



Southington Education Foundation

September 12, 2023

6:30 p.m. on Zoom

Meeting Minutes

In Attendance

15 Directors - Jerry Belanger, Ellen Bellinger, Lisa Cammuso, Denise Carabetta, George Fournier, Jan Galati, Nancy Garry, Trish Kenefick, Paula Knight, Michelle LeBrun Griffin, Joyce McAloon, Nancy Rogers, Ann Taylor, Dianne Quinn, and Katie Wade

Administrator – Steve Madancy

A. Welcome/Call to Order –

Katie Wade called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm.

The directors were thanked for promptly submitting votes over the summer in order to uphold our commitment to the Hearts & Minds grant. A vote was needed in order to use SEF funds to cover the unexpected cost of shipping. On August 19th all were in favor - the vote was unanimous.

B. Approval of June Minutes

There were no additions or corrections to the 6/13/23 minutes.

Jerry moved to accept the minutes, seconded by Jan.

There was one abstention. The minutes were approved.

C. February Treasurer's Report – Dianne Quinn

- M&T Bank required current officers to sign forms for bank access. Dianne, Katie, Lisa, and Ellen signed on; Paula and Jerry's names were removed.
- Dianne explained that treasurer reports will now be kept in Google Docs where members could have access at any time.
- There will be two separate excel sheets – one that includes the fiduciary funds we are managing and one showing SEF's funds alone.
- The Goralski Scholarship fund was moved to a savings account. Lisa suggested a separate Google sheet for this.
- The current CHECKING ACCOUNT BALANCE is \$53,233.80.
- Paula moved to approve the treasurer's report, seconded by Katie. All in favor. The motion passed.

- The fraud department at M&T Bank notified Dianne of a breach which caused them to establish a watchdog service that we will receive for free for one year.
- Dianne will check in with the business office to see if there is any unused grant money.

D. Committee Work

1. Scholarship – Ann

- The Goralski Scholarship was added to the website.
- There was some discussion about our obligation to the Goralski family and our continued management of the scholarship.
- Further discussion was tabled due to time restraints.

2. Events Committee – Nancy/Paula

- Next Meeting - September 27 at 6:30 on Zoom.
- Trivia Night –
 - The date has been moved to October 25th in order to facilitate advertising.
 - Ticket price will be \$30pp.
 - Jerry will set up the flier and a Zeffy account for ticket purchases.
 - Raffle donations are needed.
- Chamber of Commerce – Sip & Shop - November 28th
 - Paula and Jan are working on it.

3. Board Development – Jan

a. By-Law Revision

- By-Law revisions were previously approved by Attorney Denorfia and shared with directors in the summer.
- Proposed revisions include:

Article II. Section 3.

Remove sentence: “No Board member shall serve more than three (3) consecutive three (3) year terms.”

Replace: “At the end of the (3) year term, Board members shall decide whether to serve an additional three (3) year term.”

Article II. Section 10.

Add Chair-elect to allow an individual to serve in a mentorship

Article V. Section 1. Chairperson/Co-Chairs. Add Co-Chairs after Chairperson.

Article XIV. Miscellaneous

Explanation of leader’s mentorship relations

- With no questions or feedback received, Jan moved to approve the proposed revisions to the SEF By-Laws as shared with the Directors, seconded by George. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

- b. Commitment and Conflict of Interest forms
Ellen will resend a request to directors who have not yet submitted.
- c. Board Manual (Member Information)
In order to have access to the board manual a gmail address or Google-approved email address is needed on the account.

