

Present: Sonja Olson, Candy Burchett, Linda Laferriere, Bob Rafferty, Jenn Bradt, Judy Gibson, Kim North, Amy Aldrich, Liz Henglein, Sue Cifaratta, Ralph Rothacker, Bob Speck, Jessica Rzeszotarski

The meeting in the Stevens Library was called to order at 7:02 pm by Amy Aldrich

Welcome and Introduction of Attendees

Presidents Report –Amy Aldrich

Approval of Minutes

- January Meeting Minutes were discussed via email.
- Motion to approve minutes made, seconded and passed.

PTA Update

- The DARE reception for 5th graders has been confirmed for Friday, June 18th.
- Valerie Simpson has had to step down from her position as Arts and Enrichment Chairperson so we will need to find a replacement for her for next year and possibly the remainder of this year. Amy will check with Jackie Ballinger to see if we will need a replacement for the remainder of this year.
- SNN - School News Notifier – Concerns over how well it is working and if communication is being received in a timely manner.
- Bob Rafferty was our Founders Day winner and Charlene Spetla was the PTA Council Founders Day winner.
 - Question still arose as to whether or not winners should be notified ahead of time. Bylaws state that it should be kept secret; however, not all schools in the district follow this bylaw. Schools vary as to how they handle the awards and it is something that will be discussed next year.
- Spring Fling – Date is set for June 4th. We had considered tying this in with the spring fundraiser/Stevens Goes Green which needs to net \$600; however, since this will be basically a plant sale the date pushes it too late.

Principal’s Report – Ralph Rothacker

- Kindergarten Registration takes place at Stevens next Monday and Tuesday. Letters went out to parents of 180 children who are eligible in the district to start Kindergarten in the fall. That number is a little lower than usual but we often get kids who are moving into the district and a handful that we had not known about.
- The Parent Night for incoming Kindergarteners was held Monday night and the turnout was on the low side.
- The Kindergarten Teachers are organizing the 1,001 Book Kid Club which is already in place in the other two elementary schools.
 - The bags will be housed in the hallway across from the office and there will be an honor system sign out to take the bags home to read. The goal is for every child to read 1,001 books by the end of 1st grade.

- Suggested that a recommended borrowing time be listed somewhere to keep books coming and going in a timely fashion.
- Many people are donating time and services to create the space to house the books. An Eagle Scout is going to build the shelving.
- Kids will get small rewards throughout the process as they read the books and the final book will be read with Mr. Rothacker.
- The teachers are still accepting donations and books.

<i>Officers Reports</i>

Treasurer's Report – Bob Rafferty

- Account Balances: Checking \$11,385.98 and Savings \$9,307.84
- The Silvergraphics monies have started to come in. Our first wave was \$7,102 and we usually get several more orders that are turned in after the due date. Our goal for this program was \$9,400.
- Our spring fundraiser needs to net \$600 which will be through the Stevens Goes Green program which is basically a plant sale because the Spring Fling is a wash.
- The Curiosity Shop expenses are still only at \$261 and we had budgeted \$1,050. It is important for expenses to be turned in so everything is accounted for. If we indeed only had that level of expenses we need to reevaluate the budget for following years.
- Enrichment Clubs met the expected income and expense levels.

Teacher's Report –Sue Ciffaratta

- Letter from Mrs. Gregory and Mrs. Niezgoda – The 1,001 Book Kid Club is asking the PTA for a yearly \$100 donation to go towards purchasing of the kids rewards every year. Some of these items are pencils, bookmarks, book gift certificate and trophies.
 - PTA will bring the request to the budget meeting in May and assuming we can fit it in the budget, we will add a line item for the Book Club.
- Recycle Program – One of the Speech Therapists has looked into a recycling company program that could earn the PTA some money! The company is called Greenfiber and they pay \$25 to take away a ton of paper waste. Other schools that have done this have made over \$250 in one year.
 - PTA will see if someone wants to look into this further and be brought to the planning committee for next year. Questions arise as to how the program works, how it fits with the current program in place at the schools, and if it needs to be a district wide program as opposed to an individual school program.
- Betty Hanson reported that the Student Council coin drive for Hope for Haiti made \$650. They would like to thank TrustCo Bank for all their help!
- Book Fair – The teachers were looking for the sign up for time slots to go to the library. Ms. Cuyler will have ½ the library set aside for the book fair to be set up in.
- Tools For Schools catalog orders have been turned in for ordering.
- Arts and Enrichment Question – In the past years an author has been brought in for the upper grades and the K-2 teachers were wondering what the possibility of getting someone in for the younger grades and also about getting a different author from time to time for the upper grades.

