

2020-2021 P.S./I.S. 217 PTA General Meeting Minutes

Monday, November 16, 2020 – 8:45 a.m.

Notetaker: Alex Kling

Registrants were admitted to the Zoom meeting beginning at 8:45 a.m.

Quorum was established at 8:50 a.m.

Minutes of the October 29th elections meeting were approved at 8:59 a.m.

Treasurer's Report (9:01 a.m.)

- Opened with a brief overview of how the PTA manages finances
 - Budget is a plan of how we expect to raise and spend money
 - Budget can be amended throughout the year
 - Budget approval does not imply pre-approval of any expenses
 - All expenses must get approved by the general PTA membership
 - PTA files tax returns once a year and expenses with the DOE twice a year
- PTA is not anticipating in-person fundraisers this year, but expects donations to remain steady
- We do not yet know what enrichments we will have this year, but a line item has been left for them; we welcome input in terms of how to reimagine enrichment programs
- We are in the process of applying for a RIOG grant
- We are down by about \$46,000 in terms of projected fundraising income because we cannot have in-person events
- Administrative expenses are not changing substantially
- We will be requesting more money for teacher development, classroom support, and materials ; there is also a request to update furniture in the library
- Technology is an important way to support students this year
- We may be spending more money than we are taking in this year, but we are financially prepared for this situation through our savings

A member inquired about the line item for walkie-talkies at 9:13 a.m. Assistant Principal Jenn Allen explained that there was only one approved vendor that worked with the walkie-talkies the school already has. Allen also specified that this is really a safety line item and will include other products as well as batteries for the walkie-talkies.

A member inquired regarding the \$15,000 line item for Chromebook replacements at 9:17 a.m. Principal Mandana Beckman replied that this was actually a bigger technology line item and would include other items. She also specified that some Chromebooks were on the older side and that there had been some wear and tear since these Chromebooks were never intended to be used as much as they are being used now. She also relayed that families are being given information on how to care for them.

A member inquired regarding the line item for sex education at 9:20 a.m. They raised the concern that the substance abuse prevention program may need more funding. Co-treasurer Oliver Christ responded that these numbers are based on last year's spending and are only a guideline.

A member inquired regarding a line item for in-school P.E. and the lack of funding for wrestling considering that Mr. Luce is giving wrestling lessons over Zoom. Christ responded that the money was to replace broken equipment and that the lessons over Zoom did not cost the school anything. We do not currently anticipate having wrestling expenses, but if that changes, the expenses can be approved by the PTA at any time throughout the school year.

A member questioned the line item for Pupil Pass at 9:28 a.m. Beckman responded that this is a software that helps people input assignments and grades. The school does not think this is the year to switch platforms and has gotten a discount from the company.

The member then inquired about the line items for staff lunches and holiday gifts at 9:30 a.m. Christ responded that we wanted to increase funding to sponsor events every other month, as we have been told by the school administration that it really helps increase morale. The cost is \$12 per person if you consider the number of staff. Beckman replied that there was a cost increase because we can no longer buy things in bulk. Now meals must be individually served as opposed to being served in platters.

A member inquired about the lack of a line for fundraisers like XA-Plus Rewards/Stop + Shop at 9:34 a.m. Christ said that this income is covered through account "4110 - Internet Shopping Revenue". The member asked to confirm whether the check for this fundraiser had been received by the school. Christ confirmed receipt of the check (\$141.32).

The budget was approved at 9:38 a.m.

Christ shared the financial report for expenses through the end of October at 9:39 a.m.

The PTA has not yet started a general campaign for donations. The Saturday marketplace has already generated close to \$9,000 in proceeds. Raz Kids has been paid for, and money has been spent for t-shirts for the teachers and staff, which has helped us identify them at drop-off and pick-up.

Christ shared the financial requests document at 9:42 a.m., pointing out line items such as accounting software, RazKids, Chromebooks, and Zoom license fee reimbursement. Christ explained that we pay receipts when they are received and vetted.

Beckman explained at 9:46 a.m. that we typically pay for professional development for teachers through the school budget. We've been on the waitlist to join Teacher's College but were recently taken off and let into the program. The administration team explained the school's

need for \$25,000 to pay for more days with the consultants, as that line item cannot be increased with the DOE.

