



## September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2014 – PTO General Body Meeting Minutes

**Meeting Commenced:** 9:37 am

**Board Members Present:** Andrea Keenan – President, Amy Happ – Vice President, Jennifer Jones-Hodgson – Vice President, Disha Mahadevia – Treasurer, Ranjini Reddy – Secretary (AM), Mrs. Debbie Dawson – Teacher Representative, Mrs. Crumlish – Teacher Representative, Mrs. Tsacoyeanes – Teacher Representative, Damian Sugrue – Principal.

**Chairpersons Present / Parents Present:** Michelle Brown-Droese, Jing Zhang, Archana Iyer, Rashmi Muralidhar, Jeanne Hobbie, Allison Katsoulis, Heidi Friedman, Sadie Simone, Missy LoPorto, Meria Kuriakose, Sheetal Kulkarni, Lin Zhang, Patsie St. Hilaire, Helen Daniel, Shalini Srivastava

### Welcome and Approval of May 2014 Minutes

Andrea Keenan welcomed the group and updated the group of the change in the day of the am meetings. The minutes of the May meeting from the previous academic year were presented for review and approved.

First motion to approve minutes – Heidi Friedman

Second motion to approve minutes – Jeanne Hobbie

### PTO Board and Open Positions

Andrea Keenan gave the update on the parents who have volunteered for the PTO board as well as the open positions. She thanked all the parents who had volunteered. Positions that still required a chair were for Gardening, Ice Cream Social classroom gifts, and AM secretary. Heidi Friedman volunteered to take over the Ice Cream Social classroom gifts. Ranjini Reddy volunteered to be the AM secretary. Andrea also spoke about guest speakers to attend the PTO meetings including the first talk on executive function skills on October 22<sup>nd</sup> and a talk by a chronobiologist to talk about the importance of sleep in children. In addition, the new superintendent will be attending an upcoming meeting.

### Treasurer Update

An update of the PTO Profit and Loss Budget versus actual sheet was presented by Disha Mahadevia. The amount to raise for this academic year is about \$43,000 which is similar to last year's budget. The main changes to the budget were as follows.

- (i) an annual movie license fee (\$400),
- (ii) a budget for the PTO speaker series (\$500),
- (iii) a one month membership to access the grants database at the Foundation center (\$179), and
- (iv) monies set aside for the nature walk program training (\$1500).

These changes in the budget were made possible, in part, by the reduction in expense associated with the copy machine.

The major expense in the budget (approximately 60%) still remains the fees for the classroom assistants. These staff members work with all children in the classrooms.

Disha also gave an update on the PayPal account. The account is up and running and the PTO is registered at the non-profit rate. The button will be put on the website and be used for the Annual Giving campaign. There then followed a discussion on the best ways to increase participation in this campaign.

### **Annual Giving**

Jennifer Hodgson gave an update on the Annual Giving Campaign. She spoke about the amount per family that the campaign targets (\$112) as well as where the money collected is distributed. This year's campaign will follow along similar lines to last year with gifts associated with three levels of giving. The flyer for the Annual Giving Campaign will be distributed to families in the next couple of weeks. A discussion followed on the process of collecting funds as well as ways to reach out to families. Andrea Keenan mentioned that there will be a greater discussion with the PTOs of all the elementary schools to come up with a collaborative solution on the best way to raise funds for the PTO.

### **Spirit Day**

Jennifer Hodgson gave an overview of a new idea: introducing a spirit day on the last Friday of the month. The group discussed the different ways that this idea can be rolled out. No decision was arrived at and the discussion will be ongoing.

### **Kindergarten Social**

Andrea Keenan reported that the Kindergarten Social was postponed. Families of the Kindergarteners will be involved in deciding when and where to schedule the event.

### **Craft Fair Update**

Andrea Keenan gave an update on the craft fair to the group. Flyers are done and the event is just over a month away. A team of parents are helping Beth Ali with the event. Volunteer opportunities will be sent to the school community soon.

### **Escript Program**

The Escript program was reviewed with the group by Jennifer Hodgson. Disha Mahadevia will be registering Conant on the website. Once registered, parents can sign up on the website with their credit card and choose Conant as their school. Participating merchants will then give a portion back to Conant whenever the registered credit card is used at the stores. Information and publicity for the program will be rolling out soon.

### **Bowling Night**

The bowling night made about \$1700. It was a fun event and well attended.

### **Grants Committee**

Michelle Brown-Droese gave an update on the grants committee. Michelle and Ranjini Reddy met with Mr. Sugrue and Mrs. Dressler to talk about target areas to apply for grants. The target areas were the playground, technology, and engineering. The PTO has a one month membership to a database at the Foundation Center. Michelle will be meeting with a group of interested parents to start tapping into this database to identify potential grants. She will also be training the parents to write grants.

Michelle also mentioned a grants program at the local TD bank that the PTO can potentially apply for. The manager has up to \$250 as discretionary spending amount. For an amount above that, he can support the PTO in applying for a grant at the bank.

### **Principal's Update**

Mr. Sugrue gave a report on the happenings at school. He spoke about the superintendent and how he has been coming up to speed on issues in the district. Mr. Sugrue also spoke about the issues with transportation. Routes have been re-done. There are a couple of benefits of the new routes. Conant will not be sharing the buses with the Parker Damon building which makes it easier to deal with any issues that come up. They have made adjustments to the bus routes which have been beneficial to the pickup and drop off times. A new bus route has also been added to help with the times.

### **Open Items**

#### a. Pick-up Process

A discussion took place on the student pick-up process. Many suggestions were given by the parents present. Andrea Keenan will give a summary to Mr. Sugrue.

#### b. School Supplies

Andrea Keenan talked about the cost of school supplies and ways to make more efficient use of them. One possibility was to collect unused supplies at the end of the school year and pass them on to another classroom in the building. Teachers could also think about materials that are not absolutely needed. This issue was brought up as it was a concern to some parents.

#### c. Playground

An update on the playground committee is needed.

#### d. Finance Committee Survey

The town Finance committee wants to visit the school. Andrea mentioned that the PTO may conduct a survey to see sample some of the questions Conant families may have for them.

#### e. Winter Activity

Andrea Keenan mentioned that, at the chair meeting, the idea of having a winter fun activity for Conant families came up. It will partially be a fundraiser. Heidi Friedman volunteered to be in charge of the event. Discussions followed on the event.

Jeanne Hobbie mentioned that she is the new liaison between the SPED PAC board and the schools. She invited parents to attend meetings that are open to all families. Jeanne will be sending more information to the PTO.

**Meeting Adjourned: 10:48 am**

First motion to approve minutes – Linda Vittum

Second motion to approve minutes –Jennifer Hodgson

Minutes Typed By: Ranjini Reddy