

# MINUTES

## Horsemen PTA Minutes

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November 15 | 8:30am | *Meeting called to order by* Christina Grillo

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### In Attendance

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Christina Grillo (President); Andrea Williamson (Secretary); Allie Scherich (Vice President); Julie Fiore (VP 1<sup>st</sup> Grade); Christina Papadopoulos (VP K); Amber DaSilva (VP 7<sup>th</sup> Grade); Elissa Smith (VP 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade); Andrea Harrison (SNC); Juliana Aloia (VP 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade); Brianna Staudt (VP K & 1<sup>st</sup> Grade); Lauren McBride (VP 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade); Angel Rafter (Membership & VP SHHS); Mitch Sylves-Berry (Rivertown Parents); Daphne Uviller (MS VP); Brenda Rodriguez (Guest); Sue Hubbard (Guest)

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### Budget

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2019/2020 Budget was circulated via email on Nov 11<sup>th</sup> by Christina and at the board meeting.

Christina highlighted a couple of expense updates following the budget meeting on Nov 6<sup>th</sup>:

- **Technology:** Additional \$1,500 line item added to expenses to Technology at W.I. Working with Jean O'Brien, she recommended two coding tools; Cublets being one that was more versatile and durable. Concern was addressed as to how the Cublets will be protected. Mr. Holland advised that the Cublets will be centrally housed. Kids will follow a sign-out process during recess, with monitoring of Cublets returned in good order. Additionally, kids will be taught how to use them.
- **Administrative:** Christina has ordered a banner – “Sponsored by PTA” – that can be used to promote all PTA events. PTA Balloons ordered for MS Book Fair – leftovers can be re-used.

**The Budget was unanimously approved.**

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### Heads Up Vote

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Amber updated the board on Heads Up, starting with some history on the organization, before the board took a vote on officially adding Heads Up as a sub-committee. Heads Up is an organization started in Irvington and gaining membership in neighboring districts. In Tarrytown/Sleepy Hollow, there are just a few parents actively involved. In Irvington, Heads Up is a sub-committee of their PTSA, whereas to-date, this group has not been a sub-committee of the Horsemen PTA. In Irvington, being part of the PTSA has been helpful in advertising, promoting, and educating, as Heads Up can leverage their PTSA's mailing lists. Amber thought being part of the Horsemen PTA can likewise help to promote Heads UP in Tarrytown/Sleepy Hollow. Additionally, having some budget from the PTA, for example to have banners that can be re-used at multiple events, is another advantage. Andrea Harrison commented that teachers would be interested in joining Heads-Up, as they are finding kids commonly distracted by devices, and not attending to class.

Communication channels were discussed more broadly; the PTA will be starting its own weekly email blast to the district with updates on events and initiatives. Among other updates, Heads-Up can be included. Angel suggested as an alternative the email blasts could be sent to just PTA members via member-hub. Decision taken to begin with district-wide emails.

Amber explained there are various monthly initiatives that are directed by the Irvington central branch of the group, including Gift the Gift of Attention (Parents to refrain from texting kids during school hours). As part

of a multi-year, educational initiative, Heads Up would eventually encourage the removal of cell phones from lower and upper schools. Discussions are in the early stages as the local branch grows and develops.

The downside of having Heads Up as part of the PTA, is any initiatives need to be voted on by the PTA, and could potentially be rejected.

**A vote was taken to add Heads Up as an official sub-committee of the PTA, and was unanimously approved.**

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## NYS PTA Convention Summary

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A handful of Horsemen PTA attended the State PTA convention that took place in Tarrytown last weekend. The Horsemen PTA had received a \$500 voucher towards the convention. The Horsemen PTA was given the membership growth award for having the highest rate of growth in NY state last year.

There were several exhibitors. Daphne highlighted a trivia game exhibit that could potentially be used at a family game night event. Daphne to review and may share if applicable to the Horsemen PTA. Another interesting exhibit was "make a stuffed animal" which could be a good fundraiser.

Brianna noted one good initiative other PTA's have is helping parents prepare for parent-teacher conferences. This could be a simple flyer.

On December 5<sup>th</sup>, at Captain Lawrence, there is a Holiday Mingle with other PTA's in Westchester / East Putnam if anyone would like to attend.

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## JP/Morse Holiday Helpers

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Christina has contacted Ms. Camaj (social worker at both JP and Morse) regarding JP/Morse Holiday Helpers. Ms. Camaj will provide an anonymous list of what children in need are in need of (typically clothing items or other necessities). The list covers families before they can be registered with Open Door. A signup genius will be distributed to the PTA executive board, and items can be dropped off at the schools. WI has its own resources to support its students.

There was discussion around adding this to the volunteer sheets for 2020 to broaden the distribution for future years.

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## PTA Closet Update

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In an effort to keep the closet from becoming too full and to keep it organized and useable, Andrea raised the following points:

- Before sourcing any additional party serving items, hosts/chairs to check the closet. There are several packages of cups, plates, utensils, and an entire box of table cloths.
- There is a stand-alone box of office supplies that can be brought to any event as needed. Event-specific items should be stored separately.
- Items for teacher appreciation lunches should either be disposable, borrowed, or raffled off at the end of each luncheon. There is not room in the closet to store past event themed décor.

