

Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake PTA Council March 17, 2008

Call to Order: Peter Merchant called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Amy Agan, Barb Becker, Nancy Della Pia, Linda Fieldhouse, Laurie Kruppenbacher, Kathy Lynch, Peter Merchant, Rocco Montesano, Lori Moore, Erin Pezzulo, Lauren Roecker, Jim Schultz, Ann Slocum, Rita Snively, Paula VanBuren, Lynnette Ziskin.

President's Report: Peter Merchant.

~Peter welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending tonight's meeting.
~He announced that the last Council meeting for this school year will be on Tuesday May 20, the same day as the School Budget Vote; he also asked everyone to remember to vote.
~Peter thanked Erin Pezzulo for stepping up to chair the Wellness committee.
~Peter has received many compliments about the Founders Day dinner. He reported that several people commented on the lengthy speeches, and suggested: (a) the master of ceremonies read the speech(es) or part of it, or (b) the Council enforce limiting the speeches, so that a more reasonable closing time (9:30 p.m.) could be achieved.
~Peter reminded the unit representatives that the membership cards must be returned to the region chair by the end of March.

Secretary's Report: Lynnette Ziskin.

~The minutes of the January 14 Council meeting were approved electronically, and will be sent to Christy Multer for inclusion on the BH-BL website.

Treasurer's Report: Amy Agan.

~Amy's 4-page report consisted of the following:

1. The Balance Sheet which reflects the Current Assets as follows:

- Checking Account: \$2,097.23
- Savings Account: \$8,706.86
- Total Assets: \$10,804.09

2. The Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual from July 1, 2007 through March 17, 2008. Amy noted that the PTAs were not billed for the Founders Day flowers; this expense was included in the Edison Club's bill. For this reason, it appears from the statement we were under budget and we must be mindful of this fact for next year's planning of the Founders Day dinner.

3. The Profit & Loss Statement from July 2007 – June 2008, which reflects that the schools spent much more in Arts & Enrichment programs this year.

4. An up-to-date Income and Expense report for the Theatre for Children.

School Board Liaison's Report: Nancy Della Pia for Mike Wolf.

~Nancy is the Vice President of the School Board and monitors the development of the budget. The Senate and Assembly presented their budgets last week; the BH-BL budget process is dependent on the outcome of those budgets. Progress can now be made more accurately on the BH-BL budget.

~Extensive information about the budget development process and issues specific to BH-BL can be found on the website.

~Nancy distributed a letter regarding the proposed reductions in state education aid which was written and signed by all members of the Board of Education. She encouraged all Council members to make their own copies, sign the letter, and send it to our state leaders. The more times legislators receive this letter from BH-BL residents, the stronger our message will be.

~Nancy reminded everyone of the upcoming Public Forum to answer questions about the budget and budget development process. It will be at 7:00 p.m. on March 26 at the Ballston Town Hall.

~At this time, the Board is very close to adopting a budget for 2008 - 2009.

~Nancy noted that less than 4% of BH-BL's tax base is commercial. The taxes are generated primarily from a residential base, and the majority are on a limited income (retired people).

Superintendent's Report: Jim Schultz.

~Jim informed us that the progress of the 2008-09 budget is available for everyone to view on the website.

~Jim submitted his budget recommendations on March 6, including additions and reductions to the preliminary budget. Many reductions remain on the table for further discussion including a proposal for just one theatrical production per year at the high school, discussion regarding funds for (extra-curricular) technology related programs at the high school, and no sport with more than three team levels.

~The Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday March 19 at 7:00 p.m. in the high school library. This is a public meeting and all are welcome to attend, although there is no public input allowed at this meeting

~The next Board of Education meeting will be held on Tuesday March 25 at 7:00 p.m. in the high school library.

~There is one remaining public Budget Forum scheduled for Wednesday March 26 at 7:00 p.m. at the Ballston Town Hall. This meeting is specifically intended for sharing information and collecting feedback from the public.

~Jim passed out a report from the BH-BL Ad Hoc Committee for interscholastic sports, which was presented to the Board of Education at their March 11 meeting.

~Jim reiterated that shared decision making at BH-BL is extremely important.

~Jim reported that the enrollment at Kindergarten registration has increased this year, and there's a need to add an additional section of Kindergarten. He restated that the Board is constantly looking at class size and the number of special education students in a class.

~Jim reminded us that PTAs are welcome to utilize the BH-BL website; there is a staff person in each building designated to maintain their school's webpage. Information can be posted to the main page, and optional links can be set up for additional information.

Teacher Representative's Report: Andy Haluska, Rocco Montesano.

