

**Runnymede Public School Council Meeting Minutes**  
**Wed. Oct. 21, 2009**

**Attendees:** Robert Dunford, Halina Cieszynska, Alice Bell, Tricia McGovern, Audrey Robinson, Andrew Violi, Mehnaz Malik, Donna Mackay, Becky Jenkins, Jerry Tiessen, Kirsten Tenebaum, Suzanne Gordon, Chris Sheehan, Nadine Singh, Bruce Toner, Hilary Inwood, Joe Louch, Brian Withnell, Kshama Patel, Jason Thompson, Krista Wylie

**Teacher Reps:** Kathryn McCormick

**School Administration:** Rob Hochberg, VP

**Regrets:** Amelia Dennis, Michael Kanalec

**1. Welcome**

Rob Dunford welcomed all in attendance.

**2. Receive Previous Meeting's Minutes (June 17, 2009 & Sept. 22, 2009)**

No discussion occurred for this motion as minutes were handed out at last meeting and there were no questions.

*Suzanne Gordon put forward motion to accept previous meeting minutes  
Seconded by Jerry Tiesson  
Motion carried*

**3. Receive Correspondence**

No correspondence reported on as received since last meeting.

**4. Treasurer's Report: 2009/2010 Budget Proposal**

Chris highlighted the following points from the Council constitution:

- All expenditures will be approved by the Council. Expenditures may be approved in the following manner: Council's decision to hold a fundraiser conveys implicit approval to pay the related expenditures; once Council approves a budget, no further approval for budgeted items is required. Exceptions will be expenditures \$150.00 or less and will be approved by the Chair or Co-Chair and by the Treasurer → the implication of this is that if council approves budget for committed items, we shouldn't expect to see proposals for same (we are pre-approving) and if we don't want to pre-approve then we need to move the item into uncommitted funds.
- Council's Spending Objectives are to spend the greatest proportion of Council funds on projects which collectively, over the long term benefit the largest number of students and to only utilize funds when there are insufficient funds available from other sources, including the Principal and School Board. (i.e. Council will not fund items such as school maintenance which should be funded by the School Board)

Chris then presented the proposed budget for 2009-2010, which can be viewed on the Council website on the Treasurers page

Points of discussion regarding the budget:

- Overall – the proposed 2009-2010 budget is based on conservative estimates of fundraising revenues and on expense estimates that are in line with previous years' commitments. One notable additional commitment that is included is \$1500 for Art, as discussed at Council last year. As well, \$500 has been allocated to Council Communications for website improvements, communications and e-mail costs. The projected net income for this coming year is a deficit of \$ (330). This projected deficit means that Council will need to be careful of cash flow when writing cheques and will need to monitor any fundraising shortfalls closely.
- The miscellaneous revenue of \$2000 represents grant money that could result from applications being submitted by the Yards committee to Metro and Eco-Canada. To reflect the fact that this money is only a potential source of revenue at this time, the \$2000 is also noted as an uncommitted expense in the proposed budget (i.e. they are tied together – if the grants don't materialize then the uncommitted item must be dropped).
- A major percentage of committed expenses is the Teacher's Resource Fund (TRF). In the past, each teacher at the school could request up to \$350 from this fund in order to purchase additional resources. Last year, many teachers did not take advantage of this opportunity. Rob Dunford asked Rob Hochberg if it would be possible for Council to attend a staff meeting to market the availability of the TRF so that all teachers know about it and how to access this source of additional funding.

**Action:** Council to attend future Staff meeting to provide information to all teachers about the TRF and how teachers have used this resource fund in the past.

- A proposal for alternate ways to distribute the RTF to ensure equitability has been submitted and will be discussed at a future Council meeting. It was noted that the total amount allotted for RTF will remain flat to last year at \$17, 500 since this is all the budget can afford without reallocating other line items.

**Action:** Table discussion on division of RTF for future Council meeting.

- The \$2500 allotted to Extracurricular Support should be split between both sport (\$2000) and non-sport (\$500). The feeling is that this money should not be used to pay for ice time.

*Brian Withnell put forward motion to accept the proposed 2009-2010 budget*

*Seconded by Hilary Inwood*

*Motion carried*

## **5. Ward 7 Report**

Kshama Patel presented the following report from the last Ward 7 meeting:

### **Elections**

- Ela Sawistowska (Humberside) was elected as Ward 7 Chair for 2<sup>nd</sup> year.

### **Discussion on Parent Involvement:**

- TDSB Parent Involvement Advisory Committee (PIAC) advises the Board on matters relating to the implementation of the policy on Parent and Community Involvement in the TDSB, and may provide input into other educational issues of broad community interest.

