

**Somers Middle School PTA
Executive Board Meeting Minutes
November 17, 2011**

Attendees: Kathy Cucchiarella, Linda Verderame, Patrice Graham, Susette Acocella, Janice Pirrotti, Kirstin Reynolds, Becky Williams, Jennifer Maestri, Colleen Olifiers, Christine Adler, Susan Moon, Elizabeth Acosta, Christine Rossiter, Teresa Lombardi

Call to Order: Becky called meeting to order at 9:25 a.m.

Approval of Minutes: The October meeting minutes were accepted without changes

Presidents Report:

- Met with administration, discussed the budget and the session that Dr. Blanch has been holding. They are exploring all options. Looking at everything. Dr. Blanch is open to any ideas. They will have the pension and healthcare numbers in February.
- Dr. Blanch will have monthly excerpts in the Somers Record. He will also attend the January joint PTA meeting. Dr. Blanch also has been utilizing Council as a "focus group" to see what we value.
- Administration may be asking for parent volunteers to help students at recess to organize games. A walk around the property was conducted to see if there could be more space for kids to play. Discussion took place about a possible footbridge to Fireman's Field (maybe an Eagle Project). This idea has come up in the past –we will re-visit this.
- Anti-bullying seminar by Dr. Joel Haber will take place on November 21st at the High school.
- The staff basketball game will take place on January 20th with a snow date of February 2nd. It will be SMS versus SIS staff. Mr. Lopez is leading the initiative. They are looking for volunteers to join the committee. Dr. Blanch will be the referee.
- A discussion took place about collecting donations to offset the Washington trip for those students unable to attend. Let's get the student council involved in fundraising.
- Kate working on directory to be handed out before Thanksgiving.
- Tour company running the 8th grade trip to Washington came to the school to speak to the parents. Parents were pleased with the presentation.
- Next year we will have a "Washington Recap meeting". Talked about starting the fundraising earlier next year.
- Brick fundraiser was discussed.
- Mrs. Watkins has sent a communication out to all the staff about joining the PTA and the "competition among the campuses". All teachers who are PTA members will be entered in a raffle. Prize is \$100 to be used in their classroom. Winner will be chosen at the basketball game in January.
- Next meeting is a joint meeting with the High School on February 9th at 7:30pm. Linda Morgante has arranged for Andrea Fallick and Judy Mezey to come to the meeting on February 9th to speak to the parents to discuss "What all parents need to know about current drug trends". These women spoke at the Parent Portion of the fitness fair. Many parents found the discussion to be very informative and stated it was a good idea for them to return.

- Mrs. Watkins will begin her coffee sessions on December 7th. The topic will be "Sensitivity". The second one is scheduled for December 14th. Topic will be "Impact of your Words".
- We will follow up with Mrs. Watkins about SMS signing up for the Stop & Shop fundraiser.
- Kathy was contacted by Linda Boyce a representative of "At Home in Somers". At Home in Somers is an organization that helps senior citizen in our community who prefer not to go to assisted living. They help with needs that they may have (shopping, transportation to doctors etc...) They are hosting a Comedy Night fundraiser on November 18th at the middle school. At Home in Somers would also like to donate time to our school. Possibly run a camp (gardening, quilting etc...)

Teacher Liaison Report/Kristin Reynolds:

- Will discuss with staff the importance of being a part of the basketball game.
- Mrs. Reynolds informed us that the teachers are willing to do more to help the district.
- Will remind the staff about becoming a member of the PTA.

Treasurer Report

- The balance in our account is \$44,000.

Membership

- As of November we have 378 parent members and 47 staff totaling 425 members.

Health & Safety

- Their focus is on the on going bullying that is happening in our school. It is not being addressed properly. In need of a continuous program to educate children. The Anti-Bullying law will be in place by July 2012. Must be a program that reaches everyone. The law makes suggestions on how to implement. Dr. Faustino has suggested the Step One program which is a program that runs every 2 weeks. School is looking into this. Funding has been privately offered.
- Some ideas the committee has shared with us include: Post monthly "thought provoking statements" on our bulletin board in front entrance. Hold a movie night (show Flipped or That's What I am). Have age appropriate movies during indoor recess. Offer an Anti-Bullying awareness club after school with a parent advisor or counselor. Utilize our schools mini-grants. Discussion took place on possibility of having students anonymously tell "their stories". Next year will hold anti-bullying week in October. Student's artwork will be displayed in the building. Working on having curriculum tie-ins and decorate the school. Discussion took place about are there any video opportunities in the hallways while students are changing classes.

Parent Programs

- Discussion took place about how do we incent parents to come out to participate in our programs.
- The committee attended a Rachel Simmons presentation focusing on social networking and emotional disrespect. She was excellent but costly.
- Possible topic the committee is looking into is managing stress and anxiety.
- Will explore having Judith Segal visit.
- Kathy reminded the committee that there is \$500 in discretionary funds if they feel strongly about a speaker who costs more than our budget of \$1750.

Socials

- 182 children attended the 6th grade social. We made \$1109. Administration will be speaking to all 6th graders about there behavior at the dance. Students were messy and disrespectful.
- Going forward all signed social permission slips will be kept on file with Mrs. Watkins.

Fundraising

- Box top fundraiser raised \$103. The winner for the 1st contest was Madeline Meyer.
- We made a \$600 profit with the Pizza fundraiser. We had 30 SMS families participate.
- To date we have received \$850 in direct donations.

Meeting Adjourned: 11:29 a.m.

Minutes recorded by Teresa Lombardi
SMS PTA Recording Secretary