Expense requests were approved at 9:50am.

Principal's Report (9:50 a.m)

- Welcome families
- COVID testing has now happened twice
- About 80% of families have submitted testing consent
- We want to be able to have grade gaps soon
- We are learning to be flexible this year; there is not just one way to solve a problem
- Staff loves being at school with the kids

Assistant Principal's Report

- School is working hard to be proactive, not reactive
- Administration is making preparations for if/when the school goes fully remote
- Thirteen more students have opted into blended learning, bringing the total to 409
- We may be moving to the 50% model for blended students
- A Monday/Thursday and Tuesday/Friday schedule (with Wednesday as a shared day) allows teachers to see kids more consistently throughout the week
- More information will be shared once the school has a final opt-in number

President's report (9:57)

- Introduction of new executive board
- We are still committed to building and celebrating our community and supporting teachers and staff in these unprecedented times
- The Invest in Your Child's Success campaign will be launching with Giving Tuesday
- Other ways to easily contribute to the school:
 - Box Tops
 - A-Plus/Stop + Shop Rewards
 - Book Culture (shop in Astoria)
 - Amazon Smile
- The PTA is looking forward to collaborating with everyone
- Don't forget to visit psis217pta.com regularly for info

A poll to stagger PTA meeting times was submitted at 10:02 a.m.

A plurality voted to rotate morning and evening meetings by month; for the meetings that occur in the morning, a majority voted to hold them at 8:45 a.m. rather than later in the morning.

The next PTA meeting will be December 9th @ 7:30pm. (Meetings are held every 2nd Wednesday of the month.)

Membership committee report (10:06 a.m.)

--Co-Vice President of Membership Melissa Godwin asked everyone to fill out the Parent Information Form so that we could identify a number of grade guardians (who will replace class parents this year)

Events committee report (10:07 a.m.)

--Co-Vice-President of Events Amanda Brown said that events would look different this year, but would still occur (online auction and online talent show for example)

-- Co-Vice-President of Events Stacey Ornstein presented the idea of a citrus sale fundraiser with the Orange Shop in Florida (they ship throughout the US and Canada; 217 families would receive a unique discount code for 10% off; 15% of sales would return to the school; cards will be sent with orders, to make for easy gifting)

The citrus fundraiser was approved at 10:26 a.m.

PTA Co-President Eirik Davey-Gislason queried whether there were corrections to March minutes at 10:27 a.m. and explained that minutes remain in draft form and that corrections can be made until the minutes are approved by a vote. Corrections for the March minutes were put into the chat and approved. March Minutes were approved at 10:34 a.m.

June minutes were approved at 10:38 a.m.

A date change to the June 2019 minutes was approved at 10:42 a.m.

Christmas tree fundraiser will occur again this year. There will be limited supplies, so people who want them should order them early. The plan is to have tree sales on the side where the market used to be.

PTA Co-President Andrea Davey-Gislason raised the subject of having a coat drive this year at 10:44 a.m. If families are interested, they should email the PTA.

A member raised the subject of the food pantry on Roosevelt Island, which also does a coat drive. They also pointed out that the debit cards students were sent can be used to purchase fruit and vegetables at the market.

A member brought up the subject of the Stop N' Shop fundraiser and said that old participants do not need to reregister, but that new participants do need to register by the end of December. The program goes from August until the end of March this year. Stop N' Shop orders can be made online and the groceries can be delivered throughout Roosevelt Island and Queens.

A member queried whether we should bring back a previous clothing fundraiser now that events are not happening and there is not as much fundraiser fatigue. Andrea Davey-Gislason replied that any member who has fundraising ideas should email the PTA. Fundraising ideas will then be proposed to the general membership and voted on them at the December meeting.

Eirik Davey-Gislason proposed the issue of how votes are cast, considering that multiple voters may be sharing a device. This will be discussed more at a later date.

Meeting adjourned at 10:56 a.m.

Note: If there are any proposed amendments to these minutes, they should be submitted at the next PTA general meeting on December 9th. Please come prepared with the language to the proposed amendment already drafted so that it can be shared with the membership prior to a vote. Thank you for understanding that no changes can be made to the minutes before the December 9th meeting.