

MINUTES

Horsemen PTA Minutes

February 28, 2020 | 8:30am | *Meeting called to order by* Christina Grillo

In Attendance

Christina Grillo (President); Andrea Williamson (Secretary); Brianna Staudt (VP K & 1st Grade); Angel Rafter (Membership & VP SHHS); Christina Papadopolous (K VP); Amber DaSilva (Heads-Up); Lauren McBride (Morse & WI VP); Elissa Smith (Morse VP); Julie Fiore (Morse VP); Daphne Uviller (MS VP); Kersten Harries (JP Class Parent)

Middle School Update – School Fundraiser

School Tool Box Fundraiser

Daphne is investigating a school supply fundraiser with School Tool Box for Morse, Washington Irving, and the Middle School. The pricing varies depending on the particular grade supply list, and ranges from ~\$40 to ~\$65. Any PTA mark-up would be on top of this price. Parents can un-select any items they do not want to purchase through School Tool Box. An additional advantage is delivery directly to school. We can launch this fundraiser whenever we want, but there is a cut-off in July for the ship-to-school option. Thereafter, parents can order supplies but the only delivery option is to home. Parents can also choose to purchase additional classroom supplies against teacher wish lists, and we can accept incremental donations that schools can use to augment. There was discussion around the PTA mark-up; one idea was 10%, or a flat \$5 fee, that would be disclosed. Preference was for a \$5 flat amount per order that would go to the PTA.

Other Middle School Updates

Working to find a date, including 5th grade, for the speaker on online safety (speaker is a former NY PD), funded by the PTA. The speaker will do assemblies for each grade plus an evening session for parents.

DC Trip – this years' grade 8 class is smaller vs last year. As with prior years, ~30-50 kids choose not to go. Cost per kid is \$550, slightly up to cover a hotel closer into the city (to reduce a 1.5 hour bus ride). 3 kids on a waiting list (no space on the bus).

Sandy Hook Say Something – discussion between Mr. Whitham and Mr. Borsari regarding whether this should be just for MS/HS or available across the district. Likely out of time for this year, but let's aim for an event next year.

Attendance is a concern for the district; the district attendance statistics were poor last year which reflects poorly on the district. Mr. Whitham is asking parents not to pull kids out of school (except for illness).

Earth Day Cleanup

Last years' cleanup was successful, and was how we obtained the Disney tickets we were able to raffle. Lauren has been in touch with the town and Disney (tickets) and Gogo Squeeze (snacks). The event is April 18th, which is a popular date (e.g. Foundation dinner); Lauren can't be there day-of to run the event but is doing most of the leg-work. Angel offered to help day-of. Christina suggested connecting with Moms Out Front to see if we can find additional volunteers and potentially augment/enhance the event.

Corona Virus Preparedness – C. Borsari Superintendent

The Superintendent joined the meeting to address preparedness planning for the Corona Virus. Mr. Borsari explained the district has a seasonal cleaning protocol for the flu; cleaning of doorknobs etc. When a flu case is identified, the cleaning staff will clean the related classroom for a few nights (desks etc). The protocol for Corona virus is generally the same, but the district is awaiting further guidance from NY State. The Principals are working on a “what would happen” plan for two scenarios; 1) if we had to tell certain children they couldn’t come to school for 2 weeks (there are laws that dictate how the school can exclude students from school), or 2) if we had to shut down schools for 2 weeks. At the higher grades, the use of Google Classroom makes this planning easier. This planning is more challenging for the elementary grades, where some families may not have access to the internet from home.

The other consideration is school overnight trips, including Washington DC, a highschool trip to France, band trips to Boston/Virgina, etc. Currently reviewing insurance policies, and what would happen if we need to cancel or change destinations or timing (e.g. refund policies).

WI Movie Night

Movie Night is Friday March 13 in the Washington Irving auditorium. The movie that was voted on is Abominable. There will be Pizza with the Principal from 5:30 – 6:30 in the WI Cafeteria beforehand with all Elementary School Principals beforehand so that families can grab an easy dinner before the movie. The signup Genius is out and volunteers are signing up. There will be an e-blast from Jean O-Brien this Sunday. Christina will start advertising on Facebook. Lauren has prepared a flier to go out to Elementary students. The movie itself is free. Pizza will be \$2/slice to break even; snacks, waters, and baked goods will be \$1 each, raised to cover the costs of the movie license.

Mini-Grants

The PTA was able to issue \$15k of grants, and was able to accept all grant applications (except for one small aspect of one grant regarding t-shirts). Teachers and staff were very happy.

Spirit Wear

The PTA made \$2 per item. This was more of a service... 232 items sold, so making \$464. Deliveries expected in the next few weeks. Welcoming input on the designs and offerings, and thinking of offering again next fall.

School Calendar

The PTA was a part of reviewing the school calendar for next year. There were 5 variations, voted down to 2, then a final selected by majority vote. The winning option includes the first day of school on Sept 8th after Labor Day, with Christmas break from December 23rd – January 4th. Given the extent of the work planned for many of the buildings this summer, holding back the start of school will help ensure the buildings are ready. The calendar will be approved at the next Board of Education Meeting.

School Updates

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

- **JP:** Book fair coming up March 9-12. Bri has lots of volunteers, but still need help with the register (Tuesday evening or Wednesday/Thursday morning). JP is looking for someone to help write a grant for work on the playground. Excited about the composting grant from the PTA!
- **Morse:** Mr. Walley was thrilled with all of the PTA grants. The Teacher Appreciation luncheon will be on Friday May 8th. Mr. Walley is investigating a situation where a student was absent for 4 days, and no call was made either to the home or to the school. It was also noted that there has also been a high number of students arriving to school late.
- **WI:** The Teacher Appreciation Luncheon will be May 4th. Refer to notes from Lauren sent earlier this week.
- **SHMS:** The Middle School update was provided at the top of the meeting. It was further noted that the Teacher Appreciation Luncheon will be May 13th.
- **SHHS:** A poll went out to the community as required to extend the PTA into the high school. 197 people voted, of which 195 were affirmative and 2 said no. Angel asked the board if we felt comfortable with these results or if further outreach is needed. The board feels confident with these results, and Angel will now proceed with NY State on finalizing the process to extend the Horsemen PTA into the high school. The focus of the PTA in the HS will not be on fundraising (which is well covered by the Arts Boosters and other groups), but on parent and administration engagement, the transition from grade 8 to 9, etc.

Sub-Group Updates

- **SNC:** Andrea is arranging for a literacy expert / reading specialist, Joanne Ferrigno. Date is Thursday April 2nd.
- **Heads-Up:** Amber to send meeting minutes from the meeting with Mr. Borsari, Jean O'Brien and Gail Duffy. Jean O'Brien sent a 4-question survey to high school parents regarding the presence of cell phones in the high school. The group will re-start the monthly initiatives, after missing February due to the short month/Winter Break. In the next PTA newsletter, there will be an article on Heads-Up and it was suggested to highlight the upcoming Mindfulness Fair on May 14th. The Mindfulness Fair will promote mindful use of technology and modeling technology use for families.

AOB

Meeting Adjourned at 10:03 am.

Next Meeting

March 26, 2020 | 7:30pm, The Administration Building