

# **Dover PTO**

## **Minutes of an Executive Board Meeting**

*December 14, 2007*

**Attendees:** Dana White, Wendy Darragh, Laura Rinaldi, Betsy Ryan, Sue Dangel, Julie Cook, Gina Saltonstall, Annemarie Thompson, Christine Colbert, and Dawn Fattore.

An Executive Board Meeting of the Dover PTO was held at Chickering Elementary School, commencing at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, December 14, 2007. Ms. White, the President, chaired the Meeting and Ms. Rinaldi, the Secretary, recorded the minutes.

**VOTE:**

**To approve the November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2007 Dover PTO Executive Board meeting minutes.**

Upon motion duly made and seconded, this request was unanimously approved.

### **President's Report**

Ms. White started the meeting by updating The Board on The Dover PTO website task force. She presented 5 options for the home page, all complying with ADA standards (to enable vision-impaired access). The Board voted on a preferred look and feel for the home page, and Ms. White will take this back to the website developer to begin work. A "first draft" test site should be operational in the beginning of January.

Dr. Davis's retirement reception was a nice event that was well received by the retiring superintendant of Dover/Sherborn schools. The Dover PTO supplied desserts and the students of Chickering created a congratulatory banner that was hung in display.

### **Vice President's Report**

Ms. Darragh, the Vice President, stated that the last two outstanding Teacher Grants were confirmed and granted. The teachers were very appreciative and have already started ordering their items and will be reimbursed by the PTO.

Some discussion was had around the possible reinstatement of the Giving Tree. Ms. Fattore stated that she noticed that some teachers may have individual needs that parents in the classroom would

like to fulfill. The Giving Tree could be a nice vehicle for this. A volunteer will be identified to look into this further.

## **Outdoor Classroom**

Ms. Fattore, PTO advisor, gave an update on the Outdoor Classroom. The hardscape (stonework and containers) has gone in. As this was being finished, it became apparent that the irrigation system should be done now to avoid rework in the spring.

### **VOTE:**

**To approve the previously discussed \$3,000 necessary to implement the Outdoor Classroom's irrigation system.**

Upon motion duly made and seconded, this request was unanimously approved.

Because the water is currently shut off, half of the \$3,000 will be paid now, and the remainder will be paid after the water is back on and the system can be tested.

Board members pointed out that some teachers are still not clear as to what the Outdoor Classroom is. Deb Reinemann will re-clarify this to the teachers and aides, and a sign will be posted on the shed.

## **Volunteers**

### ***Playground Task Force***

Ms. Dangel, along with the Playground Task Force, gathered a lot of information and organized it into one document (see attached). Some highlights included lack of basic playground equipment like balls and hula hoops, and lack of standardized indoor recess procedures. Ms. Dangel will take this information and meet with Mr. Kirk Downing, school principal, and Ms. Ginny Keniry, assistant principal, next week to determine the next steps. The Playground Task Force will also incorporate the aides into this process to make sure we are addressing their needs as well as the students during recess.

### ***School Photographer***

An email was sent to all Chickering parents soliciting feedback on the current and previous school photographers. Of 68 responses, 62% indicated that they were happy with the current photography company, Coffee Pond. Although other options were mentioned and discussed, Coffee Pond was overall favorable and competitively priced. We will forward feedback received to Coffee Pond in the hopes that previous issues will be addressed in next year's photo shoot. Also, we will inquire about the option of taking several shots of one child and giving the family online options for purchasing the best one. Finally, we will summarize the

responses in the January newsletter to communicate back to parents our thanks for their participation and input, and our final photographer decision based on that input.

### Emergency Phone Tree Test

Chickering was released early yesterday for snow. Because Comcast High Speed Internet service has Chickering identified as a “spam” source, we were unable to send a broadcast email to all parents. Therefore, we tested the emergency phone tree for the first time. Although the overall process went pretty smoothly, this gave us an opportunity to identify areas of confusion so that we can more effectively operate next time. Below is a list of suggestions the Board identified, and they will be communicated to Mr. Downing.

