

Present: Jessica Rzeszotarski, Cathy Todd, Sue Cifaratta, Amy Agan, Jackie Ballinger, Amy Aldrich, Teresa Bashant, Dawn Bellamy, Betty Hanson, Holly Fitzgerald, Lynette Albright, Kim North, John Blowers, Laura Foster

The meeting in the Stevens Library was called to order at 7:04 pm by Cathy Todd

Approval of Minutes

- January Meeting Minutes were distributed and reviewed.
- Motion to approve minutes made, seconded and passed.

<p><i>Presidents Report – Cathy Todd</i></p>
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Thank You to:

- Everyone for the Founders Day Award – it was an honor to be the recipient.
- Helen Roos for organizing the enrichment club and to all the volunteers who helped make it a successful event.

Stevens Goes Green

- This event will not be held this year. Attendance was not what it was hoped to be last year and vendors were also backing down.
- We will still be having a plant sale fundraiser with added fruit and vegetable varieties due to their popularity. Flyers will be sent home the first week of April with a ten day turnaround.
- Any 4H events that were held in conjunction with this event can still be held – any teacher who is interested can contact the PTA. The Kindergarten and 3rd grade event has already been scheduled and paid for.
- It will be important to look into additional fundraisers for next year – for both the fall and spring or possibly doing a few smaller scale fundraisers throughout the year.

Curtain Update

- Question was raised as to how much the *In the City* book sale raised toward the curtain fundraiser. Exact amount was unknown but it was down slightly from last year.
- Sue Cifaratta and Amy Agan are looking into the exact amount we have towards the curtain at this point.

Upcoming Events

- PARP – The flyers for Parents as Reading Partners was sent home. Each child received a coloring sheet with pictures to cut out once they’ve read the required minutes for the week as well as a bookmark with additional activities. Trivia questions will start next week.
- Kindergarten Registration – The district wide registration process will be held at Stevens March 9th and 10th. Tina Crocetto is organizing that again this year – contact her if you wish to volunteer.
- Book Fair – will be a three day event this year instead of five due to staffing volunteers for the entire week and cutting into the time and space of the library for an entire week. The pajama party will be held on Friday March 20th. Classes will be brought in by their teachers instead of during their library time. We will be in need of staffing from 10-2.

<p>Principal’s Report – Ralph Rothacker</p>
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- **Not in Attendance**

Teacher's Report – Sue Cifaratta

- Teachers have created wished lists based on the Price Chopper receipts and we are looking to do the same for our credits with the Campbell's soup labels.
- Town Budget Committee meeting was well attended and teachers were encouraged to sit in. A lot of negative comments regarding the cuts were heard, but unfortunately there was not a lot of positive support for our teaching staff expressed.

PTA Council Report – Amy Agan

- The Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Theater for Children is putting on Grease, Jr. on April 3rd and 4th. Flyers have gone home for ticket sales and more information.
- The cuts proposed by legislation are outlined on the website – a lobbying letter is available through the school website and all are encouraged to send letters to the government officials.
 - ♦ Lobbying has become important to discourage the government from making cuts in our district. Our district does not have a large business base from which to draw from and we have a large senior population, so what we are in reality is much different from what appears on paper.
 - ♦ It is important to focus on getting the aid from the state and federal government at this point, not as to how the district will spend it.
 - ♦ District residents are being asked to at the very least email the form letter, but writing personal letters or making phone calls are strongly being encouraged as they are more effective. If the parents come together as a coalition, it will be more effective as well.
 - Jackie Ballinger is going to copy letters to have available at Kindergarten registration next week for parents to sign and information regarding the cuts will also be made available. Letters will be collected and given to John Blowers to deliver.
 - Amy Agan is going to send out an email to home room reps with information regarding the availability of the letters and information on the website.
 - Laura Foster will communicate information to the Middle School PTA.

Building Council Report – Amy Agan

- The approved guidelines for Health and Wellness are now available on the district website.

Officers Reports

Treasurer's Report – Cathy Todd for Bob Rafferty

- \$13,511.31 in checking and \$9,973.55 in savings.
- Overall we are in a good position with our savings, staying on budget this year and making more money than planned on certain events.
- The budget meeting for next year will need to happen next month and we will need volunteers to be part of that committee.

President Elect – Amy Aldrich

- The nominating committee has been assembled to get nominees for next years available executive board PTA positions.
 - ♦ The positions available are President Elect, Vice President of Fundraising, Vice President of Programs and PTA Council Representative.
 - ♦ The nominating committee members are Amy Aldrich, Charlene Spetla and Jessica Rzeszotarski. Contact any member of the committee if you are interested in one of the positions or know someone who might be.
- The nominees will be announced at the April PTA meeting and voted on in May.

