

# MINUTES

## Horsemen PTA Minutes

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*May 12, 2021* | 8:00pm | *Meeting called to order by* Christina Grillo

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### In Attendance

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**Board Members in Attendance:** Christina Grillo (President); Andrea Williamson (Secretary); Brianna Staudt (VP Website, 1st & 2nd Grade); Lauren McBride (VP Fundraising, VP 2nd Grade & 4th Grade); Mechtild Steinert (VP 8th Grade); Maribel Correa (Treasurer); Sophia Rana (VP 5th Grade); Katy Lough (VP Kindergarten); Beth Provincher (Spiritwear Coordinator); Brenda Rodrigues (Vice President); Leanne Bloom (Heads-Up Committee Chair); Fay Serafica (Diversity, Inclusion and Equity Committee); Mitch Sylves-Berry (Rivertown Parents); Dana Tavano (VP K, Volunteer Coordinator); Julie Fiore (VP 2nd Grade)

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### General Hello's and Introductions

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Christina welcomed board members as they joined, and formally kicked off at 8:05. Christina was hopeful that we could wrap up our meeting earlier than 9:30pm this evening, given a relatively light agenda.

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### Recap on Open Positions for 2021/2022

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Christina noted that there have been many new additions to the 2021/2022 PTA Positions in the past few days, with just a small number of open roles. Christina thanked Dana in particular for deciding to come back as the Membership Co-Chair. The remaining open positions are the Morse Class Parent Coordinator, and VP's for Pre-K and 2nd grade. Christina also noted we now have two High school reps, with both Mechtild and Leah.

Christina will advertise the last few remaining positions, and update the calendar committee with the latest positions.

Christina asked the board for any needed updates to the Volunteer roles, aside from the Community Wardrobe. Andrea mentioned wanting to modify the forms to allow for a digital sign-up, that would require the addition of a link to the form. Christina thought creating a space for that link is all that is needed for now, and for the forms to be approved. Andrea described utilizing a Google Form template but that the work hasn't been started. Christina thought we would have until July to finalize the Google Form and link details.

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### Elementary Outdoor Book Fair Recap

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The book fair hosted 234 families over the 3 weekend days, and raised over \$2,700 for the PTA, and \$800 in All For Books fundraising vs a target of \$500. From the All For Books fundraising, we were able to purchase 300 books for students and teachers' classroom libraries. Andrea noted that there were many positives of the event, including amazing volunteers, superb fundraising success with the games, and the ease of the logistics with the signups measuring attendance and the quick-fair set-up. On the other hand, the weekend / off-site nature of the fair definitely impacted the attendance and the "buzz" that usually surrounds a fair. It also made

the All For Books distribution to students very challenging, with only 15 of 100 students attending the fair with their coupon.

Brianna again thanked the amazing volunteers who helped at the fair, and stressed the success of the All For Books games, suggesting this success could be leveraged at future book fairs or other events.

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## Restructuring of Executive Board Positions / Procedures Update

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The Procedures were circulated on May 12th to the Board for review, with the expectation of finalizing the Procedures in the June meeting. Andrea thanked the many board members who have already contributed to this document, and welcomed any and all comments as Board members review. The Procedures generally describe how the Horsemen PTA operates. It includes sections on General Structure, Committees, Positions, and Events. As part of the process, there were a lot of good dialogues and suggestions. For example, one suggestion is to engage with Class Parent Coordinators and Class Parents via emails at the beginning of the year, reminding these parents that they are acting in PTA positions and sharing some feedback or guidelines on the respective roles.

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## Community Wardrobe

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Sophia shared that the group is very close to a new location for the Community Wardrobe, which is in a centralized location. It's a great potential space, and the team is hopeful that this will work out. There is a follow-up visit scheduled for this Friday. The goal is to be able to host families before school ends to help support families before the summer.

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## School Budget Vote

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The school district budget vote is scheduled for May 18th. Lauren and Kat and Brianna have been working on a translation of a communication describing what the vote is for, and how to vote, with the goal of getting the word out to parents. The team was hoping to utilize class parents, but Christina was concerned that many class parents don't have parent email lists. Christina noted that we can work all of our communication angles to get the word out, including social media, Horsemen PTA email, and class parent networks.

