



Merchantville PTA Meeting Minutes
8/17/16

Call to order 7:03 p.m.

All members introduced themselves. Colleen Akkari and is a new parent in the school and attended the meeting. Kari Shotwell and Angela Waldron also attended their first meetings.

June minutes approved

Marisa read correspondence - Thank you from Savannah Fleig and Adam Gillis for HS scholarships. Thank you from Beth Alloway for Teacher Appreciation.

Mr. Strong did not attend but asked that Ingrid relay that he is presenting to the BOE on Tues 8/23. Additionally, he wanted to remind parents that 12:30 pm is the time for early dismissal days with an option to take a bagged lunch home at the end of the day.

Programs/ Fundraisers

Apparel/ Car Magnets - Ingrid asked if there was anyone who would like to chair or be in charge of apparel and magnets. (Carrie Rupnow-Kidd asked to interject a conversation with Mrs. Taylor about Music Boosters. She suggested possibly selling Merchantville Music t-shirts.) We asked if Spirit Wear has to be a finite fundraiser or if it can go throughout the year. Nicole Kipp (not present) previously stated that she was going to check with Sue McCleary, who has an apparel/screen printing business, for quotes/information. Ingrid suggested water bottles and tote bags as possible spirit items. Marisa brought up a previous discussion where Community Sports offered two options, one without us having to keep inventory. Ami mentioned that a previous 8th Grade class sold magnets for \$5 each. She would need to check her records to see what our cost per magnet was. Ingrid suggested that a car magnet would be a fun give-away at Spirit After Dark. Kari Shotwell offered to chair because she has a vendor she has worked with.

Tea Party Date – Ingrid stated that Diana Pell and Danielle Bordi are co-chairing the Tea Party. She opened a discussion about possible dates. Carrie Rupnow-Kidd went over last year's brown envelopes and stated that, last March, the calendar was wide open. Diana Pell suggested March 26 or April 2 as possible dates. Christina Hunter will forward contact information of superintendent of Community Center to Diana. Ingrid asked if we should use our free community center event for Coach Bingo in January or Tea Party. She asked Diana to call about cost of both events to determine which will be our free event, as one may be more costly than another.

Author Day – Ingrid stated that, during the PTA Board meeting, a discussion took place about whether or not to keep Author Day as a PTA program. If we keep it, she feels that a committee (to include 1-2 teachers) is necessary. She will reach out to Mary Noel



Rasi (previous chair person) to confirm that she will chair again and discuss the possibility of a committee with her. Ami Meachum added that the nice thing about Author Day is that most of the money comes from the Carol Will and doesn't have too big of an impact on the PTA bottom line. One of the nice things is that it's been better that last two years because it's been run well and the Authors have been better. She received positive feedback from her daughter. Ingrid restated that she feels it's too much for one person. Lisa Kruczek agreed with the necessity for a committee and offered to help. Ami suggested that a committee would be good so there is more input and not so much of a burden on one person.

Career Day – Ingrid thinks Career Day sounds like a great idea, but we need someone to chair the event. Angela Waldron asked if we could get room parents involved and have them responsible for identifying parents to talk to each individual class. Ami Meachum added that subjects like Art can be applied to Desk Top publishing and graphic design and that subjects and different interests can be turned into careers. Ingrid realizes that this is a lot to organize and doesn't want to over-burden the school/teachers. Kari Shotwell suggested limiting to junior high students. Marisa Tkachuk has always thought that people from abstract/uncommon careers should be brought in to show kids how their skills can be utilized as a career. Angela stated that Mr. Waldron (her husband/junior high teacher) brings people into his class to talk to the students about careers the kids didn't know about. It's an 'unofficial' part of the curriculum. Christina Hunter asked if the chair person should have a conversation with Mr. Waldron. Kari Shotwell asked if there is a career exploration part of the curriculum. Could it be part of a STEM Program? We could pull professionals from the community in to talk to the students. Ami stated to keep in mind what we are looking for in parents or volunteers with their careers. Ingrid suggested revisiting the topic at the September PTA meeting.

