



Southington Education Foundation

September 10, 2024

6:30 p.m.

On Zoom

Meeting Minutes

In Attendance

11 Directors – Katie Wade, Lisa Cammuso, Dianne Quinn, Nancy Rogers, Ellen Bellinger, Nancy Garry, Paula Knight, Michelle LeBrun-Griffin, Jerry Belanger, Trish Kenefick, Jan Galati.
Volunteer - Patricia Gagliardi
Administrator - Frank Pepe

A. Welcome/Call to Order –

Katie called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

B. Agenda Additions or Changes -

Co-chairs received an email for the library building committee requesting a donation. Discussion ensued with consensus that such a stand-alone donation, apart from having a more direct impact on Southington students, is outside the SEF mission.

C. Installation of Board Members

Jan facilitated installation for Katie Wade as Co-Chair and Ellen Bellinger as Corresponding Secretary.

D. Approval of the May Minutes

Paula moved to accept the minutes as distributed, seconded by Trish. All were in favor with two abstentions. The minutes were approved.

E. Treasurer's Report

Dianne reported a current balance of \$62,755.55. She submitted the following updates: Donations for July and August- \$718 from Estee Lauder, through Lisa's efforts

Honor and Educator donation of \$1452.44 from Girl Scout parents to recognize Jan Verderame
Interest accrued- \$14.57

Expense- \$50 to the CT Department of Consumer Protection

Nancy R moved acceptance of the Treasurer's Report. Paula seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Lisa reported that she has updated the budget sheets available to board members, with a separate accounting for items for which we are a fiscal agent, such as when The Community Foundation of Greater New Britain gave SEF \$33,000 to administer to families with Pre-K students who were caught between their own resources and the change in policy for school admission to kindergarten. The administration fee garnered by SEF for this service is \$990. Dianne reported that so far \$11,056 has been allocated for four such students.

Discussion ensued regarding the need for an audit of our financial records, as recommended based on best practices. One option discussed was to appoint a committee to audit, as per our by-laws. Another suggestion was to reach out into the community for a pro-bono auditor, due to increasing complexity of our finances.

F. Superintendent's Report

Frank reported a "great start so far" to the school year. He said that administrators made it a point to greet every staff member personally as the year began, and noted increased energy and people being in sync. He said the Building Classrooms initiative is providing excitement and "good peer pressure" as more educators observe the outcomes. He emphasized the need for the STEPS initiative to be implemented in schools.

G. Committee Work

1. Scholarship – Ann

Ann was not present but reported that she is waiting on grades for payout of last year's scholarships.

2. Events Committee – Paula and Nancy G

A. **Trivia Night** will begin at 5:30 on Wednesday, October 23rd at Cadillac Ranch, with set-up at 4:30. The goal is to increase the attendance from 140 last year. Members were advised to reach out to community groups for attendance and for promoting the event on their social media. Tasks will be coordinated by the following members:

Ellen - raffles

Lisa - centerpieces

Jerry and Dianne - ticket sales at the door

Frank - bringing the SEF blocks

The board determined that additional insurance coverage for the event was not needed. A poster distributed online to promote the event will be revised to be in compliance with STEPS policy regarding events serving alcohol.

B. SEF will not participate in **Sip and Shop** this year.

C. Trish has met with **Just for You** and designated December 7th as our shopping day. She suggested members meet for brunch that morning and shop together.

D. **Drive-In Fundraiser** will most likely be held on June 14th.

E. Katie and Michelle will develop plans for **Thank A Teacher**.

F. Trish reported that she has been developing ideas for a **Basketball Event** featuring local talent, and will have more to say at the next meeting.

G. Plans are still in place for the **Cider Tasting** at a date TBD later in May 2025.

Nancy G and Paula said business will be conducted throughout the year by contact with committee members on texts and emails to limit meetings.

3. Program Committee - Michelle

A proposal was submitted to SEF by Megan Albanese, Director of Southington STEPS to promote the STEPS Asset Building Classrooms/Emotional Wellness Program in Southington schools. Michelle noted that when the grant from the Main Street Foundation comes in, SEF will be a “fiscal sponsor” of this initiative, which elevates it to a “Program” level. School administrators and staff are stressing the need for this program, and \$15,000 has already been spent to date in classrooms.

Concerns about the specifics of the budget outlined in the proposal to SEF, specifically that the money was going to posters, were addressed by a discussion that the monies would support the initiative as a whole, with SEF just playing their part for now.

Katie moved that SEF allocate \$9,975 in seed money to support the launch of the STEPS Asset Building Classrooms/Emotional Wellness Program in Southington schools, including the purchase of non-consumable instructional materials necessary to initiate classroom implementation of this program. Trish seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

4. Grant Committee- Jan

Jan invited all interested members to join the Grants Committee. The first meeting will be held on Zoom at 6:30 on Monday, November 25th.

Jan also distributed materials highlighting changes to the Purchase Order Funding Policy, specifically that the increase over the approved budget that can be approved by the Grant Committee Chair be increased from 10% to 12%, and that this amendment be included:

“The Grant Committee Chair may be called on to use their judgment: For example, if revision (of the original item) surpasses the 12% limit or \$200 amount as outlined in #2 above, but is considered to be at a reasonable level, the Grant Committee Chair may consult with the SEF chair. Together, they will decide whether to override the need for a vote. If there is a change without a vote, the grant committee chair will report their resulting decision with the SEF directors at the next Board meeting.”

Jan moved that the Purchase Order Funding Policy be revised as presented. Lisa seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Jan presented a spread sheet with a number of ideas for increasing the number of grant applications. She also noted that March, 2025 will be SEF's 15th birthday!

5. Board Development - Jan

Jan will send out reminders to board members who have not yet submitted the Conflict of Interest and Commitment Forms to her.

Jan urged board members to consider taking leadership positions for the 2025-2026 year, noting that there are a number of officers who have reached the limit of years for service in their position.

6. Next General Meeting: October 8, 2024

7. Next Committee Meeting: Grants Committee on November 25 at 6:30 on Zoom.

8. Upcoming Event: Trivia Night on Wednesday, October 23rd at 5:30 at Cadillac Ranch

9. Adjournment -

There being no other business to come before the Board, Trish moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:05. Lisa seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

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