- TDAB French as a Second Language Advisory Committee (FSL-AC) advises the Board on matters relating to the organization and implementation of French as a Second Language Programs in the TDSB (optional and core FSL), and may provide input into other educational issues of broad community.
- With respect to Ward 7 information packages, there was discussion about posting the information on Irene's website. School councils can then link to Irene's website (avoids duplication of attachments). Historically, emailing soft copies to ward reps has not been done due to size of attachments and volume of information.

**Presentation: Parent Involvement & Advocacy – How can parents make a difference? By People for Education – Annie Kidder**

- People for Education is a province-wide parent advocacy group that does work in 4 main areas:
  - Research: conduct research through surveys about education & publish statistics
  - Universities: work together to influence policy
  - Supporting parents – helping parents to get involved in their children's education
  - Communication
- They purposefully avoid becoming a lobbyist group and instead focus on engendering a transparency of process in the education system.
- They try to engage ALL PARENTS in terms of soliciting directions for advocacy.
- They host conferences to bring parents together to share opinions.
- Research outcomes support that parent involvement in school affects children's ability to succeed in school. Attendance at parent teacher interviews, school concerts, ask about school work, help their kids with their school work, all help to overcome socioeconomic differentials.
- Future agenda items for People for Education include bringing together school councils to discuss what they can be doing to communicate with parents.
- They also publish a newsletter five times/year
- They are hosting their annual conference on November 7 at York University. Any parent can attend and topics include: education in recession, technology in the classroom, reading and literacy, school councils, navigating the education system, what really helps kids,
- Their website is [www.peopleforeducation.com](http://www.peopleforeducation.com) and they also offer the following resources:
  - A handbook with helpful "tips" for school council – how to host events where parents will come – "parent inclusion manual" – to be posted on their webpage shortly
  - "tip sheets" up on website – translated in 12 language
  - Toronto Parent Toolbox - \$50 + shipping to make – has all the tip sheets in hardcopy

**Trustee Report - Budget update**

- On Sept 23, 2009 the Board formed a Special Budget committee. The committee has been given a reconciliation statement and has been mandated to provide recommendations to the board on how to balance the budget deficit

**Pools update:**

- Parkdale and Ursula Franklin closed permanently
- Fern – Opening Oct 11 – has permits now 5 days/wk
- Western Tech is still looking for permits so anyone looking for pool time is encouraged to contact the pools committee.

**Reports from Central Committees:**

- PIAC Parent conference is being held on Nov 14, 2009 Earl Haig SS – child care available, registration online at: <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/survey/parentconference> Topics will include: Promoting a Healthy Mind for Children and Youth, Closing the Achievement Gap...The Parents' Role, Parent Teacher Interview: Making the Most of Your 5 Minutes, School Dress Code or Uniforms?, Making the Transitions, Strengthening Community Partnerships in Your Schools, Bullying, Making Your School Council Work, Encouraging the Love of Learning at Home

## **6. Administration Report**

Rob Hochberg reported on the following items of note:

### **General Updates**

- New basketball nets for the Runnymede Yard are going in on Oct. 22, 2009 – a project proposed by the yard committee and approved in June, 2009. The final portion of this proposal – multi-hoops for younger children – will be put up in Spring 2010.
- Extracurricular activities are going well with a lot of teacher support and a lot of success by Runnymede athletes and participants
- An extracurricular program called “Mad Science” is being piloted this Fall for Grade 1 students and started on Oct. 19 with 20+ students. This is an extracurricular activity for which parents must pay. It was initially suggested by a Runnymede parent and has been made possible through the support of a Runnymede teacher willing to stay for the program and to have their classroom be used for this program. Assuming this pilot goes well, it will be offered to Grade 2 students in Winter 2010.

### **Halloween**

- The annual Runnymede Halloween parade is scheduled for Friday Oct. 30 this year and will start at 1:00 pm and will proceed outside and around the Runnymede Yard. Parents are invited to attend this event. Please note that morning Kindergarten classes will have their own parade taking place in the morning that will occur indoors. Parents of morning Kindergarten students are certainly invited to attend this morning parade as well.
- UNICEF forms will be sent home to request donations
- A Food Drive, initiated by 2 Grade 7 students at the school, is being held as part of the Halloween celebrations. They were inspired by the work one teacher is doing in the classroom on the “Stand Up, Take Action, End Poverty Now” mobilization, which took place this year on Oct. 16-18 and wanted to do their part to take action. Parents are asked to bring food donations to the Halloween Parade.
- Communications on Halloween activities and costume safety will be sent home with all students.

