

## **PTO MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, June 11, 2008

Bishop School Library, 7 pm

**WELCOME:** Co-President Karen Stark welcomed everyone. Other PTO officers present were Co-President Gwyneth Morris, Treasurer Mark Slomiak, Corresponding Secretary Alixe Bonardi and Recording Secretary Eliza Burden. Steve Carne was the staff representative.

**RECORDING SECRETARY'S REPORT:** The minutes of May 2008 were reviewed and approved as written.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Mark Slomiak reported that "the PTO is in better financial shape now than when I started two years ago." He gave huge thanks for the Bear Fair, noting that it was a huge success and much of the reason for the PTO's current financial position (\$22,000 in the account). He mentioned that he enjoyed very much working with the Bishop parents.

One parent asked if there was any plan to invest the money. Parent Marie Meteer spoke up to express her disappointment that the PTO does not spend the money in the money market account on the kids that are currently enrolled in the school. Another parent suggested that a sub-committee be formed to determine some uses for the money in the money market fund. Marie Meteer inquired whether some of the money could be used toward a town-wide program like the Arlington Schools Foundation. Steve Carne suggested some the money could be used for books for our reading training program. Karen Stark made a motion to organize a committee. Marie Meteer agreed to lead this committee.

### **PRESENTATION OF 2008-2009 BUDGET:**

Mark Slomiak introduced the proposed budget, explaining that the goal was to come up with a "zero balance budget". Alison Vaishnaw inquired as to why the library was being excluded from the budget. She thought the PTO should not rely on the library aide to fund the library. Gwyneth mentioned the sponsor-a-book program linked to the website. Anne Murray suggested we take the \$7,000 "profit" from the Bear Fair and place it in the money market fund and immediately invest it in the children. Karen Stark recommended we vote to take \$1,000 from the money market and devote it to books. Alison Vaishnaw stated that she would rather see the library be part of the budget. Another parent stated her concerns that eliminating library funding would send the wrong message to parents. Marie Meteer made a motion to move \$1,000 from the money market fund and in turn dedicate \$1000 to library funding in the budget. The motion was approved. Karen Stark noted that she was pleased that the incoming board feels it is so important to achieve a zero balance budget. She is also pleased that the PTO is having these discussions.

Anne Murray wanted to make certain that the field trip bus fund was sufficient. She mentioned how pleased she has been that the number of field trips being taken seems to be on the rise. She wondered if there should be an increase in the amount. The decision was made to keep the amount as it is for now and revisit it if need be.

Karen Stark made a motion to approve the budget. The budget was approved as amended.

**CORRESPONDING SECRETARY'S REPORT:** Alixe Bonardi reported that this was the PTO Thrift Shop's last week. In its place will be the Little Fox Thrift Shop that will focus on selling used children's clothing. This shop will raise money for the Fox Library.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Playground Committee.** Justine Bloch thanked the 33 volunteers who showed up on June 7 (a very hot day) to help with the Bishop planting effort and clean-up. She gave special thanks to Kellie Connelly (kindergarten parent) who oversaw the planting effort, planting 2 trees and 18 shrubs in the rear of the school. Justine also explained that a history of Bishop will be installed on the kiosk. The benches have not

yet been built due to a hardware problem but the town did lay the concrete pads for the benches. Karen Stark publicly thanked Justine for all of her very hard work.

Jim Ballin apologized for the fire incident last Sunday, explaining that the mirrors installed in the kiosk had led to a fire. He said the mirrors had been removed but remained confident that the roof can be changed so that the mirrors can be re-installed. Karen Stark also thanked Jim Ballin for his work.

**Enrichment.** Alison Vaishnaw provided a summary of this year's programs. She said the final program, the third grade play, will take place this Friday. Alison said she needs money in the budget to book the programs but it is her hope to ask for grants so she will not spend all that money. Eliza Burden thanked Alison for all of her hard and thoughtful work in designing the Enrichment program for Bishop. Robin Cassel also noted what a thorough and professional job Alison does with her grant-writing.

**Garden Committee.** Eliza Burden mentioned that the Nature Center area has been spruced up by a handful of volunteers. Steve Carme has submitted a work order for repairs to the tables in the Nature Center. Special thanks were given to Lillian Wilcox (2<sup>nd</sup> grade) and her mother Charlotte Pierce for their efforts in designing and installing signs for the Nature Center. Becky Holmes-Farley is to help in the efforts to get the teachers to utilize this area in their curriculum.

**PRINCIPAL'S REPORT:** Steve Carme gave special thanks for the Bear Fair. He also reported on the numbers of classrooms and the number of incoming students. He noted there are 75 incoming kindergarten students so it is likely that there will be 4 kindergarten classes. He said the dates for next year will be mailed to parents over the summer but that the calendar on the website already has the early release days noted. The 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Recognition will take place on June 16.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

No new business

#### **PTO OFFICERS**

Co-President Gwyneth Morris and Corresponding Secretary Alixe Bonardi will return for the 2008/09 academic year. New officers include Recording Secretary Jessica Sweeney, Treasurer Michelle Krawchuk and Co-President Joanne Routenberg.

#### **NEXT MEETING**

The next PTO meeting will take place in September. PTO meetings for the academic year will be scheduled in September.