



# CHILMARK SCHOOL

PTO Meeting  
November 4, 2024

**Attendance:** Katherine Barnes Horenstein, Beau Begin, Kate Squire, Catharine (Cat) Rykowski, Robyn Dori, Stephanie Da Rosa, Emily Drazen, Donna Sullivan, Allison Perry, Lisa Brown, Nettie

Called to order: 8:10 a.m.

## 1. Welcome and Attendance

- a. Katherine motion to approve September minutes. Beau seconds. All in favor.

## 2. Teacher report: Robyn Dori

- i. Multiple successful field trips that all grade levels have taken out in the community.
- ii. 2/3 has made a trip to Chappy to study climate change and erosion after the trustees came into the classroom to teach them. They also went to Menemsha Hills. They will be going to the Farm Institute and the MV MUseum to start a unit on cultural heritage and immigration.
- iii. K/1 went to Polly Hill to look at seeds and lifecycles and visited Morning Glory. They got to see behind the scenes of farm life and focused their study of pumpkins.
- iv. 4/5 Halloween Fundraiser for South Sudan was a big success! Not only did it raise funds for a good cause, the students created wonderful well researched reports and presentations to share information about the nonprofit organization. They have also been working at Beetlebung Farm.

## 3. PTO Update

- a. Square One
  - i. Last day to order Friday November 8th
  - ii. Minimum goal is \$3,300 to get highest return percentage
  - iii. Will have a PJ party if goal is reached
  - iv. Class parents should send out an email to their classroom
- b. Community Lunch
  - i. Very successful!
  - ii. Allison: It was great to see everyone coming together but wondering what the role of the kids was?
    1. Kate: They were very involved. Grade 1,2, and 3 did meal prep, chopping food etc. Grade K, 4, and 5 will help with the food prep for the Community Lunch in the Spring.

2. Every lunch is a new theme including menus and who in the community is invited. This time it was focused on the farmers.
- iii. Allison: It seemed like a lot of work for Grace getting all the plates, silverware etc. together. Cleaning up was a lot too, cleaning all those cups etc. She didn't know they weren't allowed to sit and eat at the tables. Overall frustration with how it was run and the lack of communication with who got to eat at the tables and who didn't.
  1. Feedback:
    - a. We're still getting up to speed from the break during Covid of not having a Community Lunch. Each time will get easier and easier and Grace won't have to do so much preparation and we will have all the plates, utensils we need.
    - b. Parents volunteer to organize the seating chart, clean up, and set up. The lunch is for the students, staff, and community members. Parents are asked to volunteer not eat.
    - c. There will be space in the basement to store plates, utensils etc.
    - d. Ask Grace to make a list of what she needs and wants for the next luncheon in Spring. Ask her to come to the December meeting to go over how it went and any changes that need to be made. Also make a calendar of what needs to be done 4 weeks prior, 2 weeks, week of etc.
    - e. Allison makes a motion to refund Grace \$462.97. Donna seconds. All in favor. Make sure the check is written to IGI.
  - c. Food Drive for the School
    - i. Cat: An idea she had while taking with her sons about serving, giving, volunteering in the community and globally. She thought a school food drive would be a great idea and will pursue the idea and come back with more info.
      1. Feedback: The group loved the idea. Check to see what time of year is best. They might get a lot this time of year and not much come late spring.
      2. Kate: Her school had a "Soup-er Bowl" food drive that went really well. It was a classroom competition.
      3. Other ideas: Coat drive, Cradles to Crayons, make a "Birthday Kit" to give to the Food Pantry, make after school snack bags that the kids can assemble.
  - d. Spring Auction
    - i. Date will be in March. No set date yet
    - ii. Lisa needs to find a replacement to manage the Handbid website as she is leaving this year. Check with lower grades to find someone to do it with her this year. Emily and Donna volunteered to help.
4. Principal Report
  - a. Community Lunch
    - i. It was her first Community Lunch. She was very impressed! Thought it was a special and beautiful event. It was nice for her to meet with community members and retired Chilmakr staff.
    - ii. Next lunch will be around May 23rd.

