

Bishop School PTO meeting minutes

11-19-08

1. Minutes from September were approved.
2. PTO Town-Wide Meeting. Gwyneth Morris reported on town-wide PTO meeting.
 - a. Years ago there was a robust town-wide enrichment e-mail list – “Liz ?” from the town-wide PTO will coordinate and renew the list to help facilitate communication between school PTOs about enrichment opportunities. This may help with planning to share enrichment resources among schools.
 - b. Food Pantry. All schools are running food pantry drive, especially important in this year.
 - c. Comparison of fund-raising. All schools run some kind of gift-wrap fundraiser and all have seen a decrease in sales this year. Dallin school raised ~ \$4,500 this year doing a computer recycling program. Next town wide meeting will be focused on more detailed discussion of fundraising to help PTOs to learn from each other.
3. Annual Drive. PTO has not yet put out ‘plea’ for annual drive. Last year the PTO started the annual drive in October. Several schools around town shared that they offer an “opt-out” option (e.g. pay \$150 and then families do not have to feel like they need to participate in other fund raisers).
 - a. Timing for this year’s Annual Drive. The PTO has sponsored several fundraisers in the last few weeks. Ken Lubar suggested a “soft letter” to go home in backpacks in the first week of December, informing families about the upcoming fundraiser and letting them know how they can give before the end of 2008. The fundraiser can then be officially kicked off in January with another letter and publicity throughout the school. The focus this year will be on participation by more families this year, regardless of how much is given. One suggestion is to have participation tracked by classroom, with the classroom that has the most participation getting a small rewards such as a sum of money to be spent on something for the classroom (teachers and students decide).
 - b. Method of payment. Discussion of options including Paypal and credit card. Both incur some cost. Michelle Clifford will confirm the details of what %age will be taken form each transaction.
4. School Directory. Ann Murray reported that she is finalizing details for the last 15 or so kids. Bowes Real Estate has agreed to pay for printing this year.
5. Budget Report.
 - a. Wrapping paper fundraiser did not do as well as expected.
 - b. Revenue from other fundraisers better than expected including Art Fundraiser. Spaghetti Supper had great turnout – final numbers have yet to come in. October Pumpkin Sale made over \$800. Election day bake sale made over \$1200.
 - c. Planning for Wreath Sale (November 22) and Craft Fair (December 4th)
 - d. The first half of teacher checks were given out to each teacher. There was some extra money in this budget line because Bishop has fewer teachers

- this year than were anticipated in the budget. Extra funds were used for a mini-grant for 2nd grade teachers for their “Moon Project”
- e. Mini-grants. Last year, teachers were under the impression that there was not money for mini-grants so have stopped asking. PTO board expressed intention to put mini-grants back in to the budget for next year and will inform teachers.
 - f. Teacher training. One teacher has been sent for Open Circle training. This has depleted the training budget for this year.
 - g. Other expenses. The PTO purchased a clothing rack for the lost and found. Thank you to Lil’McIsacc and Christine Carne for maintaining order in the lost and found.
 - h. The library made \$624 from the ‘sponsor a book’ program in the library at open house.
 - i. In summary, cash flow and revenue on track at this point.
6. Corresponding Secretary Report. Alixe Bonardi read thank you letters from teachers for checks and for sponsoring the 2nd grade Moon Project. Paper and More (Party Goods Store on Mass Ave.) is extending a 10% discount to the PTO and teachers for school-based events. Alixe has sent information about upcoming fundraisers to the Advocate. Response from the Advocate staff indicated that they will hold the notice and run it at the appropriate time, and that it is not necessary (or advantageous) to send in notice every week.
 7. Principal’s Report.
 - a. Steve Carne visited the 5th graders this morning at Science Camp. It is cold, but all are having a great time and enjoying it.
 - b. The ‘Bishop Votes Program’ was a highlight in October, involving all grade levels. Thanks to Mrs Dooley and Mrs Capaldo for their leadership in this program. Also thanks to Alison Vaishnaw for her support.
 - c. Report Cards go home 11/21/08. Conferences are December 2-3-4
 - d. Next year’s budget (town-wide) does not look good for next year. Steve is participating in town-wide budget meetings.
 - e. Technology updates. Bishop has not had an update to computers for 9 years. Tech update is part of the School Committee goals and plan for upcoming years.
 - f. Steve recently attended fundraiser for Arlington Schools Foundation (ASF). ASF supported expansion of grade 3-5 reading closet at Bishop.
 - g. Incoming Kindergarten information night Jan 15th @ Hardy School. The preliminary census list for kindergarten class is lower than this year.
 - h. Mrs. Spencer comes back December 1st from maternity leave.
 8. Enrichment Update. Alison Vaishnaw. A major focus has been on the “Bishop Votes” program in the past month. Teachers were great and really supportive. The program was supported with a grant from the AEEF. The 4th graders recently had a “weather” program from the Museum of Science. Upcoming plans for enrichment: ‘Eyes on Owls’ for K-1 in early December. Late Jan/early Feb. Carrol School will present musical play for the older grades. A presentation about Helen Keller will be for the younger grades.

9. Teacher Update. Mrs. Pooley thanked Alison Vaishnaw and the teachers who led Bishop Votes. Also, thanks from the teachers
10. Update from School Committee. Jeff Theilman (school cttee. Liaison to Bishop) gave a brief budget overview. The School Committee is looking at a major budget shortfall for next year. Preliminary planning discussions are underway. The School Committee has already made \$2.8 in cuts in the past 2-3 years (mostly through admin/support staff cuts) so additional cuts will be challenging. One plan is to reduce costs by supporting more kids with SPED needs in-town. Steve Carme reflected that budget cuts may put the school in a position to need to consider class sizes in the context of town wide sizes.
11. The meeting was adjourned by Gwyneth Morris.

Notes by Alixe Bonardi