

Vincent Massey School Council Meeting Minutes – September 20, 2023

Attendance:

VM staff: Julie Chouinard Nicholas Lafrance

Executive: Erinn Brooks, Erin Corbin, Katie Eberts

Members: Allison Ewacha, Allison Merz, Cheri Whitall, Cheryl Khoury, Galen Wong, Hamid Azad, Jacqueline Willmore, Tiffany Campagnolo, Tori Moore, Valerie De Franco, David Merz, Allison Palermo, Jenny Ellis

Item

1. Welcome

Katie provided an Intro of Executives and roles
3 positions currently occupied

*Chair - Katie Eberts

*Treasurer - Erinn Brooks

*Secretary - Erin Corbin

Other potential roles were explained, such as

*Outreach

*Communications: update website, promote events, social media

*Grant submissions: annual and specialty as applicable

An explanation of non-executive roles was also provided which included:

*Attending monthly meetings

*Volunteer for events

*Lead/join committees such as gardening, library rejuvenation, etc.

Note that every parent/caregiver is part of council; participation can take many forms

An invitation for anyone that would want to put their name forward to join the executive was made.
Katie asked those interested to let council know by September 29.

Katie also explained that this year there would be virtual and in-person meetings

*6 virtual; 3 in person (October, April & June)

It was noted that council has reviewed the OCDSB Council policies and procedures, and we can discontinue the formal "motions to approve" for things like meeting minutes and decisions where there is consensus. If ever there is not consensus, that's when we can take a vote.

Katie provide an overview of the June meeting which included a discussion of the timing of suggested Council events (discussed in more detail later in the meeting)

It was noted that it was agreed that Council should focus its spending on activities for the entire school and not on one grade/division more than another

Also agreed that council would decide in advance how Council funds will be allocated; drafted ideas in June.

Spending ideas included:

*Purchase of t-shirts to sell as fundraiser at Fun Zone

*We'll give \$ towards multi-cultural event (~\$500, for plates, napkins, juice boxes, table cloths)

*Will also allocate set amount to each division early in school year (after Fun Zone fundraiser, once we know how much we have) (last year we allocated \$75 per educator because we had a large pot of money)

*Will fund an indigenous event in June (dancing, throat singing)

*Will fund some/all helmets/equipment needs, depending on costs

*If asks come in that don't "serve" the whole school community, we'll discuss with School Admin who is best-placed to fund - in some instances, it would be better to use the school budget, for transparency and equity

*If we are fundraising for a specific project (library, outdoor classroom), we need to be clear in the communications that that is where the money is going

*If a major project is identified and agreed-upon, we could also look into a percentage allocated for fundraising. (Example, 90% of funds go towards major project; 10% goes towards general)

No issues or objections were noted regarding the general spending ideas presented.

2. Principal updates

Julie provided the following information:

-a 5th kinder class has been added this year – approx. 27 students each – hired four new staff members as a result

-hired a new term library technician – Laurie Mckenzie – she is at the school 3 days per week

-hired an office assistant (part time). The office team includes Mary, Catherine, Ruby, and Lily in the afternoons

-there are 18 new staff members this year – this is due to the school growing, some retirements, staff with OCV (had to choose between that and VM), some staff relocated

-there are 757 students enrolled as of today, this is up 150 from last year

-English classes are full – 23 students each class

-there is one additional FR immersion intermediate class

A question was asked about portables. Julie has reached out to the Board to signal that there isn't anymore room, if there is another class created, the school will need more space.

Council mentioned to Julie that they were working on an updated Principal Profile for VM admin review. This is due to the Board by October 31.

3. Teacher updates

Trisha couldn't join today – Julie gave the update instead.

Intermediates – going to McSkimming starting next week and through Oct.

The Terry Fox Run will be held October 13.

Soccer practice has started at recess for juniors and intermediates.

Student council has been chosen, they will be starting to meet shortly.

A question was asked about the list of sports happening at the school. Julie explained that sometimes it is Board driven, sometimes the school can choose. Julie will get back to us on this.

Student council will be invited to the parent council meetings – to give updates.

Popcorn starting again, Merry Dairy will be at the open house next week (as a fundraiser for the Grade 8 leaving activity).

Student council wants to have t-shirts made, will reach out to school council for info.

4. Student council updates

No one was in attendance from student council (see notes above in the teacher updates).

5. Fun Zone @ Open House

- 4:30-6pm; simultaneous with Open House
- Games like 3 legged race, potato sack race, spoon egg carry, parachute cat/mouse
- Activities like art, bubbles, skipping ropes, hula hoops, chalk and free tattoos
- Pre-sold pizza combos can be picked up - picnic style for families (so far have sold 48; deadline is Sunday)
- Pre-sold t-shirts may be picked up as well (those not picked up will be sent home with student)
- Hoping to have music with help of AV club
- Compost, recycling + garbage bins - looking into Earth Club volunteers for monitoring waste
- Student Council has provided 2 volunteers - thanks!
- Julie/staff: please contact Katie to purchase t-shirts and pizza - we can find a way to sell to you.