4. Grant Committee – Denise & Jan

- a. Grant Cycle and Timeline
 - There will continue to be 3 cycles with the following deadlines for applicants: Nov. 14, Jan. 11, and Mar. 11.
 - \$5,000 has been budgeted with the possibility of requesting more.
- b. Committee Members
 - Five members will continue on the committee (Denise, Jan, George, Trish, Ellen, and Nancy R.)
 - There are two slots open for additional members. Let Jan know if interested.
- c. SEF/Main Street Community Foundation Partnership Grant
 - Denise and Jan worked with MSCF to finalize the particulars of the application and its process. The new \$900 grant opportunity went out to educators with a July 1st deadline.
 - Denise & Jan reviewed the submitted applications and passed them on to MSCF for a final decision.
 - The full \$900 grant was awarded to Chris Palmieri for his “Kids’ Koop” chicken coop project located on the farmland north of DePaolo. It will require an additional \$500 in outside funding.
 - The project is a collaboration of two student clubs whose members will be tasked to care for the chickens, learn the daily responsibilities associated with caring for livestock, as well as managing egg sales. The proceeds will offset the ongoing operational costs.
- d. Possible Obstacles in Grant Application Submissions
 - Fewer applications have been received in recent years and many submissions have been incomplete. Jan and Denise raise the question: Should the application be simplified?
 - The discussion that followed included concerns about teacher stress and fatigue; suggestions for making the process easier for teachers; and the need to maintain the integrity of the application process.
 - A suggestion was made to look into offering some “quick & easy” small grants for items teachers may need (ie. for items recently seen on teacher wish lists). Steve cautioned that teachers should check with their principals first to see if such items might be purchased with BOE funds.

e. December Grant Celebration.

- Jan has a list of 6 possible grant presenters.
- A December date needs to be set. Steve suggested checking for possible conflicts with the SPS calendar on the website.

5. Program Committee - Michelle

- Michelle explained the difference between a grant and a program. Jerry pointed out that it's also explained on the website.
- She expressed gratitude for the vote this summer that covered the unexpected shipping cost of the Hearts & Mind program grant.
- The district will let us know about professional development plans.
- Steve has some program ideas that he will share at a later date.

6. Marketing Committee – Jan

- Efforts are underway to participate in the Chamber's Sip & Shop event.
- Lisa has updated the SEF PowerPoint presentation and will send it over to Jerry for the website.
- Ideas were shared about ways to reach out to teachers about SEF grant opportunities.
- Business cards need to be distributed to all members.
- Paula urged participation in Chamber breakfasts. Katie and Lisa indicated interest.

E. Other

1. Memorial Tree and Plaque for Gloria Brown

A dedication was held in the YMCA Memorial Forest at Camp Sloper on August 29. It was attended by SEF members, administrators, Bob Brown, his two children and grandchildren. Members of SEF and the Brown family spoke eloquently and passionately of our former colleague and friend. Paula explained the significance of the beautiful Eastern Rosebud tree that was planted in her honor. A reception followed at the home of Jan and Bob Galati.

2. Bread for Life Community Conversation Event (9/21/23 7-8pm)

An event flier had been distributed to SEF members. The event will be a kick-off for the book, Free Lunch, that describes what it's like to live with food insecurity. Bread for Life will partner with SEF in the distribution of information about upcoming events.

3. SEF Zoom Account

The cost of obtaining a Zoom account is around \$150 per year. Steve said he would look into the possibility of allowing SEF to use one of the school district's many Zoom licenses. A request for funding an account was tabled.

F. Meeting Dates for 2023-24

- The following dates were proposed: 9/12, 10/10, 11/14, 12/12, 1/9, 2/13, 3/12, 4/16, 5/14, 6/4.
- Jerry moved to accept the proposed meeting dates, seconded by Michelle. All in favor. The motion passed.

G. Adjournment - The meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Next Meeting: October 10, 2023, 6:30 pm on Zoom

Other Dates:

- **Sept. 27** – Event Committee – 6:30 Zoom
- **October 25** – Trivia Night at Cadillac Ranch

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Bellinger,
Recording Secretary

Mission: The Southington Education Foundation, Inc. is committed to instilling a life-long love of learning in all children through innovative, creative learning experiences that expand upon existing educational opportunities. The Foundation will partner with the community to secure resources, inspire excellence, and enrich student achievement.

Core Values: Innovation, Learning, Equity, School-Community Partnership, Integrity.