~Rocco urged everyone to attend the Finance Committee meeting on March 19, where the Finance Committee truly agonizes over every penny spent on programs, and also to attend the Budget Forum on March 26 to discuss budget development. He stressed that people in the district must be present and their voices heard in order for fair representation and outcome. He noted that the Teacher's Association does its best to attend and support these meetings and parents must do the same.

~He encouraged us to attend Meet the Candidates night at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday May 6 in the high school library.

~Rocco expressed that it is extremely important for us to support all of the meetings offered that precede the budget, and also to please support the budget.

Committee Reports:

Audit Committee: Karen Smith.

~Karen was not present at tonight's meeting, but sent a report stating that the audit committee will present a full report at the May meeting.

Eileen Briggs Award: Ann Slocum.

~The Eileen Briggs informational letter and nomination forms will go out next week.

Arts & Enrichment: Rita Snively.

~Arts & Enrichment is going well, and reported the following for the schools:

Stevens:

~In January, the Living World Ecology Center presented a program entitled "Animals Nobody Loves" for grades K-5.

~A number of 4-H programs are scheduled for 3rd graders in May.

~Stevens and Pashley are co-hosting a residency with Ellen Sinopli Dance Troupe in late spring.

Charlton Heights:

~"Go Kennel Racing" was seen in March for the second graders to support their unit of study on Alaska and the Iditarod

~An interactive theater show featuring The Grumbling Gryphons was canceled due to artist illness. They are in the process of rescheduling this performance; it is a theater show of the sea that addresses marine pollution.

~Sylvia Markson, a ventriloquist and puppeteer, is scheduled for March 18.

~In early April, Chris Holder is scheduled for a 5th grade residency program; it will feature a study of Canada through the arts.

Pashley:

~A participatory program for 4th graders is scheduled with American Heritage Living History. This is an examination of 18th century life through exploratory theater.

~Stevens and Pashley are co-hosting a residency with Ellen Sinopli Dance Troupe in late spring.

O'Rourke Middle School:

~Visits by Theaterworks and Educate Us (history programs) are scheduled for March.

Additionally:

~Rita reported that the BOCES Arts showcase is scheduled for May 1st at Cohoes Elementary and Middle Schools. The Arts & Enrichment representatives from the 5 BH-BL schools have all been notified of the showcase. Rita has encouraged the reps to have a couple of people attend from their school as the slate of artists and performers looks enticing.

After-school Enrichment Clubs: Karen Smith.

~No report.

Theatre for Children: Kathy Lynch.

~This year's play will be Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. There will be a 7:00 p.m. performance on Friday March 28, and two performances on Saturday March 29, 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. A flyer is being printed and will be sent home with students soon.

- ~Kathy thanked the elementary representatives for coordinating the purchases of tickets via backpack mail in an effort to increase ticket sales.
- ~Although ticket sales are going well, there are plenty more tickets available for all show times.
- ~Kathy thanked the PTAs and the PTA Council for supporting the Children's Theatre.

Nominating Committee: Lauren Roecker, Paula VanBuren and Barb Becker.

- ~The committee presented the following candidates:
President: Paula Van Buren; Secretary: Lynnette Ziskin; 1st Vice-president: Erin Pezzulo; 2nd Vice-president: Laurie Kruppenbacher. (Please see "addendum" for vote.)

Odyssey of the Mind: Jean Smith.

No report.

Council Delegate Reports:

High School PTA Council Rep: Laurie Kruppenbacher.

- ~The high school Science Bowl team won the annual competition (against Shaker) held at the G.E. Research & Development Center in Niskayuna. They will travel to Washington DC for the national competition.
- ~The PTA is presenting a plaque to the Brewster family in honor of their Founders Day award.
- ~The state will discontinue the use resource officers.
- ~Spirit Week was successful.
- ~The Wednesday Wellness program is scheduled for May; it will take place after school.
- ~The PTA is re-evaluating their newsletter.
- ~PTA Virtual Lobby Day is Wednesday March 19. NYS PTA is focusing on two major issues this year – property tax caps and healthy school foods. For more information visit nyspta.org.
- ~The annual audit has been completed.
- ~The Prom will be May 16. The After-Glow is expected to accommodate over 400 students.
- ~John Blowers attended their meeting and spoke of the three open Board seats. He also initiated a discussion regarding how to increase parent interest, encouraged all to attend the forums for the budget development, and the importance of voting for the budget.
- ~There was discussion regarding catering changes with the school. The lunch program was discussed; also, additions made available (cakes/cookies) for events such as graduation.
- ~The nominating committee has filled most of the open positions.