### **Weather Policies and Procedures**

- During lunch, if rain occurs, the weather is monitored and at a point when rain is heavy enough to cause students to stop activity, students will be let in early from outside. If this happens early in the lunch period, students will return to their lunchroom and be monitored by regular lunchroom supervisors. If this happens with only 5-7 minutes of lunch period left, then students will go directly to their classrooms.

- During morning drop-off, should heavy rain occur then students will be allowed to enter the school up to 15 minutes early. They will go downstairs to a waiting room where they will be supervised by the teachers who would have otherwise been on supervision outdoors.
- During winter months, the Board has a policy that children will remain indoors only if the temperatures reach – 28 degrees so ensure that children have appropriate clothing for the weather.

### **Questions to Administration**

- When is next Runnymede Rapport? To be distributed at the end of November.
- Many students in Grades 1 – 3 lunchroom who usually finish eating their lunches have been coming home this week with virtually none of their lunch eaten. They claim to have had no time to eat. Since this is unusual, several parents asked Rob to look into the cause.

**Action:** *Rob Hochberg to look into the Grade 1-3 lunchroom activities to determine cause of seemingly shortened eating time.*

- What is Runnymede's plan should an outbreak of H1N1 occur at the school? At the moment, the school is focused on preventative measures and has no specific school-based plan for any potential outbreak. Should an outbreak occur, the Board would issue a policy that Runnymede P.S. would then adopt.

## **7. Committee Reports**

### **a) Yard Committee Report**

Hilary Inwood introduced Bruce Toner, who will be taking over the Chair of Yard Committee role in the January 2010. She also explained that the Yard committee is in the midst of two grant applications – one available from a Green program offered by Metro grocery stores for up to \$1000 and one available from Eco-Canada for up to \$12, 000. It was noted that Runnymede has already achieved the Eco-school certification of GOLD and that in the next couple of years – with attention to showing leadership – Runnymede should be able to qualify for PLATINUM certification.

Hilary mentioned having many photographs that could be posted if space was allotted on the Runnymede website and that the actual Resource Guide could also be posted on-line.

**Action:** *Table discussion of including these features for a future Council meeting or perhaps a Communications Committee meeting*

Hilary presented the following priorities for 2009/2010 include:

- Planning and Implementing Yard Days - \$1000
  - Yard Day, which occurred on Oct. 3, 2009 and was a huge success
  - Earth Day, which is planned for April 17, 2010 and will focus on
    - Weeding/pruning/removing invasive species
    - Ongoing improvements to the butterfly garden and medicine wheel garden
    - Musical performance in the garden for Earth Day
    - Adding no bikes/no dogs signs at Colbeck entrance

- Clean up litter
- Sweep up mulch and leaves
- Supporting curriculum-related activities in the Hillside Garden - \$3200
  - Hire an educator (100 hours @ \$30 per hour) to instigate and support cross-curricular learning with teachers and students in the Hillside Garden;
  - Promote lessons and students' work on bulletin board
  - Bulb-planting in Hillside garden with JK & SK students
  - Print and distribute Runnymede Resource Kit (developed by Yard Committee Chair Hilary Inwood) for Teachers
  - Possible in-service workshop to introduce teachers to the new Resource Guide
  - Possible recognition awards for teachers/classes that take on a stewardship work in the Hillside Garden
- Erosion of pathways - \$500
  - Decommissioning of vertical paths with plant debris
  - Mulching existing pathways in spring
  - Re-build stairway from Adventure Yard into Hillside Garden (done at October Yard Day)
  - Build pathway to/around Medicine Wheel Garden and Butterfly garden
- Expand Art in Yard - \$500
  - Primary/junior art project – “No Idling” fence paintings for Colbeck fence
  - Add sundial on asphalt near portable (scheduled for Spring Earth Day)
  - Fix graffiti issue on grade 7 paintings in the Yard

**Action:** *Kathryn McCormick will look into having students take this on as a project but to actually implement will need assistance from volunteers to take down art and re-hang (send request to extra hands from Yard committee?). An additional challenge is timing this before cold weather sets in, which would make painting untenable.*

- New projects - \$ N/A
  - Recruit new members
  - Planning for the development of the Kindergarten learning area
  - Planning for improvement of southern edge along Colbeck
  - Exploring options for improvement of water/ice area on Runnymede yard

There was discussion about potential for including “Lift and Learn” flaps throughout the Hillside Garden as a permanent learning feature. Concern is vandalism and cost of such signage. A potential alternate of have the Educator build lesson plans that will be shared and/or housed in office for other teachers and parents to use.

There was discussion about the importance of fixing vandalism in a timely manner to discourage additional vandalism. Challenge is that this work is done by volunteers. If parents are interested in being on the “Extra Hands” list – a list kept by the Yard Committee to contact when jobs around the yard are required – please contact Yard Committee.

