and the path is being heavily used. Since it is currently gravel, it becomes very muddy in the spring and if ongoing drop-off restrictions continue there will be significant tracking of dirt and mud into school classrooms.
- Madame Hare confirmed that she had been in contact with Jeff Hillen on the board to discuss ownership and plowing responsibilities; he indicated that he did not believe it was the board's responsibility. However, Jen MacLeod later confirmed that it should be considered school property as it is on the school site plan. There was a discussion a number of years ago with the township who agreed to plow it with an informal arrangement that has continued since then. Further clarification of plowing responsibility will be needed if paving the pathway moves forward (likely not for this year).
- Jen M was later able to clarify that previous estimates were between 15-17K to pave the path.
- An **action** was taken for further solicitation of quotes from more local contractors, e.g. Abi Coote's husband
- Priorities for remaining funds were discussed and include the following: (see Dispersal of Funds section later in minutes for agreements)
 - **Trees:** a comprehensive tree plan is required, including how we plan to water them afterwards.
 - There are some grants we could apply for that relate to trees and also local contacts who may be able to help us either with donations, use of equipment etc.
 - Board specs for mature trees and size, type will need to be followed and aligned to whatever local options are available
 - Jen M volunteered to head up a sub-committee to review the tree plan/next steps further and also will reach out to Wayne Cochrane in case this is something he may be interested in helping with
 - **Outdoor Classroom Space;** ideas for incorporating more outdoor classroom space were discussed, especially in light of ongoing Covid need to be outside

- Picnic tables were discussed but the industrial ones are very expensive (about \$700-800), and wooden ones, while cheaper, present a potential issue with encouraging gathering, carving, etc.
- The preferred idea was to put in more benches, like the current Kindy yard; if they are under 18 inches then there is no safety issue
- **Shade:** in addition to natural shade with trees, other shade fixtures were discussed
 - Shade sails are in use at Brisbane and Madame Hare spoke to the principal there for some feedback on these
 - They cost about \$700 plus posts
 - Brisbane has had these in place for about 2 years and generally like them but did note the maintenance was not ‘hassle free’; can’t be taken up and down easily;
 - The board needs to help with these and work orders are needed each time; the estimated cost for set up/maintenance is between \$50-100 per season
 - Agreed that it’s not really a fixture that a teacher could/should be having to deal with setting up and taking down
 - Ongoing storage of the sails would also be needed
 - An **action** was taken by Madame Hare to follow up again with Brisbane to understand when they take the shade sails down – is it just over winter or also in summer months?
- **Other items:** Jen M provided notes prior to the meeting also requesting that other small features be added to the yard, such as more mud kitchens, music stations; these were not discussed in detail but will have to be post Covid and we expect these to be volunteer-driven

B. Snack Program (Amanda Samms)

- \$1600 Grant from PC Children’s Charity and \$500 grant from Children’s Foundation
- Current restrictions continue which make re-instating the snack program difficult; items have to be prepackaged which usually means being kept in fridge and difficult for teachers to coordinate access
- Continue to need someone to take over the lunch program (if/when it can resume); Jen T has reached out to Danielle but everyone is still just waiting to see what happens
- An **action** was taken to follow up again with Danielle
- Amanda will provide further update next meeting, figure out how best to spend funds and next steps

C. Parent Involvement Committee (Martha Turner)

PIC meeting was held on Monday October 26, by virtual conference; Martha was not able to attend but Jen Tulloch attended and compiled detailed notes. These notes were reviewed in the meeting and are appended here in full:

- **Heather Loney – Communications and Community Engagement Officer**
 - Board uses website, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and more recently Youtube
 - Mostly as follows:
 - IG – great photos from schools
 - Facebook – sharing good news stories from schools
 - YT – video of schools and board projects, events
 - Twitter – board news, updates and the above

- Most used is Twitter (9700 followers compared to 6000 on FB)
- Advantages to Twitter is that it's not a dialogue
- Disadvantage to FB is that algorithms mean different content is shown to different users, also that it's open for negative comments
- 15, 484 people used UGConnect app over past thirty days
- 50x the number of visitors on UGDSB website vs fb page

