

PTSA Board Meeting Minutes – September 12, 2012

The meeting commenced at approximately 6:30 p.m. in Sunnyside Environmental School Auditorium.

The following people attended the meeting:

Beth Azar; Kim Jarvis; Valerie Stegall; Elizabeth Levy; Chena Mesling; Heather Mattioli; Heidi McNamee; Mathew Latterall; Cindi Carrell; Eric Herr; Sue Lyon-Myrick; Neeley Wells; Amy Kliener, Justine Light; Diana Deumiling; Jill Bryant; Dana Buhl; Tim Hahn (Learning Gardens Institute); Annie Tucker (Go Fund Events Coordinating Committee).

1. Preliminary Matters

- **Motion to Approve Minutes:** a motion to approve the minutes from the August 8, 2012 meeting was made, seconded and approved by unanimous voice vote.

Dan reported that he had just spoken with board member Bill Welch who wanted to let the board know he could not attend the meeting because of unexpected scheduling conflicts.

2. Principal's Report re: State of the School

Amy gave a brief overview of the state of the school. She reported that PPS human resources had recommended an additional new kindergarten teacher and that they would split up the two existing classes into three.

Amy stated that she would continue to build on momentum from last year and continue to emphasize racial equity and math at SES. She stated that the staff also has a goal to articulate the K-8 environmental science curriculum in order to avoid duplication.

Also, she wants the staff to update environmental science practices from the last update in 1996 to 2012 and include new concepts and tools such as biomimicry. She wants the staff to link equity to environmental science, which could involve solving real problems in real communities but connect it to environmental science. She gave air quality as an example of subject matter where this might work. Another example might be a middle-school urban planning storyline. An additional curriculum issue she is working on involves asking the question, “What is field study? Does it always mean going to a natural space?”

In October, Amy will convene a monthly parent equity night for parents to better understand the equity goals and issues that the faculty has been working on. Because of the nature of the program, she wants parents who participate to commit to attending every meeting.

3. Sustainability Program Report

Tim Hahn from the Learning Gardens Institute (LGI) gave a report on the SES sustainability program which LGI administers. He explained how LGI administers funds from PTA's grant. Tim passed around LGI's budget to show how PTA's grant funds have been spent. The work of LGI includes field trips to Jean's Farm. One of LGI's coordinating contractors, Michelle will be leaving at end of

November, and there was a discussion about dealing with this situation. LGI will probably reduce the number of middle school field trips to Jean's Farm from 6 to 4 (2 in fall and 2 in spring).

Tim also discussed some staffing changes. Vinnie Miller who has been a full time contractor at SES and will probably go down to half time. He will be assisted by Louie Lapinsky. Another contractor, Steph who has been the garden coordinator, is on maternity leave but will be working throughout year. She's already worked the summer and will work from September through January. Steph will work on a binder of the sustainability curriculum and will work on an "eat-drink-grow" online curriculum. Steph will make a handbook describing the sustainability program roles.

Amy mentioned that Steph will probably make up extra time lost during her maternity. The Board engaged in a brief a discussion on that topic. Vinnie and Louie may need to take over some of her tasks because of seasonal planting needs.

Cindi stated that PTA increased budget from \$31K to \$38k and asked what we are getting if LGI is cutting back on trips. She also wanted to make sure the LGI contractors meet definition of independent contractor. Amy responded that what we gained was an expansion of the program at SES instead of at Jean's farm. Amy further discussed the issues involved with allowing the contractors to manage their own projects.

Tim said that LGI will have its contractors post their hours and state what their activities are in the building. They will undertake logistical steps to create more leadership among middle schoolers and 5th graders to give them more responsibilities. Louie and Vinnie are both interested in that. Neeley asked whether new contractors would be hired at lower rates. Tim responded that the new contractors will be hired at the same amounts because it seemed fairer to do it that way. Amy noted that field trips to Jeans now cost \$1 more per student from \$5 to \$6.

