

## **PTO MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, January 30, 2008

Bishop School Library, 7 pm

**WELCOME:** Corresponding Secretary Alixe Bonardi, sitting in for Co-Presidents Karen Stark and Gwyneth Morris who could not be present, welcomed everyone. Other PTO officers present were Treasurer Mark Slomiak and Recording Secretary Eliza Burden. Steve Carme and Karen Hartley were the staff representatives. School Committee member Ron Spangler was also present.

**RECORDING SECRETARY'S REPORT:** The minutes of November 2007 were reviewed and approved as written.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Mark Slomiak reported that the PTO Board had held a special meeting in early January to discuss the payment of teachers' checks. There had been concern that the cash in the account would not allow for the full payment of these checks, so the decision was made to give the teachers another quarter of what they were promised at the start of the year. Mark stated that fundraisers have fared quite well but that the PTO started the year with a \$9,800 deficit. He also reported that the funds from the Annual Drive total \$6,855 to date. This represents the contributions of roughly 20% of Bishop families. Mark estimates that we will need an additional \$3,000 before the Bear Fair. He believes that if the PTO Thrift Shop makes another contribution, the PTO will be in good shape. Also, prior to the Bear Fair there are a few upcoming events including Movie Afternoon and the Skating Party.

**CORRESPONDING SECRETARY'S REPORT:** Alixe Bonardi reported that PTO Thrift Shop was opening as of January 30. They are still giving generously to the town PTOs but they are reevaluating their donation practices.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Playground Committee.** Alison Vaishnaw presented the BPIC update for Justine Bloch. She reports that BPIC met last week and determined that it would: 1.) build a community board/kiosk recognizing donors; 2) launch a buy-a-brick fundraiser; 3.) have a volunteer day in the Spring to assist in these efforts and help beautify the playground; continue to sell Arlington Eats menu guides. A Bishop parent, Anthony Santagati, has generously offered to recoat and repaint asphalt – this should not interfere with Bear Fair. BPIC wants to thank Bishop parent, Jim Ballin and 5<sup>th</sup> gr. Teacher, Anne Hess-Mahan, for their efforts at writing grants which would enable science elements to be included in the playground area. An AEEF grant written by them was awarded, and will be used to purchase a weather station. They are always looking for volunteers to help with these projects. Steve Carme suggested that BPIC put a flyer in the Kindergarten packet to be delivered to parents next Thursday.

**Enrichment.** Alison Vaishnaw gave a summary of the more recent programs at the school, including the Respect program by Nikki Hu and Guy von Duser, the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade workshops by Kidstock on "Respect", and the mural art program by Rob Surette that was focused on Hero Art. There is ongoing follow-up on the Surette program in library classes and anyone who is interested in reading or talking about a hero is encouraged to do so. Upcoming programs include the Science Fest on Feb 8, Mineral Mania on Feb 13 for 4<sup>th</sup> graders, Rob Aptaker, (Native American culture) on Feb 13, Drumming workshops in late Feb, presentation by a Spellman Museum rep for 2<sup>nd</sup> graders on biography and postal stamps on Feb 26, and Wampanoag workshops for 2<sup>nd</sup> graders on Feb 28.

**Upcoming Events.** The Skating Party will be held on Sunday March 30 at 4:15.

The Arlington School Superintendent, Nate Levenson, will be speaking about district goals at 6:30, 30 minutes prior to the March 19 PTO meeting.

**PRINCIPAL'S REPORT:** Steve Carme reported on the following topics:

1. Core Values posters. Steve displayed a sample copy and said that more were being made. He will submit the receipt to Mark soon.
2. The school is finishing its second round of assessments. The winter writing prompt was just finished.

3. MCAS will occur between March 24 and April 4 for 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> graders. The long composition test for 4<sup>th</sup> graders will be on March 25.
4. Early Release Day on Feb. 5. The professional development aspect of this day will be dedicated to improving writing rubrics.

#### Upcoming Dates

2/5 Early Release 1:00

2/18-2/22 – Feb vacation

#### **STAFF REPRESENTATIVE**

Fifth grade teacher, Karen Hartley, reported that the year was progressing smoothly.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

Laura Fairbanks proposed holding a Pampered Chef (kitchen equipment) fundraiser. She said an ordinary Pampered Chef fundraiser generates 10-15% of total purchases for the school, but as a Pampered Chef rep she said she would pass up her commission, bringing this percentage to 20-25% for the school. Karen Hartley remarked that Pampered Chef products are expensive but they are high quality.

Mark Slomiak presented the idea of having a shopping day at Wilson's Farms. Alixe Bonardi will look into this.

#### **SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE**

Ron Spangler was present to provide an update on the school committee's budget meeting on January 8. The budget is expected to increase 3% next year, but he said this is not sufficient to cover increased expenses, so they are anticipating a shortfall of roughly \$1.1 million for the Arlington Schools. In terms of revenue enhancements, he reported a finding of \$200,000 by a hired budget analysts. Also, the schools might see \$200,000 in grant money. He encouraged parents to attend the budget hearing on February 26. Ron also mentioned that the School Committee along with the Traffic Advisory Committee has been addressing the Safe Routes to School program. Bishop parents Carry Aluia and Carl Wagner have been involved in these discussions.

#### **NEXT MEETING**

The next PTO meeting is Weds., March 19 at 7 p.m. Arlington School Superintendent, Nate Levenson, will be speaking to the assembled group at 6:30, prior to the PTO meeting.