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## Committee Updates

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**Heads Up:** The Committee is aiming to host a presentation with Columbia Doctors on Monday June 14th at 7pm. The topic is "Now What - Transitioning Back To Normal", which is focused on kids screen time. Leanne asked for the boards' advice on registration tools to track those interested in joining, aside from Signup Genius. Brianna suggested a google form, that could be easily created and customized.

**Rivertown Parents:** Rivertown Parents just hosted two events, both focused on inclusivity. The first was a speaking from American Poet Richard Blanco, and the second was Doctor Yolonda Sealey-Ruiz, whose presentation was entitled "Archeology of the Self". For the Richard Blanco event, Brenda assisted in signing up 5 spanish-speaking families, and worked to open the Life Center for the families to view the presentation from. At the Life Center, Brenda was able to do some Spanish translation for the parents. Mr. Blanco even answered a couple of Spanish-language questions in Spanish, and was pleased to see our Spanish-language family engagement. For both events, Sleepy Hollow/Tarrytown had a significant number of signups, including a BOE member and several signups with @TUFSD email addresses.

The head of the Windward School (Jaimie Williamson) will be doing a presentation on early screening for learning disabilities and dyslexia. Mitch thought this presentation will be quite popular with parents. Michael Turner (who works for NY State) will do a presentation on various ways and means of funding a college education. He speaks for free - Mitch would love to have him do a presentation specific to our district. A last upcoming topic is family engagement, with the goal of getting more families involved in the schools.

**DEI:** Fay shared the Listening Session Roadmap with Chris Borsari in a brief meeting, and would also like to share the findings with the Board of Educations' Equity Committee, but that hasn't been arranged yet. The DEI Committee is also trying to connect with Dianna Loja to share the learnings with the village of Sleepy Hollow. Planning is starting to work on the Spanish-Language PTA meeting scheduled for September, and will continue through the summer.

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## School Updates

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**JP:** Katy shared that Mrs. Barnett has implemented a detailed plan for how to schedule lunches and snacks (non-maked time) that maintain appropriate distancing, including significant outdoor time. This has addressed the concerns that some parents were raising when the hybrid model was phased out, and larger numbers of students began attending school each day. Katy also noted that Mrs. Barnett thought that FLES may be dropped entirely, so the school is looking for ways to infuse Spanish in the day-to-day of Kindergarten. Lauren noted that at the last Board of Education meeting, the plan for 2021/2022 is to use one-time federal funding to continue the program, with significant analysis on the benefits of the program to help determine the future of this program thereafter. Lauren also shared that if the program is to continue in 2022/2023 and beyond, then there would need to be cuts elsewhere, in the ballpark of \$400,000.

**Morse:** Morse will not do a book swap this June, given the complications of quarantine requirements as well as several other events scheduled for June. For Field Day, parents can't bring fruit and water and help to serve it (as is typically done). Mr. Walley asked if the PTA could contribute towards a treat, which we can do with the \$150 budget. The district is hosting the Summer Program again in August, for selected JP and Morse students. There will be transitional visits for students moving to Morse, WI and the Middle School next year. It is expected that parents will be able to come in to meet teachers in August this summer. The move to pick-up and drop-off outside was a success, vs having students gather in the auditorium and gym in prior years. Mr. Walley also noted that parent participation in parent teacher meetings was greater this year with the video meeting option. This may be an option that they offer parents in future years.

**WI:** The school started a walking bus with staff to address the lack of busing for students under 0.8 miles from the school. There are 4 routes with at least 2 adults who pick up children then walk them home at the end of the day.

**MS:** Mechtild provided an update on the Grade 8 "experience" that Mr. Whitham has been working in, in lieu of the Washington DC Trip. For the Grade 8 students to go to Boundless Adventures, it needs the approval of Mr. Borsari since all off-site trips have been canceled this year. Meanwhile, the teachers had been planning a fair-style event with food trucks for the students at Peabody, which appears to be what the teachers are supportive of hosting. The PTA VP's have each advocated for the off-site event to Mr. Whitham.

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## Meeting Adjourned

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Christina closed the meeting at 9:34. She noted that we have one final board meeting scheduled in June, and Christina would like to host an in-person meeting to say thank you to everyone for a great year. The next board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday June 9th at 8:00pm.