

## **Southington Education Foundation**

February 11, 2025

6:30 p.m.

On Zoom

### **In Attendance:**

7 Directors: Lisa Cammuso, Dianne Quinn, Nancy Rogers, Ellen Bellinger, Trish Kenefick, Michelle LeBrun-Griffin, Jerry Belanger

3 Volunteers: Patricia Gagliardi, Julie Barnofski, Peg Lewis

Administrator: Steven Madancy

### **Welcome/Call to Order:**

Lisa called the meeting to order at 6:34.

### **Additions to the Agenda:**

Trish reported that Southington STEPS students and advisors met with Chris Poulos to discuss the status of the bill he introduced to address the sale of Kratom. She shared the concern that the substance is unregulated and available to minors.

### **Approval of the December 2024 Minutes:**

Trish moved acceptance of the minutes as amended. Jerry seconded the motion and they was approved unanimously.

### **Treasurer's Report:**

Dianne reported the current balance of \$61,824.57.

Income included:

\$500 donation from Jim Gorham (Dianne, this might be a repeat from last month?)

\$313.02 from Just For You event

\$2000 donation from Paula and Rick Knight

\$85 to honor an educator

And \$8.87 in interest

Expenses were:

\$2000 to scholarship recipient who won two from SEF

\$1000 to the other recipient

The Goralski Scholarship Fund withdrew \$1500 from their account.

Dianne noted that there is still \$20,954 remaining in the pre-school tuition fund. Steve said he will look into this and report back.

Nancy R moved acceptance of the report, Michelle seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

## **Superintendent's Report - Steve**

Steve reported that the Board of Education unanimously adopted the proposed school budget at a 6.6% increase. He will present it to the Board of Finance tomorrow (February 12). Efforts are being made to work with the State to supplement funding due to cut backs on the federal level.

The Strategic Planning Committee met yesterday (February 10) to review the 3000 responses received from the community, including parents and students. The committee will be looking for patterns to emerge to help make future decisions.

There are conversations continuing regarding creating a town-wide robotics program outside of school hours.

The barn project adjacent to Depaulo Middle School is targeting late spring for ground-breaking. A site survey will be needed and an accessible bathroom will be included in the construction because the site will be used as a teaching space.

Steve also mentioned that on February 25, March 12 and March 24 at 6:30, the Early Childhood Collaborative and the Southington schools will collaborate with the Southington Public Library for a three-night book discussion at the library of *The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness* by Jonathan Haidt. Registration is required.

## **Committee Work:**

### **Scholarship: Ann**

Ann provided Lisa with an update that she has received first semester transcripts from scholarship recipients. She also reported that Sue Reisman will join the other five readers. Applications will be distributed to them during the first week of March and scores returned the last week of March.

### **Events: Nancy G and Paula**

**Trivia Night** will be held on Wednesday, March 19 from 5:30 to 9 at Kinsmen Brewing. Admission will be \$30 per person. Michelle negotiated the rental price from \$1500 to \$1000, with an agreement to waive the \$1500 bar fee. In addition, Kinsmen will promote the event in their social media as a co-sponsor. They suggested that SEF set up a table at the entrance to catch other customers that night. They will be providing tables and tablecloths.

Michelle will clarify the insurance coverage needed for the event.

To date, 33 tickets have been sold.

**Cider and Wine Tasting** will be held on Wednesday, May 21st. Nancy R described the help needed to supply food, entertainment, publicity, a live auction, a raffle, ticket sales, sponsors, and a showcase for the grants and programs we have funded and advanced. She named each of last year's sponsors, who have been contacted by mail to let them know that we are holding the event again; and members signed up to follow up with a request for continued sponsorship.

Steve reminded the board that students cannot attend events at which alcohol is served, and allowed that recordings of student music could be part of the entertainment. He said all publicity should read that the event is for people 21 and older. He said the SHS Student Art Show would be held prior to our event, and that students might be willing to donate work for the raffle or sell their work at the event.

**Program:** Michelle

Lisa reported attending the joint SEF and STEPS press release January 28th. during which a \$42K check was presented.

**Grants:** Jan

In Jan's absence, Ellen reported on the Grants Committee's recommendations for a vote on three grants: The Bakehouse Club; School Helpers; and Empowering Elementary Voices through Reading Fluency.

Ellen moved that the board approve allocating \$1,76.14 for a Bakehouse Club grant, funding an after school program at Southington High School. Nancy R seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously. Ann and Katie also submitted yes votes in absentia.

Jerry moved that the board approve allocating \$790.00 for a School Helpers Club, giving special education students an opportunity to contribute daily to school life. Trish seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously. Ann and Katie also submitted yes votes in absentia.

Jerry moved that the board approve allocating \$395.40 for Empowering Elementary Voices through Reading Fluency by means of purchasing microphones to assist students in improving reading fluency. Trish seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously. Ann and Katie also submitted yes votes in absentia.

Jan, Patricia, and Lisa met with Amy Zappone & Michael Colantonio to discuss a possible grant to expand the physical activity of elementary students along the lines of those suggested in “The Anxious Generation” book. They will come back to SEF with their ideas for implementing these concepts, and suggested there might be a broader audience for this beyond physical education. The grant might be such that it funds a pilot in one school that could become a wider program.

**Board Development:** Jan

A meeting will be forthcoming to develop a plan for marketing SEF in order to recruit more board members and volunteers.

There being no further business to come before the board, Nancy R moved to adjourn at 7:33. Jerry seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

**Upcoming Meetings and Events:**

**Grants Committee** – Monday, March 24 at 6:30 on Zoom

**Events Committee**- Wednesday, April 23 at 6:30 on Zoom

**General Meeting** – Tuesday, March 11 at **7:00** on Zoom

**Trivia Night** - Wednesday, March 19

**Cider Tasting** - Wednesday, May 21

**Respectfully submitted,**

Nancy Rogers

Corresponding 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