



Cottage Street School PTO Membership Meeting Minutes October 2, 2014

Meeting began at 7:03 p.m., adjourned at 8:25 p.m.
24 people present

1. **Welcome and Introductions**
2. **Approved September 2014 meeting minutes by voice.**
3. **Treasurer's Report:** Elizabeth reviewed income and expenses, report distributed.
4. **Committee Updates:**
 - a) **Book Fair:** The Book Fair earned more than budgeted. Leandra did an amazing job, which is greatly appreciated. She also had a wonderful team of volunteers. We should spread the word about the scholastic money for teachers, book lottery, and books for Fun Fair that are earned.
 - b) **Picture Day:** Picture day is October 10. It is the only picture day this year as there will be no spring picture day. Sibling pictures are available. Pictures need to be pre-ordered. There will be two forms—1 for individual pictures and 1 for sibling pictures. Photo trinkets, like key chains, will be available too. We have switched from Lifetouch to Coffeepond, as the quality was declining with Lifetouch. Coffeepond uses handheld cameras, so can get better shots. Teachers should get pictures taken too. Class pictures will be outside, but not on the playground. We think that there will still be an online code, if one does not pre-order. Tom Roux suggested “Throwback Thursday” pictures of parents to advertise picture day—if interested, send an electronic scan of your old school pictures to Tom.
 - c) **Popcorn Friday:** 4 volunteers are returning on a regular basis. Wijen will come at 7, Elaine at 7:30. There are three tentative helpers as well. It is fun and a minimal time commitment. The popcorn and seasoning are kosher. From a health and wellness perspective, it isn't too bad. There were questions about serving size, seasoning used, etc.
 - d) **Box Tops:** Collection sheets are out now and due back October 16. Three winners will receive an iTunes gift card. CSS PTO earns \$.10/Box Top. Expired Box Tops are no good.
 - e) **Programming:** They are in touch with teachers and meeting soon with Mr. Madden regarding all-school programs. So far, Kindergarten is going to have yoga and dance programming and maybe Moose Hill if the budget permits. 1st grade will have Zoomobile. 5th grade will have Amelia Earhart. The rest is to be determined.



- f) **Kidstuff:** In the middle of the coupon book sale. It is going well so far. They will have one student bring the books back to the office, which might be a 5th grader for the Kindergarten class rooms. They will be collected Friday, October 10.

5. Principal's Report:

- a) Ms. Munise reported that the school year is off to a really smooth start and she is very happy at Cottage.
- b) The library naming for Joan Wernick is in process.
- c) Cafeteria Seating: We are just finishing the 2nd week of assigned seating. The kids seem to be eating more, but are still socializing and the cafeteria is still very messy. Mr. Madden is meeting with the staff shortly. Students can start earning paws by grade. Parents asked that special consideration be made for 5th grade, as it is their last year at Cottage and they need to be prepared for SMS. It was also asked that developmental issues be considered. Parents suggested having cleanup by table, having concerned parents come in to assist, and bringing in senior citizen volunteers (who would volunteer for a tax deduction). On a different note, someone asked about hand washing before coming to the cafeteria.

6. New Business

- a) **Halloween Bingo:** This event will take place on 10/28 from 6:30-8:00pm and is free. Tiffany Dunn volunteered to chair. There is a contest where previously carved pumpkins are judged. All students who participate in Bingo get prizes and winners get gift cards. Costumes are optional. There may be refreshments.
- b) **Vacancies—Family nights, recycling:** We would like to have a Game night in November. It could be a Hasbro or GameWright fundraiser or it could be that families just bring in their favorite games. For Recycling, we need volunteers to help on Friday mornings. It is quick and easy (usually done by 9:40am) and there is a rotating schedule of volunteers. The kids like to get involved. Someone could help by unsubscribing to all of the promotional magazines that the school gets. We also need more volunteers to help with Beautification.
- c) **Broadway Cougars-Oct 21 and 23:** Those are the audition dates. The performances will take place on Feb. 12 and 13. This is a musical extravaganza. The cast was too big last year and therefore difficult to manage. Mrs. Sellers will direct it with a smaller cast. Rehearsals will start late November and will be Tuesdays/Thursdays until 4:30pm. It will be restricted to 5th graders with auditions to limit the number. It will then be



opened to 4th graders if slots are still available. We know this will be hard for current 4th graders, but it will be something for 5th graders to look forward to. It is an original show that Mrs. Sellers is writing. One parent asked whether younger students could be involved on stage crew/tech support. On a related note, CSS PTO will insure that there will be some sort of Talent Show for all grades to participate in.

- d) **Zipper Bags:** There was a call put forth to donate the easy to close kind of zipper bags for “Books on the Go”. They need to be gallon-size. There was a discussion on alternative storage solutions and whether the bags have to be clear. It was determined that they should be waterproof. If the bags are not donated by individuals, teachers can use the reimbursement provided by PTO.
- e) **Guest speakers:** Two years ago PTO conducted a survey to find out whether people would be interested in staying longer for a speaker after the regular meeting. Who would you want to see? Someone mentioned that relevance is important—for example, having Tim Farmer explain redistricting a few years ago was very helpful. Emilia Brauer suggested having an author, who is a psychologist, speak about the benefits of Screen Free week—she is going to contact him. Other suggestions were a children’s author or the School Safety Officer. It would have to be a volunteer this year, but we could budget for it in the future. Also, we could ask for a SEF grant for a speaker. General opinion was to try it once and see how it goes. It would help people to learn more about PTO and get more people in to meetings too.
- f) **SSEPAC:** Katrina Norman explained a bit about what SSEPAC is. The first meeting will be on 10/6 at 7:00pm in the SMS Conference Room. They will be planning for the year and are looking for ideas. You don’t need to have a child on an IEP or any kind of special plan in order to participate—it is open to all. Mr. Clough will speak at the meeting.
- g) **PTO website:** Tom Roux was praised for how great the PTO website looks. A discussion about online payment followed. We are looking at ways to pay online for membership and complete membership information online in the future.
- h) **Bike racks:** The bike racks are very crowded—it is great that so many students are riding bikes to schools. Can there be a new one added? The bike rally will be on Saturday, November 1. People discussed the logistics and laws regarding riding bikes to school, which brought forth the idea to have the School Safety Officer speak at a PTO Meeting.
- i) **Dropoff/Pickup procedures:** Parents are parking in the wrong church parking lot, which is leading to dangerous situations. Can the administration provide further clarification? Can additional staff/police be stationed at the entrance to the church parking lot? What about providing information at one of the Kindergarten parent introductions or at Back to School Night? Some suggestions were to make a video, display signs, or to have community



enforcement of the correct procedures. This also led to a discussion of busing—could the cost/family be decreased, as busing has safety and environmental benefits?

- j) **Snow removal:** Planning ahead for the winter, can there be a better system implemented to plow the playground so that students are able to have outdoor recess after it snows? It is important for students to get outside and they are eager to play in the snow. There seemed to be an inequity between how quickly the different elementary schools were plowed for this purpose. It was suggested that perhaps there could be a parent committee, but liability concerns were discussed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.