

Newton North High School PTSO
Board Meeting Minutes
January 12, 2021 (4:00-5:15 pm)

Present: Patty McCabe, John Oliver, Janna Lacatell, Johanne Campbell, April Stein, Karen Cutone, Livia Aber, Kim Buckton, Ted Vahey, Henry Turner, Susannah Wardley, Andrea Steenstrup, Lindsay Pike and Karen Ghiron

Absent: Alberta Chu, Dima Basha, Joel Bloom, Shawna Slack, Ed Quintero

Call to Order (Patty) @ 4:02

Approval of the December 2020 minutes (Janna & Johanne)

- Meeting minutes approved unanimously with the removal of Sarah Rizzo and Amy Axelrod under Not Present, as they are not board members, and correction of a typo.

Programming (Patty, in absence of Shawna)

- Program on Resilience scheduled for January 28 with Jessica Teperow from REACH, and Alison Malkin from Newton North. Focus is on recognizing when you/your kids need help.
- Just Think Expo: Posters will be put up around the school with QR codes to scan. This should bring you to a page on our web site with links to the usual participants and what they offer.

Treasurer's Report (April & Livia)

- Nothing out of the ordinary; no news to report.
- Susannah asked about funding and if we carry over money from year to year. April shared that the bulk of funds is raised at the beginning of the year and is then spent throughout.
- Andrea asked if a particular matching gift came through from Biogen which required recertification. The email will be forwarded to April and she will take care of the recertification.
- We have a lot of money in line items where we won't spend it this year (Parent-Principal coffees, retirement tea, etc.).

Teacher Appreciation expenses requiring approval (Patty)

- Customized masks came in but cost more than the \$1200 we initially approved (\$1509). Johanne motioned to approve, Livia seconded, all were in favor.
- Grab 'n Go cookies for teachers (made and packaged by a NN parent who does it as a business), scheduled for January 26 (\$600). Kim motioned to approve, Susannah seconded, all were in favor.

Grants & Projects (Patty, in absence of Joel)

- Looking for ideas for spending this year, as there is \$14K in the budget plus some from last year.
- April suggested allocating more in the budget for next year.
- Henry pointed out that there will be three years of students in the building next year who didn't spend a full year in school. There is an opportunity to create a new culture. Perhaps some seed money could be provided for that.

- Henry also suggested that perhaps a group of teachers could apply for a larger amount. As an example, in Bedford there was an effort to use technology to be innovative and creative, though technology may not be the focus next year.
- Susannah was concerned that Grab 'n Go cookies were just for teachers and not for the entire staff, and perhaps we could spend more to make them for everyone. It was explained that this is a quantity problem, as there are about 270 teachers and 500 staff, and that usually these things are for everyone.
- Susannah asked if some of the extra money could be used to help families. That is what the Principal's Student Assistance Fund is for, which people may donate to at the beginning of the year.
- Karen Cutone suggested a working group to review line items in the budget for next year, assess the needs of the community, and redirect assets accordingly, not just grant money.
- Patty suggested a subset of the board can meet and brainstorm for grants now, and at the March meeting we can dive further regarding next year's budget. John agreed.

Community Engagement Efforts (Patty, in absence of Dima & Alberta)

- Dima and Alberta have been working on it. The events have been worthwhile, with Zoom participation of 10 to 25 people.
- The wine club seems to have a dedicated group, while the movie group varies.

Educational Excellence (Lindsay, Andrea, Karen G)

- \$7000 raised so far, of the \$30K goal
- Focus on racism and microaggression
- Lindsay wants to link an Instagram account in which students share incidents from elementary school onward, as parents may not be aware of what is going on.
- Henry said it mentions people's names and wouldn't be comfortable sharing it. There may be other options.
- Patty asked for an email to be sent for review.
- Kim said to send her what they want, and she and Ted will make it happen (Henry's email, brochure and links all posted on the web site).
- Virtual events before February break: a panel of students/cultural day; Theatre Ink event with students of color sharing experiences.

Principal Update (Henry)

- Gearing up for in-person learning
- There have been activities geared to all levels about the riots – processing what happened, supporting other students

Planning (Patty)

- Next year is an important year for the PTSO
- Henry mentioned that some students will likely still be remote, as the vaccine may not be rolled out to teenagers yet.
- John is running for city council. Patty is concerned that time will be a factor, and John realizes the importance of having presence on the board of people with experience of a "normal year".

- Patty offered two scenarios for discussion. In both scenarios, one co-president would be found to shadow now and serve one year through June '22, and during our nominating process we would find one co-president to begin a 2-year term, serving through June '23.
 - Scenario 1: John remains as co-president to serve until June '22. Three co-presidents would serve with (potentially) a clear division of labor, for one school year.
 - Scenario 2: John serves as co-president until this June ('21), and then the two new co-presidents would take over at that time. The board would create an "At-Large" board position for one year, to allow for some continuity and knowledge transfer for the two new co-presidents.

No decision has been made yet.

Spring Committee (Lindsay)

- Thinking about what can be done for seniors
 - Prom next winter?
 - Something at the end of summer?
 - Signs, outdoor ceremony, and graduation lane were all popular last year
 - Henry shared that graduation and the graduation lane is school-driven, not driven by the PTSO
 - Patty suggested inviting senior parents who want to participate in planning events to join a FB group for this purpose.

Meeting adjourned: 5:18 PM

Respectfully submitted by Johanne Campbell and Janna Lacatell