

Bowman PTA Board Meeting Minutes
October 24, 2018
Bowman Room 3

Sign-In, Welcome, and Introductions

In attendance: Lisa Premerlani, Katie Quick, Gary Van Deurse, Alison Stevens, Courtney Lauriat, Sarah Carter, Rebecca Fagan Gorospe, Chad Fallon, Cindy Arens, Valerie Machinist, Taleen Gleeson , Winnie Pong, Anne Norman, Amet Zahawi, Nageeb Sumar

Faculty Representatives: Joshua Curhan, Martha Rogers, Jenny Corduck

Treasurer Update

The 2018-2019 budget was brought up for approval. A few items were discussed before voting.

- The Sagam fund is still currently in the budget, but we need to work with the school to see if this is something we want to continue
- The Staples Foundation grant is being discontinued by Staples so we do not expect to receive any money this year
- We are closely approaching the income we budgeted for membership
- We have budgeted to bring in \$47,000 through various fundraisers this year
- There are no unexpected expenses so far this year with the exception of printing (see below)
- We have budgeted extra money for the buses for Nature's classroom. The large class size will require an additional bus from previous years.
- We have budgeted to dip into reserves by \$13,000 but we have a healthy reserve fund and a year's worth of operating expenses in our account.

There was a motion to approve the budget and the budget was approved.

The treasurers brought up some issues regarding our accounts with various printers. We currently use three different venues for printing. There have been some recent billing issues with Swifty and we would like to discontinue using them in the future. Moving forward we will continue to promote LPS and update documents/website to encourage people to go to LPS for all printing needs, with the goal of closing the Swifty and LexGraphics accounts by next school year. This will be communicated to coordinators for all events.

Membership Update

- We still have some swag left and will send out reminders to faculty that they can still purchase memberships and buy swag at cost.
- The average donation has gone up from \$69 to \$74 from last year. This is mostly from a few \$500 donations. We have fewer \$35 and \$200 memberships than last year, so the total number of dollars brought in is lower than last year even though the average donation has gone up.
- Currently 59% of families have purchased a membership. We are reaching more families than a few years ago but would still like to increase this number. The total amount of dollars brought in through membership is down despite the high percentage of families who have purchased.
- Alison is eager to engage more families and faculty members in supporting the PTA and is open to suggestions on how to do so. Discussion ideas included: a trifold with barometer showing membership levels either outside at rolling car or on a bulletin board in the front foyer. Rebecca will work on making this display. We also discussed printing a list/thanking those who have already joined in some of our PTA materials-this was done last year and Rebecca will put together.

Principal Update

Ms. Corduck gave an update on some happenings at Bowman:

- Storybook Character Day-she got very positive feedback about moving the event indoors. However, for next year improvements need to be made to better communicate with parents where they can stand and with staff about the route the students should take. She was impressed with the creativity of student and staff costumes and the success of the first All-School Meeting, and thanked Ms. Rogers, Ms. London, and the literacy and math coaches for their work planning the meeting. This event may happen in April next year instead of in October/November like it has in past years.
- School start times-at last night's School Committee meeting there was a conversation about school start times. The current plan is that the elementary schools would adjust by 5 minutes (to start at 8:50), the high school would start 45 minutes later, and the middle schools would stay the same. This is the current proposal but still needs to be approved by the school committee. There will be an opportunity for community feedback, but Dr. Hackett said it's likely we will be able to do this.
- Building improvements-Ms. Corduck recently walked around Bowman with the Interim Business Manager and the Facilities Manager for the town to discuss a punch list of capital improvements for the school. Items discussed were curtains in the gym, an umbrella shade structure for the new playground, air conditioning in the library, and water bottle filler stations. The only one that has been funded and is guaranteed to happen is air-conditioning in the gym, but she is hoping that some of the other improvements will take place. They were both impressed with the cleanliness and condition of the building since the renovations.

- Dismantling Racism curriculum-There will be a Parent Information Session at 7:00 on November 8 in the library to hear about the work the Dismantling Racism leadership team did over the summer to enhance the curriculum.
- Composting-On November 14th the Student Council will teach their 4th and 5th grade peers and composting will begin for these grades. Ms. Corduck's goal is that we can quickly bring the program to all grade levels once we see how it works with the older grades.
- Playground Ribbon Cutting-Ms. Corduck is proud of the Student Council who stepped up and quickly pulled together thank you cards and speeches about why the playground renovation was sentimental and important. The event was very student-centered and students were given the opportunity to be ribbon-holders and cutters in addition to giving speeches.

Auction Planning

- Traditionally we have had a parent-only social event/auction every other year to help the PTA raise funds to continue operating without dipping into savings. In a non-auction year, we budget for a deficit. We had an auction two years ago that made around \$20,000. However, there was low attendance and no-one has come forward to coordinate an auction for this year. This reality led us to a conversation about how we can figure out what events people want from the PTA before planning additional events. Are there other events that can stand in for the parent auction and achieve the same fundraising goals? For example, Estabrook does Estafest, a family friendly carnival. Other ideas mentioned were a silent auction online-only. It was agreed we should pause before planning and survey families before moving forward.

Surveying Families

- It was agreed that it would be valuable to put together a survey of families to try to come to a better understanding of what people want from the PTA and barriers to attendance, particularly for the auction but for other events as well. We also want to come to a better understanding of how we can encourage more people to volunteer. There is concern about the future of several events which do not currently have people willing to run them after this year (in particular the Adventure Run)
- Survey ideas:
 - Auction-give four auction ideas and ask people if they would be willing to help.
 - Do you come to events? Which events did you attend this past year?
 - Would you help run an event? If so, which one?
 - What event have you never missed?
 - What events would you like to see? (new ideas)
 - What are barriers to why you don't come?
 - Did you go to the auction in 2017? If not, why not?

Anne, Cindy, and Rebecca will work on putting together a survey. Chad is willing to help encourage people to take the survey in rolling carpool.

- Ms. Corduck mentioned that there is nothing unusual about the concerns about volunteerism and that it is typical that PTA support ebbs and flows throughout the years. It is also typical that the responsibility typically falls on the shoulders of a small set of volunteers. She has been encouraged by the number of parents who have come to Bowman in recent weeks for Big Backyard and Library and wonders if this is an untapped group that might be willing to help more. Passport to the World was very well-attended and was heavily organized by staff. Perhaps staff can have larger planning roles in other events. There is a distinction between PTA vs. school events and she is hoping that through improved channels of communication we will be able to showcase for families which events are school-sponsored and which are planned and funded by the PTA.
- One member made comments about not feeling welcome at the school in past years and how this is a barrier to participation. Ms. Corduck did a tour for new families this year and is planning to have an evening event for new families before the beginning of next school year to discuss the ins and outs of the school.

Other Business

- Welcoming committee: Winnie has created welcome packets for new families who start school after the start of the school year with a personal letter, info about the PTA, Insider's Guide, PTA membership form, welcome packets, etc. Chrissy will give one to each family when they enter the school. Ms. Corduck would also like to personally welcome new families and take them around the school rather than have them shown around by office staff.
- Variety show-there are some issues about hosting the variety show at Clarke this year and we discussed either moving it to the Bowman gym or to a Thursday night. Consensus is that people liked the idea of having it at Bowman and we will encourage the organizers to explore doing it at Bowman this year.

Upcoming Events

- Book Fair is happening now and we still need more volunteers to staff it. We also need to send an email to room parents to let them know when they need to purchase books for the classroom by.

Next PTA Meeting : November 14