

PTA Meeting Minutes
February 17, 2011

Present:

Bonnie Ackerman	Leslie Mook	Debbie Handler
Wendy Adler	Kim Palumbo	Pam Sunshine
Patty Chernick	Nancy Barr	Sarin Bachmann
Carol Lazar	Kelly Lieberman	Valery Schwartz
Hedy Cardozo	Shizue Cohen	Jen Kitchin
Cheryl Artabane	Donna DiCanio	Glen Schuster
Gina Healy	Larry Engle	Bill Stark
Felicia DePaola	Jen Schlactus	Susan Rosson

Motion to accept January minutes – Jen Schlactus

Seconded – Kim Palumbo

January minutes unanimously accepted.

Vote on proposed unit bylaws.

Dues remain \$15.

Nominating committee will still have five members.

Motion to accept – Debbie Handler

Seconded – Carol Lazar

Co-presidents - Felicia and Jen

- Have been involved in parent advocacy and promoting it within the district. Education and empowering constituency is important.
- Local school issues controlled, in large part, by NY state.
- George Latimer and Susie Oppenheimer are receptive to speaking with people.
- Sound Shore Alliance – formed to educate people about issues affecting schools and how to best communicate with state leaders.
- New governor's cuts and tax cap threaten most affluent districts, such as ours.
- Facebook page – “Sound Shore Parent Advocates” – PTA/PTO presidents concerned with cuts being made

Larry Engle (BOE)

- BOE invited to participate in webinar re: budget and what it means. PTA might want to post a link to it.

Treasurer's Report

- Jen Schlactus reporting for Adele – made \$17,000 for spring after school activities.
- Clothing – great sale last Friday – made \$878.

Race to Nowhere (movie to be shown in district)

- Trying to add another screening to accommodate people who want to see it.
- RTN is appropriate for older HS students.
- Teachers have already seen the movie.

Mr. Stark (Superintendent)

- Budget presentation earlier this week

- 1.56% increase = dollar to dollar increase
- 1.95% increase = tax levy; actual dollar value
- Tax includes both residential and commercial
- Star rebate deducted
- \$776,000 = average house value; average tax bill = \$10,520 on a \$776,000 house; actual increase should be \$43 in taxes.
- Board can now look at Mr. Stark's proposed budget to decide what should be kept or discarded.
- Vote functions as a tax cap.
- Governor has said that there should be a consolidation of districts.
 - Fairfax, VA used as a model of consolidation, but they have had massive layoffs and funding difficulties. Under the model, Westchester County would be responsible for school districts.

Mrs. Weisel (RSS)

- Thank you for staff appreciation breakfast.
- Parents of RSS receiving an award from the Jr. Achievement program for longstanding involvement. Mrs. Schlactus, Mr. Zarkower and Mrs. Weisel will attend a dinner in March to receive the award.
- Back on track now after snow days. Celebrated Valentine's Day, Chinese New Year and President's Day.
- Mrs. Weisel and Mrs. Taylor hold monthly town meetings, which have been very successful. Still getting kids outside every other day.
- RSS staff saw RTN last week
- Lice – Phyllis (P/T nurse) completed lice check and there was one case.

Mrs. Bronson (BBMS)

- Vision – new MS newspaper
- Robin Maizes – taking charge of MS yearbook this year. Robin is working hard to create a brand new look for the yearbook and the MS is very grateful for her help.
- Thank you to Debbie Handler, Pam Sunshine and Susan Rosson for MS activities this afternoon
- 7th graders are getting 8th grade science choices and info about Gettysburg trip (which combines an educational experience with the civil war curriculum).
- Seeing good and new things happening in MS, including new use of technology.
- MS teachers saw RTN. It is a provocative film, designed to spur thought and conversation. We don't want discussions to dissolve into finger-pointing. The anxiety of the kids is real, so the question becomes what we can do from our sphere of influence.

Mrs. Healy (BBHS)

- Back on regular schedule after midterms and snow days. 100% of juniors passed Regents exam.
- Still looking at midyear assessments.
- Working on course selection and scheduling. Had a parent meeting with incoming 9th grade parents.
- March 11th – cutoff for all forms re: scheduling.
- HS schedule is determined by student request. Course of studies guide is online and can be accessed on the HS website.

- Thank you for staff appreciation breakfast.
- Shakespeare program – saw Hamlet followed by a discussion; it was a wonderful program
- Successful Homecoming – pep rally held; standing room only at Homecoming Game. Wonderful evening of school spirit and support.
- Band has participated in NYSSMA; choral program has nine people participating.
- Upcoming events include Sophomore Circus and Junior Class trip.
- PTA sponsored Columbia University trip and the PTA received a thank you note from the students.
- Race to Nowhere – film is 90 minutes long; looking to have a community forum on March 8th to continue the discussion and focus upon solutions.
- HS Shared Decision Making Team resurrected and will continue conversations.

Glen Schuster (BOE)

- Thank you to three principals for positive reports

Mrs. Bronson - MS – technology

- Cell phone policy – must be off, away and out of sight all day. Eighth graders have privilege of using cell phones during activity period (last 20 minutes of the day). If student uses phone in school, teacher takes it, brings it to the office and parent is called to pick it up. Guideline is intelligent policy-making.

Mrs. Healy - HS – cell phones

- Students can use cell phones when not in class (lunch, between classes, etc.). If cell phones are out in class or during assembly, they are confiscated.

Facebook

- Constant incoming stream of social messages for our children is very stressful for them to handle.
- Try to calm down constant influx of info/data/messages.

Larry Engle (BOE)

- Check website – come to meetings, participate and be involved.

Pam Sunshine

- Busy month – Science Night (need volunteers), Ridge Street Spelling Bee (Lisa Striar), Staff Appreciation Breakfast, MS Madness and MS Spelling Bee.

Cheryl Artabane (Membership)

- Should have update after break.

Debbie Handler (MS Liaison)

- Heightened awareness regarding problems with drug use (children trading drugs – Ritalin, etc.).

Jen Kitchin (RSS Liaison)

- Book fairy – PTA will buy some books
- CD project – school is making a CD and each grade will perform 1-2 songs (involves Mr. DiMiceli, band, etc.).
- Class parent issues have arisen and need to be addressed.

Bonnie Ackerman (HS Liaison)

- Race to Nowhere will be shown on March 2nd.
- Shared Decision Making Team formed at the HS; parent representatives include Michelle Fishman, Fran Miller, Lauren Wels and an alternate (Julie Steinberg).

Sheri Zarkower (BOE)

- Fifth grade moving up party being organized.

Jen S.

- PTA does not pay/sponsor the party, but will complete the form, etc.
- Fifth grade party in MS gym

Glen S.

- Community Budget Meeting at BBHS – Sat., 3/5 from 9am-2pm.
- Can coffee, water and soda be provided?
 - o Cheryl A. will coordinate.

Next meeting is 3/15 at 7pm in RSS library.

Motion to adjourn – Kim Palumbo

Seconded – Pam S.

Meeting adjourned 10:13 a.m.