



February 1, 2013 Meeting Minutes

Meeting Commenced: 9:30 am

Board Members Present: Cathy Gallinger – Treasurer, Marybeth Quaadgras – Secretary, Ranjini Reddy – President, Damian Sugrue, Principal

Parents, Teachers, Community Members Present: Smitha Bharadwaj, Loretta Crumlish – Teacher Representative, Debbie Dawson – Teacher Representative, Andrea Keenan, Ezili Mayo-Joseph, Kim McOsker, Jean Potter, Anna Sater, Mary Tsacoyeanes – Teacher Representative, Linda Vittum

Welcome and Introductions – Ranjini Reddy

Secretary's Report - Marybeth Quaadgras

November 2012 Meeting minutes approved as written. Jean Potter – First Motion to Approve Minutes; Kim McOsker – Second Motion to Approve Minutes.

Chinese Music Night – Thank You – Ranjini Reddy

Ranjini Reddy thanked the Acton Chinese Language School for their donation to the Conant PTO from ticket sales to the Acton Chinese Music Night that was held in December. The Conant PTO made approximately \$150 from ticket sales to this event.

Treasurer's Report - Cathy Gallinger

The Balance Sheet was reviewed. The PTO had a Fidelity Account which in the recent past was earning very low interest. This account was closed, and the funds were consolidated into the PTO's Middlesex Bank Business Fund Account.

As of this meeting, the net incomes from various events to date were as follows:

Craft Fair - \$9300; Direct Appeal - \$5300; Miscellaneous Income (Logo, School Pictures, Grant for Amazing Hero Art Program), for a total of approximately \$16,500. The Direct Appeal and the Kids Stuff Coupon Book fundraisers are both ongoing, with the Coupon Book event raising \$750 to date.

We have heard from some parents that we have too many fundraisers. Kim McOsker pointed out that the PTO is required to have reserves to meet organization operations for one year as we are funding (teaching assistant) salaries. The next payments for teaching assistant salaries will be made in March and June.

We are still waiting to hear back from the IRS on our tax status. The IRS had requested more documentation and that was sent in December.

School Committee – Kim McOsker

Budget FY 2014 (2013-2014) - Kim McOsker explained that Dr. Mills had a three year plan of funding \$108K each year to help with paying for assistants. The third year (2013-2014) is not funded within the proposed budget. The proposed FY '14 budget is 2.2% higher than this year's budget. Meetings to discuss the budget will be held on Feb 7th and Feb 14th.

The Acton Public School (APS) budget proposal includes the addition of a half-time Assistant Principal, adding hours to the ELL program as the district has ~140 kids, and the addition of a full time Psychologist. The state contribution numbers came in last week and the finance committee is still adjusting town budget numbers. Kim McOsker stressed that if an issue is of importance to parents, they need to speak up on the Feb 7th meeting or send letters.

Regionalization – Kim McOsker explained that on February 7th, the committee is going to recommend suspending regionalization efforts. The major concerns are the loss of control over the budget, loss of

school identities, and issues over calculating assessments. Assessments are based on population with approximately 80% of the regional budget charged to Acton and 20% charged to Boxborough. Based on current school population projections, Acton's portion of the budget would increase. From Acton perspective, the increase would amount to the costs equivalent to ~ 20 kids.

Ice Cream Social Update - Christina Pharo. Andrea Keenan

The Ice Cream Social (ICS) will be held on March 8th; the date is earlier this year due to some scheduling issues. Andrea Keenan brought up whether we should move up the time from 7-9 pm to 6:30-8:30 pm as the earlier time would be more appropriate for the younger children. The consensus was to move up the event time to 6:30-8:30 pm.

The second issue brought up was how to address cakes and allergies. It was suggested that we have a separate table of special cakes for those with allergies. It was also suggested that the committee have Heather Makris send out a note to families. It was also suggested to have more volunteer spots for cakes. Lastly, it was recommended that families of those children with allergies make suitable cakes and that they be set aside.

Classroom Gifts Update - Linda Vittum

The PTO has obtained a raffle permit from the state and so we can proceed with offering teacher outings. Teacher outings / offerings are voluntary. The committee should consider having older kids and alumni help out with the event. A list of event jobs will provide guidance and should be available after winter break.

The event pricing was suggested to be the same as last year's event: \$5 for a game ticket, \$5 for ice cream ticket, or \$8 for a combo game-ice cream ticket, with a \$25 maximum for a family ticket. The consensus was to keep the ticket costs the same. The question was brought up as to do we sell raffle tickets in advance? The consensus was to sell tickets in advance, starting after the winter break.

Linda Vittum explained that in addition to the teacher outings/offerings, we will also have classroom gifts. Melissa Hayes has incorporated the creation of the classroom gifts into their curriculum. We will frame a bit of each kid's artwork in a collage for each classroom's gift.

Picture Day Providers - Ezili Mayo-Joseph

Ezili Mayo-Joseph brought up the question as to whether we should use the same company, Coffee Pond, for next year's pictures. Comments were made to the effect that we like their service and that they are very responsive. The sentiment was to keep Coffee Pond as the vendor to take next year's school pictures.

PTO Event Planning – Ranjini Reddy

Willow Book Night - March 27th has been set as Willow Books Night for Conant.

Carnival – After much discussion, it was decided not to do the carnival this year due to the large volunteer effort required and the net level of income. It was decided to do an end of the year picnic at NARA Park.

Light Bulb Sale - It was decided to go ahead with the light bulb sale in April.

Playground Committee Update – The playground committee met in January and decided to divide the playground plan into smaller, more manageable goals. Over the upcoming summer, the K-3 playground area will undergo some surface changes.

OPEN Positions for next academic year- Ranjini Reddy

We have all board positions and many chair positions open for 2013-14. A list will be forthcoming after winter break.

Principal's Update - Damian Sugrue

Report Cards will be issued right before break. There are a lot of changes in the report card format and feedback sections to meet with new standards. Teachers will be focusing more efforts on writing. A writing consultant has come in to help assist teachers.

The students really enjoyed Bart Bartaclan. He donated a painting to the school which is now displayed in the lobby. The presentation was a very good focus of visual arts for both the lower grades and upper grades.

Open Items - Ranjini Reddy

Movie Night - Do we want to do this? We have to pay \$100 for a license.

Some parents would prefer a Games Night as it is not putting kids in front of something to watch. A Friday night date is preferred over a Saturday night. Having the event in March is preferred as to waiting until April.

Coffee Maker – One coffee maker is not working. Debbie Dawson will donate a coffee maker.

Staples School Kidz Supply Program – Do we participate in this program where Staples prepares supply packets for the kids? The sentiment was that parents like to do supply shopping on their own with their kids; it is part of the tradition of preparing for going back to school.

Meeting Adjourned – 10:38 am

Next Meeting - Wednesday, March 6th at 7 pm