

Birchwood PTO Meeting

Birchwood Conference Room

September 8, 2015

MINUTES OF MEETING

Members Present: Anne Burger (Recording secretary and parent); Jan Brown (Co president and parent); JoMarie Ethier (Co President and parent); Brenda Leto (treasurer and parent); Jill Appert (Vice president of fundraising and parent); Tammy Apkarian (Friends of Music Liaison and parent); Suzanne Brooksby (VP Programs and Services and parent); Kathleen Vermilyea (teacher); Amy Santandrea (Teacher); Debra Berndt (Principal); Pennie Cuevas (parent and webmaster); Millie Gnatek (parent); Sonya Ward (parent); Lori Lembo (back to school BBQ and parent); Jennifer Coso (Monster Mash co chair and parent); Tara McKenna (Monster Mash co chair and parent)

I. Call to Order

JoMarie Ethier called the meeting to order at 6:33PM.

II. Co President's Report:

JoMarie let everyone know that everyone on a committee will be getting binders to help with a method of communicating for the future. Collect things as you go, such as , in this month I will do this. If anyone needs a binder, let Jo Marie or Jan know.

Any PTO Flyers should be given to Renae in the office so that she will know what's going on because parents will ask her about the flyers and she has to figure out what the flyer was about.

Jo Marie and Jan will be tidying up the PTO cabinets in the office. Jill uses things in there for popcorn Fridays, such as tape, envelopes, etc. There are also past directories in there.

Perhaps keep one from each previous year and get rid of extras.

The PTO received some thank you cards from the retired teachers for the gifts.

The PTO put together Survival kits for the new teachers and received some thank you cards as well.

III. Officer Reports:

VP Programs and Services (Suzanne Brooksby): Suzanne brought mums that are for sale. Very positive response thus far. Many orders have come in. Back to school BBQ is coming up and Lori Lembo is helping with it. Tara and Jen are doing the Monster Mash. PTO was thinking of doing a Culture night instead of Holiday Shopping for the open house date in December which is also in conjunction with the book fair. There would be a Craft room for kids to make gifts for a small fee, such as 50 cents. Suzanne is organizing the volunteers for the events so the chair persons don't have to worry about that.

VP Fundraisers (Jill Appert): Jill is working on the fall fundraiser which is the thick packet with wrapping paper, etc. We are using a new person who is friends with Al. He has cups with team logos and will be giving a free welcome mat to the school. Popcorn will hopefully

start at the end of the month. Restaurant fundraiser day is Columbus Day (10/13), the Bolers are taking care of that.

Treasurer (Brenda Leto): Brenda presented the monthly financial report. She reported that there was \$6400 in the bank but that \$20000 had been taken out for the playground. Last year, it was decided that around \$7000 is a good amount to start off the year. Suzanne wanted to know if there was a budget list for each committee or event, Brenda said there was.

—Jan Brown made a motion to approve the financial report as presented, seconded by Jill Appert, and passed unanimously.

Secretary (Anne Burger): No report

IV. Principal's Report:

Deb Berndt reported that it was a great start to the school year. New teachers have been very positive about how much the kids are thinking and talking. Deb has reinstated reading "How Full is your bucket?" again after the exiting 5th graders insisted that a bucket be on the memory wall. All the kids were excited about the book and were saying Hello and helping others by picking up things.

V. Teacher's Liaison Report:

Amy Santandrea stated how teachers have changed around the building due to retired teachers. The 3-5 wing has additional new teachers. The kids are off to a great start. Kathleen Vermilyea stated how the K-2 wing has also experienced new teachers as well. Kids are off to a great start as well. Everyone was saying how it was nice having the long weekend since school started before Labor Day, sort of like a soft opening to school.

VI. Board of Education Report: (Kevin Laurilliard):

No report.

VII. PTO to Board of Ed Liaison Report (Anne Burger):

No report as no BOE meetings were attended over the summer and first one is next Tuesday.