- iii. Feedback: That's Memorial Day weekend, a busy time for parents in the community getting their businesses ready to open etc.
- iv. Next year they hope to have 3 luncheons: Fall, Winter, and Spring
- b. Reminder: Everyone working with students needs to be CORID. Fill out the form at the Superintendent's office in VH, bring your driver's license. Takes about a week or two to get. It lasts a year. Makes sure to do it before Ice Skating program starts in January
- c. Turkey Trot
  - i. We are doing Stone Soup this year but hope to do it during Community Lunch in the future.
  - ii. Make sure to have the police close the road. Last year they didn't and a car drove around the kids running.
- d. Ice Skating
  - i. A 4 week "Learn to Skate" program. It will start January 9th.
  - ii. We would like to find 2 insured skating instructors to help the students the first 2 weeks.
  - iii. Cat: Ask Beth O'Connor Blakenship. She is happy to do it and will do it and has been known to do it for free. PTO is happy to fund it.

## 5. Treasurer Update

- a. Thank you to Brent Brown for his years as Treasurer. He kept immaculate notes and was very organized.
- b. We need to get PTO board members to sign at the bank so he can start writing checks and have access to the accounts etc.
- c. Addressing what to do with the Non-Allocated Finds which currently has \$48, 831.35. Once he has access to the account he can look at this account and see how it was accrued.
  - i. Lisa: A big chunk of it was because the 4/5 class didn't go on the Shenandoah during COVID.
  - ii. Formula for the fundraiser in Spring is 50/50. Half goes to PTO and Half goes to OP. Maybe consider changing the formula since prices are going up for Outing Programs.
  - iii. Get the word out to teachers about this account and see if they have any wishes: a new laminator etc.
  - iv. Kate: It would be very easy to spend this money. I am open to having conversations to discuss ways to augment curriculum, build classroom libraries, and provide specific targeted professional development. I know teachers are interested in seeing fundraising money go directly to classrooms. IE we have an old laminator. A new one costs \$800 to replace. One thing schools do is at the beginning of the year the PTO allocates classrooms a certain amount of money and then throughout the year they bring PTO their receipts and get refunded. We can make sure it's classroom needs only. It can put towards professional development.
  - v. Discussion on teachers and Amazon wish list. Kate: We won't do that. She thinks it would be better to allocate a certain amount of money to teachers.
  - vi. Cat: Outing Program is so untangleable for the younger kids and parents. The skiing trip and the Shenandoah is for 4/5 only. She wondered if the OP could come up with trips the younger classes can take to benefit from the OP program?

- vii. Kate: Bring in authors visits through the Mass Cultural Council. Might be hard and expensive getting them to come here but possible one visit a year.
  - viii. Katherine: Let's continue this conversation with Rebekah who's over OP on extending the Outing Program. Also note: she's looking for someone/someones to take over the OP. Suggested noting when they do they auction, to say what exactly the money is going towards.
  - ix. Kate: Issue with the larger all island budget. We have \$0 in the school's "Activity Fund." Raises a concern and might come up is audited. She will get more information on it. Maybe consider having a separate "Chilmark Education Fund" to internally grant money to teachers for specific classroom needs and programs.
  - x. Katherine: Looking at the excess funds, time to start thinking about what we want to do with them. Suggested her Mom could help who started something similar in NH. She wants to make sure we're not advertising that we're sitting on a lot of excess money which could change the attitude towards the Spring Auction.
  - xi. Beau: How have we used this account in the past?
    - 1. Katherine: Different classroom programs, drama teacher visit, field trips,
    - 2. Don't want to allocate this money across the classrooms now because it wouldn't be fair to future classes.
    - 3. Lisa: Remember a big portion of this money is from the year the 4/5 didn't go on the Shenandoah trip.
  - xii. Cat: Not worried about getting rid of it now but considered looking at our budget, getting feedback from teachers and being cautious as to how we spend this money.
  - xiii. Suggested Beau reviews how much is going into that fund and what's going out. Then decide what to do with this money.
6. Katherine motions to close the meeting at 9:51 a.m. Kate seconds.
7. **Next meeting Friday December 6th at 8:15 a.m. in the Chilmark Library**