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## Fundraising / Membership Update

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- **Disney Tickets:** 156 tickets have been sold to-date, including 50 tickets at the Farmers Market (\$1,140 profit to-date). Great to do an event for the community (the town clean-up), and then receive the

Disney Tickets. Drawing will be December 13<sup>th</sup>. Thinking of asking Mr. Borsari to pull the winning ticket; could Facebook Live the drawing.

- **Boon:** Boon profit to date is \$10,500 (including \$500 bonus from Morse, as Morse sold in excess of \$10,000). However, only a small portion of the population participated. Given this limited population, Lauren raised a concern that we should consider using a different fundraiser next year, as people may not have the same need/interest in Boon products just one year later.
- **Membership:** Current membership stands at 316. WI staff have had strong adoption, and JP staff is making progress. Morse staff, who had 100% participation last year, have low participation thus far. The competition ends today. Winning school receives a hot breakfast, served by the PTA.

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## WI Crossing Guard Update

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Dana provided an update via email, that Christina read to the Board:

- Tarrytown does not have the resources to provide an officer at 3:15, as this is during shift changeover.
- There is a company that assists School Districts in hiring crossing guards. There was a bill (S3673) passed by the NY senate that now allows schools to pay in whole or part for crossing guards (this was previously prohibited), <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2017/s367>. A brochure from this company was provided to Juliana to share with Mr. Holland, with the thought that this crossing guard expense could be included in the 2020/2021 budget.
- Dana had also noted that the police department recommends that children needing to cross Route 9 at 3:15 dismissal cross at the safest point, which is at Benedict Avenue, where there are pedestrian crossing signals. It was noted by Angel that this too can be an unsafe crossing for children.

Not an issue at other schools; Sleepy Hollow police are available at Morse dismissal (later time), and the Middle School uses teachers. However, this is on school grounds, whereas teachers cannot direct traffic on a state highway (route 9 at WI).

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## Summary of recent BOE Meetings

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The BOE is asking all principals to present on each school, its initiatives, its dreams, etc. Mr. Walley presented for W.L. Morse. His “dream” was for a new building.

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## School Updates

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To facilitate these meetings, send Principal meeting notes to the board in advance and focus the board discussion on key topics.

- **JP:** Photo day was a success. Small issue with Boon delivery; items delivered to an incorrect address, now at the school. The celebration for the National PTA School of Excellence award is still being discussed; one option is the Holiday concert at JP.
- **Morse:** Successful book fair, raised \$7,500 in the Book Fair Celebration alone. This year, hosted 18 class visits on the first day with 3 the following day, in an effort to let all kids create wish lists before the Celebration. Good thought but would recommend in future years, spreading out over two days and hosting the Celebration on a Tuesday evening. Good Halloween costume drive; photo retakes Dec 3<sup>rd</sup>. Gates to playground continues to be a discussion. Staff continually monitor, and Mr. Walley is looking into a stronger latch. Mr. Walley is also concerned about parking lot lighting and is looking to enhance.
- **WI:** Sue getting ready for the WI Book Fair next week. Sue has everyone in line! Halloween costume drive went well, too many costumes so next year we may not need a “push”. Kids did a Halloween “March” around school, first time this year. Amada is running the year book this year, and had a

process designed to collect pictures and send to a discrete email. Mr. Holland has asked if we needed a yearbook – is this for kids or for parents? Alternately, should we focus efforts on the end-of-year video for the 5<sup>th</sup> graders, sending parents home with a copy of the DVD? For this year, the contract is signed, but will assess the relevance of the WI yearbook for next year. Amada to be setting up a meeting with Mr. Holland and include the WI VP's.

- **SHMS:** Recently held Dinner and a Movie night; had 50-60 attend, but many kids seemed to be unaware of the event. Kids did not receive permission slips. Ms. King (PE teacher) the day of the event helped with permission slip distribution. In general, communication appeared to be a challenge. Before event, HS play was practicing and was unaware there was an event. A lot of kids were leaving the event, in the bathroom, some leaving the building. Security needed for future years, to monitor children coming in and out, and more parent volunteers in general.
- **SHHS:** No Update.

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## Sub-Group Updates

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**Heads Up:** Update provided above at top of meeting.

**SNC:** Andrea H noted there is an event coming up on Nov 26<sup>th</sup> on “How to Understand your Childs IEP”, to be presented by an attorney for student advocacy to understand the role of the parents and the obligations of the school. Flyers to be mailed (Andrea H to send with translation to Christina who will share with school VP's), Christina to be posted on Facebook, and shared with Jean O'Brien for the weekly district email distribution.

**Rivertown Parents:** Mitch noted a workshop on Tuesday Nov 19<sup>th</sup> regarding Social and Mental Well-Being, focused on anxiety and depression. This is the first presentation for Rivertown Parents for the year open to all parents. Communication to be electronic only, no paper flyers given the timing before the event. Horsemen PTA still need to figure out our presentation – may host a presentation on Internet Safety. Meetings are once a month on a Wednesday, and Mitch is looking for other volunteers interested in attending.

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## AOB

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Meeting Adjourned at 10:02 am.

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## Next Meeting

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December 13, 2019 | 8:30am, The Administration Building