Book Fair – Felicia Dunsmuir checked into it. Nicole Kipp had a conversation with a friend who told her that the BOGO book fair isn't a standard book fair. The book selection is not as diverse. Ingrid asked if a second book fair was necessary if the BOGO was no longer on the table. Should we use the spring Barnes and Noble event as the second book fair to promote summer reading? [Side note – Ingrid stated that Loredana Rubini (not present) was already contacted by Barnes and Noble to book the Christmas date.] Marisa Tkachuk suggested discussing the second book fair with the teachers to get their feedback. Carrie Rupnow-Kidd added that she enjoys the family night part of book fair and likes that it engages the community. Kari Shotwell mentioned that the book fairs also benefit the teachers because of the wish lists for classroom books. Christina Hunter added that the teachers got new books with the Scholastic Dollars raised from book fair. With the leftover scholastic dollars, we are buying books for the new teachers to help them build their classroom libraries. Ami Meachum asked if we could promote book fair as a give back for teachers. Ingrid suggested purchasing books to donate to the end-of-year book giveaway.

Communications



Ingrid asked if Weekly Announcements need an update to better improve parents actually seeing them?

Konstella - Marisa Tkachuk asked how we connect new parents in the school before school starts. Kari Shotwell asked if we have links to Social Media groups on School Website. Lisa Kruczek stated that we can link to school groups from the PTA website and then share on Merhantville Neighbors. Marisa asked if we can ask the school to confirm the parents that ask to join for security reasons. Ingrid will discuss with Mr. Strong. (Side note – Colleen Akkari suggested having full bios for teachers. She is a new parents to the school and was hoping to get some information about her kids' teachers prior to the start of school, but there was none. Christina Hunter reminded the group that pictures were taken last year of each teacher for Teacher Appreciation week. We can offer to have the teachers use those pictures on the website. Ingrid then suggested each PTA Board member have a picture on the website so we are identifiable by parents.) Carrie Rupnow-Kidd and Felicia Dunsmuir (acting in Room Parent role) wrote letters their class rooms identifying themselves and the other room parents at the beginning of the year. They included a form to complete and send back in with their information. This information could be used to invite more parents to Konstella. (Side note – Christina Hunter stated that the room parent flyer not going home in the 'return to school' packet is a problem for getting room parents signed up.) Kari Shotwell suggested a meet and greet at Back to School Night with snacks. Marisa presented an idea she had been thinking about involving tables in the gym and a food truck on the big playground; however, we agreed that it would be too much for parents to have two big events (Meet and Greet/Back to School Night) two days in a row. Ingrid wanted to integrate Diversity Night idea and Meet and Greet. Lisa Kruczek brought up the app that Konstella has for iPads specifically for room parents to use on Back to School Night to gather e-mail addresses. Kari suggested a welcome line with tables lining each side – can we have a table outside? Ami brought up the fact that Konstella is not just for the PTA, but for the entire school community and we should market it that way. Kari offered to help at the table. We will discuss weekly announcements at the September meeting.

Treasurer's Report

Opening balances as of July 1, 2016

General \$6,938.63.

Gaming \$2,671.20.

Total: \$9,609.83

Savings \$2,635.45.

Total: \$12,245.28.

Playground \$5,168.75.

Ingrid asked how we accrued such a surplus. Lisa asked if we discussed projects to which we can donate funds. Carrie said Mrs. Taylor's dream is a new sound system for the auditorium. We suggested asking Mrs. Taylor to make an itemized list for what she



would need and we could potentially donate for a sound system. Marisa suggested the Eiland Arts Music Enrichment Program to offer kids free guitar lessons.

Lisa Kruczek stated that PTA memberships can be purchased through the PTA website but we need to make sure that the e-mail goes to the Membership Chair as well as the Treasurer.

Upcoming Events

- 9.1 PTA Teacher Breakfast 8am
- 9.6 Welcome Back Tables 8am
- 9.9 Picture Day
- 9.14 General PTA Meeting 7pm
- 9.14 Mandatory PTA Room Parent Meeting 8pm

Meeting adjourned 8:41 p.m.