

PTSO Board Meeting Minutes
January 14, 2020

Present:

Patty McCabe, Valerie Pontiff, Johanne Campbell, April Stein, Kim Buckton, Ted Vahey, Livia Aber, Linda Hanusaik, Millicent Lawton, Henry Turner, Sally Brickell

Absent:

Janna Lacatell, Beth Tierney, Karen Cutone

Call to Order (Valerie): 4:00 PM

Approval of December Minutes (Johanne): Unanimous

Celebration (Patty):

- Celebration 101: How to Get Involved (Celebration kick-off) will be on Feb 11 at 6:30, prior to "Making the Most of Your High School Years" with Amy Winston, which begins at 7:00.
- Celebration theme will be "The Great Gatsby."
- There is an effort underway to move items from the rented storage unit in Waltham to the storage closet at Newton North on Main Street. The goal is to release the storage unit, which is quite costly. It would be nice to add shelves to the closet. The storage is primarily for Celebration items.

Nominating Committee (Valerie):

- The nominating committee will be Jacquie Arbuckle, Monika Jain, Maria Sullivan and hopefully one board volunteer (no one has volunteered at this point). There will be four meetings.

Finance (April):

- While cleaning out the storage unit April found an original journal from 1955.
- Grants & Projects: have paid out about half so far.
- Celebration: storage unit is expensive; almost \$2000. Trying to empty it.

Other NN groups using our Tax ID:

- Will stop helping on exchange trips due to potential liability issues.
- Dover Legacy Scholars, Mass 9, Carpentry trip, Transitioning Together, School Store, two scholarships (Ty Vignone)
- Continue to support these groups so they can focus on what they do best and don't waste their time on bookkeeping. We don't touch their fundraising. There is no flexibility for these groups to go through the city.
- Make sure Principal Turner is aware of all of these groups. Many of these innovative groups couldn't exist without PTO assistance.

Central High School:

- Has 25 students, 20 are full-time, 4 are doing special projects. 6 students are from Newton South, the rest from North. Diane Lockett is the principal.
- Regarding field trips: there are many lower income students, so the trips usually include meals. Many parents can't pay, so they do fundraising. We donate \$250 per year, and they get donations from Target. They need \$2800/year, and they raise about \$1800; teachers pay the balance. April suggested they contact local food donors who help us with various functions like Celebration.

1. Do we off-ramp and house their funds?
2. Do we donate more?
3. Newton South was supposed to donate the same amount as us. Do they still donate?
4. Central HS doesn't have a PTO. Can Newton South house Springboard funds, and Newton North house Central funds?

- We are agreeing to manage Central HS bookkeeping for this year.
- We give Dover Legacy Scholars \$1000.
- Motion made to donate an additional \$500 this year to Central HS (unanimous).

- Educational Excellence Campaign: about \$7300 so far.

Puzzle Day (Valerie):

- Sam Shoutis (math and computer science teacher) would like to hold a Puzzle Day on a weekend with pizza and prizes to get non-traditional students interested in STEM.
- There will likely be coding and guest speakers (targeting parents who work in STEM).
- Valerie suggested giving him \$500: \$250 for pizza, \$250 for prizes, but stressed that the PTO would not be involved other than including it in Tiger News/PTO Planner.

Programming

- Making the Most of Your High School Years (Linda): scheduled for Feb 11 at 7:00.
- Just Think Expo 2020 (Sally): the event went well.
- Just Think Expo 2021 (Sally and Principal Turner): It's a great program for families, but it is a lot of work; it may be a smaller event in the future. Students and parents can see the many resources available for mental health. It is good to tie it in with sophomore night. Parents need to get involved. Music and food is nice, but not required. As a community event, it needs Newton South to participate. The PTSO needs to decide whether we can staff it, and if we can, circle back to Henry.

Web Site (Ted and Kim):

- The current site is built on Drupal, which is free but difficult to learn. It doesn't look "new" but the content is there, and the legacy info is there. There are many built-in free modules and is very secure when it is up to date, but requires manual updates. A fully supported site would automatically update. Not many people know Drupal; no support.
- Drupal: \$50-100 (hosted)
- WordPress: \$5-50
- Wix: \$12-15/month
- Membership Toolkit: we can leverage it but it's not pretty.
- It is possible to export from Drupal to WordPress.
- Ted showed various web sites using the different platforms; April noted better aesthetics of other sites.
- The web site team will determine the best platform.
- If you think of things you'd like to see on the site, please let Ted know.

Meeting adjourned: 5:16 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Johanne Campbell