Observations	Recommendations
It was very time-intensive to call all parents - some parents not getting the message until 2 hours after declaration was made.	A "reverse-911" system would help immensely "family phone trees" would reduce number of redundant calls
There was some confusion about the procedure - yellow form versus that day's note	Room parents should communicate <b>consistently</b> to all parents three things: what time are the children being release - Chickering AND MS/HS what is on your yellow form - bus or pickup if you need to change that for this day, please call office
People couldn't remember what was on the yellow form	Give this information to room parents for file and to parents to re-clarify Give parents a chance to change this by calling office
What should be done if there is no answer?	Instructions on yellow form are followed Parents should have a plan with their children
Some teachers were circumventing the phone tree and calling parents - this was redundant	Until reverse-911 system is in place, teachers should minimize the amount of calls they have to make that day - pto phone tree is sufficient
Sandy Copeland is responsible for METCO families	Communicate this to all room parents
Are there different types of "emergencies"?	Clarify types of emergencies
What happens when emergency is lifted - i.e. lockdown situation?	Clarify this for phone tree and "reverse-911" systems

### Community Outreach

Ms. Colbert informed the Board that a “Gifts for Kids” program was introduced by Mrs. Grady to the teachers, and several teachers opted to participate on a class level. A lot of great gifts have been purchased for needy children, and so the program is considered a success so far. Ms. Colbert will meet with Mrs. Grady to discuss ways the PTO could help improve upon efforts from this year to make an even bigger success next year.

The Community Outreach committee has identified a spring speaker – Dr. Nicolas Oreskovic. He is a practicing internist and pediatrician, and a fellow in the Harvard Pediatric Health Services Research Fellowship Program. Dr. Oreskovic’s research focuses on how the built environment can affect people’s health, particularly how it can affect chronic diseases in children.

In addition to the Haitian shoe drive in the spring, Community Outreach will also sponsor another food drive for “A Place To Turn” Food Pantry in Natick.

## **Fundraising**

Ms. Thompson stated that \$20,000 has been raised thus far in the check-writing campaign! This is a tremendous start to what is sure to be a successful campaign. There will be one more email reminder to parents regarding this campaign, and then fundraising efforts turn to the Casual Couples Spring Event.

The kickoff meeting for this event was held, and many details about the event were discussed. The event will have a golf theme, and there will be three areas of donation opportunities at the event, designed to maximize all different levels of participation.

1. a live auction will have “bigger ticket” items and will be bid on in a live auction format.
2. several box raffles will be available, coordinating with holes on a golf course. There will be a price for a ticket, and tickets will be placed in the box – winner drawn at random.
3. a “bag of chance” will be available with gifts ranging in value amounts, but ticket price will be standard.

Ticket price for the event will be \$75. It will be communicated to parents along with the invite that approximately \$35/person will cover appetizers and site rental fee. The remainder, \$40/person, will go toward the fundraising aspect of the night.

The “Easy Money” for Chickering continues to bring in money.

## **Communications**

Ms. Ryan pointed out that the Dads/Donuts event was spotlighted in the Dover/Sherborn paper. She is working towards getting one of our events on the front page soon, and is soliciting good pictures to submit.

Ms. Ryan is putting together the January newsletter and requested content for it from several people.

## **Treasury**

Although Ms. Friesen was not able to attend today’s meeting, Ms. White presented her topics in her absence. First, as mandated in our bylaws, the Treasurer needs an Audit Committee to ensure that PTO funds are managed in a businesslike manner and to ensure that the PTO’s assets are appropriately safeguarded. Members are picked from the community at large, with one being a PTO Board member. The attached document outlines the Terms of Reference for this Audit Committee.

After some discussion, the Board identified the Curriculum Enrichment chair to sit on the Audit Committee. This Board member offers a sound cross-check for the treasurer because she is involved in a lot of the check requests but does not at any time have check-writing authority.

**VOTE:**

**To adopt the Terms of Reference as written in the attached document.**

Upon motion duly made and seconded, this request was unanimously approved.

**VOTE:**

**To approve the new Audit Committee members Erika Lert, Chris Fiore, and PTO CE Chair Julie Cook.**

Upon motion duly made and seconded, this request was unanimously approved.

## **Curriculum Enrichment**

Ms. Cook stated that they are kicking off the “Understanding our Differences” series for the second grade. All programs seem to be progressing well.

Given the new curriculum changes, new art enrichment programs may prove to be too much for teachers to take on at this point. All research done to this point will be forwarded to Dover Parks and Recreation as potential programs for them to offer.

## **Wrap-up**

Ms. White thanked all those present for attending. As there was no further business to come before the Meeting, upon motion duly made and seconded, the Meeting was adjourned.

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Laura Rinaldi