Minutes

Plympton Elementary PTO

September 20, 2012

The meeting was called to order by Hamish Sherlock at 7:05 p.m.

In attendance

21 parents

8 PTO board members

Principal: Mrs. Taddeo

Vice Principal: Mrs. Hurwitz

Teacher representative: Mrs. Pinto

Special guests:

* Mayor Jeanette McCarthy
* Kim Scott, Recreation Supervisor, City of Waltham Recreation Department

Approval of Minutes

This is the first meeting of the school year and therefore there were no minutes to approve.

Treasurer’s Report  
by Melanie Sherlock

* The budget for the current school year is still in draft form and the treasurer will distribute a final budget for review and approval at the next meeting.
* Currently, there is approximately $21,000 in the account.
* Some changes to this year’s budget are that there is a higher projected budget for free fundraising, such as BoxTops, Shoparoo, and the Stop and Shop A+ program.
* A question was asked about the absence of the 5th grade line item in the budget. That money can come from the miscellaneous line item if needed.
* Also, an item has been added to the agenda for Champions to provide extended learning during the PTO meetings. The board is hoping to increase attendance by making this service available to parents who do not have childcare for the meetings.

Executive Board Report  
by Hamish Sherlock

* New board members were introduced: Hamish (president), Anina (vice president), Melanie and Laurie (treasurer), Melissa and Erick (corresponding secretary), and Kristie and Michelle (recording secretary).
* The new board was very busy over the summer trying to plan out the upcoming school year.
* Jessica Vautour will continue to chair the Restaurant Night Out fundraisers.
* The Halloween party/fall event will be on Saturday, October 27 from 5:30-8:00. The committee still needs a chairperson and volunteers.

Principal’s Report  
by Mrs. Taddeo

* This year’s teacher representatives will be Susan Pinto and Mrs. Bower.
* Mrs. Paradis and Mrs. Hagan-Alves will continue to be the Multicultural committee representatives.
* There are 417 students currently enrolled at Plympton.
* Miss Schulle is a student teacher from Simmons working with Mrs. Paradis in the library.
* Mr. Kutcher, a former Plympton student, is a new paraprofessional working at Plympton this year.
* Carla Uzzel is the new literacy coach.
* We are currently looking for a 0.4 reading teacher.
* Sometime over the weekend, the gate near Farnsworth was ripped out of the sidewalk. We are currently using orange cones to stop traffic during recess.
* Thank you to Mrs. Schmidt for the bulletin board in the hallway demonstrating this year’s Plympton PRIDE initiative. The first featured item is P for Positive Attitude.
* Thank you to Constant Contact, a local business, for donating school supplies (backpacks, markers, crayons, Kleenex, hand wipes, etc.)
* We received a $200 donation from the Arts Council to be used for art supplies.
* We are currently working on the BOKS Program. We are actively pursuing this physical program for before school in the gym. We are hoping to start in February.
* Mrs. Arsenault is awaiting surgery and will be out indefinitely. Mrs. Butler is acting in her position, but they have posted a perma-sub position.
* Cafeteria: -the best way to buy is to set up an account instead of sending money into the school. If you want information about setting up an account, please contact Mrs. Butler.
* Volunteers: Must be CORI-approved through Waltham Public Schools in order to volunteer at the school. It doesn’t matter if you are CORI-approved through another organization. The approval needs to be for the Waltham Public Schools. See Mrs. Brophy for more information.
* Picture Day: September 27 is picture day. You will receive a reminder phone call on Wednesday.
* Thank you to Mrs. Lear for the going green email distribution list.
* Teacher’s survey: A survey was taken by teachers in the spring. Teachers were able to comment on the school environment. The highlights included:
* Managing student conduct
* Teacher Leadership
* School Leadership
* Professional Development
* Community support and involvement
* Instructional practices

Areas that need improvement

* Provide more time for teachers to collaborate
* Textbooks: We were short some math books at the grade 3 level. The error occurred at the district level. We have received the missing books and they were distributed yesterday.

Vice Principal’s Report  
by Mrs. Hurwitz

* Brandeis will be coming in to convene the Jr. Achievers group for grades 3, 4, and 5. This year, they are limiting it to two activities
* Regis College has two student teachers for 2nd and 5th grade.
* We are currently involved in a senior citizen volunteer program helping grades K-2.
* Homework help will be provided by certified teachers from Brandeis that will come in to assist with homework.
* Bentley University has a group that works with ELL students.
* America Clicks is offered to 3rd and 4th grade. Two students from each classroom will be selected to meet with an America Clicks representative for 55 minutes each week to work on curriculum-related lessons.

Teacher’s Report  
by Mrs. Pinto

* On behalf of all the teachers, thank you for the Lakeshore gift cards.
* Thumbs up to the earlier start time for Open House. Also, the tables with information were great.

Multicultural Report

* The first meeting will be Tuesday, September 25 at 8:00 a.m. in the library.
* This year, we are focusing on the continent Africa. We are looking for items to display from Africa. If you have any, please drop them off in the library.

