



January 21st, 2015 – PTO General Body Meeting Minutes

Meeting Commenced: 7:02 pm

Board Members Present for General Body Meeting: Andrea Keenan – President, Disha Mahadevia – Treasurer, Ranjini Reddy – Secretary (AM), Cathy Gallinger – Secretary (PM), Loretta Crumlish – Teacher Representative, Mary Tsacoyeanes – Teacher Representative, Damian Sugrue – Principal.

Chairpersons Present / Parents Present for General Body Meeting: Beth Ali, Rashmi Muralidhar

Welcome

Andrea Keenan welcomed the group.

Approval of November 2014 Minutes

The minutes of the November meeting were presented for review and approved.

First motion to approve minutes – Damian Sugrue

Second motion to approve minutes – Disha Mahadevia

Treasurer's Report

Disha Mahadevia gave the treasurer's update. The annual appeal has raised about \$11,000 to date and represents 22% of the families. The first check for teaching assistants of \$5,700 has been sent to the town. The total for the year will be about \$17,000, less than the \$25,000 budgeted due to carryover from prior year funds. Damian added that the town uses district money first then money from enrichment and community education, before using PTO funds.

Fundraising

Direct Appeal:

Disha reported that the \$11,000 raised to date makes us ahead of where we were for the annual appeal in the prior year. There will be another round sent out soon and we should promote the tax exempt status. About 19 families have used paypal generating fees of \$68.

Coupon Books:

Disha reported that the coupon book fundraiser sold 134 books totaling \$1,675 for the PTO. This was less than last year where about \$2,100 was raised.

Festival of Cultures:

Disha asked if the Festival of Cultures had received a grant this year and Rashmi replied that it was received which will cover the 10% increase in costs. Andrea mentioned that the committee is thinking of selling ad space in a program to cover costs. The event takes place on April 11.

Grant Team Update:

Ranjini reported that the team is focusing on grants to acquire Chromebooks. The school currently has 4 carts used by the three 6th grade classes and some by 5th, but they hope to get two more carts for 5th grade and then three additional for 4th grade. Each cart costs about \$10,000. A general letter is being drafted for grants which do not have specific requirements and another letter to organizations that support STEM grants. Feedback from teachers was included in the grant letters. The proposal letters will be sent in two weeks. They will also apply for a mini grant at a healthcare company that employs a Conant parent.

Playground

Andrea reported the focus is a new upper grade playground and new swings for the lower playground. Currently the PTO has about \$8,000 in a playground fund and the principal has earmarked an additional \$40,000. The grant team hopes to raise at least the same amount. Ranjini reported that the grant team feels it is very beneficial to show the school has already accumulated a large amount toward the goal and are just looking to raise the supporting money. The team is inquiring information from a neighboring town who recently applied for a grant for a playground. Andrea reported that Damian and Abigail making an equipment list that that the team will get quotes on. Once they have the list, the grant team will know the total amount of funds required. There are two vendors that are approved and on the bidding list for Massachusetts.

Ice Cream Social

Rashmi reported the event will be on March 20th. Smitha is co-chair and Heidi Freidman is class gifts chair. There was a discussion about getting the correct staffing and billing for kitchen and custodial staff. The group discussed how to change the way the raffle winners are announced and possibly the winners will be announced in the cafeteria and winners can pick the plate up in the lobby. For children with allergies, their parents will again be asked to bring a special cake for them.

Talent Night

There was a discussion about whether to have a talent show; either a student talent or staff talent show. There were some suggestions of other fundraisers such as donkey ball or staff vs. parent basketball game but would require renting the junior high gym. The carnival of past years was popular but weather and volunteers were an issue. There will be more discussion before a decision is made.

Games Night

Ranjini reported that the Games night was very well attended. Gameswright games were available to try and to buy. The event made \$482 but teachers were invited to pick games for their classrooms. About 14 classrooms got new games and the PTO made \$289.

Movie Nights

Ranjini Reddy reported that the movie nights have net \$472 after expenses. She suggested having another movie night during February with a classic movie night including all families. Families can vote for a movie from 3 choices. Suggestions were made of Wizard of Oz, Marry Poppins, Chitty, Chitty, Bang, Bang, or Pete's Dragon.

Willow Book Night:

Kathleen Little is working on a date, most likely March 3.

Craft Fair:

There was a discussion about finding someone new to learn about running the craft fair to help Beth Ali by splitting up the work. Andrea would be willing to work on craft fair next year. There was a discussion about having team efforts on all of the fundraisers so people will volunteer more instead of feeling like they are in charge. Beth is hoping for new ideas and team to improve or grow the event.

Principal's Update

Damian Sugrue gave an update on the happenings at school.

MCAS will be the last two weeks of March. Saturday January 31 is Budget Saturday. There may be differences between what the town and schools want. The town has already committed to not tax to the full two and a half percent. There has been a large increase in psychological and special education services.

The staff is interested in a child study at Tufts which incorporates literacy and anti-bullying. The program is finishing up research and wants to implement next year. The program has interactive novels where children can click and see what the characters are thinking or feeling. The program is run by the Center for Youth and Adolescent Development. They are writing grants that includes computer equipment so if they came to Conant, it could also include Chromebooks.

Miscellaneous Items

Andrea mentioned that Community Education spoke at the joint schools PTO meeting and they mentioned that when the school is rented through community education, the school gets a good percentage of funds and would be beneficial to advertise, if possible. Damian mentioned there is some restriction on what the funds from community education can be spent on.

Andrea reported the Staff snacks are very popular. It is mostly through parent donation, small amount through PTO funds.

Kindergarten tours begin soon. The extended day for K for next year will be at the administration building. Next year there will be again two kindergarten classes, one half day and one full day. The following year will be back to three kindergarten classes. Kindergarten information night is February 24th.

Andrea mentioned that a new family breakfast coordinator or team will be needed next year.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:25pm

First Motion to Approve: Amy Happ

Second Motion to Approve: Beth Ali

Minutes Typed By: Cathy Gallinger