

Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake PTA Council
January 10, 2011

Call to Order: President Mary Carrier called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Present: John Blowers, Mary Carrier, Kendall Dubuc, Rachel Engelhardt, Mary Beth Frewin, Chris Katz, Laurie Kruppenbacher, Jim Schultz, Charlene Spetla, Lynnette Ziskin.

President's Report: Mary Carrier.

No report.

Secretary's Report: Lynnette Ziskin.

~The minutes of the November 15, 2010 Council meeting will be re-distributed via e-mail for approval. The minutes contained two minor errors. After approval, they will be sent to Christy Multer for inclusion on the BH-BL website.

Treasurer's Report: Rachel Engelhardt.

1. The Balance Sheet as of January 8, 2010 reflects the following:
 - Checking Account: \$9,313.27
 - Savings Account: \$8,762.37
 - Total Assets: \$18,075.64
2. Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual, July 1, 2010 – January 8, 2011
3. All five schools have paid their dues to Council.
4. The Theater for Children Income and Expenses report includes some recent payments for expenses, as work on the performance has begun.

School Board Liaison's Report: John Blowers.

~A few months ago, the Board engaged the services of a realtor to start the process of marketing the building which houses many members of BH-BL administration. Recently, a buyer has emerged with a proposal to option the property with the right to purchase. The district is continuing to develop solutions for relocating the staff currently working in the Hostetter building. For more information on this topic, please visit the website, www.bhbl.org.

~This year the staff has been reporting to the Board on the district's progress on implementing the 21st Century Framework. In October, staff members highlighted successes with innovation and creativity in the classroom. In December, the critically of financial literacy was brought to life with several examples of key education delivery at the elementary meetings. The next meeting to focus on 21st Century Framework will be on Feb. 15th at Charlton Heights and will focus on Leadership & Vision.

~The budget season is upon us. Given the current fiscal climate, the board began conducting Finance Committee meetings earlier than ever this year by holding its first session in October. In addition to the normal concerns of rising prices and increasing state mandates, a number of issues make this budget season more challenging including a new governor who is extremely motivated to implement a tax cap, New York State's ongoing financial woes (\$10 billion deficit), and negotiations with the Teacher's Union. During the next several months, there are opportunities to attend Finance Committee meetings and participate in community forums to receive updates and provide input in the process of developing the budget. The calendar is available on the district website, www.bhbl.org ; box in upper left, click "Board of Education", then the information can be located under "Budget Development" section.

Superintendent's Report: Jim Schultz.

~Jim spoke at length about the Budget Development process. The Board is projecting a \$2 - \$3 million deficit from last year. Unlike many Suburban Council school districts, BH-BL has very little commercial development, and our tax base is 85 - 90% residential.

~Five objectives for developing the 2011-12 budget, the Board of Education will:

1. Work to balance the community's desire for both low taxes and excellent school programs by critically evaluating current practices, proposed expenditures, and revenue sources other than taxes.
2. Ensure that BH-BL graduates have the skills, knowledge and attitudes outlined in the district's 21st Century Framework for Learning — including high literacy and numeracy skills — so that they can compete in a demanding and technologically sophisticated global marketplace.
3. Support the development of new strategies to compensate for the loss of state aid and still deliver a comprehensive education program at a lower cost.
4. Engage the community to share their perspectives and values on school programs they wish to support with their tax dollars.
5. Lobby state legislators to approach the tax cap issue with legislative actions that will acknowledge and reduce some of the mandates outside of school districts' control that currently drive up costs in the areas of instruction, personnel, and construction.

~Jim stressed the importance of the PTA being involved during the budget development process, and suggested that PTA Council form a voice to be heard at Budget Forums.

~Jim reported that BH-BL received a \$30,000 grant check from Saratoga IDA.

~A number of changes are coming soon from the state education department regarding our curriculum & assessment. The state will be revising testing over the next four years. For example, the district is piloting an English Regents on January 11 (tomorrow), and the ELA math for grades 3 – 8 will be longer and include more variety of tasks.

~As mentioned at the last Council meeting, the "Dignity for All Students Act" was passed in September and the Board has already begun to take action on an anti-bullying task force. Policies for this program are mandated by the state, and the anti-bullying guidelines will be set by the state. BH-BL has taken a pro-active approach and is currently evaluating training models for all staff members. A teacher liaison will be appointed at each school. The new policy must be instituted by July 2012. We need a partnership of parents, students, and staff to help create an environment where bullying is not tolerated.

