

Welcome to Conant School PTO



September 22, 2015 – PTO General Body Meeting Minutes

Meeting Commenced: 7:04am

Board Members Present for General Body Meeting: Jennifer Jones-Hodgson, Co-President; Amy Happ, Co-President; Shijesta Victor, Treasurer.

Chairpersons Present / Parents Present for General Body Meeting: Ranjini Reddy, Jessica Cody, Ezili Mayo-Joseph, Stanphenie Yao, Michelle Brown-Droese, Missy LoPorto, Veena Kamath, Rashmi Muralidhar.

Welcome - Amy Happ welcomed the group.

Approval of May 2015 Minutes - The minutes of the May meeting were presented for review and approved.

First motion to approve minutes – Jessica Cody

Second motion to approve minutes – Michelle Brown-Droese

Approval of Treasurer Board Member

Motion to approve Shijesta Victor as new treasurer - Amy Happ

Second motion - Michelle Brown-Droese

Shijesta will be added as signatory on bank account 9.23.15

Open Positions

Jennifer Jones-Hodgson: Vice President, Breakfast w/ families Chair needed.

Ranjini and Stanphenie: At least one Scholastic Book Fair co-Chair is needed for this year.

Michelle: Grants Team may or may not be needed this year depending on input from Principal

Corporate Relations

Michelle Brown-Droese: RTO (orthodontist on Great Rd. in Acton) would like to work w/ PTO to sponsor something in exchange for visibility. Idea is to approach RTO with a request for the \$1200 needed for

breakfast with the families in exchange for them setting up a table w/ toothbrushes and oral health-related stuff for the kids.

Annual Fund

Comments: Visibility needs to be increased without alienating parents from the PTO. Fiscal needs need to be clarified and communicated to families at the beginning of the year. We should point out that Fundraisers have decreased in favor of cash donations. Classroom assistants need to be retained. Budget is 25K (this funds assistants for grades 2-6, librarians, or what is needed). PTO earnings goes to central office but is earmarked only for Conant. School committee allocates. Drafts of changes to the format of the annual fund solicitation changes are passed out for review. Aim for an increase in participation from 18% to 25%. Comparing Conant to other elementary schools might help parents understand our situation but is probably not a good idea. In order to increase the amt. of time assistants work, we need to raise the budget up from \$44K. "Did you know?" format might work in print. Google Doc will be started on the drive for PTO members, teachers, to add information to. Parents need to be educated about what is really happening. Could possibly be put in the newsflash. Veena and Stanphenie will compile a list of information.

New Flyer is approved and will be sent as an e-mail which will contain a link to donate via Paypal. The flyer will also go home in student folders and be handed out at breakfast with the families. Co-Presidents intend to increase visibility and information sharing this year.

Treasurer's Report

Shijesta Victor: Brief discussion of the actuals from last school year.

Veena reports that parents would consider buying more food if it weren't just pizza and candy. Ranjini emphasizes that Movie night is a community building event and needs to be kept simple for the volunteers.

eScript - fundraising opportunity (Conant is not currently enrolled). 2.5% return. Linked to credit cards which makes it easy.

AmazonSmile - President needs approval to enter tax id, etc. to complete signup.

Motion to enroll in eScript made by Amy Happ approved.

Jessica Cody will plan a free mom's night out for early November.

New expenses:

Soda machine/Assignment Books money not budgeted for coming year (\$500 expense in question). Memory Book donation to library is in honor of Karen Olson's mother who passed away this year. Directory printing needs a line for budget (need Powerschool and help from Ann Lack) \$700 has been budgeted for "PTO Expenses and Programs" line item (need clarification from Andrea Keenan and Disha Mahadevia). Usually it is \$275 (Ranjini). "Teacher supplies" line item definition also needed.

Playground-

Michelle Brown-Droese: We borrowed about \$2690 from reserve. Number of cash raised by families (to put on Facebook) is around \$6200. We needed to order about \$2500 worth of benches to meet the 95K total cost mandated by our Steinberg-Lalli offer. Builder needs to get it on schedule; potentially Columbus Day weekend. Michelle has notified Abigail Dressler about this. Shijesta will sign the checks at the bank and pay the bill!

Picture Day 9/24 –

Ezili Mayo-Joseph had an initial lack of volunteers but now feels it will be adequately staffed.

Bowling Night 9/26 –

Amy Happ has the tickets in hand. Christina Pharo is chairing the event.

Breakfast with the Parents 10/2 –

Volunteers needed. Event will start at 7:30am. Debi (kitchen manager) can prepare some of the food. 4 people are needed before event starts (6:30-7:30) 6 people are needed for clean up (7:30-8:30). A Volunteer is needed to place food order and pick it up the night before at the Dunkin Donuts near Ace Hardware. Ezili will e-mail the order details to Veena. VolSpot will be used for signups.

Open items:

Letters to local businesses to get gift certificates (Roche, Donelan's, Stop'n Shop) is used to purchase items for the ice cream social. Someone needs to solicit these businesses. Elise Calisi will draft letter and someone will do the asking in the stores.

Room Parents - Almost every teacher has recruited a room parent. Per Principal and Vice Principal, the Room Parents are to help the teacher only and not to communicate to the class on behalf of the PTO. This presents a big challenge to the PTO, we need to use the PowerSchool database and send the e-mails directly. We can organize our database by grade level. Ranjini- we do not have everyone's e-mail which will be a significant information slip for the PTO. This is going to affect the Nature Walk program quite negatively, for example. Missy LoPorto reports there were more or less 1,000 emails to naturewalk one year. Then, it was going to go through room parents. Teachers didn't want to manage the volunteer list; they want a naturewalk person to handle it. Classroom gifts for ics, Book Fair, and other items will suffer from this decision. Ranjini and others propose outlining their issues for need of contact w/ room parents and it can be presented to staff.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:34pm

Minutes Typed By: Elise Calisi