VIII. New Business:

Monster Mash: Tara McKenna & Jen Coso are co chairs. They were interested in doing things differently this year. Instead of starting at 6PM with food, start at 6:30 with appetizers and drinks. Anne Burger is doing the pumpkin room again. Tara needs to get more prizes as they ran out last year. They were thinking about doing a DJ again perhaps along with the carnival games, half the gym for dancing and half for carnival. Deb Berndt would want it to be very organized to kids aren't running all over the place. Fire trucks are coming again and Mr. McKenna will be there and perhaps wrapping children like mummies. Monster Mash is on Friday 10/23. The parade and parties are on 10/30. Monster mash would still have the parent costume party, that was well received. The story teller was not received well last year and some parents complained about having to bring food and still pay to come in. Tara was also thinking about doing a mini spooky room with parents dressing up and telling stories.

BBQ: Lori Lembo and Rick Mizenko are organizing this. It is moving right along. Shop rite is donating most of the food. Tara said that if any more food is needed to let her know since she works there. There will a raffle done at the BBQ as well. Millie is making centerpieces to be raffled off. There will be snow cones, face painting and cotton candy as well. Lori

wanted to know if there would be a Spirit wear table that night. We will need room for the mums and Monster Mash info as well. Lori will let Al know the set up for the night.

Bike Ride for Missing Children: This will be on Friday 9/18 in the morning. Volunteers are needed to come in around 7AM to make sandwiches for the riders. The riders come by around 815-820. The kids really enjoy it, the bikers get off and interact with the kids as well.

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for New Playground: As soon as it's known when Poured in Place company can do the rubberized material, we will know when we can have a ribbon cutting ceremony, hopefully at the BBQ.

Teacher Mini-Grant Application: There is money in the budget for the teachers to get mini grants. Jo Marie gave out the application form. It's \$75 per teacher for school supplies, events, activities, etc. Any application up to \$75 will be approved quickly, if it's over \$75, it will need to be brought to a PTO meeting for approval. 2 board members just need to sign off on the application form. Regular ed teachers, special ed teachers and reading teachers can apply. Not really special area teachers. Deb said either the teachers can get the items themselves and get reimbursed or can go thru the district purchase order process which goes through Renae, sometimes gets a better price, just a different way of getting it and then Brenda will get a check to the school.

E-Directory: Shilpa is working on the e directory. It's a great way of putting it together. Is \$5 still a good amount for the dues? Yes, it's a good price. We are still going to be going through the edirectory. Another benefit of having almost 95% participation is that in emergency situations, Matt Leon can send out a mass email since most families are included. At back to school night, we will need volunteers for PTO dues as well as computer lab to assist parents with opting in the directory.

Friends of Music Membership: Tammy is the Friends of Music Liaison. She would like some support in the form of 2 \$50 gift cards to try to get more members.

--Brenda made a motion to approve, seconded by Millie Gnatek, and passed unanimously.

IX. Committee Reports:

E-Directory: Work on the E-Directory is well on its way. The district has given us the option to use the e-directory or receive information from the registrar, with directory delivery in October 2015.

We are encouraging parents to sign up - Newcomers at all grades (K-5). Parents currently signed up should review and update their info as required. Initial Backpack notes to newcomers informing about PTO Communications, until the sign up and Opt-In for e-communications.

RESOURCES for curriculum night

*****2-3 volunteers at PTO dues table (alternating between sessions) to review directory info and collect PTO dues**

*****2 volunteers Computer lab 2-4 computers for newcomer sign in and volunteers.**

OPEN Items:

- 1. Is Print shop at High School is it available for printing directories?**
- 2. Do we continue with \$5 as PTO due?**
- 3. Class lists required from Birchwood office**

Bulletin Distribution: 2015-2016 email distribution list is on way. Currently we have 263 opt-in email addresses that are going to increase with the incoming KG class and other newcomer e-directory sign ups. Current list is accessible for e-bulletin distribution and updated version will be made available shortly after e-directory updates. Please have items for bulletin to Pam Ober the Sunday prior to the Thursday distribution. Articles must be written and print ready. Pam will send a draft out on Tuesday. Please read it and respond to her with any changes or with a thumbs-up. (Submitted by Shilpa Garde)