~Phase 2 of the Energy Proposal will include the replacement of windows at the High School. Summer activities will be scaled back, including the Summer Rec program.

~A reminder that BOE meetings take place at all schools on a rotating basis. Please check the calendar for the meeting date and place. Jim requested that schools do not schedule their PTA meetings on the same night as the BOE meetings.

~Teacher Representative's Report: Mike Mosall.

No report.

Committee Reports:

Arts & Enrichment: Jackie Ballinger.

No report.

~Lynnette Ziskin reported that Charlton Heights Elementary School received the \$3,000 grant from Saratoga Arts Council for a Civil Rights Movement program presented by Chris Holder.

Eileen Briggs Award: Maureen MacNamara Marshall.

No report.

Odyssey of the Mind: Jean Smith.

No report.

Theatre for Children: Kathy Lynch.

No report.

Council Delegate Reports:

High School PTA Council Rep: Lynnette Ziskin.

~Mrs. Symer commended the fall sports teams on a very successful season.

~The Rachel's Challenge assemblies were held in mid-December for all grades. Over 120 parents and students attended the evening program. Training was held for the "Friends of Rachel" club, which included 112 students and 10 faculty members. Thank you to Mr. and Mrs. Bob Van Vranken for their generous support of this program.

~Many of the holiday concerts were held at the High School auditorium in December with more to come in January.

~The BH-BL High School Transition Committee recently sent a survey to alumni in classes 2006, 2008, and 2010. The survey is interested in focusing its efforts on improving the transition of students from high school to their chosen post-high school activities. The survey can also be found on line at: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/BH-BLGraduateSurvey>. All classmates of classes 2006, 2008, and 2010 are encouraged to complete the survey as the information is important to the district.

~Mrs. Symer discussed the upcoming budget in a difficult economic year. There are a lot of unknowns in this budget, especially state aid. Mr. Schultz met with the SGO to gather information regarding what's important to the student body. Mrs. Symer encouraged PTAs to organize and be represented at the budget forums.

~The anti-bullying task-force has begun its formation at the high school. The policies are very specific.

~The Smith's Pies Fundraiser will begin taking orders in the spring. The pick-up date is Wednesday May 25 in the HS cafeteria from 2:30 – 6:30 p.m.

~The Staff Appreciation luncheon will be held on Thursday May 12.

~Many Arts & Enrichment programs have been scheduled for the high school students.

~Lisa Read sent a report that stated, to date, there are approximately 280 PTSA members.

~The forum entitled "Tech Valley comes to BH-BL" was held on November 16 at the middle school. Approximately 75 parents, residents, staff and students attended the forum. Speakers from GLOBALFOUNDRIES, GE Wind Energy, Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, and the HVCC Biotechnology program answered questions about how this is impacting our area and the skills and education they look for in new employees. For more information please visit the website: www.bhbl.org.

Middle School PTA Council Rep: Amy Agan.

Lynnette Ziskin reported for Amy Agan:

~A Founders Day winner has been selected from numerous nominees that were submitted.

~The search is on for a three-member Nominating Committee. They will be elected at the February PTA meeting and will be searching for nominees to fulfill the positions of President, Vice-president, Treasurer, and Secretary.

~A committee will be formed in March to develop Standing Rules Working and Special Committee rules. These rules will make it easier to attract volunteers in the future.

~The O'Rourke Middle School is turning 50 years old in February. The Building Council will be working on celebratory plans; the PTA will work on a possible 60s theme for the 6th Grade Rec Night on February 4th. The opportunity exists to host a fundraiser at this time; this fundraiser would support Arts & Enrichment funding.

~The Gertrude Hawk Chocolate fundraiser is scheduled to begin on February 18; the money from this fundraiser will support PTA programs.

~A Monopoly Fundraiser Special Committee was formed to investigate options for retiring and selling the life-size game. The committee members are Mary Carrier, Sonja Thomson, and Lynnette Ziskin. Decisions to be made are: storage of the game (must move out of Hostetter building soon, especially if the building is purchased), possibly renting the Monopoly Board to organizations needing a fundraiser, or whether or not to sell the game board.