4. Go Fund Events Coordinating Committee

SES parent Annie Tucker appeared before the Board to give an update of the Go Fund Events Coordinating Committee. The committee consists of a group of middle school parents working on fundraising events specifically for the Go Fund. There have been discussions within the SES community calling for more leadership by 8th grade parents and students on fundraising especially for the annual Catalina trip. The committee hopes to prepare a best practices manual to use in subsequent years. The committee has asked middle school core teacher to select one eighth grade student to be a point of contact with the committee and work with the committee to develop and plan about seven fundraising events. Some of the possible events are: plants sale; faire trade chocolates; craft faire; pizza nights; car wash; Applebee's.

The committee is meeting with 8th graders next Monday. On the October 9th is an 8th grade parent meeting and the committee wants to get more parents involved help run Go Fund fundraising events. Amy noted that students and parents need to understand that not all events are purely Go fund. Also, some of the Go Fund fundraising is to "pay it forward". Annie wanted to get the message out that families are raising money for everyone not just for the 8th grade, i.e., we are not pitching this as the Go Fund for 8th Grade, but for all grades.

The Board engaged in a discussion about dedicated fundraising. Cindi likes that some fundraising goes exclusively to the Go Fund. Matthew stated he liked the idea of dedicated Go Fund fundraiser.

Annie said that the committee also wanted 8th graders to be in charge of running something at the school.

Neeley suggested that it may make sense to have two committee leaders from each grade. But Annie said the teachers decided they wanted one 8th grader from each class to work on this. Neeley would like to work on coming up with a figure for a fundraising goal. Annie clarified that the 8th graders on her committee would be promoters of the events, not the organizers. Neeley suggested as a possible fundraiser perhaps having some sort of parents' night out with babysitting.

Beth initiated a discussion of craft fair as a possible fundraiser event. Her daughter Alia was planning to organize the craft faire as a service project with SES classes making things to sell. In discussions with Rebecca, they had tentatively scheduled it during beginning of parent conferences on Monday and Tuesday before Thanksgiving.

However, it is now unclear whether it is realistic to have a craft fair then. Amy noted that prior craft fairs were mostly run and patronized by people outside of SES. The concern is that it may be difficult to attract vendors and shoppers. The Board engaged in a discussion of whether the craft fair should be mostly an internal SES event with classes making things to sell or an external event, as in past years. Matthew and Amy both noted that the conference days might not be the best for kids to attend. In any event, Amy said if we wish to hold some sort of craft fair, she will approve it.

5. Treasurer's Report

Chena passed out financial reports and explained that the PTSA fiscal year runs from July 1 through the end of August. She passed out a balance sheet and profit/loss statement. She reported that checks are coming in from the back to school ask and we seem to be getting a good response so far.

Cindi passed out packets for board members containing a roster, standing rules, the budget, and budget to actual report. She reminded board members that they have a fiduciary duty to monitor the financial health of the organization. She noted that we ended the fiscal year with \$81k in cash. We raised \$15k more than last year and didn't spend all funds in the budget. Scrip made \$4,500. The Run/Walk made \$15k and the move-a-thon made \$1600. One of the larger, unusual expenditures was the \$24k grant to the SES foundation. PTA budgeted \$19k but paid only \$16k for the Go Fund. Word has gotten out that 100% of kids went on the Catalina trip and that fundraising does not buy down anyone's trip.

Dana asked whether the funds raised at the disaster dinner will be rolled into future emergency preparedness budget. Cindi confirmed this.

- **Motion to allow QuickBooks Upgrade:** Cindi and Chena explained that PTSA has a single user version of QuickBooks software that makes it difficult to share bookkeeping responsibilities. She asked the Board to authorize \$480 (\$40 / month) from the discretionary budget to upgrade to a new, multi-user version of QuickBooks. Heidi made the motion which was seconded and passed by a unanimous voice vote.

6. Foundation Grant Request.

Amy made a request for additional SES Foundation funding to help fund a portion of a half-time administrator in the middle school. She reported that Michelle Schafle has been employed in the past as a half-time coordinator for the middle school. This work permits the middle school teachers to spend more time teaching and less time handling the logistics of middle school trips and programs. SES currently lacks sufficient FTE funding to bring Michelle back to half time.