<i>Committee Reports</i>

Silvergraphics – Cathy Todd for Karen Orlop

- Mrs. Buckley has asked to take next year off from Silvergraphics; therefore, this program will not run next year. Although it has not been run as a fundraiser for the PTA, it typically has made the PTA some profit in past years.

Book Fair/Pajama Party – Kim North/Cathy Todd

- Kim North is organizing this year – contact her if you wish to volunteer.
- Volunteers will be needed for staffing during the three day event, as well as setup and breakdown. Also people will be needed to transfer the books from the library to the gym for Friday nights PJ party.
- Kim will be out of town due to a family matter so Cathy Todd will take over set up the week of the event.
- Denise Stewart is looking for food/drink donations for Friday night.

Health and Wellness – Cathy Todd for Donna Sausville

- March 9th – Eric Freestone will have about 9 classes that will begin keeping food journals to help encourage healthy eating habits. Journals will be kept utilizing their agendas to assist in record keeping. Eric will reinforce this during gym class.
- We are also in the process of looking for a school health and wellness mascot to help promote healthy living. A survey was sent out for ideas and submissions have been received and are being looked over.
- They are also looking into doing some sort of spring fitness challenge – possibly setting up an obstacle course when the nicer weather comes.

Odyssey of the Mind – Laura Foster

- Our Odyssey of the Mind team came in second place at their competition for their problem and division – by only two points!
- Kelley Johnson was the parent volunteer coach and did an amazing job with the kids this year and hopefully we can do it again next year!

Board of Education Report – John Blowers

- Report from the Business Office that they finished in the top 5% of NY state audits and got a clean bill of health for all our practices.

- ♦ Administrator resigned due to family move and position has been filled temporarily, but the office is looking into being able to operate without this position in the future to help cut costs.
- ♦ The Board is also looking at other activities of the business office to see if there are other opportunities to cut costs – such as outsourcing payroll.
- Budget Forum Meetings
 - ♦ The second of three budget forum meetings was held last week and the Board was looking to share ideas on where cuts might be made and provide an opportunity for district input.
 - ♦ Residents expressed repeated desire to see exactly where the district money goes and exact numbers as far as salaries/benefits for teachers vs. administrators. The importance of overall knowing where monies go was expressed so residents could have a better understanding of the budget process.
 - ♦ There were over 100 people present – it was a good turnout and some good dialogue occurred. Residents were very passionate about the cuts and proposals on the table.
 - ♦ ***The third and final budget forum meeting will take place on March 31st.*** The Board will approve a budget at their meeting in April and district voting on the budget will take place the third Tuesday in May.
 - ♦ Information regarding the meeting is available on the district website as well as form letters to utilize in lobbying efforts.
 - ♦ Proposed budget cuts, which were discussed at the meeting and are outlined on the website, are broken down into Tiers and depend upon exactly what aid is cut. The Board is fairly confident the initial 1.6 million that had been taken out will be coming back.
 - ♦ Many sports will be affected by cuts by eliminating levels, reducing numbers of games played, shortened seasons or if necessary being cut altogether. No new uniforms will be budgeted for next year. The cuts are trying to be shared across the board rather than being devastating to one area. Although our overall budget for sports is on the lower than average side, it is important to think about the other areas budgets that are affected (transportation, maintenance for playing fields, etc.)
 - ♦ When cuts are being considered the maintenance of academic areas continue to be the primary focus, but it is important to also remember the benefit of non-instructional areas (music, art, sports, etc.) to students as well.
 - ♦ It would be beneficial to educate public on the budget and the budget process – contingent budget vs. actual budget for example – especially with the state of the economy this year.
- Long-range planning – The Board is looking at the overall mechanism for funding education and seeing how and why it is not working. They will be possibly looking into more outsourcing and sharing of resources to save money. The need to realistically explore other options and ways of saving money exists today.
- Class Size – The concern has still been expressed about the third grade class size and that the fixes put into place did not really work. Based on this feedback, the district is continuing to focus on class size so the incoming classes will not lead to such bubbles in the future.
- The district did not pass the state Physical Education audit. The district is challenging the results because any changes made based on the state finding would require state aid.

Upcoming Events:

P.A.R.P. is the whole month of March

Kindergarten Registration at Stevens

Book Fair March 18th-20th

Pajama Party March 20th

Our next PTA meeting is Wednesday April 1st

Meeting adjourned at 8:22 pm

Submitted by Jessica Rzeszotarski

Stevens PTA Secretary