- Erin explained that council could take credit card payments for shirts (and potential to use for future events as well) if we purchased a Square - would be an up-front cost of ~\$70 + tax + % on each sale. There was consensus to go ahead with the purchase.
- Spending on other purchases for the event was also discussed. Council requested an amount up to \$100 to cover tattoos, games and other supplies. There was consensus to go ahead with this amount.

A discussion about how to further promote the event was held. The following ideas were put forward and will be followed up after the meeting:

-Classroom emails – council can provide information that the teachers can send in an email to let parents know about the event and pizza and t-shirt sales.

-Instagram page – post to promote the event –Julie can do this, council to provide the information for the post

-A post will also be included on the Families of VM facebook page

-Morning announcements – council will email Julie and Nick

In the future council will consider using flyers that could be distributed to each student to take home in their backpacks.

6. Treasurer's report

Current balances:

Total available: \$2,277.43

- *\$1,126.83 (School account)
- *\$1,150.60 (RBC petty cash account)
- Reserved for library + maker space: \$5,775.43

7. Ongoing fundraisers

- FlipGive

*Passive fundraising, get a % of sales

*Was originally created to fundraise for the library rejuvenation project several years ago; has since shifted to being a general fundraiser

*Plan to increase promotion this year, including use of QR codes on flyers and targeted emails surrounding holidays (multi-faith)

- Mabels Labels

*Another passive fundraiser

*Promoted at kinder meet and greet flyers (QR code) and back to school email; will continue with this and maybe do another push mid-year for those whose labels have come off/need more

- VM merch

*This is back for the current school year! Thanks to a VM parent Owen Purcell-Sutherland for redesigning the logo, and to Erinn and any others who contributed to the discussions about making the bull a bit friendlier and moving away from the school motto, refuse to lose. And thanks to Julie for sharing her contact for printing the t-shirts.

*T-shirts are being sold on an ongoing basis via School Cash Online, and will also be available for direct purchase (cash or e-transfer) at the Fun Zone

*T-shirts raise just under \$5 each

*Future merch (hoodies) won't likely be fundraisers as the cost is already high enough

Other New fundraising initiatives

In June, council discussed potential multi-year, major fundraising projects including:

-reviving library rejuvenation (2.0)

-outdoor learning space/classroom

-play structures - we've since learned that they have a lifespan of 25-35 years depending on materials, and ours have 10-20 years left, so we don't need to worry about this now)

Input from VM admin and teachers is critical so a parent, Allison Klus Palermo created a survey to gauge interest and set priorities. So far, 25 responses have been received - Julie will send a reminder to teachers on Friday to see if we can get some additional participation. Responses are split almost 50/50

between the two larger initiatives so far with an outdoor classroom with slightly more votes. Final results will be shared at the next meeting.

8. Events for 2023-24 school year

-Goal is to spread out events to avoid burnout and keep everyone interested (1 x month)
-In June, Council agreed on the following calendar of events as a draft (Also open to other/new ideas.)
-Will create calendar of events so that everyone knows what is happening when; easier to secure volunteers and families can plan accordingly

September: Fun Zone

October: Halloween dance?

November: Promote FlipGive; Scholastic Fair (School-led)

December: Sales at concert?

January: Movie night (19th)

February: Dance-a-thon

March: Book Giveaway + Do nothing

April: Movie night (19th)

May: Multicultural Event (school led, but Council helps)

June: Kinder Meet & Greet

Discussed potential toy exchange – potentially in December before the holidays.

There was general agreement on the activities and timing.

9. Roundtable

The return to school approach this year was discussed, specifically questions were asked about why students did not find out their classroom teacher in advance of the first day. Julie explained that they wanted the whole school to follow the same strategy (other than kinders who will always get an email introduction from their teacher). Two things happened this year that complicated the process – creation of 5th kindergarten class – which had an impact on staffing and impacted which teachers would be teaching which classes and the influx of new students - this was happening right up until the Friday before the long-weekend and the school was constantly revising the class lists.

At a staff meeting on Friday, VM decided to hold off on emails as there were too many moving parts but until then they had thought they would share this by email.

Julie apologized for not sharing the complexities in the email that was sent to parents on Friday..

A question was asked about how many split classes the school has. Julie noted that split classes are decided by school board planners – they look at numbers and caps across the board. This can mean that there are split classes – depends on registration numbers – EN program has more splits than FR immersion.

How is it decided on the distribution of students? Julie noted that this is based on a discussion between future and former teachers – they look at the overall cohort and consider many factors.

Parents can contact the school individually if they would like more information on their specific case.

End meeting

Next meeting is October 18 @ 6:30pm in person in the VM library

