

MINUTES

Horsemen PTA Minutes

October 15, 2020 | 7:30pm | 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); 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 (Volunteer Coordinator and VP K); Juliana Aloia (VP 4th Grade); Anne Marie Cellante (SNC); Mechtild Steinert (VP 8th grade); Sophia Rana (VP 5th Grade); Krista Barron (Diversity and Inclusion and VP pre-K); Jessica Lake (VP Membership Coordinator); Neelima Reddy (Spiritwear Coordinator); Mitch Sylves-Berry (Rivertown Parents); Beth Provencher (Spiritwear); Leanne Bloom (Heads Up); Samantha Ford-Godette; (VP 3rd; Jennifer Bahme (VP K)

Fay Serafeca (guest); Amanda Ferguson-Cradler (guest)

General Hello's and Introductions

Christina kicked off the meeting by welcoming Leanne Bloom and Neelima Reddy to the board, and introduced their roles with the PTA.

Photo Day

Morse photo day was delayed as the school was closed this week. Christina explained that the elementary photo days are taking place over two days, one per cohort, and will largely be outside (except for WI that will be in the gymnasium). There will be no class photos. The other schools have a rain back-up inside. Morse Cohort A needs to be rescheduled, along with the quarantined Cohort B students. Dana noted that JP still has one open volunteer slot for its picture day.

Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee

Brenda shared the take-away's from the kick-off meeting from late September, with the main goal being inclusion and engagement of the Spanish-speaking families. Another objective is to find a way to have universal Spanish translation. However, the number of Spanish dialects poses a challenge in this regard, where not all words have the same meaning in each dialect. Members of the PTA DEI Committee are planning to join the next session of the Districts' Equity meetings. The committee is working to launch a "PTA en Espanol" WhatsApp group by January, including gathering contact information and sharing key updates. Brenda also noted that she would like to have specific events just for the Spanish-speaking families, where they are not just being issued translations but have events specifically in Spanish. This would also be very helpful in getting more Spanish-speaking families involved in the PTA.

Christina raised a concern that we don't create two different PTA's. Brenda stressed that "PTA en Espanol" is a committee of the PTA - more than just translation, but not a second or separate organization. Christina also asked what support the committee has, given the scale of the efforts envisioned. Mitch suggested that Dual Language parents may be interested in engaging in this type of group. Samantha asked if the focus of DEI is

spanish-speaking families, or diversity more broadly, e.g. a non-hispanic low-income family. Krista responded that the committee's first thought was to engage the Spanish speaking community as a prevalent portion of our school population but lacking in our PTA representation, but that it was not a limiter. Krista welcomed new voices and thoughts to the committee, and to join the next discussions. Several members on the call commented in the Zoom chat window that they would like to join the next DEI meeting.

WI Book Fair - Virtual Option

Lauren shared that Mr. Holland does not want an in-school fair, as attendance has not been predictable in the district with several school closures. He feels similarly about a virtual fair, which also has the disadvantage of giving a lower percentage of profits to the PTA, available only in Scholastic Dollars. Additionally, parents will be responsible for shipping for any order less than \$25. The goal of hosting book fairs is to instill a love of reading, and to put books into the hands of students. Lauren questioned, given the shipping costs, how many students will actually complete orders?

Christina suggested combining all of the elementary book fairs into one event, perhaps even an outdoor event. She thought the virtual fair is not attractive, that it fails to drive much interest.

Another suggestion is to push the WI Book Fair to the spring, and/or potentially to combine with the other schools into one event. Particularly if we spend a large portion of the winter inside and generally apart, an outdoor book event may garner significant attention.

Christina asked the board for a vote on pushing the WI book fair to the spring. The board unanimously agreed.

Virtual Event Brainstorming / Volunteer Update

Christina is starting a google doc on the PTA shared drive asking for input from the board on virtual event ideas. Dana added her input on what Volunteers are sharing on their volunteer forms, including a parent who would do a cooking demonstration, and a couple of parents offering to lead STEM activities.

Dana mentioned that we have good volunteer engagement thus far; 31 parents at JP, 43 from Morse, 25 at WI, and 3 with the MS.

Membership Update

Jessica reported that we have currently 38 members to-date via the paper forms sent out in registration packets. She is working to collect all payments and ensure all details of members are complete (e.g. associated children, grades, classes, etc).

Christina noted that in addition to the 38 members from paper forms, we also have 89 online members.

There is a membership raffle underway. Jessica asked for help to execute the raffle virtually. Dana suggested a "wheel of fortune" digital spinner that would have each members' name on a slice.