Middle School PTA Council Rep: Lori Moore.

- ~The PTA received a thank you card from Robbie Paine for the Founders Day award and dinner.
- ~The 8th grade Class Night will be held on Friday June 20. The awards ceremony will start at 6:00 p.m. at the high school. It will be followed by the dance at the middle school from 7:00 – 10:00 p.m.
- ~The Odyssey of the Mind team placed 1st at the regional competition. They will travel to Binghamton at the end of March for the state competition.

Charlton Heights PTA Council Rep: Barb Becker.

- ~The Nominating committee is working to fill a new slate of officers for the Board.
- ~The current treasurer has resigned, effective immediately.
- ~Completion of the Building Council questionnaire regarding Respect was discussed. Data collected by the survey responses will be utilized to explore options for maintaining and improving respect throughout the Charlton Heights Elementary School community.
- ~115 tickets have been sold thus far for the Theatre for Children via backpack mail.
- ~There has been discussion to create a position for a representative to attend the Board of Education each month in order to improve communication.

Pashley PTA Council Rep: Paula VanBuren.

- ~The Book Fair runs this week on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.
- ~The annual “Read-In” was held on March 7 and followed by the Ice Cream Social; the theme was Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.
- ~PARP concludes on April 11.
- ~Curiosity Shop is running smoothly in its second week; there are approximately 175 students participating each week – total enrollment is 432 students.
- ~There is discussion regarding a different company for school pictures to replace Lifetouch due to various problems and unhappy picture recipients.
- ~Teacher’s Appreciation week will be celebrated the third week in May.

Stevens PTA Council Rep: Linda Fieldhouse.

- ~Stevens is also experiencing problems with the Lifetouch Company; they plan to explore other options for school pictures.
- ~The Book Fair was held last week, March 10 – 14.
- ~Parents as Reading Partners is being held this month. PARP is a collaborative effort among parents and staff to build a reading partnership between the home and the school. PARP programs encourage parents to read with their children for at least 15 minutes per day.
- ~”Stevens Goes Green” will take place on Saturday May 17 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. This is a community-wide event featuring a plant sale, workshops/seminars for children and adults, numerous vendors displaying “green” ideas, a mini-golf course and a barbecue lunch will be offered for sale.
- ~Ticket purchases for the Theatre for Children’s Charlie and the Chocolate Factory via backpack mail seems to be very successful.
- ~The Silver Graphics items should arrive at the school soon.
- ~The President-elect has resigned due to work-related conflicts. Cathy Todd was recently instated in the President-elect vacancy.

Vice-president: Erin Pezzulo.

No report.

2nd Vice-president: Paula VanBuren.

- ~The Founders Day winners are as follows:
 - Charlton Heights – Chris and Mark Katz
 - Pashley: volunteer award – Rachel Winters; staff award – Kim Ferrie
 - Stevens: Jackie Ballinger
 - O’Rourke Middle School – Robbie Paine

-BH-BL High School: volunteer award – the Brewster family; staff award – Marta Roberts-Pekar.

-PTA Council – Tim Sinnenberg

~Paula has received much positive feedback regarding the Founders Day dinner.

Contrary to statements listed in Peter Merchant's report, Paula stated that numerous people agree that the time allotted for the dinner should be shortened instead of limiting the speeches. A couple of suggestions are starting the evening a bit earlier and replacing the sit down dinner with an option which would require less time (hors d'oeuvres buffet, etc.)

~Transportation Recognition Day is scheduled for Wednesday June 4 at Stevens Elementary School. Each PTA unit is asked to supply five volunteers, 4 – 6 dozen baked goods, and a fruit tray. Set-up is at Stevens on Tuesday evening, June 3 from 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. Volunteers are needed from 7:15 – 10:30 a.m. Wednesday. If there is left-over food, help will be needed in transporting it to the bus garage at 10:30 a.m.

~**3rd Vice-president: Lauren Roecker.**

No report.

Unfinished Business:

None.

New Business:

None.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:30 p.m.

The next PTA Council meeting will be held on Tuesday May 20, 2008 in the Principal's Conference Room at the High School. This is the final meeting of the school year and coincides with the **SCHOOL BUDGET VOTE at the BH-BL High School gym from 7:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.**

PLEASE VOTE.

Addendum:

~Via e-mail, Lauren Roecker motioned to accept the new slate of officers presented by the Nominating committee, Lori Moore seconded the motion. The vote was subsequently conducted via e-mail, and was unanimously in favor of the slate of officers presented.

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|-----------------------|--|
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