

Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake PTA Council November 17, 2008

Call to Order: Paula Van Buren called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Amy Agan, Darcy Baumbach, Barb Becker, Linda Fieldhouse, Mary Beth Frewin, Laurie Kruppenbacher, Rocco Montesano, Erin Pezzulo, Jim Schultz, Bob Speck, Rita Snively, Paula Van Buren, Lynnette Ziskin.

President's Report: Paula Van Buren.

~The Reflections program currently does not have a chairperson. Thank you to Erin Pezzulo who volunteered to oversee the 2008-2009 Reflections program. The Reflections theme is "Wow!" Entries are to be dropped off at Acadia Elementary School (Shenendehowa) on Friday November 21 or Thursday December 4 from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. Entries must be delivered to NYS PTA by January 9, 2009.

Secretary's Report: Lynnette Ziskin.

~The minutes of the September 15 Council meeting were voted on and approved at the November 17 (tonight's) meeting. They will be sent to Christy Multer for inclusion on the BH-BL website.

~Peter Merchant provided Hallmark School Portraits business cards to Lynnette to give to the Unit Reps so they could distribute them to their respective PTAs. This company was used by the Shenendehowa School District this fall with great satisfaction and high remarks. There recently has been much discussion as to dissatisfaction with the Lifetouch Company currently being used by several of our schools.

Treasurer's Report: Amy Agan.

~Amy's report consisted of the following:

1. The Balance Sheet as of November 15, 2008, which reflects the following:
 - Checking Account: \$8,836.36
 - Savings Account: \$8,709.62
 - Total Assets: \$17,545.98
2. The Profit & Loss July 2008 – June 2009.
3. Amy noted that all of the Arts & Enrichment and Odyssey of the Mind payments from each school all came in; she also noted that the Arts & Enrichment and Odyssey of the Mind bills were paid to the BH-BL school district.
4. The tax return was filed on time.

~School Board Liaison's Report: Bob Speck.

~The Board interviewed 3 candidates in order to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of Nancy Della Pia who moved out of the district. Patre Kuziak of Schlensker Drive, Glenville, will be appointed, by a unanimous vote of the Board, to the open seat at the November 18 BOE meeting.

~Preparations are underway for the next bond issue. Every five years, the BH-BL Board of Education has charged a committee of residents and staff with the task of examining major construction, renovation, and maintenance needs district-wide. This has proven to be a cost-effective way to address instructional support and infrastructure needs and to protect the community's long-term investment in school facilities. With the completion of the 2003

referendum, it is time to once again examine current and anticipated renovation and construction needs.

~This evaluation will be accomplished by the formation and work of two separate committees:

- (1) A Critical Infrastructure Needs Committee to evaluate and recommend to the Board a prioritized list of infrastructure projects for potential inclusion in the next Bond Referendum. This committee will be comprised of:
 - Assistant Superintendent for Support Services
 - Supervisor of Buildings & Grounds
 - Construction Management
 - Building Principals
 - Other invited experts

Specifically, this committee will present its prioritized list of projects (up to a maximum of \$10 million) to the Board by December 15, 2008.

- (2) A Bond Referendum Committee to evaluate and prioritize renovation and construction projects proposed by staff and others. This committee will be comprised of 29 members who will be appointed by the Board of Education:

- 7 community residents
- 5 PTA representatives (one from each school)
- 2 Board of Education members (ex-officio)
- Assistant Superintendent for Support Services
- 2 administrators
- 3 support staff
- 5 teachers, one from each school
- 2 high school students
- Custodial Supervisor

The Committee will meet from January to June, and will make its final report to the Board in June.

~Last year at this time, an ad-hoc committee was formed to examine interscholastic sports. Findings of this committee will be presented to the Board at tomorrow night's meeting.

~Mr. Speck explained that BH-BL's long range planning process includes incorporating Board goals. One of the important goals for 2008-2009 is to develop a 20-year strategic plan to maintain BH-BL's continuous improvement.

Superintendent's Report: Jim Schultz.

~The critical financial crisis of New York State will have a great impact on our district. Many sacrifices throughout our district are imminent.

