

# MINUTES

## Horsemen PTA Minutes

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January 17, 2020 | 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); Juliana Aloia (VP 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade); Brianna Staudt (VP K & 1<sup>st</sup> Grade); Mitch Sylves-Berry (Rivertown Parents); Brenda Rodriguez (MS VP); Angel Rafter (Membership & VP SHHS); Christina Papadopolous (K VP); Doretta Miraglia (SNC VP); Beth P (Spirit Wear); Amber DaSilva (Heads-Up)

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### Recap of Superintendent Meeting & BOE Meeting Summary

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Christina met with Mr. Borsari on January 14<sup>th</sup>. Christina started by summarizing the reaction from the HS/MS lockdown. Christina has heard that parents were generally happy with the communication received from the district. Mr. Borsari was appreciative with how well the kids handled the situation. One area he noted for improvement was in communicating faster to the MS that there was not an active incident. Towards the end of the month, there will be a School Safety Forum with all stakeholders to review procedures and what could be improved in lockdown situations.

Mr. Borsari also addressed recent rumors that the District is looking to privatize the buses, confirming that this is not under consideration. He did note that there is a contract renegotiation ongoing.

At the January 16 Board Meeting, there was a long discussion on Health Education (e.g. Hygiene, healthy eating, Health class in 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> grade, 7<sup>th</sup> grade and 10<sup>th</sup> grade). The goal is to teach children 1-2 years before it would be expected that kids would be exposed to these concepts (e.g. vaping). Enhancing the Health education focus at the Middle School was a key area of discussion.

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### Booster-Thon Fundraiser Idea for Next Year

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The Booster-Thon fundraiser would replace the fall fundraiser, focused only on elementary students K-5. The reason for switching from the successful Boon fundraiser from this year is that demand will likely drop given the lifespan of Boon products (“fundraiser fatigue”). The Booster-Thon fundraiser is pledge-based (all internet-based so kids aren’t responsible for handing in money), for 8 days, ending with a fun run. Many kids won’t even realize it’s a fundraiser. It’s a character and fitness aspect to the event that is also appealing. Each day there is a challenge, between classes (not individual challenges).

Boon raised ~\$11k, and Yankee Candle raised ~\$8k the year prior. In comparison, the rough estimate for the Booster-Thon fundraiser is ~\$20k.

Timing would be late September / early October, and would require close scrutiny of the fall calendar for PTA events (e.g. picture day, Morse Book Fair, Halloween).

The board discussed challenges of the event, including the need for daily videos (10 minutes in length, for 8 consecutive school days). Question if it would be possible to blend into the Physical Education curriculum. If the gym teachers can show the videos on the 3 days that week that they have students, it can reduce the ask on teachers during their instruction time. Discussions to continue with the Elementary Principals.

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## Ice Skating & Spirit Wear Fundraisers

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Ice skating event is next Sunday from 1-3. The goal is 300 attendees, which would drive \$1,800 of profit. Dana will be sending out a volunteer signup genius to general volunteers to support the event. Class Parents will be asked to invite teachers and their families to the event. At the event, Spirit Wear advertising will launch with a flyer (hopefully with a QC code). Beth, co-chair of Spirit Wear, provided an update. The vendor we are now working with has a more limited selection than Fanclath (t-shirts, sweatshirts, potentially long-sleeve shirts, 2-color only with short timelines). We are looking to host an online store for 2 weeks. Currently working on designs. Beth to check if it's possible to get samples to have on-hand at the ice skating event.

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## Holiday Helpers

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Juliana provided some take-away's from this years' holiday helpers. This years' list was too long. Juliana to provide feedback to the Social Worker at JP/Morse now, to improve next years' process.

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## Irvin Simon – 2020 Picture Day

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Exploring an option for online ordering. Pictures would be accessible online, purchases would be made online, and shipment would be direct to home. Question is how our non-English speaking families would react; would they have access and/or be as likely to participate without the paper forms? Given this limitation, the board decided not to move away from paper orders. Will investigate if Irvin Simon can support both paper and online, and if not will maintain the current paper order practice.

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## WI Movie Night Date Shift to March 13

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Movie night will be moved back one week to March 13<sup>th</sup>, to accommodate a Foundation Wizards event on March 6<sup>th</sup>.

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## Mini-Grants

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Thus far 3 grant requests have been received; 2 from the MS, and 1 from JP. The deadline is February 3<sup>rd</sup>. VPs to email principals to follow up with teachers to ensure they are aware. There was feedback that at the MS, teachers weren't aware of this opportunity.

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## School Updates

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Updates were provided by the VP's from each respective school.

