



Cottage Street School PTO Membership Meeting Minutes from December 3rd, 2015

Meeting began at 7:05p.m., adjourned at 8:33p.m.
14 people present

1. **Welcome and Introductions**
2. **Approved November 2015 meeting minutes by voice.**
3. **Treasurer's Report:** Elizabeth reviewed income and expenses, report distributed. This led to a discussion about membership, why our numbers are so low, and what we can do to increase membership. Should we send a targeted e-mail to those who haven't joined? Should we survey those who haven't joined? Should we increase the membership amount next year? Is there a misunderstanding that by joining, members are required to attend meetings, volunteer, etc.? Is there a cultural misunderstanding by some? Perhaps we can reach out to the Indian MOMS Club and Chinese MOMS Club. We might consider asking for donations on Giving Tuesday next year. It was agreed that we will send out a targeted e-mail after the holidays.
4. **Committee Updates:**
 - a) **Cougar Gear:** Discussion about what items are selling well, as inventory is low. Thinking of ordering new design in pink as well as blue and ordering tie dyes in the spring, as those are still popular. It seems to be working well to sell at more events. Perhaps we could add Cougar Gear to the SignUp Genius for events like Back to School BBQ where we already have plenty of volunteers.
 - b) **Programs:** The Zoomobile came for 1st grade. Kindergarten is in the midst of doing yoga. The all school hip hop assembly has been confirmed for January 26. 2nd grade will have author David Kelley visiting in March.
 - c) **Picture Day:** We discussed whether to sign a 3 year contract with Coffee Pond, where PTO would get a higher percentage. Someone raised the issue of having to buy pictures in advance of seeing them, but this is standard for all school picture companies. Retakes went smoothly. Class pictures are free for all students. One can always purchase the smallest package and then buy more pictures online. Coffee Pond gives us a lot (sponsor Spelling Bee, small pictures of each student for Ms. Mo, etc.) and are good with customer service. It was agreed to sign for the three year contract.
 - d) **Game Night:** Ann did a wonderful job organizing the event. It was well attended and enjoyable. It is not a fundraiser, yet the net was \$197. There was popcorn, juice, and Cougar Gear sold well too. Ann suggested doing



another Game Night in the spring during Screen Free week and it was agreed that this would be a great idea.

- e) **Barnes and Noble Night:** It seemed to go well. The Cottage performance was great. People felt badly for the performers who went after Cottage, because it felt a bit chaotic in the crowd and it was hard to hear the performers.
- f) **Winter Dance:** The dance is tomorrow night. There are already 208 people signed up. Meg asked that all of us help to enforce a “no running” rule. Perhaps the DJ can say something, as well as having a sign at the check in desk.

5. Principal’s Report:

- a) Results from PARCC testing came back to the school today. Results should be going home next week.
- b) ALICE training has begun for the staff. We discussed what ALICE is, the types of logistics the teachers and staff are working on right now, and that it is a work in progress. It is a districtwide training, for which there is a task force in place. One of the many concerns is determining how much information to share with students at each level.

6. New Business

- a) Holiday Breakfast December 18th
<http://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c094daaae2aa64-cottage>
This will be included in the PTO News as well. There are items to buy, even if you don’t wish to cook or bake, and there is a need for help with setup and cleanup.
- b) Room Parent Guidelines—the guidelines, which Amy sent out to Room Parents this week, were also included on the agenda. There are very strict guidelines for teachers to accept gifts unless it is a gift made to the classroom, whether from an individual or as a class gift. It was recommended to ask the teacher for suggestions on what is needed for the classroom. Some ideas are a humidifier, special chair, or standup desk.
- c) Holiday Donations—Holiday donations go along with charitable giving, as discussed previously. We haven’t organized holiday donations in recent years.
- d) Roller Skate—this event will take place on Sunday, January 10 at the same rink as in years past. We have already paid the deposit. The time will be from 5-7pm, as we have to work around the rink’s birthday party business.



Hopefully, it will work well. We'll publicize the event in advance of the holidays, since it will take place soon after.

- e) Fun Fair update and vacancies—We are looking for help with Café and Raffles. We have a few folks interested in Café and we are sending out a “Help Wanted” for Raffles in the PTO News, website, and Facebook. We are going with the theme of children’s literature and Paula is working on the logo. Chairs are meeting later this month and a Room Parent Meeting will take place in January.
- f) Committee & Board Vacancies: Yearbook, Exec Board, Donations & Giving, Programs—Susan Friedman kindly stepped up to take over Donations & Giving. We discussed how to get more volunteers and how to engage the new families that are attending family nights. Some think that there is a perception that you will be made to do things if you attend meetings or that you need to be crafty to be involved in PTO. Perhaps we need to have more targeted asks, like Mark shared about Boy Scout volunteers. Should Room Parents ask classroom parents? Should teachers ask classroom parents, since parents are used to hearing directly from teachers? Maybe teachers would have suggestions of parents who seem to want to get more involved. Should we resurrect the role of the Nominating Committee? Is it the responsibility of the person vacating a position to find his/her successor? We can also post job descriptions on the website. We decided to table this discussion by suggesting that for “homework”, everybody try to bring one friend to join them at the next PTO Meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:33pm.