~Plans for Eight Grade Class Night are underway; co-chairs of that committee are Amy Whitney and Carolyn Guyer.

~Reflections winners are: Michael Batzinger and Stephanie Messina (literature), Natalie Albright (music), Kristian Cerrone, Katherine Gibson, Shelby Kislowksi (visual arts), and Jennifer Andrew received Honorable Mention.

~Registration for Club 26.2 will take place on January 3. This is an after-school walking club developed by the Wellness Committee that encourages students to walk a full marathon by the end of the school year.

~The 7th & 8th Grade Dance is scheduled for Friday January 28, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

~The next Principal's Tea will be held on February 2 at 9:00 a.m.

~PTA meetings are scheduled for (this evening) Jan. 10, 7 – 8 p.m., and Feb. 15, 6 – 7 p.m.

Charlton Heights PTA Council Rep: Laurie Kruppenbacher.

~Reflections winners are: Olivia Moon, Sophie Swain (literature), Isabella Antonini, Sydney Fitzgerald, (photography), Chloe Bousse, Madeline Bousse, Jessica Sinopoli (visual arts), and Cassidy Burgner and Luke Haluska received Honorable Mention.

~The Holiday Shop was a great success. There was a waiting list for vendors. There was a PTA table (free) and a considerable amount of free coupons were handed out. Thank you to the parents that donated to this table. Free wrapping was available to all students' gifts.

~The After-school Enrichment Drama Cub has begun with 63 students working on the production of Sleeping Beauty.

~The "Holiday Outreach" program allowed the students to donate to three less fortunate Burnt Hills families that were adopted by the school.

~First graders had their annual Thanksgiving feast learning about the Native Americans and Pilgrims.

~The fifth grade students are learning about the constitution and science cell projects and detailed skeleton system. A local farmer/science teacher brought in the tracheal pipe, lungs and heart of a beef steer and the students were able to see, touch and learn how the muscles work for digestion and life support of such a large animal.

~An exploring engineering day is scheduled for RPI on Saturday February 19 for students and parents.

~Charlton Heights had 2 winners of the Founders Day award.

Pashley PTA Council Rep:

- ~The Movie Night scheduled for January 7 was canceled due to inclement weather.
- ~Pashley Spirit Day was recently held – the students and teachers dressed in their Pashley spirit wear; the children were allowed to purchase popcorn as a special snack.
- ~The Holiday Shop was held on December 8 & 9; there was a large turn-out.
- ~The BOGO Book Fair begins on December 13.
- ~The PTA Breakfast is scheduled for January 22 from 8:00 a.m. – 10 a.m.

Stevens PTA Council Rep: Charlene Spetla.

- ~The Family Dinner was held on November 12.
- ~The annual Holiday Shop was held on December 8, and had a waiting list for vendors.
- ~The Stevens BOGO Book Fair was held on December 2.
- ~PTA Dues will return to the former price of \$5.
- ~The PARP kick-off will be on January 18.
- ~Science Nights will be held on February 2nd & 9th.
- ~The Founders Day awards celebration will be on February 3 at the River Stone Manor.
- ~Family Fun Night will be held on Friday January 21.
- ~The Stevens PTA teachers' representatives requested that PTA be involved in the BH-BL budget development process.

1st Vice-president: Chris Katz; 3rd Vice-president: Mary Beth Frewin.

~The annual Founders Day awards ceremony will be held on February 3 at The River Stone Manor beginning at 5:45 p.m. The Jazz Band will perform at 7:00 p.m. Family members will wait in the house on the property – please see map for directions. Each unit rep. is asked to supply 2 dozen cookies and one 2-liter bottle of soda. Flowers will be ordered from Kathy Lynch. It was agreed that we will post a sign at Mail n More to sell tickets.

2nd Vice-president: Laurie Kruppenbacher.

~No report.

Unfinished Business:

None.

New Business:

~Laurie Kruppenbacher presented information about a grant received from the GE Chairman's Award. This money was awarded to a project that pertains to a legal or environmental type. She will contact Mrs. Symer at the high school to identify a project this money could be spent on. This grant is worth approximately \$25,000.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:02 p.m.

**The next PTA Council meeting will be held on Monday March 21, 2011
in the Principal's Conference Room at the High School.**