- **JP:** Next meeting is Jan 27<sup>th</sup>. The school of excellence presentation was wonderful, thank you to Angel for presenting. The fact that this is the only school in Westchester with this designation received a roaring round of applause. Awaiting photos to add to the PTA newsletter. Book Fair is coming up; Briana looking for a Celebration Chair.
- **Morse:** Mr. Walley has been working with Facilities on the gates to Beekman. The School Facilities team is putting a "permanent latch" on the gate. The January meeting is next week.
- **WI:** Last meeting was this Tuesday. WI read-a-thon is coming up soon, and the PE teachers have just launched "Kids Heart Challenge". Read-a-thon may be delayed to not conflict. A teacher received a "We Deliver" postal program grant last year from the PTA, to allow children to write letters to each other; and we are looking for an update. Mr. Holland will be sending a message to parents that buses

are an extension of school in terms of rules, including banning use of phones. Mr. Holland noted that at this point last year, he'd been receiving emails regarding the yearbook; hoping that all is on track for this year's yearbook. Indoor recess is now in the classroom, vs in the lunchrooms. Requesting games for indoor recess, now that it's in classrooms. Connect 4, UNO, Jenga, are popular games. Some Class Parents may be reaching out to make requests to parents.

- **SHMS:** Principal meeting was yesterday. On Monday following the Lockdown, the building debriefed, allowing students to express how they felt or ask questions. Mr. Whitham felt the lockdown went as practiced. Unfortunately, the school did receive phone messages from parents during the lockdown (when the Principal and other administrators were focused on the safety of the students and not answering calls). Some parents were waiting outside the building, that rushed inside as soon as the doors were opened also causing confusion and several unknown adults suddenly in the school. Mr. Whitham enquired at the \$2,000 allocated to the Grade 8 D.C. Trip, at how he can receive the money. Christina to follow up with Mr. Whitham on the process. Mr. Whitham liked the idea of a PTA-sponsored presentation on Internet Safety (particularly given the students' response to the lockdown that several students were texting, calling, and sharing details on social media), and had an idea of a good speaker who has presented at his previous school. Mitch raised some concerns on hosting a Middle School presentation on Internet Safety as this conflicts with what Tarrytown wants to host for its Rivertown Parents event. Mitch had a suggestion on a speaker about vaping. There is Say Something training from the Sandy Hook Promise for grades 6-12 that is being discussed to raise awareness. Lisa King (Middle School PE teacher) will be a PTA/Parent liaison at after school events. Mr. Whitham suggested that Lisa join our monthly PTA board meetings.
- **SHHS:** A community poll is required to confirm that a high school PTA is desired. The poll is prepared, Mr. Borsari has approved the poll, and Jean is engaged to share the one-question poll via a district-wide email. Angel hoping to be able to send shortly.

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## Sub-Group Updates

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**Rivertown Parents:** Mitch is evaluating topics for the Tarrytown event for Rivertown Parents. The Detective Grimes presentation has been somewhat dated, so Mitch is looking at other speakers to address Internet Safety. The thinking would be to have both a student presentation as well as a parent presentation. Tinker Night is upcoming – flyer was posted to the Horsemen PTA Facebook page, and Christina shared to Tarrytown & Sleepy Hollow moms.

**SNC:** Doretta noted that the November SNC meeting was very lightly attended with only a handful of parents. She raised a concern that perhaps there wasn't a need for a Special Needs Committee given the light attendance. The board suggested that the light turnout was due to the event timing (the Tuesday evening before Thanksgiving), and that more outreach, branding, and time is needed to raise awareness and engagement of parents of Special Needs students. Doretta took note of several suggestions from the board.

**Heads-Up:** Heads-Up parents are meeting with Mr. Borsari, Jean O'Brien, and Gail Duffy on January 17<sup>th</sup>. Topics include: The goals of the Technology Committee (the Technology committee is focused on increasing the use of technology in the curriculum); an update on digital awareness campaign; and to discuss the Personal Electronic Device policy at the high school.

Heads-up has been sponsoring monthly "awareness" campaigns, e.g. in February the focus is on Giving Likes in Real Life. The board discussed the most effective way to communicate initiatives. Paper flyers are effective, but only elementary aged kids receive paper fliers, and that isn't the target audience. Alternatively, the message is still applicable to all ages and grades. Christina asked Amber to continue to think about the best

way to convey messaging, and looks forward to hearing about the outcomes from the meeting with the District.

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AOB

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Meeting Adjourned at 10:31 am.

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Next Meeting

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February 28, 2020 | 8:30am, The Administration Building