## **b) Spirit Committee Report**

Nadine Singh provided the following report from the Spirit Committee and gave assurance that the revenue projections in the financials are very realistic since all fundraisers are currently on target.

- Donations
  - \$2000 total so far (likely coming close to being done with receiving new donations) – which is up from \$1,800 last year
- Runnymede T-Shirts Sales
  - Profit of approximately \$1000 – which is up from \$600 last year
  - 109 shirts left to sell which Spirit Committee will try selling again at Christmas concerts - if all these 103 shirts are sold in our spirit year 2009/10 then another \$1300 otherwise will inventory to sell in 2010/11 year.
- QSP – our most profitable fundraiser
  - 60% of sales have been online so far
  - Campaign tally is still being done but looks like we will realize profit of approximately \$12,500-\$13,000 (not including \$1,500 bonus we get this year) - which is close to last year
  - a parent raised concerns about a sharp increase in the subscription rates

**Action:** Spirit Committee is looking into this with QSP and QSP has already contacted this parent

- concern raised at meeting about inability to receive discounts online

**Action:** Spirit Committee to look into online functionality available for next campaign.

- Gift Wrap
  - Deadline was extended to Friday, Oct. 23 so tally is still being compiled
  - Looks like we will come in the same as last year with a profit of approximately \$3900 +/-
- Chapters Night
  - Wednesday, November 25th 6pm-9pm.
  - Music confirmed with Mr Fraser and Mrs McLeod; Mme Kling , Mr. Tran and Mr Shook's classes will participate in some way.
  - We will also display art from Mrs. McCormick's senior students.
  - Flyer will be going out to all students in early November, announcements on PA system & the event will be advertised in SNAP
  - This event is less of a fundraiser and more of a community-family event – any funds raised is received in form of gift cards
- Pub Night
  - Looking at Friday April 30th as the date, venue TBA,
  - Musician who performed last year is signed on again
- Potential Family Movie Night
  - Looking into a Kingsway Theatre movie night for families in January
- Arts program proposal coming in November

**c) 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary/Centennial Committee Report**

Alice Bell provided the following information on this committee:

- No update at this time
- New members and a Chair for this committee are required
- Next meeting is Wed. Oct. 28th

#### **d) Communications Committee Report**

Jason Thompson is the new Chair of the Communications committee and provided the following update:

- Mandate of committee
  - Improve communications overall within Runnymede so that all families feel welcome and part of a smaller community within a big school.
- Moving towards more e-mail communication
  - We are working on ways to build our list serve – something that we could share with the administration in an effort to move more families to the web for information
  - This would allow for more frequent updates, meet demands of being an eco-school (paper) and equally importantly, address time and effort of staff and volunteers to create some 900 copies of the Rapport
- Website improvements
  - Looking to improve our website – [www.runnymedecouncil.org](http://www.runnymedecouncil.org) - adding “Resources” section, FAQ section, links to public health (H1N1)
  - Also looking to include milestone info to the Runnymede community – section on welcome to the school and JK issues; entering grade 7 issues;
  - Potential to include information on tryouts and extra-curriculars so parents would know in advance
  - Examining effect of school announcements being included on an ongoing basis
- Next meeting: Nov 9 at 8pm – new members are welcome to attend – please contact Jason Thompson @ [Jason.Thompson@rogers.com](mailto:Jason.Thompson@rogers.com) if interested.

#### **8. Motion for Funding Quartet visit**

A request from Mrs. MacLeod was made for \$660 from Council to cover the cost of a String Quartet that she hired in September to introduce all students to Strings. While an expense like this would normally have been covered by lab fees, students this year are not required to pay lab fees.

A discussion on this request included:

- Feelings that teachers should request money from Council prior to money being spent
- Budget is quite tight this year so until we know at the end of school year where money stands, Council is not in a position to approve an ad hoc request such as this.
- Potential for Mrs. MacLeod to pool TRF money with other teachers to cover this cost.

*Rob Dunford put forward a suggestions that we to defer this request to the end of the school year when Council knows its financial position*

**Action:** Rob Dunford to let Mrs. MacLeod know about potential to use TRF funds for this expense if she pools with other teachers in same area and also let her know about Council's decision to defer her request given 2009/2010 budget constraints.

## **9. Other Business**

The following future meeting dates were agreed upon:

- Thursday November 19<sup>th</sup>
- Tuesday January 19
- Wednesday February 24
- Thursday March 25
- Tuesday April 20
- Wednesday May 19
- Thursday June 17 (optional if required for summer spending)