Standing Committee Reports

1. Restaurant Night Out
   * We will have one restaurant night out per month throughout the school year.
   * September 18 was at Margarita’s we made approximately $200
   * Next Restaurant Night Out will be at the Chateau on Tuesday, October 16 from 5-8. A flyer will be sent home the week before.
2. Clip and Save Fundraisers
   * Box Tops for Education
     + Earned $427 during out summer collection
     + Javier Vega, Jr. is the winner of the family 4-pack of movie passes
   * Campbell’s Labels for Education
     + Earned over 44,000 points during a special bonus collection
     + Cashed in points to buy an iPod Touch for the library
     + Cashed in points to purchase a coop-a-walk and balance beam for the gym.
   * Coke Rewards
     + Cashed in points to buy six new scooters for the gym.
3. TerraCycle
   * We will be rolling the program out shortly. This year, we will be collecting juice pouches, chip bags, granola bar wrappers, candy wrappers, lunch kits, toothbrushes and dairy containers.
4. Shoparoo
   * Shoparoo is a free app for smartphones and tablets that lets anyone turn pictures of shopping receipts into donations to your school. With Shoparoo, every grocery receipt - regardless of the store or products purchased - earns money for your school. It's similar to other widely adopted box top and label collection programs, but with much less work involved. With Shoparoo, there's no collecting, tracking, mailing, or shipping. In fact, you don't even need a coordinator. (Though Shoparoo is most effective when you mention it alongside your school's existing fundraisers.) Finally, it's private. There's no need for parents to provide sensitive information such as their name, address, bank account numbers, credit card numbers, etcetera.
5. Halloween/Fall Event
   * Need help picking an activity to keep the kids engaged. Need help with decorating.
6. Visiting Artists – Cindy Boudreau and Elizabeth Lear

* Each year, the PTO organizes a visiting artist to visit each grade. The artist is usually tied into the curriculum for that grade.
* Kindergarten - a visit from the New England Aquarium and the dentist
* 1st grade – the dinosaur lady (paleontologist)
* 2nd grade – Museum of Science: Magnets
* 3rd grade - Museum of Science: Planetarium
* Grades 1 – 5 will have a visit from Clara Barton

1. Printed School Directory – Elizabeth Lear
   * The directory is in progress. School email lists have been finalized and the hope is to have the directory ready in a few weeks.
2. Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) – Anina Thompson
   * Should have it 2-3 times a year. First distribution should be in December.
3. Holiday Shopping – MaryBeth Walsh
   * Will take place, but need volunteers and gift wrap donations.
4. Fall Fundraiser – Hamish Sherlock
   * The Mixed Bags fundraiser kicked off today. Orders can be placed online or through the catalog through October 9. In order to stay on budget, we need to sell for $6000.
5. Holiday Pies – Lynn Galante
   * We will be taking pie orders for 2 weeks (October 1-15). The pies will be delivered during the November PTO meeting (November 15), which is the Thursday before Thanksgiving.
   * We need to sell at least 150 pies to receive the highest profit per pie ($7.50).
   * We are looking for a volunteer to chair the Holiday Pies next year since the current volunteer is a 5th grade parent.

Guest Speaker: Kim Scott

* The City of Waltham’s Department of Recreation has special events for no school and early dismissal days.
* For the fall session, there’s a Wednesday afternoon event in the gym at Plympton. You must be signed up to attend.
* Fall registration began last week. You can either register online or at the Parks & Rec office at 510 Moody Street.

Guest Speaker: Mayor Jeannette McCarthy

* Mayor McCarthy explained the Chill Zone. This year, they are phasing in the 5th grade by offering Chill Zone Friday nights for 5th graders.
* The Parks and Rec department is located at the old south middle school at 510 Moody St. They use the gym and auditorium. They will soon be providing a drama program.
* The mayor applied for and received federal grant money to renovate the former cafeteria into a “Skate and Skoot” similar to the old The Wal-Lex roller skating rink. It will feature the original disco ball from the Wal-Lex. There will be a wall dedicated to the Wal-Lex and a movie screen to show movies year round. You will also be able to rent skates.
* Drake’s Playground is a city park and not owned by Plympton School. It is maintained by the Parks and Rec Department. The park was renovated several years ago with improvements to spray park, the basketball area and the drainage issues.
* Currently, there is a 5 year capital project for the playgrounds. To have improvements made to a specific park, we need to form a group to discuss what improvements we would like to make. Quantify what you want. Requests need to be submitted by December to the city council.
* Current Issues:
  + The trees around the playground on the Bacon Street side next to the fence are dead.
  + Hazel Street trees – new growth. Trees need to be trimmed and groomed. Leaves and sticks land on the playground. Abandoned chain link fence and garbage dumped.
  + Tree in the middle of the outfield – why?
  + Playground is across the driveway from the school and when the gates are open, the “road” is being used as a cut through. May need speed bumps to slow the traffic down.
  + Need signs posted for no dogs.
  + No places for the parents to sit. No stairs down to the playground.
  + Already aware of the drainage issue.
  + The benches near the basketball court are not bolted down and if you lean on the bench, it will tip.
  + No sidewalk to walk around the park.

Next Meeting

* October 11, 2012, at 7:00 p.m., school cafeteria