

Pine Hill CSA Minutes

Online Zoom Meeting, due to Coronavirus School Closure
May 14, 2020

Present: Royale Abrams, Dr. Barbara Brown, Rachel Cohen, Molly Cullum, Ranjini Dowley, Kaitlin Dunham, Megan Edgar, Lynn Frigiani, Katie Garvey, Tara Hourihan, Hannah Ireland, Jackie Kleiman, Lauren Leahy, Nikki Miller, Christina Robida, Heather Shanahan, HESSIE Sheldon, Meg Siegal, Megan Stoessel

Call to Order

VOTE: Motion to open the May meeting of the CSA. Motion approved. The CSA monthly meeting was called to order at 2:02 pm.

Presidents' Report – Molly Cullum and Hannah Ireland

The presidents thanked board members for attending this Zoom meeting.

Scholarship Letters

The CSA gives a scholarship to DS seniors every year. This year we received four applications. The board will vote and the CSA will give two scholarships. Usually someone from the CSA presents them at graduation; this year we will probably mail them.

Year Wrap Up

The CSA has halted all fundraising. We will probably have to be creative about fundraising next year. This year we cancelled the book fair, the Luau, and the spring fundraiser because of the school closure. Many of our events earlier in the year were successful, so we are in a good place financially.

We will give teacher grants as planned.

The presidents thanked the board members for a good year.

Meg Siegel offered to lead a fundraising effort to raise money to plant new grass on the school fields, which she said could use some new grass. The board discussed this and Molly will follow up with Meg to determine if this is feasible.

Vice-Presidents' Report - Royale Abrams and Tara Hourihan

Operating manual

Four or five position descriptions are still needed for the board operating manual. Board members were asked to submit descriptions of their roles if they have not yet.

2020-2021 positions

A list of open positions was distributed before this meeting. Board members were asked to tell Tara and Royale if they want to switch roles. Board members were asked to help with recruiting for open positions. There has been some discussion about combining committees, or changing co-chairs to chair, to reduce the number of volunteers needed.

Auction

We are not sure what the auction format will be next year. For now, we will proceed as if it will be held in the same format as in the past, with the awareness that it may need to be held as an online auction only. We would like to begin getting auction committee positions in place. Lauren, Hannah and Molly will meet with the new presidents to plan.

Principal's Report – Dr. Brown

Dr. Brown expressed gratitude at seeing the board members at this meeting. She said that she misses our children very much.

Dr. Brown has been meeting with grade-level teams every week for planning. The thing they are most concerned with during this time is the ability to connect with kids at a relational level and the social stimulus that is critical to their interests and social development.

A couple of grade levels have made requests for virtual field trips.

Parents have been asking about how the school will welcome new kindergarteners and send off the 5th graders. The school has promised that there will be an in-person celebration for the 5th graders whenever this is possible. Parents are working behind the scenes to put together slide shows, and the students are making videos about legacy and leadership. Ideas are welcome for parents and staff that are working on this.

We are unsure what the beginning of school will look like in the fall.

We are focused on helping classroom teachers build meaningful relationship with students.

Behind the scenes we are working on placement of students into classes, master scheduling, and recruiting and hiring.

Today we reached out to the first grade families to tell them that we will be keeping the first grade classes together, although with different teachers. We feel this is best for our youngest students.

We aren't able to do this for kindergarten because they will be moving from three sections to four for first grade, as this is big cohort.

We are hiring new teachers for kindergarten and first grade because Mrs. Hilperts and Mrs. Sullivan are retiring. This year we have 19 classrooms and the school committee has approved 20 classrooms for next year. The current third grade, which has four sections, will have four sections again next year. First and fourth will be our big cohorts next year. Some teachers will shift grades, but not as many as last year.

Administration changes: Jim Carnes will become Interim Assistant Principal at Chickering. The Chickering Interim Assistant Principal will become Principal. Allison Gullingsrud will return from maternity leave on May 20th. Amy Beigel will remain as the gym teacher. We will hold Jim Carnes job for a year because his interim assistant principal job is for one year.

Teachers have been relaying questions from parents. Parents are asking what next year will look like. This is being considered and planning is ongoing. Parents are asking how to retrieve their children's things from the building. Families with immediate needs have been addressed, like medication and glasses. Until recently, the building has been shuttered and only the custodian has had access. Now Karen and Kristen in the front office are reporting to work a couple of days a week. Some teachers have been collecting things to return to families. A couple of high school seniors are planning a senior project to design structures to get each family's belongings returned.

Dr. Brown talked about the 5th graders losing the opportunity for a traditional year-end celebration. She asked if there would be an opportunity to give them a gift, perhaps something onsite where they can leave an inspirational quote and their handprints. Dr. Brown suggested a gaga ball pit. Molly said we don't have money in the budget for this but asked Dr. Brown to keep her in the loop on ideas for this and the board will discuss it.

Communications – Rachel Cohen and Ranjini Dowley

Rachel suggested sending out a CSA newsletter. Items include custodian appreciation day, retirements, and new hiring. Board members were asked to let Rachel know if they have ideas for newsletter content.

Rachel, Molly, Hannah and the new presidents agreed to meet to discuss the communications platforms to determine if there is an opportunity to lower costs.

Rachel has continued to work on updating the website.

Hannah wants to do a separate email to announce open positions on the board.

Dr. Brown said that the school has a paid account for webinars, which the CSA could use in the future for meetings, as Zoom only allows 40 minutes for a group this size.

Treasurer – Heather Shanahan

Heather has updated the financials. She is still waiting to hear from Broadmoor about whether we will need to pay the second half of our annual fee. Once we have this information, she can provide a more accurate picture of the end-of-year financials.

We netted \$4,600 on the raffle basket fundraiser. We gave refunds to everyone who registered for the Luau.

One thing to be cognizant of: we don't know what type of auction we will be able to run next year, and what people's capacity for giving will be, which makes it hard to budget for the next two years. In addition, the school and teachers may have new and different needs that they don't yet know about. As a reminder, the auction is our major fundraiser and funds two years of CSA budget.

The board was asked to submit any remaining receipts for reimbursement so Heather can close the books at the end of the fiscal year on June 30th.

Enrichment – Kaitlin Dunham and Lynn Frigiani

The 2nd grade has asked for funding to do a virtual field trip on June 8th hosted by the Roger Williams Zoo. Kaitlin said that 2nd grade parents had donated money at the beginning of the year for teacher gifts, and perhaps the room parents could ask the other parents if this money could be used for the virtual field trip.

The 5th graders have requested funding for an end-of-year program. Kaitlin will get more information about it.

We have nine grade-level enrichment programs that didn't come because of the school closure, as well as one all school meeting performance. We have not been paid for these programs; however, we also did not hold the Luau and fund for excellence fundraisers.

Molly and Hannah will meet with next year's presidents to discuss the budget for class requests for funding for virtual field trips or other end-of-year programs.

Events – Jackie Kleiman and Megan Edgar

Jackie has some things for the Luau from the CSA closet. She will return them when she can get into the building.

Metco – Angie Johnson and Lauren Leahy

The Metco scholarship fund has created a school closure emergency fund for DS families and staff. So far, 20K has been raised to help families and teachers in need at this time. An anonymous private donor will match up to 25K from now until the end of the school year. Information about this fundraiser will be sent out through the school's email. The CSA could also put it in the newsletter. Donations are being made to recipients in the form of grocery store and pharmacy gift cards. Over 80 families and staff have been helped.

New Families – Megan Stoessel and Nikki Miller

Nikki reached out to one new family this week. The child is in first grade. Going forward we will need to be creative with how we connect and meet people.

Veggieville – Julie Dreyfus

Julie thanked the CSA for the funding for the pumpkin patch, which was supposed to go in this fall but may have to wait until spring.

She suggested putting something in the garden to honor Mrs. Hilperts and Mrs. Sullivan.

She will ask Dr. Brown if it's okay to put some pumpkin seeds in the existing beds.

She has not yet heard about a DSEF grant she submitted for.

Volunteers – Katie Garvey

It would be helpful to have the class lists as soon as possible to begin recruiting room parents. The room parent job descriptions may need to be updated if we are still doing remote learning next year.

Adjournment

VOTE: Motion to close the March meeting of the CSA. Motion approved. Meeting adjourned at 3:09pm.

Approval of March 5, 2020 Minutes

EMAIL VOTE: Motion to approve the March 5, 2020 minutes of the CSA was approved by the majority of board members, as captured via email to CSA co-presidents following the March 5, 2020 meeting.