Media Center: Soyoung will be taking care of visiting authors instead of Laura. If we need more people for this committee, I'm going to recruit more people. Alice Downing is the only one person signed up for 1000 book club. This committee falls under Media center. So I recruited another person, Lori Corwin. If we need more people, I can also ask around and recruit more people. (Submitted by Soyoung Mok)

Yearbook: we have started to collect 1st Day of School pictures. Any photos should be emailed to birchwoodyearbookpictures@gmail.com . 1st Yearbook Committee meeting request should be emailed out soon. We are planning for the 1st yearbook pto meeting to take place next week; we will be choosing the cover and going through page design assignments. (Submitted by Sonya Ward and Millie Gnatek)

Junior Achievement: Laura has prepared the parent volunteer collection sheet. This will be distributed to the teachers to use at Back to School Night. Teachers were asked to get back to Laura with their parent volunteer names so Laura can coordinate with JA for training and packet distribution. (Submitted by Laura Mirkovic)

Media Relations: Laura is ready to do news releases as needed. Not sure if we should do another one on the bike ride for missing persons as it was covered pretty well last year. If there is strong feeling to do this, I can. However, I have a work event the day of the ride and would not be able to be at the school. Please advise. (Submitted by Laura Mirkovic)

Nature Club:

- 1) Base for shed has been erected by the compost bin. Not yet permanent. If needs to be moved, please let us know. Plan is to build shed on day of mulch installation if that is still happening.
- 2) Carrots are being harvested for school lunches
- 3) Story Walk will be in place again before Back to School BBQ. We are putting up Lois Ehlert's Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf. (Submitted by Katie Cowley-Cooper)

Arts in Education: After meeting with Mrs. Berndt this summer, the Arts in Education Committee has been busy planning assemblies for the upcoming school year. We have been working to coordinate quality programs and stay within budget.

Some of the programs being planned include:

1. Patty Bateman is coordinating--Kids and Cultures-Treasures of the World for one assembly on Monday, November 23rd at 1pm. It's a "fast paced interactive

storytelling program for elementary students, featuring folk tales from all over the globe." [Kidsandcultures.com](http://kidsandcultures.com). This taken directly from the website.

In working with two other schools and the performers schedules, this timing worked best.

2. Jennifer Sargent is coordinating Opera Saratoga and is working on a visit date with Mrs. Berndt.

3. Cheryl is coordinating one presentation by Flame-the Band, which is scheduled for May 18, 2016 at 1pm. <http://www.flametheband.com/>

4. Katrine Rush is coordinating a 4th grade presentation about Owl Pellets by Birds of Prey and will be working with 4th grade teachers.

5. Teachers will again be able to schedule one presentation on their own through Scotia Glenville Children's Museum, paid for by the PTO. (Submitted by Cheryl Gerstler)

X. Old Business:

Playground: The children were excited for the new playground but will have to wait about 2 weeks to actually use it. John O'Donnell and Deb B. walked around today. They are waiting to hear back from the Poured in Place people about when they will be putting the surface down. Once it's down, it has to cure for 3 days, then the district can put the stones and mulch down. We will need help spreading the mulch at that point. Hopefully by the BBQ the playground will be ready.

XI. Concluding Comments:

Tara asked if there was a poster contest this year. Deb said Mrs. Kirkpatrick is out and will be back in couple of weeks but Mrs. Newsome was working on it. Tara will reach out to her to see if she can help.

Flip flops/sliders as well as beanies may be added to the Spirit wear orders.

Summer Reading calendar will be due early next week.

ASEP packets will go out end of this week. There are 3 new programs and will start end of September. Tuesday will only have 5 sessions due to days off.

XII. Adjournment:

--A motion was made by Suzanne Brooksby at 7:35PM, seconded by Tammy Apkarian and passed unanimously.

Minutes submitted by Anne Burger