~A new state budget is forthcoming; the governor is currently making new proposals. The legislature meets tomorrow (Tuesday, November 18) and a reduction of the increase in state aid is expected. This year's reduction is expected to be 4.5% above last year's reduction. Of the \$1.6 billion aid package, the state wants to take \$800 million back. (Note: The senate agrees that it's not in the best interest to make mid-year cuts.)

~This financial state makes BH-BL's budget process much more important. The expectation is that this is a 2-3 year problem requiring a 2-3 year solution.

~In response to the state's financial crisis, the district has recommended necessary expenditures only. Therefore, field trips are in jeopardy at this time.

~ Offices and programs in the Hostetter Building were extensively damaged in November due to a water main break and flooding in much of the building. Insurance adjustors say it may take months to restore the building.

~ On November 4, the Hostetter Building suffered a water main rupture under the building. Custodians were called by the Glenville police, who reported water was gushing out of the building's front entrance. The force of the water pushed the floor tiles up and out of position in the main hallway and carried muddy water throughout much of the building. Some walls cracked.

~An engineer was called, and has located the rupture.

~The entire building had to be emptied of its contents. There has been a loss of income as a result of the water main break. The three businesses that rent from the school district (K-Care, Crossroads Center for Children, and the Montessori School) have temporarily relocated.

~One wing of the building (A Quad) was not damaged in the flood, and modular trailer units have been erected next to A Quad to provide more office space since repairs to the building are now expected to take several months. The insurance company will cover the rental cost for the modular trailers.

~The heat and plumbing will be restored by mid-November; most staff have returned to BH-BL administrative office in the Hostetter Building.

~The building is expected to be restored to better than its previous condition.

~Jim commended all of the fall sports teams on a remarkable season.

Teacher Representative's Report: Rocco Montesano.

~In early August, the custodial staff applied a new floor finish to the gym floors in the high school and middle school. The finish was a bad batch and refused to dry; it turned the floors into a sea of goop.

~The fix involved sanding the floor down to the wood then reapplying four coats of finish, along with all the lines needed for various sports and the BH-BL Spartans logo at center court. The high school gym was reopened Monday, October 6, while the two floors in the Middle School needed another week of work.

~The gym floor situation unfortunately cost the district tens of thousands of dollars in repairs and inconveniences.

~With the upcoming budget process, Rocco encouraged all of us to let our voices be heard. It is very important to gather input via avenues of parents, PTAs, etc.

~Rocco reiterated on a serious topic which was discussed at length at last May's Council meeting – inappropriate dress by female students. This topic is currently being addressed at the building level(s). The May minutes state:

“There is great concern regarding inappropriate student attire in our high school, which is rapidly becoming an issue in our middle school as well. Our children are attending school inappropriately dressed, succumbing our staff members and teachers to vulnerable situations. Inappropriate styles worn by females are uncomfortable and almost impossible to address by a male staff member. Female administrators at both schools have spoken with all female students; unfortunately the result is minimal. Addressing this issue has become distracting and time consuming; it's taking time away from the academic day.

~Due to the nature of this sensitive issue, support and cooperation is sought from parents. Parents must understand the predicament our professional staff is being subjected to.

~PTA Council representatives are asked to discuss this topic with their school's PTA members, and ask parents to do their part in seeing that their children are appropriately dressed to attend school.

~A school dress code is in place but it's disregarded; mention was made regarding school uniforms.

~This delicate topic is putting our dedicated professionals in extremely difficult situations and a solution, popular or not, is inevitable."

Committee Reports:

Audit Committee: Karen Smith.

~No report. (A complete report will take place at the January meeting.)

Eileen Briggs Award: Ann Slocum.

~No report.

Arts & Enrichment: Rita Snively.

High School:

~In October young adult author Alex Flinn talked with English students from grades 9, 10 & 11 about her writing and the writing process.

~Two sections of Grade 12 Participation in Government class attended the Albany Heritage Visitors Center for a program.

~In early November, Fremarjo Enterprises, a theater group, presented Frederick Douglas Seminars on racial and gender equality for grade 11.

Middle School:

~No report on programs.