School Councils on Social Media

- Councils can have separate FB/Twitter presence from school official messaging
 - Must follow social media code of conduct as posted on Board website
 - If open to parents' commenting, encourage parents to follow Board social media guidelines
 - There are tips and best practices guides for council use of social media, including must set up with official council email address, must be positive, must respect privacy (i.e. photos of students cannot be published without express consent from parent/guardian, first names only if named)
 - Highly recommend Twitter for sharing information as content is shown to all followers uniformly unlike FB where altered by FB algorithms by user, be more cautious with Facebook – perhaps use for discussions or where looking for feedback?
- **Jenny Marino – Provincial Parent Survey Results, Mental Health**
 - Survey conducted in first three months of shutdown
 - 7500 respondents
 - 10x increase in symptoms of depression
 - Parents reporting increased alcohol/cannabis use
 - Greater than 50% reported moderate to high concern for their students including re increased screen time, student's mood/anxiety
 - ~13% reported concern surrounding access to food/necessities

What is UGDSB doing to support mental health?

- Operated summer mental health line for students to access, 308 students supported
- June-Aug webinars for parents
- Return to school included a large focus on students' mental health, a mentally healthy return to school
 - o Mental health PD for all teachers before school started
 - o "First 10 Days and Beyond" – daily wellness activities, staff wellness, daily info bursts
- High risk transition support through the last two weeks of August targeted to high risk populations in schools. 447 helped individually, 520 through group supports
- Umbrella Project – wellness themes each month. November's is GRATITUDE
- Ongoing webinars for parents on board website open to all. (We should promote these as a council) <https://www.ugdsb.ca/parents/mental-health/>
- An **action** was taken by Martha Turner and Charlotte Kerby to ensure publication of key links and webinar details below.

November 2020:

- November 3, 2020, 4:00 p.m. – Building Mindfulness in Children – [Link to Webinar](#)
- November 9, 2020, 4:00 p.m. – Positive Parenting Strategies – [Link to Webinar](#)

- November 17, 2020, 4:00 p.m. – Supporting Children with Anxiety – [Link to Webinar](#)
- November 17, 2020, 4:00 p.m. – Taking Care of you so you can be the Best Parent you can be – [Link to Webinar](#)
- November 18, 2020 – 4:00 p.m. – Strategies to Support Learning at Home K-3 – [Link to Webinar](#)

Past webinars remain available to view and include August 2020:

- August 19, 2020 – [Getting back into a School Routine](#) (PDF) and [Webinar Recording](#)
 - August 24, 2020 – [Warning Signs: What to look for to support your child](#) (PDF)
 - August 25, 2020 – [Return to School: Supporting your child with an intellectual disability](#) (PDF) and [Webinar Recording](#)
 - August 26, 2020 – [Taking care of you so you can be the best parent you can be](#) (PDF) and [Webinar Recording](#)
 - August 27, 2020 – [Return to School: Supporting your child with ASD](#) and [Webinar Recording](#)
- **Brent McDonald, Superintendent**
 - “holding off on traditional fundraising”
 - Each school has had \$500 deposited in their council account (PRO grant money) by PIC to promote parent engagement in school community
 - Approx. 900 students changing models at the end of November. Much smaller # than anticipated.
 - Approx. 190 returning to physical school from remote, approx. 600 going to remote from physical school. Remainder are a combination of synchronous changing to asynchronous, home school changing to remote synchronous/in school/asynchronous etc.
 - This will mean some changes (reorgs) both online and in physical schools, but they are trying to keep these to a minimum.
 - Affected classes will be re-organized week of mid Nov, with students in their new class Nov 30.
 - An **action** was taken by Martha Turner to follow up on the deposit of the \$500 Pro grant money as Angie confirmed that she doesn’t see any recent deposits
 - **Next PIC Meeting November 30, 220**

[2. Treasurer Update](#) (Angie Mochrie)

- \$60.59 deposit from Mabel’s Labels
- The lottery account has been closed; \$2098.90 from that account was moved to the playground account
- Playground account:
 - Current: \$44,423.49
 - \$10,537.25 invoice is still to be paid
 - Leaves: \$33,886.24
- General account: \$308.27
- Fundraising account: \$6479.10
- Upper Grand Learning Foundation (UGLF) has \$3300
- Jen T spoke recently to Brent McDonald to ask about the guidelines for requesting UGLF funds from the board; Brent confirmed that it’s okay to ask for it but we need to confirm what it was earmarked for
 - Backstory: the danceathon raised around 6K but some was in UGLF and some was in cash/moved to fundraising account; the total amount was going to be roughly split between

Chromebooks/tech and playground, so it makes sense that the UGLF \$3300 was decided to be the playground allocation