Christina also shared that we live-streamed the drawing of the Disney Ticket raffle last year, which could be another option for this raffle. Jess and Christina to check in later this month to organize the raffle.

Spiritwear Update

Beth shared that we are looking to use the same Spiritwear vendor as last year given the good experience with both quality and timeliness. Items would be shirts, sweatshirts, and masks, including a positive message on the shirts, either “Sleepy Hollow Strong, no matter the distance” or “Sleepy Hollow Horsemen - we’re in this together”.

The plan is to launch a sale in late October / early November, so that items can be delivered before the holidays (2-3 weeks after orders are placed). Distribution will be a challenge as usually items are shipped to school, then sent home. Given remote learning and school closure risks, the thinking is to offer only a ship-to-home option. Shipping costs will be \$6 for the first item, and \$2 for each additional item. One benefit of having a ship-to-home option is that others in the community can participate.

Many board members responded that the shipping costs are expensive and prohibitive for many, so having a centralized shipping and PTA-led distribution plan would drive up participation by not turning off families.

Christina asked Beth to keep moving forward on designs and decisions. Christina will meet with Beth and Neelima next week to discuss the shipping alternatives in a smaller setting.

WI Yearbook Update

The WI Yearbook reprint is complete and should arrive in one week to Christina’s house. The 2020-2021 yearbook is moving forward, led by Laura Richardson and Nisha Raghavan as chairs.

Committee Updates

Rivertown Parents / Parent Education: Leanne will be joining, to help with transition as Mitch has a Senior this year. Rivertown Parents is pivoting from in-person events to virtual events and meetings. The Tarrytown/Sleepy Hollow presentation will be on Resiliency, hopefully profiling “Pathway to Empower”.

Heads Up: Leanne shared the original goal of the group was to create screen-smart students. Now with the pandemic and all events and learning pushed to screens, the focus for this year is on providing teacher support, and how this group can provide help (for example parent tech support, how to engage students in online learning, how to increase focus, etc). The group is currently running a WI Halloween essay competition which seems to be going well. Mr. Holland is supportive, and so far there have been no complaints. There are 25 entries, with more expected. Leanne shared that the essays are very heartwarming. The contest closes October 17th.

SNC: Anne Marie spoke to some of the initiatives she and Andrea Harrison are discussing. In the past, there was an in-person workshop to understand the IEP document. Given the importance of the IEP and ensuring parents understand this document, the committee is planning a virtual workshop again. Another topic is Anxiety, and how to manage anxiety given the pandemic. Dana and Andrea suggested having an open dialogue with district representation on managing during the pandemic, particularly with managing and potentially reducing screen time. Another idea was to have an OT in attendance to discuss sensory breaks and other tools to manage full-day screen time. Ann Marie and Andrea Harrison will regroup on these ideas and get back to the board with their plans for the year.

School Updates

JP: Mrs. Barnett was unable to meet in person but responded via email to the questions from the JP VP’s. Mrs. Barnett does not know yet if JP and Morse will be able to host Literacy Night, particularly in the building. Parent conferences are scheduled. Many classes are still missing class parents, including two special education classes. The students will complete an indoor Halloween parade (slowly) by cohort and by date. Mrs. Barnett

is very strict on not allowing parents into the building. Christina suggested that Mrs. Barnett could try sending out a communication regarding the missing class parents, listing the specific classes in need.

Morse: Successful class parent tea was held on October 7th. The group came up with suggestions on roles and responsibilities for class parents this year. The list was accumulated and shared thereafter. Brianna also reported that morning drop-off has not been the significant issue that Mr. Walley and others were concerned about, and are no longer following up with Historic Hudson Valley for parking options at Philipsburg Manor.

WI: There was no class parent tea at WI. Instead, Class Parents were asked to engage with their respective teachers directly. Photo Day is scheduled for next week. Halloween costume days will take place at both WI and Morse, with Halloween activities taking place in the classroom. At WI, all of the remote classes are full, so any request to switch into remote needs to have a very strong reason. More likely, the student would then stay with the hybrid class but stay remote. However, this option is not ideal as the hybrid approach is based on the teacher seeing the students on the in-person days, including handing out and collecting hand-written work.

MS: Christina noted that the button project was expanded into the middle school, with distribution Friday or Monday now that the students are allowed back into the school.

Meeting Adjourned

Christina closed the meeting at 9:30. The next board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday November 10th at 8:00pm.