~PTA filled the vacant Arts & Enrichment position. Although Nancy Pearse does all of the Arts & Enrichment scheduling, the PTA bylaws state that the Arts & Enrichment program must have a chairperson.

Charlton Heights:

~In early October, Charlton Heights had a week-long residency with song and dance man Brian Gillie. This residency was part of the school's 50th anniversary celebration. The residency kicked off with a performance by Brian. He then worked individually with each grade (1-5) teaching songs and dances of each decade that the school has been open:

-Grade 1 - twist and rock dances from the 60s

-Grade 2 - 70s

-Grade 3 - 50s

-Grade 4 - 80s

-Grade 5 - 90s.

~The residency culminated in a final activity where each grade showcased their newly acquired dance prowess.

Pashley:

~No report.

Stevens:

~In September, Motivational Productions, a multi media company presented a program entitled Attitude for Gratitude for all grades, K - 5.

~The students exceeded the goal for the summer reading challenge (total participants - 460); on October 10, their reward was a Carnival. In order to enhance the carnival, Arts & Enrichment

brought in High Peaks Juggling. They performed seven consecutive programs with the entire school and worked on various juggling and circus acts.

~At the end of this week, Slim Goodbody's Musical Health Show will present 2 programs (one for grades K-2 and one for grades 3-5). This program focuses on positive body image and staying healthy.

Founders Day: Erin Pezzulo & Lauren Roecker.

~The Founders Day dinner is scheduled for Thursday February 5, 2009. The location has not yet been determined.

~The building reps have begun to solicit nominees for the Founders Day award at their respective schools. Winners and non-winners will be known by December 15.

After-school Enrichment Clubs: Karen Smith.

~No report.

Theatre for Children: Kathy Lynch.

~Kathy reported that auditions for parts are tonight.

Odyssey of the Mind: Jean Smith.

~Jean's report in September stated there are two OM teams at the high school level; Linda Fieldhouse reported tonight that there is one team at Stevens Elementary. The Odyssey of the Mind competition will take place on February 28, 2009.

Council Delegate Reports:

High School PTA Council Rep: Laurie Kruppenbacher.

~The high school students recently took part in security drills in order to heighten their awareness in the event of a serious situation. "Go home early drills" are also planned so to increase awareness in the event of a real emergency.

~After the security drill, staff/student discussion groups are formed to judge the effectiveness of the drill/improvements to increase effectiveness of the drill.

~The staff and student body are supporting a BH-BL family who were recent victims of a house fire; also of a 9th grade student battling cancer.

~Mike Mosall organized a run through Charlton with proceeds going to The Giving Tree Program. They raised \$900 which helped purchase gift cards for families to receive during the holidays. The Giving Tree is a program that assists BH-BL families in need; this year \$2,000 was raised and used to purchase (mostly) gift cards for the families.

~The Green Club is the recycling program run entirely by the students is running well and has many involved.

~The membership drive solicited 342 members.

~Praise was given for all fall sports teams – truly an astounding season!

~The next meeting is scheduled for January 5, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in the Principal's Conference room.

Middle School PTA Council Rep: Mary Beth Frewin.

~Principal Don Germain recently attended a New York State Middle School conference regarding the national trend to move back to the whole child approach to learning. O'Rourke Middle School is ahead of other districts in New York State.

~ Lock down and lock out drills were successfully completed.

~The Student Council held a pumpkin decorating contest on October 28th for approximately 35 middle school students. Thank you to Nikki Boehm and the cafeteria staff for the delicious and beautifully made ghost cookies for the occasion.

~The entire 8th grade will be serving in various area agencies for 8th Grade Service Day, which is scheduled for Tuesday November 25.

~The Student Council will be holding their annual Thanksgiving Food Drive from Monday, November 17 – Friday, November 21. All Collected food will be distributed to local families through the food pantry at St. Vincent de Paul. We are hoping to top last year's total donations of 2895 cans and boxes.

~ The microwave that was available to students in the cafeteria at lunchtime earlier in the school year is no longer available due to many problems. Unfortunately, the cafeteria staff will not be able to heat students' food in the kitchen microwave due to time constraints.

