

MINUTES

Horsemen PTA Minutes

September 16, 2020 | 8:30pm | Meeting called to order by Christina Grillo

In Attendance

Board Members in Attendance: Christina Grillo (President); Alison Madrigal (PTA Co-Vice President); Brenda Rodriguez (PTA Co-Vice President); Maribel Correa (Treasurer); Andrea Williamson (Secretary); Brianna Staudt (VP Website, 1st & 2nd Grade); Christina Papadopolous (VP 1st Grade); Elissa Smith (VP 3rd Grade); Lauren McBride (VP Fundraising, VP 2nd Grade & 4th Grade); Dana Tavano (VP Volunteer Coordinator and VP K); Juliana Aloia (VP 4th Grade); Anne Marie Cellante (VP SNC); Katharine “Kat” Llivisaca (Spanish Liaison); Mechtild Steinert (VP 8th grade); Krista Barron (VP pre-K); Katy Lough (VP K); Leslie Rosario (VP 7th Grade); Tara Scheller (VP 6th Grade); Sophia Rana (VP 5th Grade); Krista Barron (Diversity and Inclusion VP and VP pre-K); Jessica Lake (VP Membership Coordinator); Angel Rafter (VP Highschool)

General Hello's and Introductions

Christina led an around-the-call introduction of all attendees, highlighting board member positions for this year.

PTA Mission Statement for 2020 / 2021

Christina shared the PTA Mission Statement with the board. She asked for any questions or comments; the board did not have any.

Budget Vote

Christina referred to the budget that was distributed to the board prior to the meeting, and noted a couple of adjusting items raised prior to the meeting for school-specific expenses (e.g. Morse Trip Around the Community). There was a question on whether a line item for the Washington DC trip should be included as in prior years. It was previously decided not to be included as the trip was expected to be cancelled. Christina asked that the MS VP's come back with a direction on whether to include or not. She then asked the board for a vote on the budget, including the adjustments to school-specific expenses and the Washington DC Trip scholarships to be made by Maribel. The budget was passed unanimously.

Button Project

Brianna led a project to enable any Elementary School teacher interested to create a button with a picture of their face without a mask so that the students could recognize and connect to their teachers' faces. The team made 160 buttons for teachers! The cost was ~\$120 total, with 4 buttons left to deliver. Christina relayed that the feedback on the project from Facebook was overwhelmingly positive, with the most comments of any post!

Membership

Christina noted that this year she expects membership to be challenging. With some marketing on Facebook, we currently have 38 members signed up online. Christina reminded all board members they must become members.

Dana noted that she has received ~7 membership forms to-date via email.

Jess spoke to some efforts to drive membership through the early part of the year with a raffle. The winners will receive a PTA Basket of items, including Spirit Wear. Bri noted that there is a bin with a variety of sizes in the PTA closet that could be distributed, perhaps with two baskets of clothes separated by sizing (e.g. smaller sizes for lower grades). Christina and Jess will meet at the Admin Building to go through the Spirit Wear in the closet.

Diversity and Inclusion Committee

The first meeting has been scheduled for 8am September 29th with a small group of board members.

Brenda noted that one challenge our PTA has had has been on engaging the hispanic community. Brenda shared an idea to launch "PTA en Espanol", to help hispanic families better connect with the PTA. The medium Brenda was suggesting to use was "WhatsApp", which she thought would require a phone. Brenda was asking if it was possible to get a phone for the PTA to utilize this app, which could be used more as a support group directly from their phone. Christina noted that this would need an owner, which Brenda offered to lead. Kat also offered to help in these efforts as well. Christina asked that they start with understanding the need for a phone better; for example, does it need to be an independent phone; can it be passed on year after year to new leads; what would be the most economical phone option be, or could it be manned by a computer via a PTA account? Other board members noted that they did not think a specific phone account would be needed, and would be quite challenging to administer.

Christina also asked Krista if it would make sense to highlight Hispanic Heritage Month given that it's this month under the Diversity and Inclusion Committee; Krista liked the idea.

2020 / 2021 WI Yearbook

Given the challenges with the yearbook last year (missed classes and errors with the grade 5 baby pictures), and the challenges with this year due to remote learning, limitations on parent access to the schools, and limited/no extracurricular activities and events, there is a question of whether or not we should continue to lead the yearbook program.

