

Welcome to Conant School PTO



October 2, 2015 PTO General Body Meeting

Meeting commenced: 8:41 am; Jennifer Jones Hodgson and Amy Happ welcomed the group.

Board Present: Jennifer Jones Hodgson, Co-President; Amy Happ, Co-President; Elise Calisi, Secretary; Shijesta Victor, Treasurer; Padmini Narayan, Volunteer Coordinator; Damian Sugrue, Principal.

Teachers Present: Debbie Dawson, Loretta Crumlish, Mary Tsacoyeanes.

Parents Present: Alison Barker, Michelle Brown-Droese, Peter Droese, Kristine Kidder, Veena Kamath, Jane Archer, Asha Nagaraja, Kim McCosker, Beth Ali, Sophia Park, Archana Iyer, Sheetal Kulkarni, Rashmi Muralidhar, Lakshmi Thiagarajan, Savitha Thatipamala, Cini Kannan, Patsie St. Hilaire, Devi Makireddi, Linda Vittum, Ranjini Reddy, Andrea Keenan, Lin Zhang, Jing Zhang, Christina Pharo.

Motion to approve 9/22/15 meeting minutes made by Amy Happ; Rashmi Muralidhar and Beth Ali make first and second motion to approve the minutes.

Open Positions: Vice President. No 2015-16 VP may mean no 2016-17 President(s). Shadowing present board members is needed. Three people noted resume and skills building benefits of volunteering with the PTO.

Treasurer's Report / Playground: Shijesta Victor reported that she made the final payment for playground. All account money has been transferred to the correct accounts for clearance. The group thanked the Grants Team for their work on the playground.

Bowling Night: Christina Pharo gave the update. Profit ~ \$1,400. Tee shirts were sold. Attendance was a little low. Suggestions: drop off for 5/6 grades, change to winter (Feb.) date, have 2 bowling nights per year per age group. Alumni will not be invited if event is drop-off.

Annual Giving Campaign: Jennifer Jones Hodgson and Amy Happ gave the update. Annual Giving is reported to be around 18% of families. Suggested amount \$125 per family. Flyers will be sent home Monday 10/5. Video is on web site, Facebook, and will be sent via e-mail (Newsflash and Principal). Parents encouraged to attend finance committee visit/meeting each year at Conant to learn more about the budget. Annual Giving goes towards enrichment. Ideas: car sticker only to those who give, recognition in print, free admission tickets to Ice Cream Social, Bowling Night, etc. for families who donate, small gift card to attract giving. Other ideas: cultural bridging in the form of cultural liaisons, using a one-check model for all events, shortening the Newsflash, weekly reminder e-mails for giving, teachers compose an e-mail to their classes, comprehensive activity list for the year online, collect dues from the PTO as a membership fee, splitting payments to make it more affordable or monthly giving, donate via paycheck or employer possibly by Paypal, survey about annual giving.

Craft Fair Sunday Oct. 25: Andrea Keenan and Beth Ali gave the update. There is an itemized list of volunteer jobs. 80 vendors are currently registered. Goal is 90. Volspot live on Monday 10/5. Publicity is needed, especially online. Profit is usually 10-12K. Foot traffic is needed to collect admission fees. Fee

increase on vendors is proposed going forward. Baked goods table is 100% profit. Professional vendors will not be available if we change the 3rd Sunday of October going forward. A participation slip is expected for many Chinese families due to the date and time. Craft fair flyer needs to be translated for posting in international community centers.

PTO Meeting Guest Speaker: Ranjini Reddy gave the update. A speaker on social/emotional development is needed to tie in with the Tufts project. Leads: A Boxborough parent who can speak on sleep needs in children, a speaker about Cyber-security (Mr. Sugrue will pursue a librarian in Grafton, MA). Other suggestions: Middlesex DA's office, communications companies (e.g., Verizon). Other topics: Stress management in children. Suggestions: A neuropsychologist from the Hallowell Center in Sudbury.

Principal's Update: Damian Sugrue. Delivery of MCAS scores will be delayed. Scores look good but more data is forthcoming. The ABRSD Superintendent has restarted the safety and security task force and they are planning to discuss lockdown procedures with the Acton Police Department. Surveys may be sent home. Budget plan is waiting on capital plan. Money for engineers in fall and summer is needed. Budget is planned to come out in winter for future planning. Conant is looking at windows, doors, HVAC, etc. (high price items). School council will be working through the budget and keep parents informed. The new playground was reported in The Beacon. Principal would like to participate in fundraising in some visible way.

Open Items: eScript. Online program to link your credit or debit card to Conant so the school receives a percentage of retail purchases. Registration is complete; instructional e-mail will be sent to families. Percent return varies per vendor but is pretty high (4.5%) in some cases. Alumni, grandparents, etc. are encouraged to sign up.

Nature Walk: Coordinator is needed. Contract proposal has been sent to Jeanne Hobie and is awaiting acceptance.

Other Fundraising Items: Kidstuff Coupon books – the book is \$25 and the PTO automatically gets \$12.50. Each grade group gets 2 movie nights per year. Parents and teachers are encouraged to e-mail the PTO with suggestions for fun events while expecting to be responsible for ideas.

Community Building: Debbie Dawson recognized the student council and community group activities such as Pennies for Pediatrics, Supply Drives, Theme Days, etc. The primary grade teachers would like to invest in more color-coded tee shirts at the beginning of the school years.

Scholastic Book Fair: Book Fair Co-Chair for 2016-2017 school year is needed. A prospective volunteer needs to shadow Sophia Park, Stanphenie Yao, and Ranjini Reddy during this November's Scholastic Book Fair.

Motion to Adjourn made by Amy Happ; Michelle Brown-Droese seconded the motion

Meeting concluded at 9:58am

Minutes typed by: Elise Calisi