~ PTA snack coupons are given to all students who make the honor roll each quarter, but very few of these coupons are being used. Discussion ensued regarding changes/ways to encourage the honor roll students to use their earned snack coupons. The cafeteria staff recommends that parents encourage their children to use their coupons. While the committee wants to encourage redemption of award coupons by honor roll recipients, they cannot change the current structure of the program due to changes in cafeteria procedures regarding snacks.

~ The cafeteria will have a new vending machine on a trial basis, provided by Organic Vending. Choices will be healthier than standard vending machines.

~The attendance of the 6th Grade Rec Night was 208 students.

~The annual Craft Fair was successful. A suggestion was made to change its name to "Craft and Vendor Show".

~ The school raised \$16,230.80 in magazine sales for the student activity fund. This does not include orders that will come in by mail from the address books that were turned in at the start of the drive. Thanks to all who ordered (and helped their kids get orders) and to the many great PTA volunteers that helped out on the counting and prize days.

~Following a lengthy discussion regarding the costs to run the Monopoly program (time, money and people) versus the profit received, a vote was taken regarding retirement of Monopoly as a fundraiser. April 24th and 25th 2009, will be the final Monopoly event at the middle school. Possible events to replace the Monopoly fundraiser are a Family Movie Night or an Apple Bees Pancake Breakfast. More fundraisers will be considered at future meetings.

~There are two foosball tables formerly used at Rec Nights currently housed in the storage shed but unable to be used due to necessary repairs. With storage space at a premium, a decision must be made soon regarding the future of these tables.

Charlton Heights PTA Council Rep: Barb Becker.

~Charlton Heights' students recently commemorated its 50th anniversary with a Sock Hop celebration on Monday September 29. The celebration included Arts & Enrichment performer Brian Gillie and songs from each decade that the school has been open.

~The Monster Mash and Halloween Parade were well organized, successful events and fun for all.

~The annual fall fundraiser produced a slightly lower than anticipated profit; the Book Fair also had a profit lower than expected.

~The Children's Garden program included the Kindergarten class this year.

~Curiosity Shop began on October 10.

~Sign-ups for the January After-school Enrichment Clubs were conducted via backpack mail.

~The Founders Day nominations will soon be distributed.

Pashley PTA Council Rep: Darcy Baumbach.

~The Pashley PTA Student Enrichment Clubs began on November 7.

~The Fall Festival was held on October 18.

~Through the Arts & Enrichment program, a mime recently visited the 2nd graders; an author is planned for all grades K – 5 in the near future, and Chris Holder is scheduled to come in February.

~The Safari-themed Book Fair begins on December 1.

~A movie night is planned for Friday December 12.

~The annual Pancake Breakfast is scheduled for January 31, 2009.

Stevens PTA Council Rep: Linda Fieldhouse.

~Odyssey of the Mind has a new chairperson; recently, an Odyssey of the Mind team was formed.

~The Family Dinner held on November 7 was successful.

~The 3rd grade has experienced an influx of students since the start of the school year; a Teacher's Assistant position was evaluated and recently approved by the Board for the 3rd grade at Stevens.

~The Arts & Enrichment program is applying for a \$2,000 grant in order to help fund the Ellen Sinopoli program scheduled for the spring.

~Curiosity Shop consisted of 19 classes and serviced 270 students.

~The BOGO Book Fair will happen the first week of December.

~Student Council's annual Food Drive concludes tomorrow (November 18).

~\$13,000 was recently raised (to put toward) for a new stage curtain.

Vice-president: Erin Pezzulo.

~Erin reported that each year at the New York State Cross Country Championship Meet, a sportsmanship award is presented to one girl and one boy. This year, Samantha Roecker from BH-BL won the girls sportsmanship award.

2nd Vice-president: Laurie Kruppenbacher.

No report.

3rd Vice-president: Lauren Roecker.

No report.

Unfinished Business:

None.

New Business:

None.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:10 p.m.

The next PTA Council meeting will be held on Monday January 12, 2009 in the Principal's Conference Room at the High School.

Subsequent meeting dates are: 3/16/09, and 5/19/09.