- An **action** was taken by Angie Mochrie and Jen Tulloch to confirm via previous minutes if this assumption is correct
- Pending confirmation that UGLF funds were for the playground, another **action** was taken by Angie Mochrie to have Madame Graetz request all UGLF monies from the board and to put these in the playground account

3. Principal and Teacher Update (Madame Hare and Madame Webster)

- Virtual Assembly was held with a Perseverance Theme
- “Epic Fail” stories were shared, including Madame Hare’s own personal story and what she herself learned from it
- The Unlearn posters continue to generate really great discussion around the school; some reactions on how the Unlearn posters are being interpreted in each classroom were shared
- Different skin colour Band-Aids were made available to the school and are now available for students
- There was also a Virtual Halloween Parade on Oct 29 by Google Meet; each classroom was able to see the costumes/parade of others
- Remembrance Day preparations are underway; some adjustments to the schedule may be needed in order to ensure the moment of silence at the appropriate time
- A Return to School letter was sent home/distributed from Public Health, providing clearer guidelines on symptoms and action required depending on what symptoms are being exhibited.
- The Board website directs parents to this link as the best source for ongoing and evolving guidelines from Public Health: <https://www.wdgpUBLICHEALTH.ca/your-health/covid-19-information-schools-parents-and-teachers/schools>
- Parent Teacher interviews will be held on November 27, 2020 and will be virtual; more info will be shared shortly from teachers
- Kara Enns is a new Planning/Core French teacher who started a few weeks ago – welcome!
- Parents are encouraged to continue to reach out to the school support counsellor Gayton.Fairfield@ugdsb.on.ca, especially as the holiday season is now upon us...the school acknowledges that this may be a uniquely difficult year for many school families
- Madame Webster raised that Mr. Embrey had requested that the council review the possibility of purchasing Disc Golf sets for the school; this was reviewed later during the Dispersal of Funds discussion

4. Dispersal of Funds (Jen Tulloch)

A. Technology Requirements

- Chromebooks are required to be purchased from the board but they expire after 5 years; working on older Chromebooks is noticeably different from newer models
- A Chromebook costs \$372.90, not including covers/cases
- Trolley Bins cost \$490.42 including tax
- The target for the school is to have 150 Chromebooks on hand in order for each classroom to have a Half Set available for their students; currently we have 121
- Of the 121 on hand currently, 10 are *already* expired and 78 will expire by end of school year (June 2021)

- This will mean that by end of June 2021 we'll only have 33 Chromebooks that aren't expired – all agreed that this is a critical and urgent situation
- Madame Hare confirmed that while the school receives technology refresh funding that these monies need to cover a wide variety of technology needs, including that of teachers (e.g. replacement laptops); further detail will be presented on this in December's meeting
- A **motion** was made that all funds in the Fundraising General Account (\$6479.10) be allocated for purchase of additional Chromebooks and three trolley bins
 - Motion made by Angie Cochrane
 - Motion seconded by Charlotte Kerby
 - A vote was held and all eligible voters below agreed with the motion
 - Charlotte Kerby, Angie Mochrie, Vanessa Ireson, Martha Turner
- An **action** was taken by Angie Mochrie to understand what tax refunds we are eligible for when we purchase new technology

B. Playground Requirements

- Playground account available funds:
 - Current: \$44,423.49*
 - \$10,537.25 invoice is still to be paid
 - Leaves: \$33,886.24
 - *Note this does not include the imminent transfer of UGLF funds of approximately \$3300 to the playground account, pending confirmation that this was the intended use of those funds

1. Mr. Embrey's "Wish List"

- Mr. Embrey had provided a wish list which Jen T had sourced potential estimates against (note this doesn't include the Disc Golf requirement which is addressed separately)
- The requirements were reviewed by council
- Confirmed school suppliers, used in the past were Flaghouse and Marchants
- Madame Hare confirmed that using non-preferred suppliers (e.g. Walmart) is not an option
- While the exact amount might change based on discounts from the school suppliers, the estimated amount to fully meet Mr. Embrey's Wish List is approximately \$1500
- A **motion** was made to purchase all items on Mr. Embrey's wish list
 - Motion made by Angie Mochrie
 - Motion seconded by Vanessa Ireson
- An **action** was taken to proceed with procuring the items; Jen T has shared the list with Madame Graetz with the estimates from Flaghouse, School Speciality, and Marchants based on their website pricing

