

**Thurston PTO General Meeting
October 15, 2019
Thurston Library
Meeting Minutes**

Board Members Present: Vice Principal Callahan, Kelly Delp, Ms. Geidner, Allison Jeter, Mary Manthey, Diane McIntyre, Elizabeth Morehead, Jon Svoboda, Kelly Williams, Nadine Wong, Principal York

Approval of Minutes from September 17, 2019 Meeting

Vice Principal Callahan asked that the minutes be amended to include a description of the Book Room as follows: “The new Book Room would be “the instructional resource that PreK/Y5 - 5th grade teachers use for all 505+ students here at Thurston. The room consists of leveled sets of fiction and non-fiction text that staff use for Guided Reading instruction. These books are organized in bags by sets and then in bins by levels for staff to use. The bookroom was moved from the previous location in order to make room for a Student Intervention and Support Services (SISS) resource room.”

Mary Manthey moves to approve the amended minutes, seconded by Emily Bellile. The motion passes. 1 abstention.

Treasurer’s Report. Treasurer Jon Svoboda presented an overview of the PTO finances and provided budgetary that reflected revenues and expenditures incurred in September. In addition to the ~\$33,000 targeted surplus balance recommended by the PTOC, the projection is that the PTO budget will have a surplus of \$16,219 at year’s end that could be used for special projects and new projects. The Fun Run is on track to meet their fundraising target.

Field Trips Support: The treasurer’s report addressed the topic of field trip expenses. In this year’s budget, the PTO will not solicit parent donations such that the field trip donations line item in the budget is reduced from \$6,000 to \$0. In order to account for projected expenses, the field trip expense line item also needs to be increased from \$16,000 to \$18,000. There is a discussion regarding potential full or partial support of this additional field trip expense by the Thurston Players. This would have to be determined after the current season of the Thurston Play.

Amy Sonntag moves to approve the \$2,000 increase for the field trip budget, seconded by Sarah Thompson. The motion passes with 3 abstentions.

Black Tie Blue Jeans (BTBJ): There was a request to provide more details about the BTBJ event. Jon Svoboda provided that the event incurred \$3,300 in expenses and that \$10,300 was

raised. There was some discussions about what activities, auction items generated the most income and whether there was interest in the PTO supporting this type of adult-only events in the future. Principal York suggested that further Black Tie Blue Jeans discussions be tabled until a future PTO meeting where the BTBJ co-chairs would be in attendance and could be celebrated for their work on this event. Allison Jeter will invite BTBJ co-chairs to a future meeting.

Principal's Report. Principal York reminded everyone of the upcoming Halloween celebration and parade. Costumes should stay away from blood, guts and gore and weapons. A concern was raised about adults wearing full-face masks during the parade, which posed a potential safety issue. Principal York acknowledged this concern and will next year consider asking adults not to wear full face masks.

Principal York clarified the no food rule around celebrations. Celebrations are considered as class parties. While the skating trip is also considered as a celebration, due to the length and time of the day of the skating event, a pizza lunch will be provided as in recent years. There were some questions raised around the inclusion of popsicles at the Fun Run. The Fun Run is not a celebration and the popsicles are considered as a reward for students' hard work. The Fun Run committee takes extra measures to be aware of allergies and special dietary issues.

Teachers' Rep(s) Report. No items to report

Committee Reports

Fundraising. Fun Run Update provided by Kelly Delp. The Fun Run has raised \$27,000 to date. Donations will be accepted until the following Friday. There is no request for volunteers for this event but families are encouraged to come cheer and support their students. The upcoming Turkey trot will need volunteers, so stay tuned. The Heron costume will make its debut at Fun Run!

Safe Routes/Safety. Update by Vice Principal Callahan. The committee is always looking for more family involvement and volunteers. Safe Route/Safety volunteer activities typically do not require long-term commitment or financial aspects. Any interested volunteers should contact Ms. Callahan or Alisa Cox.

Thurston Nature Center. Update provided by Elizabeth Morehead. TNC submitted their budget and calendar but some of these items and events will be dependent on weather and number of volunteers. There is an upcoming event on Friday October 25 - Fall Nighttime walk. This will be a great opportunity for the community to see the TNC at night.

Thurston Community Players. Update provided by Allison Jeter. Auditions are currently taking place and the Thurston play will occur in March. The theme of this year's play is around time travel. More information and updates will be shared in the future.

Other Reports/Updates

Halloween Candy Drive. Amy Sontag provided an overview of this event that happens shortly after Halloween and that is organized by the Community Service Club. The donated candy are sent to service members and also include a note from students. There has been a very positive response to this event. Ms. Bell shared how grateful her nephew and fellow service members were to receive candy from the 4th graders last year. Families are encouraged to contact Community Service Club to provide information of service members on active duty. The Community Service Club would like to request that PTO covers the cost of shipping for up to \$150 for this year and to consider adding this support as a line item in the budget for the upcoming year.

Elizabeth Morehead moves to approve up to \$150 to Community Service Club for shipping expenses, seconded by Sarah Thompson. The motion passes. 1 abstention.

Bylaws amendment. There are several questions about the new proposed bylaws. Principal York requested some clarifications around whether Thurston staff and teachers are eligible to run for Board seats. Language in the bylaws will be adjusted to reflect such eligibility. More clarification is required for instances where voting of the Board versus voting by the General Membership. There were changes in the bylaws that were discussed and voted on at last year's meetings, e.g. reducing number of members at large positions from 3 to 2. These changes are not reflected on the current version of the bylaws that are posted on the website. There was also some discussion about the composition and number of positions that should be available on the board. Anne Traicoff, Diane McIntyre, Jamie Tomasello and Michelle McManman agreed to work with the PTO to further discussions on number of candidates and position. The vote on the updated bylaws is tabled until a future PTO meeting.

Book Room proposal. Ms. York recapped the Book Room current situation and request that she submitted on behalf of the teachers at the September PTO Meeting. The current Book Room is not accessible and poses a safety hazard for teachers who are trying to use it. The request submitted at the September meeting is for \$17,813 for new furniture, storage units and books for the Book Room. Several teachers and members in attendance provided their support for this proposal and shared feedback on how the Book Room is an invaluable resource for the school, teachers and students. Some members shared their concerns about the financial scope of this request and whether this investment will be sustained in case the book room were to be relocated to another spot in the future. Topics raised included the amount requested is in excess of the current unallocated portion of the budget, the amount requested for furniture alone is about \$12,000 of the requested budget.

There was discussions about options to reduce the furniture cost by (1) reusing some of the existing furniture, (2) acquiring used furniture, (3) requesting support from AAPS, (4) exploring

different furniture layouts and configurations. Discussion on how the PTO could look into raising more funds for the book room through fundraising activities later in the year.

Elizabeth Morehead moved to approve \$17,813 for the Book Room, seconded by Diane McIntyre. The motion passes. 1 objection, 3 abstentions.

Stand up Desk Request. Request by Kelly Delp and Laura Clark for \$239.98 to purchase stand up desks for the front office.

Michelle McManman moves to approve a motion to approve \$239.98 for this purchase, seconded by Amy Sonntag. The motion passes. 3 abstentions.

Anne Traicoff moves to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Sarah Thompson.

The meeting is dismissed at 8:12pm

Action taken since October 15 meeting. The PTO Board considered a Special Grant request for the SpellingCity subscription renewal fee of \$648. This program is used daily by all upper elementary students and was due to expire on November 8, 2019. Will also suggest adding a line item in the budget for this expense at the budget meeting in 2020.

This request was approved unanimously by all PTO Board members.