Sophia mentioned there are two enthusiastic parents who have volunteered to take on the project, one even willing to commit for the next 3 years, and one who has successfully led this project in the past. Both parents wanted to come up with ways to create a book for 5th graders to memorialize their year, and had creative ideas to come up with alternatives to class photos. In the place of school activities, they would pivot to community activities (e.g. AYSO, TNT), and more input from teachers. The 5th graders could also supply more information about themselves - favorites, hobbies, etc.

Tara shared that she has had two children graduate 5th grade, who have both loved their respective yearbooks, particularly the baby pictures. Other parents agreed.

Christina wrapped the discussion by noting that the parents who have volunteered to lead the yearbook efforts are experienced with this project, and have demonstrated good partnership with the PTA board, and will abide by written guidelines (to be established) to ensure equity of student representation, and basing the official order on pre-ordered books only. Christina asked for a vote of the board, which unanimously approved the request to support a 2020/2021 WI Yearbook. Sophia will relay the update to Mr. Holland and to the parent volunteers.

Role of Class Parents this year

This year, Class Parent Coordinators were asked to join an early Principals meeting with the VP's for their respective schools to discuss how the Class Parents can be useful. One ask already made is for class parents to gather all contact information for any parents/students who want to provide it to foster communication and relationships outside of the classroom where helpful. Juliana asked the board if there were other ideas on the role that the class parents could take. Christina thought that the Coordinators, VP's, and Principals may be best situated to raise suggestions and ideas.

Mini Grants (2 application periods)

During budget meetings, there was enthusiasm for holding two periods for mini grants. None of the approved grants from last year were spent, and last years' grants may no longer be applicable, so an earlier period could identify and fund roll-over grants still applicable. The first grant period would close in October, with the second in December. Christina asked the board for input on the timing, noting that October seemed too soon and too overwhelming for both the PTA and teachers. Brianna added that the original thinking for the October period was to give teachers an option to implement a grant earlier than March. Brenda suggested that we have a first period ending in November or December, with a second period ending in February. The board agreed with this revised timeline, keeping two periods but pushing out the first period to allow teachers and the PTA to settle into the year first.

School Toolbox

Lauren mentioned that as of yesterday, the profits from Morse and WI are ~\$1,200 (Morse \$523 / WI \$708) thus far with many parents giving donations. The VP's have found overall that the fundraiser has been easy to manage. VP's should add an agenda item to their school meetings to understand what supply needs are, though feedback to-date from WI and Morse has been limited. Daphne had suggested that we can ear-mark the profits or donations from this years' fundraiser to put towards supplies for next year.

Halloween? Virtual Events?

Christina has asked VP's to bring up the Halloween holiday with Principals to understand any plans for the holiday, and if there is a need for a costume drive. Mr. Holland had previously noted WI does not need any additional costumes.

Christina also asked board members to think about potential virtual events (e.g. Bingo), which we can discuss at our next meeting.

School Updates

JP: Mrs. Barnett has asked parents to be patient, and please remember to take the survey for both students and parents accompanying them prior to arriving at school, saving or taking a screen-shot of the screen showing a

successful screening. The board noted a lot of confusion around requirements. Anne Marie will share this feedback with Scott Dorn to clarify requirements for parents. Mrs. Barnett also thanked the PTA for the teacher face buttons.

Morse: Arrival procedures are challenging in good years; this year it is expected that more parents will choose to drop off or pick up their students to avoid the bus. A letter was sent to Historic Hudson Valley with a request to allow parents to park in their lot at the bottom of Pocantico Street and walk up to the school. There has not been a response yet. Mr. Walley was also looking at alternate parking options within Sleepy Hollow. Christina offered to make a Facebook post regarding drop-off over the weekend if helpful. Dana noted there is a metered lot at the top of Beekman that could be an option.

WI: VP's met with Mr. Holland in early August, focused on WI's re-opening plan. There was no relevant update to report this evening.

MS: The first Principal meeting is taking place next Thursday.

Meeting Adjourned

Christina closed the meeting at 9:51. The next board meeting is scheduled for Thursday October 15, 2020 at 7:30pm.