

Huntington School PTO

Meeting Summary

April 12, 2018

Board members in attendance:

Meghan Vitale

Leeann Wiess

Angie Vigliotti-Martinez

Ann Yarka

Administrators: Mrs. Harlow, Principal

Building and district staff: Ms. Hallinan, Ms. Poswiata, Mr. Curinga, Mr. Kieffer, Mr. Dehm, Selina Lazarus

Others: 2 parents

Board member reports

Ann reported that karate is doing great, although a few kids have left the program recently. There are just a few weeks left for the year, and then they will have a pizza party.

No update on Box Tops.

Ann still has not received a check or an update from our 5 Below fundraiser.

Family Dance was held March 9. Meghan reported that there were about 60 students in attendance, and the PTO profited about \$100 (confirmed after meeting – total profit was \$81).

Gertrude Hawk sale was reported on at previous meeting. Delivery occurred week of March 26 – it was delayed due to winter weather. Mr. Curinga noted that he has one parent that still says they have not received the correct order. Meghan will ask Emily to give Mr. Curinga the customer service phone number, to pass on to the parent.

There was a discussion about other fundraising ideas, since it was noted that we did not do the Genevieve's fundraiser this past fall and we would like to find a replacement for this. Mr. Curinga suggested a carnival and a basket raffle. The group discussed the challenges with these ideas, mostly the lack of volunteers to organize these. The PTO ran a carnival many years ago – it takes a lot of planning and someone would have to spearhead that. Mr. Curinga said that at his child's school, the teachers run the carnival. It was unclear whether a carnival at Huntington might be a fundraiser, or a parent engagement/community activity. Meghan noted that ENA also held a carnival in recent years, but stopped doing this because of the amount of planning required and some issues encountered at the carnival, although it was open to the entire community. A basket sale or raffle was discussed, but again, the challenge would be finding donations. We already ask for prize donations for Bingo. Mr. Curinga suggested that each grade level could contribute a basket – it would be up to the grade to decide if they want to seek donations or just buy items to contribute. Angie noted that Varsity swim does a fundraiser with baskets, and some parents donate a basket of items that they have purchased and arranged. Several people suggested that the back-to-school BBQ would be a good time to hold the sale/raffle, since there are already a lot of people in attendance – but that would require that the baskets be assembled/donated over the summer. There was also a suggestion for a backpack raffle, rather than baskets. Meghan noted that the Board had been considering doing a fall plant sale, but that conversations with a greenhouse have suggested that the timing would not work out (mums are pretty much already sold out by the time we could get an order in after school starts). A poinsettia/holiday plant sale was suggested instead. The Board will continue to investigate all of these ideas.

Family Fun Bingo Night was held on April 6. We had some great prize donations – thank you to Leeann for securing those donations. About 20 families attended, and we made \$120.

New Business

Earth Day cleanup is Saturday, April 21. Emily is organizing her Girl Scout troop, and will coordinate with Huntington. We are not sure on the start time yet, but the PTO will send a flyer home next week.

PTO Board elections will be held at the next meeting. Flyers to go home next week.

Administrative report

Mrs. Harlow provided the administrative report. The NYS ELA assessments were held yesterday and today. Tests were much shorter this year, but many students took extended time to complete writing portion (there was no time limit). Huntington had no opt-outs this year, and a participation rate close to 95% before make-ups. Make-ups will be held Friday and Monday. Math assessment will be held May 2 and 3, and the NYS Science test for fourth and eighth graders will be the week of May 23. Some eighth graders will also take Algebra and Living Environment Regents exams in June. Meghan encouraged more non-food incentives post-testing, instead of food-centered parties like the pizza and ice cream parties that some grades are holding.

Huntington Around the World was held in March, and was really nicely done. There were some great presentations from our students, and they really enjoyed the experience. Only grades 3, 4, and 5 participated this year. We'll think about expanding it next year. A parent suggested that it would be better to hold this event in the evening so that more working parents could attend to see the great work the students put in. Meghan also encouraged this, noting that there were very few parents in attendance.