- One of the Speech Therapists wanted to make the PTA members and ultimately the Stevens families aware that many students needing articulation help aren't getting it because those services are often not mandated. Because of budget cuts, staff reductions and an increase in IEP's over the years their time has to go to those students with mandated services. BHBL had typically gone beyond what was mandated to help students but can no longer afford to do so which means parents may ultimately have to fund private services for their kids in certain cases.
 - Suggestion was made to get in touch with area colleges with speech programs and utilize students to do practicum or student teaching with us to fill in gaps in speech pathology. Students are able to get clinical hours in and see some of the nonmandated kids and could possible extend this to occupational therapy as well.
- Teachers also concerned about possible budget cuts leading to the four kindergarten classes going into three first grade classes.

<i>Committee Reports</i>

YMCA – Jennifer Bradt – Child Care Coordinator at the YMCA

- Friday March 5th will be Stevens Family Fun Night at the Y. Stevens is the first of the Elementary School to do this. The 5th grade is hosting a bake sale fundraiser and will accept donations of baked goods at the Y Friday night around 5:30. This is a family affair not a child drop off program.

Science Night – Bob Rafferty

- Being held the Wednesdays following spring break.
- Still looking for volunteers and parents with participating children can volunteer to help on those nights.

Book Fair/PJ Party – Amy Aldrich/Kim North

- The book fair will be held from the 17th to the 19th and the PJ Party will be held Friday night the 19th beginning at 6:30.
- Michelle Graham is organizing the book fair and is in need of volunteers and face painters.
- Food and Juice donations are needed for the PJ Party.

Kindergarten Registration/Orientation

- Amy Aldrich did a presentation to parents at the incoming Kindergarteners Parents Night to spark interest in the PTA.
- Screening of the children at orientation will be the same as last year. Some parents had asked for results and we are looking at ways to give parents some information. However it is information gathering and not an exact science so it needs to be decided how and what information from the screenings should be presented.

<i>School Board Report – Bob Speck</i>

- Last night was a budget forum meeting that was very well attended and many people participated via the option of viewing and participating through the internet.
- The School Board does not micromanage the School Budget. They sit on the sidelines and allow the school personnel to determine the best way to set the budget.

- This is another difficult year for the school district budget wise so it was important to determine priorities when developing the tiers of possible cuts. Years ago the state was contributing 60% of a school districts funding and now we are down to getting only about 40% from the state which means 60% needs to come from taxpayers.
- There are 4 tiers of cuts proposed. Tiers 1 and 2 try to maintain those high priority items and once we get into tiers 3 and 4 we are making major cuts that would have extreme impacts upon the students and their education in our district.
- There are 38 line items in Tier 1 cuts including many staff cuts, the elimination of the library clerks, the reduction of the 4 Stevens Kindergarten classes to 3 going into 1st Grade and the elimination of the open door program.
- Tier 2 cuts contain 8 more line items including more staff cuts, cuts affecting BOCES programs and the elimination of conference cost reimbursement and staff coverage for staff wishing to attend conferences.
- There is another forum on March 25th to gather public input and that will be held at the East Glenville Firehouse.
- The Board votes on the budget on April 13th and the public vote is on May 18th.
- There are two seats up for election this year. One is Mr. Specks which he will be seeking reelection for and the other one is Tim Kelliher's.

The next PTA meeting will be held on Thursday, April 15th at 7 pm

Meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm

Submitted by Jessica Rzeszotarski
Stevens PTA Secretary