

McCarthy-Towne School PTSO
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday December 9, 2014

Shelley Cole, PTSO Sr. Chair
Julie Weir, PTSO Jr. Chair
David Krane, Principal
Matt McDowell, Asst Principal
Chris Hanlon, Treasurer
Deanne O'Sullivan, School Committee
Maya Minkin, School Committee
Margaret Busse, Finance Committee
Bill Mullin, Finance Committee
Tracy Smith, Bridget Chamberas, April Hirschberg, Meredith Woodward King, Carol Chytil

The meeting was called to order at 9:40 A.M.
November 5th meeting minutes were approved.
Shelley welcomed Bill Mullin and Margaret Busse, Finance Committee members, to our meeting.

Principal's Report

David pointed out that we didn't have a single full week of school in Nov. and then turn around for 3 full weeks in Dec. However, the schedule will become consistent again starting in January.

Attendance – we haven't had the surge of illness that usually comes at this time of year.

Charity Giving – the school has raised a value of over \$3000 in combined donations between Trick Or Treating for UNICEF, clothing drive for Cradles to Crayons, and the Spoon Project for Project Bread.

Teachers College (TC) Coaching is going really well. The second part will begin in Jan. Shana Frazin, senior staff developer at the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, will be here for a total of five days through April to help in the upper grades. Our expectations for this project have been exceeded. TC is differential instruction in teaching reading and writing to our students.

Budget Talks are underway and we know that Superintendent Glenn Brand is well experienced in these matters.

Treasurer's Report

Book Fair earned \$2800 this year. This is the most consistent of our fundraisers.

Directory – earned half of what they made last year. Could be due to Activities Expo.

Fall Social – Numbers can't be finalized yet as we haven't gotten the custodial bill. However, this is an event for fun and community not for earning money.

Annual Appeal – Has earned more, last year than this at this time but wrapping paper was down. Between the two fundraisers numbers are consistent with last year.

Contract Positions – first payments were made.

Proposed ideas from parents –

- Is there a way to figure out field trip costs for the year and bill parents in one “statement” instead of having to write separate checks every trip. Can we simplify this in any way?
- Is there a PayPal option for field trip payments?
- Can we streamline bus passing with technology? Our school boasts the least amount of bus passing mistakes but bus passing may be changing anyway. Chris Whitbeck, Douglas Principal, has created an app for bus passing currently in use at Douglas School.

Finance Committee Discussion

Margaret – our purpose is to let the community know what the Finance Committee (FinCom) does. FinCom members are not elected but are appointed by the Town Moderator. It consists of nine members serving three year terms. A sub group called the Acton Leadership Group (ALG) releases a Point of View (POV) document in the fall to report on the town’s current financial position and any recommendations for the future. Acton’s fiscal year is July 1st – June 30th. Currently the committee is making a long range (5 year) plan and encouraging more capital planning.

Bill – most budget debates re done in the ALG meetings so by proposal time most of the arguing has been done. Boxborough has adopted this model as well. “In time of scarcity, decisions are easy, but in times of plenty decisions are tough. We are currently in a time of plenty.” Find the link to the POV document in the FinCom Summary provided at this meeting.

Carol – Is leveled service the best we can get? We spend so little per pupil at this time how can we be so financially strong?

Bill – If you want something done just propose it. Most thought out proposals to the FinCom are accepted. All you have to do is bring it up.

Our K-12 population is high compared to the town’s overall population. Students in this town are privately enriching which causes inflated test scores compared to money spent per student.

Our OPEB contributions are going up each year and the budget goes down. “Make your voice heard.”