

HILLSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PTC

Meeting Minutes of December 10, 2014

The meeting came to order at 7:19 PM

Board attendance included: Seema Meloni, Jessica Young, Mr. K, Chanit List, Stephanie Pearl and Lesly Murray

The meeting minutes from the October 15, 2014 were approved.

Co-President Updates

New Co-Chairs needed for the following committees

1. Understanding Different Abilities – help coordinate school-wide events that promote diversity through understanding the lifestyles of people with differing abilities. Contact Christine Shusterman if interested: cshusterman@comcast.com
2. Spirit Wear – we need a few people to help out with spring sales and then take over for next year. If interested, please contact Seema Meloni or Jodi Rooney.

Calendar Raffle- need help soliciting items and also looking for donations of items; examples include services, tickets, gift cards, etc. If interested please contact Amy Lam (lam_amy2001@yahoo.com). All funds from the calendar raffle go directly to the PTC.

Treasurer's Update (Stephanie Pearl)

Four fundraisers were held so far this year:

1. The New 5K event – over \$5K in profit!
2. Book Fair – same as last year, and on budget. Brought in \$2, 959 in profit.
3. Genevieve's Gift Wrap – almost \$400 over budget. Brought in \$4,394 in profit.
4. Spirit Wear – larger than expected return. Brought in over \$2K in profit.

Fall Fun Night made \$123.

Directory – printing services for our directory were donated so we saved \$982 on this line item. If you have printing needs in the future please consider giving your business to Kreate and Print and tell them you're a Hillside family and appreciate their service.

Enrichment Grants – we've spent 25% of the total budget which is right on target.

Overall, we are on track for a solid financial year.

Grant Committee Update (Robin Gamrath-Schauman)

We had one application to discuss.

- 1) **APPROVED- A to Z grant** request submitted by Christina Tarantino. Provide reading level, printable books for teachers to use in class. All grades/all classes will be able to benefit from this grant. The request was for \$99.95 for subscription to the site.

School Committee Update (Heidi Black)

Heidi gave an update since the meeting she attended. She had 2 recent events to bring up related to the "Hillside Project". There was lengthy discussion on this topic.

Hillside Project

1. Preparations are underway for the Feasibility Study. The Request for Services (RFS) outlines the options to be studied. The Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) added in an option that states that “any other site to be determined and with approval of the town” can be studied as an option for a new school. So the RFS includes an option to study a “green field.”
2. Two presentations were held to outline the Town’s Master Plan that includes all potential projects that could start now through the next 25 years. One issue that was highlighted was that if a school is built at DeFazio field, the DPW currently on that site would need to relocate and this could cost the town \$50MM.

These two events combined with questioning by the Finance Committee (about the exclusion of Cricket Field) could potentially impact the study to include Cricket or another area that could accommodate a new school.

Key Dates:

1/27/15: meeting will be held to short list the designers bids

2/10/15: interview the short list of designers followed by designer selection

Overall Timing for the “Hillside Project” would include a 2016 override and a 2020 opening of a new school.

School Committee Meetings begin with a Public Forum to cover items that are NOT on the agenda for that meeting. Heidi encouraged all Hillside parents to attend these forums to present their views.

As stated previously, Heidi is willing and happy to meet with any parents or groups that want to discuss this project or any other issues that impact Hillside.

Jodi Rooney and Liz Lee offered to meet with parents to discuss the details of the Hillside Project.

Class Sizes - Mr. K.

Key Facts: The ELC program for 3 -5th grades in Needham is held at Hillside.

Current Hillside class sizes: In 4th grade there are 76 kids in 3 sections (1:7 teacher to student ratio). In 3rd grade there are 72 kids in 4 sections (1:9 teacher to student ratio).

Mr. K. indicated that the MCAS scores from the current 4th grade class (exam taken last year) suggest that the larger class sizes haven’t negatively impacted the academic performance of these students. They actually scored the highest of any grade.

Options being explored:

1. No changes to sections
2. Switch number of sections (start looking at changing 1st or 2nd grade sections to balance the load).
3. Explore multi-grade classrooms, possibly combining 4th and 5th grade students in one or two sections (not all sections of both classes). Or look to combine younger students in multi-grade rooms, K&1, 1&2, etc.

There was a lot of discussion by the parents in attendance. specifically concerning the impact of the current 4th grade class also finishing 5th grade in very large classroom sizes.

Mr. K and Ms. List will be looking at data from each grade, and will meet with teachers, to find the best solution.

An update will be provided in an upcoming PTC meeting in early 2015.

Other updates:

Mr. K noted that Amy Lam coordinates having the 5th grade class send out thank you notes to any person or group that has helped the school. If you have someone you would like to send a thank you note to, please contact Amy.

lam_amy2001@yahoo.com

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm