

## The Dover PTO Executive Board Meeting Minutes Friday, May 21st, 2010

**Attendees:** Betsy Ryan, Jennifer Friesen, Georgia Dakoyannis, Meg Field, Anne Nolen, Suzanne Nystrom, Michele Mandel, Pam LoDato, Vicki Hadar, Mary Yanke, Judy Schulz, Barbara Dawley, Carolyn Ringel, and Wendy Darragh.

### **Approval of the Minutes**

Ms. Betsy Ryan called the meeting to order. Ms. Pam LoDato recorded the minutes. The first order of business was to approve the minutes from the April 14th, 2010 Executive Board meeting. Ms. Ryan asked for any corrections to the minutes. No changes were suggested so a motion was proposed to approval the minutes.

### **VOTE:**

**To approve the April 14th, 2010 Dover PTO Executive Board meeting minutes, as submitted.**

The motion was seconded and accepted unanimously by the board.

### **President's Report**

Ms. Betsy Ryan gave an update on the Worthy Mural project. This project is teacher initiated. Mr. Downing made an announcement at the auction about the fundraising needed to make the project a reality. There was significant interest as was seen by a raising of paddles at the auction. No money was collected at that time. Any fundraising needs to come from the PTO as the 501(c) 3, not the school. After discussion, the board decided to talk with Mr. Downing about writing a letter to the parents who expressed interest at the auction. Ms. LoDato and Ms. Ringel will follow up on the fundraising effort with Mr. Downing and the teachers. Information about the project and the fundraising has already been published in the Chickering newsletters and checks for about \$1,300 have been collected from 4 families.

There will also be a tribute to Ms. Joanne Weltman, a long serving teacher at Chickering. Ms. Weltman retired last summer and recently passed away after a battle with cancer. There will be a remembrance at the school on June 10th. Members of the PTO may be asked to bring beverages and cookies.

### **Fundraising Report**

Ms. Suzanne Nystrom said that the auction volunteers were meeting later that morning to debrief on the auction process. Auction Chair, Nancy Kostakos put together a 14 page summary listing the pros and cons of running each part of the auction process. Recruitment of volunteers for all of the important fundraising positions is ongoing. Lynda Barnes and Jill Shea will take over the Easy Money programs. Sales of Innisbrook products will be offered only online next year. This will significantly

streamline the process for the PTO. The board expressed their deep appreciation for all of the successful fundraising activities done this year with a loud round of applause.

### **Community Outreach**

Ms. Vicki Hadar showed a poster she was creating to summarize and remind the Chickering community of all of their contributions to service projects this year. She also handed out cut out bubble paper for the board to write the accomplishments of the PTO volunteers for display. Progress is being made to get a permanent PTO and community information bulletin board at the school. Mr. Downing will communicate with the fire marshall on the placement of the board. In anticipation of all of the school approvals being in place, Ms. Hadar made a motion to fund the project.

### **VOTE:**

**The PTO supports the purchase and installation of a PTO and Community announcement board at Chickering to be put where deemed appropriate by the school. The PTO authorizes up to \$1200 to be spent on this project.**

The motion was seconded and accepted unanimously by the board.

### **Nominations Committee Report**

Ms. Michele Mandel thanked her committee members, Suzanne Nystrom, Vicki Hadar and Wendy Darragh for their good work. Currently there are a few open positions including the staff appreciation co-chairs. This year it seemed to be the same people contributing to the monthly luncheons. There are ideas being considered to simplify the teacher appreciation process. One idea was to organize projects around the class years. There was concern about asking the room parents to take this on as they already do other important organizing. There was an opening for second grade CE chair. Ms. Judy Schulz volunteered for the this position at the meeting.

Ms. Mandel reported that the single slate ballots have gone out to the parents. The vote will take place at the June 11th quarterly PTO meeting. She and the committee are very pleased with the composition of next year's board.

There is an additional need for three members for an Audit Committee. A key qualifications would be a financial or accounting background. Members can not have been involved with writing checks over the past several years. Ms. Georgia Dakoyannis volunteered. Two additional members are needed.

Other needs include a volunteer to shadow Ms. Sara Muckstadt in the website updating and to take over this position. With Ms. Dawley move to the treasurer's position, there will no assistant treasurer (AT). Ms. Dawley thought it could wait a year to recruit an AT. It had worked well to have an AT to take care of the auction work and there is no planned auction next year.

## **Vice Presidents' Report**

Ms. Anne Nolen and Ms. Meg Field reported that the final monthly teacher luncheon was to be held on June 2nd. Jen Atwood and Amy Caffrey did a great job organizing all of the staff appreciation events. In order to thank all of the PTO volunteers, Anne Nolen is planning to host a night out at her house on Thursday, June 17th.

## **School Directory**

Ms. LoDato reported that the directory committee, under the able leadership of Amy Melican, has begun its work for next year's directory. The suggestion was made that cell phone numbers be added to the directory. This information is already collected via the purple sheets from parents. It was concluded that the PTO would need to get permission to list the cell phone numbers. In addition, only one "preferred" cell phone number would be listed in the directory.

## **Curriculum Enrichment**

Michele Mandel reported that her committee is looking at a 17% increase in next year's budget versus prior years' 10% increases. This larger than usual budget increase has been driven by the teachers' requests for expanded programs. Next year the CE program will include an additional writer's workshop for the 3rd and 5th graders. The first graders will add back the Audubon walks for about \$1300. The fourth grade bird house kits will be eliminated.

In talking to the teachers, the CE programs, such as the writer workshops, were described as great learning experiences for the teachers. It is important to get the word out to the Chickering community what a positive impact these programs have on both students and staff.

Upcoming CE events include the National Geographic maps for the 4th graders. These maps will be available for all students to see during their 2 weeks display. The African Acrobats will perform on 5/27. There will also be a nutrition program on June 16th by a mime. Both Weston and Wellesley have hosted this program with good reviews.

The board gave a big thanks to Michele and Mary for their hard work on all of the wonderful school programs.

## **Volunteer Report**

Ms. Carolyn Ringel brought up the idea of having Destination Imagination as an after school activity at Chickering. Dr. Terry Nugent spoke very enthusiastically about this program at the last PTO quarterly meeting. This is an international program which teaches kids strategic problem solving skills. The local teams are usually affiliated with schools but run by parents. Each team has between 5-7 students, beginning with third graders. The teams meet once a week over the school year. In the fall, the teams get organized and between December and April they get problem solving assignments. The assignments can be in the arts, science and many different disciplines. The teams compete within local districts with winners going to state and national competitions.

After a lively discussion on the topic, it was the consensus that the PTO consider offering to front the money for the program, with fees from the participants eventually covering all of the costs of this after school program. The PTO could help coordinate the parent volunteers and recruit students for team participation. Ms. Laura Rinaldi has expressed interest in bringing such a program to Dover and might be willing to do the initial coordination. The idea will be discussed with Dr. Terry Nugent.

Ms. Ringel asked if she should forward all of the old committee notebooks to the incoming chair, Siobhan Doherty. Much of the material in the notebooks is quite old. All recent material is online or in electronic form. It was recommended that the material be passed onto the next person who can sort through and keep anything of interest.

### **Newsletter Report**

Ms. Judy Schulz said that the last newsletter for the year has a deadline of 5/28. Ms. Nolen and Ms. Field will submit information about next year's PTO activities. Ms. Judy was thanked for a job well done with a round of applause. There were more pictures and PTO publicity in the local newspapers than in any years past.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Ms Jennifer Friesen began by discussing a request for an additional \$200 to fund an end of year party for the Metco students and host families from Wendy Darragh. Ms. Ryan made a motion to appropriate the additional \$200.

### **VOTE:**

**The PTO will appropriate an additional \$200 for the Metco end of year event.**

The motion was seconded and accepted unanimously by the board.

Ms. Jennifer Friesen had communicated via e-mail her recommendation that the PTO invest \$50,000 in a 90 day term deposit to increase the interest rate on funds to .75%. Since that time, the bank introduced a new promotional rate of 1.05% for five months. This deal also allows one withdrawal with no penalty during the term. Ms. Friesen asked for approval from the board for this investment of the PTO's cash.

### **Vote:**

**The Board approves the investment of \$50,000 of the PTO's funds into in 5 month bank term deposit with a rate of 1.05%.**

The motion was seconded and approved unanimously by the board.

Ms. Friesen presented some of the issues that the PTO board needs to consider when looking at the PTO budgeting and capital expenditures over the next several years. The fundraising goal for each year drives the PTO's ability to fund the school programs

and capital expenditures. Traditionally there have been auction years where there is significant fundraising and non-auction years where there has been a letter writing campaign and smaller fundraising events. Ms. Freisen reported that past fundraising letters raised \$34,000 in 2008-09, \$29,000 in 2007-08 and just \$11,000 in 2006-07.

Next year is a non-auction year and the fundraising budget is \$40,000 for the letter campaign and other smaller events. Current plans include a continuation of Easy Money and a new kid oriented event such as the race done by Charles River School. There are plans for a fall community building event that will include a few auction items and a raffle. The board felt that we should set a strong fundraising goal for budgeting purposes.

The other important question was how often the PTO wants to put on a large scale auction. Traditionally the PTO has had an auction every 4 years. The frequency of a large fundraising event directly affects how much the PTO can spend annually on capital expenditures. This led to considerable discussion about when the PTO should plan to have the next auction.

Consensus was that the PTO has a very successful model in place based on this year's auction. The PTO should plan on doing an auction every other year with a goal of raising \$60,000. The auction should run in opposite years of the Pine Hill auction. While the work on the auction was significant, there are ways to streamline the work. There is also a considerable amount of work that goes into many of the smaller events done in the past that raise much less money.

The board felt it was important to continually communicate with the Chickering community to explain the needs of the school and how the PTO is spending its money. Past experience has shown that parents will give generously once they understand the needs.

Ms. Betsy Ryan spoke about some of the potential projects for PTO capital gifts. Suggestions included new choral risers, playground improvements, classroom white boards, and AV equipment for the gymnasium. It was decided to do more study of the playground needs in concert with the school committee and the town. The PTO will also explore the technical requirements for AV equipment for the gym. Ms. Meg Field will speak with Mr. Harte and community experts to determine the best type of equipment for the school. The possible announcement on DSEF grants for additional white boards will be made in early June.

Ms. Ryan recommended that the PTO approve up to \$10,000 for the purchase of new choral risers. The current risers are very old and believed to be a safety hazard.

#### **VOTE:**

**The PTO approves the expenditure of up to \$10,000 for the purchase of new Choral Risers for the music department at Chickering.**

The measure was seconded and passed unanimously by the board.

The board felt it very important that the PTO and teachers get multiple bids to ensure the prices the PTO is paying are as low as possible. Ms. LoDato will coordinate the purchase of the choral risers with Ms. Ida Pappas and ensure that the PTO is getting the best price possible.

The next PTO Executive Board meeting will be on Friday, June 11th at 9:00 am, in conjunction with the PTO quarterly meeting.