

PTA General Meeting Minutes

Sept. 11, 2019

Tracey opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Outlined the meeting's format. Explained that the reading of the minutes from the last meeting is part of the agenda, but usually it's motioned to dispense with reading, in order to save time. The minutes from the previous meetings are always available, and parents may reach out to the PTA if they'd like to look at them.

Motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes. Seconded. Passed by unanimous voice vote.

Treasurer's Report

Ben spoke and introduced Oliver Christ as the second treasurer. The final financial report from last year and a list of expenses to be approved were distributed. The only unexpected expenses, or something that differed from previous years, was that the PTA spent a lot of money on curriculum materials, professional development for teachers, and classroom supplies. The PTA is still funding enrichments. Previously, the PTA also funded some capital improvements such as purchasing the cafeteria tables. Included in the budget are funds for green roof initiatives so that we may use them as soon as the green roof is complete.

Ben asked to orally add 2 more expenses to the list.

- \$107.66 for the Back to School banner
- \$500 for purchasing tickets for the PS/IS 217 Day at the Mets

These and the expenses were approved by unanimous voice vote.

Ben and Olga also discussed a need for additional funds to support Cornell Tech's curriculum development in our school. A wish list of equipment was compiled from the teachers in conjunction with the Cornell Tech teaching residency program. This includes things like robots and small items. This does not include things like Chromebooks or PCs, etc. Instead of adding this as a bulk pre-approved expense of \$15,000, they proposed to amend the budget to include this item. The motion to amend the budget was seconded and passed by unanimous voice vote.

President's Report

Tracey spoke. Would like to stick to agenda items during meetings. Introduced a sign-in sheet for speakers wanting to discuss new business. Introduce the PTA action plan as a way to support parents who have a new idea or initiative that they want to get going in the school. It's a way to organize and communicate needs that parents may want addressed. Stressed that the PTA is available to all parents. The PTA room is located in the hallway next to the cafeteria. Members are often there at different times during the day, or meetings can be arranged. PTA executive members are often at drop off and pick up. People should feel free to reach out.

The PTA is working on getting class parents for each class and will set up a meeting once class parents have been assigned. Class parents are a way for families to connect with members of their class and grade and serve as communicators between the school and families. If anyone was interested in serving as class parents, they were encouraged to let the PTA know. Hope to have it organized by the end of the month.

Principal's Report

Ms. Beckman spoke and welcomed all the parents. She and the staff are happy that they will get in 3 solid weeks of school. She expressed gratitude for everyone's support, financial and physical. She stressed the importance of showing up and/or having someone represent you at events, either PTA or the parent engagements that the teachers plan. The children love having someone see them in their school environment.

Update on the green roof: the contractors came 4x over the summer. She's letting school construction authority know that the parents and students are eagerly awaiting completion. There is not a lot of control over the timetable. The expected completion date, according to a sign on the site, is December 2020. The teachers are already planning ways to incorporate the green roof into their science curriculum so that once it's complete, they will be ready to start using it immediately.

SLT Report

Tracey spoke. The SLT is the School Leadership Team and separate from the PTA. There are 3 elected parent representatives. Teachers and the principal and assistant principal serve on it. They develop the CEP, Comprehensive Education Plan. This is where school-based decisions are made, policy and school culture discussed. Examples of things discussed last year:

- Cell phone policy
- Puberty education in 5th grade

The last meeting was in June. They reviewed CEP. The new chancellor has a new system for goals. It's a little difficult to navigate so the CEP is undergoing revisions.

The next meeting is next Friday, Sept 20 at 7:30 AM. Anyone may attend, but only SLT members may vote on proposals.

President's Report continued.

There are many upcoming events.

The Book Fair is the week of Sept. 23. Karen Weingarten is organizing with Chenda Bao helping. Flyers will go out next week with class schedules. The students go during their library time. Parents are welcome to come and help them during their book fair time. We also need volunteers to come outside of your child's class time. We're using a new vendor this year, Follett Books. The book selection is different, and there are more options for our benefits. We can get 60% discount of books from the actual book fair, 40% discount online, or 30% of the cash proceeds. A parent wanted to know if we'd be getting similar benefits as Scholastic. Ms. O'Hagan, the school librarian, already uses Follett to purchase books for the library. In response to a parent inquiry, Tracey emphasized that no one is obligated to attend the book fair or

purchase anything. Parents may come in and read with their children in the library during that time, as an alternative. A parent also emphasized the PTA maintains a dollar book table with donated books in effort to make book buying accessible to everyone. There are many desirable titles on the donation table, and usually parent volunteers will just give a book to a child so that they all leave with something from the book fair.

The Monster Bash is on Oct. 4th. It's a big community event that starts right after school with inflatables, food, the firefighters donate hot dogs, lots of games. It's also a very volunteer heavy event. We have been getting a large crowd so we really need all hands on deck. The volunteer shifts are just 30 minutes. The event is a fundraiser, and in an effort to keep the costs down and accessible to everyone, we solicit donations from businesses. Reach out to Tracey if you know anyone who can donate food or an activity or a craft.

New Business

A parent brought up that the downstairs girls bathroom has broken latches on the stall doors. This was an issue that had been brought up two years ago. There has also been no soap. A parent expresses concern about its cleanliness. According to Tracey and Olga, the school's business secretary, the custodial staff circulate the building throughout the day to check on the state of the bathrooms and their supplies and clean the bathrooms according to their contractual obligations. Olga said that at the beginning of the year there may be issues because the younger students are learning how to use the facilities properly. She will follow up with the custodial staff about these raised issues.

School Supplies Kit

A parent asked about the cost of the kits in comparison with other schools in District 30. How much was the cost of the supplies and how much was fundraising for the PTA. Tracey explained that the teachers submitted a list of items, and the company set the price of the kits. The school had asked the teachers to trim their original lists to lower the cost. There is a markup for the labor of putting the kits together and convenience of delivery to the school. Tracey also explained that the school supplies are all communal. The minimal income the PTA receives from the school supply kits is used to equalize the supplies across classrooms and to purchase supplies for the specials teachers who were buying supplies out of their own pockets. But the school supply kits are always going to be a premium and the cost not really comparable to buying the supplies yourself. Irena also explained that this was a project that was organized by one parent who researched the companies, and she handles all the logistical details. The PTA is open to different vendors if someone wants to take it on. A parent pointed out that at PS 166 in Queens, they offered school supply kits for \$40, and in district 30, it seemed to average \$60. In addition, the middle school supplies would be less because they needed fewer items.

ABT residency

A parent asked when the first grade would get the American Ballet Theatre residency that they won during last year's auction. Tracey explained that the enrichment residencies typically don't

start until later in the year. Every grade will get one enrichment during the school year. K and pre-K will have their enrichment with Music Together starting in October.

Closing

Tracey thanked everyone for coming.