

PTSA Board Meeting Minutes -- January 11, 2012

The meeting commenced at approximately 6:30 p.m. The following people were present at the meeting:

Mike Bray, Beth Azar, Robin May, Cindi Carrell , Heidi McNamee, Chena Mesling, Elizabeth Levi, Kim Jarvis, Matthew Latterell, Rebecca Wagner, Gina Binole, Mario Galindo, Dan Keppler

The Board approved the December minutes via voice vote.

Heidi announced that middle school teacher Michael Jansa will be joining the Board as a teacher representative.

1. Sustainability Coordinator Issues

Heidi explained how Myriad Growers, the firm that held the sustainability contract with SES has dissolved and is no longer in business. PTSA funded the sustainability coordinator by making a grant to the school, but PTSA is not expected to lose money as the result of this development.

A new contractor, Learning Gardens Institute, has agreed to take on the sustainability coordinator contract. Learning Gardens is a small nonprofit that has never before had employees. As a result, Learning Gardens is delayed in getting the process started and is apparently having difficulty obtaining the insurance required for PPS contractors. It is expected that Learning Gardens will obtain the required insurance within about a month's time.

In the meantime, the school has a strong need for Vinnie, a former employee of Myriad Growers to continue to undertake sustainability coordination duties. The Board discussed the fact that PTSA does not usually contract directly with service providers but instead transmits funding to the school to contract with the providers. In this instance, there is an immediate need to contract with Vinnie individually until Learning Gardens can take over management of the sustainability coordination contract. The Board engaged in a discussion of the need to ensure that Vinnie is treated legally as an independent contractor, not as an employee of PTSA. There was also a discussion of liability insurance.

The possibility was raised about having Campfire, which currently employs Vinnie part time, receive a grant from PTSA. Under this scenario, Campfire would contract to have Vinnie perform some of the sustainability coordination functions. Rebecca agreed to contact Campfire to find out if the organization would agree to a proposal along those lines.

A motion was made and seconded to request that the school administration approach Campfire to employ Vinnie to undertake sustainability coordinator duties temporarily. If Campfire will not agree, the PTSA is authorized by this motion to utilize the services of Vinnie as an independent contractor of PTSA to temporarily conduct the sustainability coordinator program. The motion passed unanimously by a voice vote of the Board.

2. Read-a-Thon

The Board discussed the Read-a-Thon fundraiser that begins on February 6 and continues through Feb 17 and which is being coordinated by volunteers Beth and Eric. Pledge sheets will be passed out to students in the preceding week. Oregon's Poet Laureate will be making an appearance at SES as part of the event on Friday, Feb. 17. The Board members engaged in a discussion of the need for special gifts for Read-a-Thon participants and a discussion of volunteer coordination and communication efforts for this event.

3. Treasurer's report

Cindi passed out financial information including budget-to-actual information and a balance sheet. She stated that scrip inventory is currently high. She reminded Board members of their duty to review and monitor financial information. Cindi also said that the budget committee met recently. She described some of the safeguards in place to ensure that that scrip funds are properly handled.

4. Go Fund Implementation

Cindi led a discussion of the new Go Fund, which is the new single-fund system in which the School and PTSA will help fund overnight trips in the future. Cindi explained that changes will need to be made to the PTSA budget by the general membership in order to implement the Go Fund.

Michelle Schaeffle is working to streamline the billing for middle school overnight trips. Middle school families have not yet received their bills for overnights. Once the school receives payments from parents, it will be able to calculate how much it needs from the Go Fund to cover the expected shortfall.

Some sources of additional contributions to the Go Fund include a \$17,000 PTSA grant, the Kleenex Grant, and funds raised in Mario's successful Christmas tree recycling event. Cindi stated that PTSA may need to contribute an additional \$6,000 to the Go Fund because we currently do not yet know precisely what the overnight funding needs will be. Other budget changes will be necessary to ensure that certain fundraising is banked into the Go fund.

A discussion ensued regarding how PTSA has in the past granted funds to SES for overnights and other purposes. The administration team has asked for a shift in arts funding from middle school to K-2 arts in all classrooms.

5. Communications Report

Beth explained that she received an angry-sounding written response from someone about a Stand for Children event posting in the Messenger. Beth described some of the criteria she uses for determining whether to publish postings of outside groups or members of the SES community. She gave examples of requests she has approved or denied. Members of the Board suggested that written guidelines be drafted to help determine messenger content. Also the Board discussed the possibility of including a disclaimer regarding information from outside groups. Beth agreed to consider these ideas.

6. Survey of Trees

Gina described a project that came to her through the Sunnyside Neighborhood Association involving Friends of Trees and the Urban Forestry division of Portland Parks and Recreation. These groups

propose to conduct a survey and count of street trees in the entire Sunnyside Neighborhood. They are seeking a grant from Metro to fund the survey. Some time ago, SES students did a survey of trees in and around the school grounds. The Sunnyside Neighborhood Association is requesting an endorsement of the idea from SES PTSA. If the project occurs, it could be something the School gets involved with but SNA is only asking for endorsement of the concept at this time.

A motion was made and seconded to support the Sunnyside Neighborhood “tree team” in successfully winning the Metro grant and to support the tree survey in concept. The motion passed unanimously by a voice vote.

7. Fundraising Report

Matthew gave a recap of the fundraising. The PTSA continues to receive funding from matching grants of the back to school ask. Tree recycling was a successful project for the Go Fund.

Matthew then summarized upcoming fundraising events beginning with the Read-A-thon (discussed above). Also, the Taste of Sunnyside will occur at Norse Hall on NE Couch on Saturday, February 25. In addition to the usual food offerings, there will be party boards, and auction items. Alcohol service will be handled by the Norse Hall, which is less work and probably more cost-effective for PTSA.

The Run/Walk Earthday event is scheduled for April. PTSA will continue to have restaurant events as well.

8. Other Issues / Announcements

Mike has organized a parenting workshop on “Parenting in the Digital Age” on February 8. He is asking parents to RSVP. He is lining up childcare and food for the workshop.

The “Rock & Roll Committee” did not receive the community grant for the emergency preparedness dinner. Nevertheless, the project is expected to go forward with participants paying their own way for dinner. It was reported that Dana was at a neighborhood event to help obtain support for the work of the committee. A backpack letter regarding emergency preparedness and the online petition has been submitted for PPS approval.

Elizabeth discussed the status of the Community Kitchen and the monitoring its use.

Heidi announced that the cistern project plan had approved by PPS. The project is expected to move forward soon with grant funding obtained from Umpqua Bank.

There is a General PTSA Meeting on January 25. PE teacher Dian will give a presentation beforehand. Also State Representative Alissa Keny-Guyer has asked to give a short presentation to talk about current legislative issues she is working on. Following the business part of the meeting, there will be a presentation from the Red Cross regarding emergency preparedness issues. Gina volunteered to obtain food for the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:30 p.m.