Summer school will run for 4 weeks, mornings only, and our students will go to Levy school because of the renovations in our building.

Bids from contractors for the building renovations were due yesterday; Mrs. Harlow had not heard anything about the responses so far. We are still anticipating that the front of the building will be worked on first. The entire project has a two-year phasing plan.

There will be several retirements this year, and a couple of resignations, so the administration is working on scheduling and staffing for next year.

Attendance is still a big initiative throughout the district.

New security measures have been implemented over the past month. We had been seeing improvements in hallway behavior, and a reduction in the number of people in and out of the building throughout the day. But, there were some concerns the past few days. The school received an influx of middle school students returning and new students that had been in alternative programs or homebound, which has caused disruptions in the established routines.

Funding requests

Mr. Dehm requested \$500, or up to \$700, for Rocketfest. Leeann noted that we never received his paperwork documenting this fund request. Mr. Dehm stated that Rocketfest has been going on for 17 years. The students launch rockets in the morning, and there are celebratory rockets for retirees at the end of the day. Some money has been donated by Syracuse Rocket Club. Most parts – like engines, etc. – are NOT reusable. Mrs. Harlow has already provided \$500 towards the event, and Mr. Dehm is still waiting to hear about another possible donation. Event will be held Monday, June 18. Meghan asked what the overall expense is expected to be for this event on an annual basis so that PTO can include this in our future budgeting. Mr. Dehm stated that the event requires at least \$1000, but up to \$1500 (depending on how many “large” rockets are included), and that this will be a recurring expense annually. Mrs. Harlow

confirmed that she expects to be able to contribute \$500 from her funds each year, so that leaves \$500-\$1000 to be filled by PTO each year. Leeann asked for a motion to approve the request. The motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Curinga removed the request for \$260 for lunch for the NJHS students on the New York City trip (this was for \$20 per student, 13 students). Leeann asked for clarification on some of the expenses associated with this trip. Mr. Curinga stated that the bus costs \$3000. He worked with Mrs. Harlow this year to document that this is an “educational fieldtrip” and, therefore, it was approved to be paid out of Mrs. Harlow’s budget. The cost charged to each student is \$525 (only 12 students are actually attending). The total cost of the trip this year for all students and chaperones is \$11,728. Student contribution is $\$525 \times 12 = \6300 , and parents are $\$600 \times 4 = \2400 . So, total paid by students and parents is \$8700. The balance is about \$3000, which is just about the cost of the buses. Leeann asked what would happen if NJHS had not received the money for the bus from Mrs. Harlow’s account; Mr. Curinga and Mr. Kieffer said they would have cancelled the trip because they do not feel they can ask the families to pay any additional costs. Mr. Curinga stated that he asked for the \$260 from PTO because it has traditionally been paid by the PTO, and he expected that this would still be the case. Leeann emphasized that the PTO is trying to encourage all grades to use their funds within the year that they raised them and it is generally our policy only to approve expenditures from the PTO general account after grade-level account funds have been depleted; so, we questioned why PTO general funds should be used by NJHS when the NJHS has a substantial fund balance (at least \$9000 unallocated in their account). Meghan also stated that, personally, she feels the PTO general fund should be used to benefit the largest number of students as that money belongs to the entire school community and the PTO has a responsibility to all families that have participated in fundraisers. There was no action on this request since it was withdrawn.

Added agenda items

Ms. Lazarus noted some upcoming Parent University events, including a dance class through the Health Department. She’ll send a flyer. Paint Knight at Henninger will be April 30; you must pre-register.

Mrs. Harlow commended the PTO Board on the fiscal management of the organization. She is impressed with the transparency. She also commended Mr. Curinga and Mr. Kieffer for their management of the NJHS trip. Leeann noted that the PTO’s record keeping has improved greatly, and she really appreciates Emily’s efforts on this.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:30 p.m.