Amy noted that PTA previously approved a significant Foundation grant last year and that not all of the funds were used. She believes a PTSA grant of \$5k to \$6k to the Foundation in addition to the unused grant from last year would be sufficient to cover the middle school coordinator.

The Board engaged in a discussion of the issue. Cindi pointed out that because the Foundation grant was part of last year's budget, the unused funds are not part of this year's budget, but were simply rolled over along with other unspent budgeted item. We currently have only \$5000 in discretionary funds budgeted. The Board would need to approve a change in the budget to fund this position. It would probably need to be a \$10,000 budget item. The Board engaged in a discussion about moving unneeded funds from other budget items to cover this. Ultimately, the funds could be found by lowering the speculative rollover of funds at the end of the year. Any budget change would then need to be approved by the membership at the next membership meeting.

- **Motion to Recommend for Change of Budget to Membership:** Chena moved to recommend an amendment to the 2012-13 budget at the September general meeting. The amendment will be to make a grant to the SES Foundation account for use in filling the funding gap for the middle school coordinator. The amendment would add a budget line to transfer to the Foundation up to \$10,000 and will reduce the PTSA's projected June 2013 carryover by the same amount. Eric seconded the motion. The motion passed on a voice vote with the following abstentions: Neeley, Cindi, Matthew, Sue and Heidi. There were no opposing votes.

7. General Meeting Planning

The Board discussed the agenda for general meeting on September 27th. Diane the PE teacher will make a presentation of her work with students. Elizabeth will discuss the role of PTA. Groups will have tables before the event with the meeting beginning at 6:30. There will be a breakdown of the budget and efforts to sell PTA memberships. Chena will give a financial report and Elizabeth will present the budget change. They requested a coordinator for food.

Someone will be available to speak about the PPS bond measure on behalf of PTA. The Board discussed the rules regarding bond measure promotion.

8. Harvest Faire

The Board engaged in a discussion of the volunteer and coordination needs for Harvest Faire and who has stepped forward to volunteer so far. The Board suggested several names of people to approach for help. Currently the Harvest Faire manual is missing. The Board hopes to have Latin music at Harvest Faire to connect with a grade 1-2 storyline on Columbia and Mexico. There was a discussion of food and related logistics and staffing.

9. Fundraising

Matthew gave a brief report on fundraising. He said we raised \$165 from the first Hawthorne Hophouse fundraiser night and said that some money was raised from selling cotton candy at the Belmont St. Fair. He summarized some of the upcoming fundraisers, including Pizzicato night, script tables, and wreath sales.

10. Safety and Resilience

Dana gave an update on the work of the safety and resilience committee. The seismic upgrade project is bogged down because the engineering firm that conducted the assessment, Nyamoto International, closed its Portland office. They currently do not have an engineer to certify the project. She will report back on this.

On September 28, PPS is offering safety training with a seismic focus. Also, the committee is sponsoring CPR training for up to 21 middle schoolers on a Saturday, October 6. An announcement of that event will be made in the middle school.

Dana announced a Sunnyside Neighborhood Association board meeting. The neighborhood association is considering designating Sunnyside Park as an emergency reunification place and using the school for that purpose. Amy has generally agreed to this, with the proviso that nothing be stored there.

11. Volunteers

Kim gave a brief report on the status of volunteer coordination. She now has volunteer survey forms and asked the Board how best to utilize them. She has volunteer spots for Harvest Faire, Wreath & Poinsettia sale, Walk & Bike to School.

Also, there was a discussion of having a parent education program involving a showing of the film "Finding Kind".

12. Announcements and Miscellaneous Matters

The Board engaged in a discussion of school calendar adjustments.

Sue reported that she is doing an advocacy blog to support school funding.

Tomorrow is back-to-school night. There was a discussion of the role of room parents in this event.

The Meeting Adjourned at 9:00 p.m.