

McCarthy-Towne School PTSO
Meeting Minutes
Friday February 28, 2014

Tracey Smith, PTSO Sr. Chair
Shelley Cole, Jr. Chair
Chris Hanlon, PTSO Treasurer

David Krane, Principal
Janet Munson
Christine Brault

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 A.M.

Minutes

The minutes of January 2014 were approved.

Principal's Report

David reported that at this point in the year, last year, we had had five snow days. With only three so far this year, the last day of school is currently planned for Wednesday, June 18th. Wednesday is a good day for the "last day" as students are more likely to attend versus if the day were to fall on a Monday.

It is budget time for the schools. The budget passed after a bit of an adventure. The initial vote was 9-6 in favor, but then it was discovered that a 2/3 majority was required. There was considerable opposition to the budget from the Finance Committee. The original budget was then shaved by 3/4 of a million. This revised budget was voted on again at the next meeting where it passed unanimously. FinCom still does not support this revised budget.

One of the issues with the budget is the change in assessment to each town. The assessment is the percentage that each town is charged (or assessed) and is based on the number of students enrolled from that town. Because of regionalization, the Acton assessment increased by 4 1/2% while the Boxborough assessment decreased by 6 1/2%. This is not to be confused with the tax levy for each town. The Acton tax will increase by only 1 1/2% which is below the 2 1/2% increase provided for under state law, Proposition 2 1/2. It is believed that in time, with changing enrollment, the Acton assessment will decrease and the Boxborough assessment will increase. A budget increase of 3% is needed to maintain services. This year's budget is increasing by only 2.74%. Because of money saved from regionalization, we are able to maintain services and add a few positions without going up to 3% (one of these new positions is a .6 shared Psychologist for Merriam and McCarthy-Towne who will be used exclusively for testing). It should be noted that Acton currently has reserves in the 8 – 10 million dollar range. When Dr. Mills began as Superintendent, reserves were only at 3 1/2 million.

David believes that regionalization is important to the district. We are now beginning to think of children from K through 12 instead of separating them between elementary vs. junior high and high school. Now, because of regionalization, upper level administrators are advocating for elementary positions and needs.

This budget will be voted on at the Acton Town Meeting, scheduled for Monday, April 7th. If the budget item does not pass at Town Meeting, the budget would need to be revised again and another town meeting would have to happen by June 30th.

In other news, excitement is building around the Auction and it is nice seeing all of the class projects in the office.

The PARCC test (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) will be administered to two of the three 6th grade sections. Those 6th grade classes taking the PARCC test will not be taking the Math MCAS (but they will be taking the ELA MCAS). PARCC is taken on the computer; currently, we do not have enough machines to accommodate 3-6 testing so it is unclear how a full roll-out would happen.

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's Report was reviewed and approved. Chris noted that a 2nd check for contracted services has been submitted.

Auction

The Auction is hard at work. Classroom projects are almost finished. The new software has been useful. For the first time we are able to have people purchase tickets online, directly through the Auction website. In just the first two weeks, twelve tickets have been purchased online.

The classroom projects are about to begin. A few projects have been changed from last year. Everything is on schedule for the auction to be held in March.

Facebook

Our Facebook page is up and running. We currently have just over 100 members with new requests to join every day. Christine Brault loves it and is happy that people are adding photos, but also being respectful of children's privacy. Janet finds it fascinating that people have used Facebook as their first avenue of information for things such as snow days and how to report an illness.

Christine Brault proposed an end-of-year meeting with the team of volunteers who oversee our different forms of information (Howler, PTSO website, Facebook page) to discuss our different platforms and how to get them to work together with the most efficiency.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Tracey Smith
PTSO Chair

