

Welcome to Conant School PTO



May 1, 2013 Meeting Minutes

Meeting Commenced: 9:40 am

Board Members Present: Cathy Gallinger – Treasurer, Ranjini Reddy – President

Parents, Teachers, Community Members Present: Mary Tsacoyeanes – Teacher Representative, Wendy Pittorino, Linda Vittum, Jean Potter, Andrea Keenan, Ezili Mayo Joseph, Smitha Bharadwaj

Secretary's Report - Marybeth Quaadgras

The March 2013 General Meeting minutes were approved as written. –Jean Potter First Motion to Approve Minutes: Wendy Pittorino Second Motion to Approve Minutes.

Regionalization Committee Presentation

Presented by Kristina Rychlik & Paul Murphy

Over the last 2 years there has been a committee working tirelessly to put together a plan for regionalization and it's been modified. On June 3rd there will be a vote on the revised plan. Today they will be sharing the revised plan. There are many reasons why regionalization will work and be beneficial, namely:

1. Blanchard can be added to the list as school choice (there will be a guarantee of hometown choice)
2. Gradual leveling of Classes (if class sizes in Acton are too high, adjustments can be made). Class sizes will be gradually leveled. Having Blanchard as a school choice will help.
3. Additional Classroom Space - More Full Day Kindergarten available because Blanchard has more available space. *Question* - Transportation a concern – If we regionalize we will offer transportation just like we do for the HS.
4. Financially it would be 1M in savings per year, i.e. this is 1M every year. Per person cost is higher in Boxborough. There will also be additional benefits and efficiencies.
5. Issues/ Concerns with the original plan –
 - 1 – Selling the school buildings to the district and being able to sell them back
 - 2 - Guaranteeing there is a school in each town
 - 3 – Expanded school committee – adding 2 more people (weighted vote – Acton 7 / Box 4)
 - 4 – Financial Benefit (80% Acton / %20 Box) Over 5 Years
 - 5 – Hometown Guarantee
 - 6 – Cost Assessed on 3 year enrollment avg.

Question on whether Blanchard will move to half-day Thursdays is not clear at the present time.

Treasurer's Report and Budget for 2013-14 Academic Year- Cathy Gallinger

The Balance Sheet (dated April 30, 2013) was reviewed. Our assets include over \$100k in cash with \$51.1K in Checking, \$46.6K in the Business Fund, and \$7.9K in the Playground Fund. (Note: The PTO is required to have in reserves the funds to meet organizational operations for one year as we are funding teaching assistant salaries.)

As of this meeting, the approximate net income from the light bulb sale was little over \$3K with more checks still coming in. Total income is about \$28K. The budgeted income is at 39K for this year. The proposed budget for next year is \$41, 480. Highest expense is for the salaries for Assistant Teachers and other big ticket items are the assemblies, copy machine and classroom supplies.

The PTO is contemplating a talent show and maybe a Basketball game (parents vs. teachers) as fundraisers in January or February.

Extra set of swings will hopefully be out in the K-3 playground this summer. However everything needs to be approved by Central office and facilities. Charlene is looking at estimates for these swings.

The budget was passed unanimously by all present at the meeting.

Spring Celebration Update – Wendy Pittorino

Last year we had 64 people attending. To date, we have 29 people and we are at risk of losing money. Total costs are at \$2800; this includes food and venue. We hope that auction items and raffle will help make money. We are at crossroads and so we decided this morning that we will have to cancel the event if we don't receive enough people. Mrs. Tsacoyeanes will send a note to all the teachers. We need about 50 more people. Last year we made about \$6,500. A backup idea is to have a breakfast and set up a silent auction on a Thursday morning if we need to cancel the celebration.

Cathy Gallinger and Ranjini mentioned the need to keep close track of finances for the raffles and card games for the lottery commission. Everyone will be given a bid number

Crier Survey Results – Ranjini Reddy for Shobana Sampath

81 parents responded to the crier survey

39 – Said they always read it

13 – Never read it

46 Said they do get information from other sources

Comments:

Some parents said change the format and said the info was redundant

I wish we had an alert

Needs more energy – dry

A question that came up in the group was whether to continue the Crier? What are the draw backs of just doing the Newsflash? The Newsflash is weekly and we keep the information brief. This may be troublesome for some issues such as the Nurses notes that are printed in the Crier. One suggestion was to integrate the crier into the weekly news flashes. Another idea was to redesign the PTO Website to have this information.

Decision that the group arrived at was to fold the Crier into the Newsflash.

Volunteers – 6th Grade Store – Ranjini Reddy

Ranjini Reddy reported on the school store and the fact that there was trouble in recruiting volunteers. As a result the store was not open as often as in the past. We need to find a solution to this issue.

6th Grade Graduation- Jean Potter

Jen Sullivan is working on the year book and she has a group helping her. Coffee Pond had a deadline so she should have sent materials in already. Jean Potter and Theresa Hoggins are meeting with Debbie Dawson to see if there are students who might require some financial help. Wendy Pittorino will make the cakes for Graduation. Table clothes and other materials are being purchased at really low costs.

To get the 6th grade graduation activities flow more smoothly, the group the process should start early. Letters need to go out to 5th grade room coordinators to ask for people to volunteer for 6th Grade Graduation and Year book committee. Next years committee should meet with this years committee to know what to expect and get some ideas and suggestions. Graduation is June 21st at 2pm.

Kindergarten to First Transition Forum – Ranjini Reddy

Dr. Koytk had a great idea to have just Kindergarten parents come to an informational meeting. Children will be also welcomed and will be showed a movie. Students who have just graduated from Kindergarten will also be giving the little incoming students advice. Mrs. Tsacoyeanes will talk about how to prepare your child for school. Dr. Kotyk will talk about administration. Debbie Dawson, our school counselor, will talk about the social and emotional aspects of Kindergarten. There will also be a parent tip sheet.

Parents will be invited through Evite. The event is slated to take place on May 31st (Friday Night).

End of Year Picnic – Ranjini Reddy

End of year picnic has been set for Sunday, June 2nd with no rain date. The large picnic area has been reserved at NARA park. We are also planning on having a balloon artist come for an hour.

Open Items - Ranjini Reddy

Andrea is meeting with parents from other PTOS to learn from their experiences. There was agreement from the group that PTOs shouldn't fund teaching assistant salaries. It should be included in school budgets.

Open positions for next year were discussed. The Communications Improvement Project was discussed. Part of the communication improvements included a handbook for room coordinators, a handbook for families, along with a redefinition of the roles of the room parents and volunteer coordinator. The goal is to have the handbook for room coordinators ready at the beginning of the school year.

There was also a motion to start a “levels of giving” for the direct appeal campaign that goes out in the Fall of the next academic year.

Open positions for the year were reported.

Meeting Adjourned: 10:45 pm

Next PTO Chair Committee Meeting: TBA