

Newton North High School PTSO
Board Meeting Minutes
October 27, 2020 (4:00-5:15 pm)

Present: Patty McCabe, Janna Lacatell, Johanne Campbell, April Stein, Karen Cutone, Livia Aber, Kim Buckton, Ted Vahey, Henry Turner, Susannah Wardley, Andrea Steenstrup, John Oliver, Joel Bloom, Shawna Slack

Absent: Alberta Chu, Dima Basha

Call to Order (Patty) @4:03

Approval of the September 2020 minutes (Janna & Johanne)

- Meeting minutes approved unanimously

Temporary By-Laws Amendment to Expand Virtual Sessions (Patty & John)

- Article IX, Section 5: modified to allow for virtual meetings when in-person is not possible. Unanimously approved.

Recording of vote on request to help with athletic lights (voted on via email)

- 11 in favor, 1 abstention

Treasurer's Report (April & Livia)

- Dues, Principal's Assistance Fund, Directory funds: combined was more than expected.
- Northside Dining (Trivia): \$3400 vs. \$7000 expected if it had been an outdoor dining event. Not expensive to run; well-received. Dues drive and Trivia Night were successful.
- Dover Legacy Scholars and other expenditures. Michelle Young indicated they could take a bit of a cut if necessary. Rather, should we perhaps increase it?
- Patty suggested that funds be used to help students rather than keeping them in our account.
- John: what would an increase look like? The regular annual spend was already in the account. If we spend \$8000+ rather than raise more funds, what would that look like? Take off-line to discuss. PTSO will be in the red this year.

Programming (Shawna)

- Civic Engagement virtual event on October 14 was a success, with 54 attendees. Claudia Wu and Terry Yoffie did a great job.
- Next event topic: Resiliency. Bring in someone from the community who can share resources, possibly someone from Newton-Wellesley Hospital. This can benefit both parents and students.

Community Engagement Efforts (Dima & Alberta)

- Postponed as neither Dima nor Alberta in attendance

Northside Dining (Trivia Night) (John)

- A fun and successful evening
- 12 teams, 80 participants. Freshmen parents participated.

Website (Ted & Kim)

- The website was able to handle Tiger Trivia sign-ups successfully.
- There will be a meeting on Nov 4 on logistics and procedures.
- Burt Glass is volunteering for the communications team and is responsible for editing site content and material sent by Patty and John.
- Ted and Kim have been working with Joel to get the Grants & Projects application form up and running.
- Using Posts to get current content on the home page; Tiger News has been in the footer.

Communications (Susannah)

- Patty reviews content before Susannah distributes via Mailchimp; process seems to work well.
- Tiger News sent to Burt for web site
- Newtonite and ournewton.org links at bottom of Tiger News. Do we want to keep them? We don't want to advertise things on our site, but can direct people to ournewton.org. They take up a lot of real estate.
- Janna asked do we want to communicate some of our social media presence (FB, Twitter, etc.)?
- John had a conversation with Adam Brown of Theatre Ink and is thinking about how we might reamplify other messages from within the school. Would there be an automated way to bring together things put out on social media?
- Susannah shared that Athletics and Theatre Ink are not promoted by PTSO as they have their own channels for publicity.
- Patty is hearing from freshman and sophomore class liaisons that they are confused as to where to find information.
- Patty pointed out that the FB pages are not official PTSO sites and not all questions are answered there, certainly not in an official capacity.
- Henry has heard from parents that it would be nice to have one place to find information on all things Newton North, but no one wants to own that. When students are in the building they figure out where to find information, but that is not happening this year, especially for freshmen.
- Susannah suggested a Twitter feed with #NewtonNorthEvents or some such avenue. Posts could have links to various calendars (Theatre Ink, Athletics, etc.).
- Kim said a list of parents was imported for Tiger News, so that distribution is now much wider.

Educational Excellence (Andrea, Lindsay, Karen)

- Meeting with Henry this Friday on the plan for EdEx this year
- Henry met with teachers on Friday on creating a Center for Antiracism and Equity (CARE)
- Karen: great feedback from teachers

High School Working Group for In-Person Learning (Janna)

- Janna is a member of the working group. Gathering information to make a proposal to the School Committee. Survey has been sent out to parents and students; due back November 1.
- Reviewing data from other districts to see what they are doing and what is working/what would they have done differently.

- Hottest question: Are you considering health? This workgroup is not Health and Human Services and is not setting policies. It is exploring what will work best for parents, students and teachers regarding in-person learning, and possible contingencies for next year.
- April brought up MOA (Memorandum of Agreement) with Teachers Union mentioned in Emily Norton's email today (elementary is hybrid; middle school going hybrid next week; high school is remote indefinitely). Henry said if we go in person in the future, then a new agreement needs to be negotiated. This does not have anything to do with the working group.
- April asked about the comparisons the working group is looking at, and Newton being an outlier because we are remote. Janna agreed that we are an outlier because the other districts we are normally compared with are in some form of hybrid learning. The point is to get back to in-person learning, therefore we are not looking at districts that are remote because we are not trying to make remote better. They are focused on being data-driven, as this is an emotional topic.
- Ultimately David Fleishman and the School Committee will make the decision on in-person learning, regardless of what the working group recommends.
- Contact Janna with any questions or comments.

Grants & Projects (Joel)

- Joel does not yet have a sense of what teachers may request from Grants & Projects this year.
- Henry has not heard anything yet, but teachers are just finding their stride so requests will likely be forthcoming.

Principal Update (Henry)

- Back to School Night is tomorrow. Most families have seen a good number of teacher videos.
- More information will come out about MCAS and APs.
- Norms around homework and grading will be forthcoming.
- People are feeling tired (parents, students, and teachers). Anxiety is high. Some efforts to show appreciation more than we have in the past will go far.
- Patty: Normally there would have already been a back-to-school lunch and two teacher appreciation breakfasts. Does anyone have any ideas?
- Blue glasses (send to people at home); goody-bags for people in the building (75-100 people are in the building); food truck; Grub Hub gift cards; Starbucks barista in the building.

Issues we should be discussing (Patty)

- Continue our discussion about outside parties asking us to forward information/surveys. Tabled until next time.

Meeting adjourned: 5:17 PM

Respectfully submitted by Johanne Campbell and Janna Lacatell