2. Disc Golf

- Three different options for Disc Golf equipment were reviewed, from fixed posts/cages to freestanding baskets
- The council preferred the baskets due to cost, flexibility (inside and outside use) and portability
- It was noted that teachers would need to set up the "course" and also that storage of the basket frame and netting should be okay, although indoor storage place is at a premium. The frames appear to be stackable and Madame Webster confirmed that she thought space could be made available.
- Each basket costs \$22.15 each

- A **motion** was made to purchase 9 baskets and some dedicated frisbees in order for the school to offer Disc Golf as an outdoor/indoor activity
 - Motion was made by Charlotte Kerby
 - Motion was seconded by Angie Cochrane
- An **action** was taken to proceed with procuring the items from Marchants

3. Additional Playground Needs/Fixtures

- Before reviewing additional dispersals, the council determined how much should be held back for ongoing repair reserve; the suggested amount is 10% of total expenditure
- A suggested reserve of \$7,000 was calculated as follows:
 - Spent \$59,370 so far, not including the outstanding \$10,537.25, so total would be \$69,907.25 (this was then rounded up to \$70,000)
 - Technically not all costs need to be included in the total, e.g. items such as temporary fencing and Armourstone don't require maintenance, but we are erring on the side of "rounding up"
- The council agreed that the reserve funds of \$7000 should be placed in a separate account in order to keep things clearly allocated
- It was agreed that shade (whether that is trees or shade sails) and increasing outdoor classroom/seating options are the priorities for any remaining funds
- A rough accounting was made in order to determine budget
 - Current: \$44,423.49*
 - \$10,537.25 invoice is still to be paid
 - Leaves: \$33,886.24
 - *Note this does not include the imminent transfer of UGLF funds of approximately \$3300 to the playground account, pending confirmation that this was the intended use of those funds
 - Minus proposed expenditures above of \$2K for Wish List and Disc Golf items leaves \$31,886.24
 - Minus proposed \$7,000 for reserve leaves \$24,886.24
- A **motion** was made to allocate \$15,000 initially now for the purposes of shade and outdoor classroom
 - Motion made by Martha
 - Motion seconded by Angie Cochrane
- An **action** was taken by Jen Macleod to put together a proposed plan based on an initial \$15,000 budget to be reviewed at a future meeting
- Paving of the Parkinson Crescent to School Parking Lot path was again discussed; costs may be prohibitive but will wait and see what local quotes come in (previous action taken)

Meeting adjourned at 8.56pm, motioned by Martha Turner and seconded by Charlotte Kerby

Next meeting Tuesday December 1, 2020

Summary of Action Items

1. Solicit more localized quotes for paving option of Parkinson Crescent to School Parking lot path → Jen MacLeod and Abi Coote
2. Confirm set up/take down of shade sails at Brisbane, how often do they do this? → Madame Hare
3. Follow up with Danielle McLeod to confirm if any interest in lunch program ownership → Jen Tulloch and Amanda Samms

4. Ensure links to PIC webinars are publicized to parent community → Martha Turner and Charlotte Kerby
5. Follow up on Pro Grant of \$500 from PIC as this has not yet been received → Martha Turner
6. Review previous minutes to confirm the desired split of danceathon funds and how the UGLF funds were to be allocated → Angie Mochrie and Jen Tulloch
7. Ask Madame Graetz to request the UGLF funds and provide clarification on which account to move them to → Angie Mochrie
8. Confirm tax rebate opportunities for when we purchase Chromebooks from board → Angie Mochrie and Madame Hare
9. Procure Mr. Embrey Wish List items → Jen Tulloch and Madame Graetz
10. Procure Disc Golf items → Jen Tulloch and Madame Graetz
11. Put together a tree/outdoor classroom plan working with an estimate of \$15,000; consider engaging Wayne Cochrane → Jen MacLeod

SCHOOL COUNCIL EXECUTIVE, 2020-2021

Co-Chairs: Amanda Samms & Jen Tulloch
 Past Chair: Marylynne Sabbagh
 Communications Coordinator: Charlotte Kerby

Treasurer: Angie Mochrie
 Secretary: Martha Turner
 Volunteer Coordinator: Charlotte Kerby

COMMITTEE CHAIRS, 2020-2021

Community Outreach: Lindsay Williams
 Grant Writing: Wayne Cochrane?
 Lunch Orders: TBD
 Schoolyard: Jen McLeod & TBD

Snack Program: Amanda Samms
 PIC (Parent Involvement Committee): Martha Turner
 Yearbook: Jen Tulloch