

**Minutes of PTO Meeting
Thursday, September 4, 2014
6:30 pm in Manhattan Library**

I. Welcome & Introductions: Michele Marshall

Michele welcomed everyone. People introduced themselves: Kari Albright, Libby Black, Danielle Butler, Mary Dineen, Amy Evans, Trina Faatz, Loli Hudson, David Jones, Mary Kay Cicio, Anna Karplus, Peggy Livingston, Michele Marshall, Meghan McCracken, Nathalie Pratt, John Riggs, Stephanie Spencer, Amanda Wember, Gwen Whalen, and Deana Zimenoff.

II. Principal's Report: John Riggs

Mr. Riggs reported that the new school year is starting well.

We have a new electronic board, for which Mr. Riggs thanked the PTO. The board displays some quotes that the teachers provided Mr. Riggs when he asked what they believe about education. Nancy Golaszewski, the Attendance Secretary, runs the program for the electronic board, with help from Mr. Graham.

Mr. Riggs distributed the attached comments from parents on Manhattan. In addition to the compliments, some parents raised the following concerns:

- Format for parent-teacher conferences. Mr. Riggs is looking into a system to allow parents to sign up for time slots for conferences.
- Bullying. Mr. Riggs said that this is not as big of a problem at Manhattan as at other schools and that the administration takes bullying seriously and will be working to address it.
- Special needs. The school has 504 and Talented and Gifted (TAG) programs. Tara Gilboa is the new TAG coordinator. She also is the community success liaison, working with the Latino community.
- Building appearance. We want to make it look more welcoming. The PTO committee (see below) may be asking the PTO for money to make the building more attractive. One idea is to replace some weeds with pea gravel and make an outdoor musical garden and an outdoor art garden.

Mr. Riggs is re-forming some teacher committees:

- PBIS, or Positive Behavior Intervention Support.
- TAG, to include the TAG coordinator, teachers, and Mr. Riggs.
- Social/Climate.
- Technology.
- PTO. Three teachers (Ms. Black, Ms. McCracken, and Ms. Spencer) have agreed to be part of the PTO this year. Ms. Black already has been doing this.

Mr. Riggs is emailing the teachers for nominations to a Principal's Council, which would include two boys and two girls from each grade to meet once a month with the Principal, who would buy them lunch. He wants a group that would represent all students.

Enrollment is steady, at about 550.

In November, a \$576,000,000 bond issue will be on the ballot. It would fund rebuilding Creekside, Douglas, and Emerald Elementary Schools and building a new elementary school in Erie. Some brochures describing the improvements it would fund for Manhattan were available at the meeting and at the Back-to-School night on August 28th.

III. Teachers' Report: Libby Black, Stephanie Spencer, and Meghan McCracken

The teachers said they were grateful for the snacks and treats that had been showing up in the lunchroom. They also said that they were happy to see new kids show up and be welcomed by the other kids. One student came to Manhattan as soon as his position on the waiting list came up, even after having been at another school for a few weeks.

IV. Treasurer's Report: Erica Johnson

Erica was unable to attend this meeting. She had prepared the attached (a) four-page profit and loss statement for the period July 2013-July 2014 and (b) one-page treasurer's report. She has started breaking down the figures for August and September of 2014. We have not yet received the income from the August 2014 fundraisers at Chipotle, which was \$945, or Sweet Cow. We will have to pay about \$3,000 for orders made to stock the school store.

V. Committee Reports

A. Magic Phoenix (Manhattan's Major Fundraiser): Amanda Wember

This fundraiser is to fulfill teachers' requests for money. Last year we raised just under \$24,000 and distributed over \$23,000. There is still \$167 left in the Paypal account.

Amanda distributed a draft letter to be sent to parents to solicit contributions. There is a separate fundraising letter for Spanish-speaking families.

This year will be different from prior years in that we expect to complete fundraising in October, to be placing money into teachers' accounts by the first week of November, and to have the teachers spend their money by February. If someone wants to pledge money during October but not pay until later, we would consider the money received at the time of the pledge.

There was some discussion of displaying a thermometer-type diagram showing the amount raised (perhaps on a website) and having the teachers do something like the ice bucket challenge once contributions reached a certain level. About one-third of the Manhattan families donate. To boost the percentage of people participating, someone suggested a graph showing how a lot of small donations could add up.

B. Community Dinners: Chris Goodman & Sara Knight

Neither Chris nor Sara was present.

C. Grocery Cards & Milk Caps: Kristin Kusmierek

Kristin was unable to attend the meeting. Michele said the grocery cards were available at the meeting for purchase. Using grocery cards is a way to raise money for Manhattan. Last year, King Soopers and Safeway cards brought in \$251 and \$281, respectively. Previous checks have been as high as \$330. This income goes to a budget committee chaired by Kari.

D. School Store & Boxtops: Deana Zimenoff

Deana said Michele had worked very hard stocking the store.

The school store now sells more healthful snacks. Candy and some types of potato chips are no longer for sale. (Not all students are pleased with this.) To qualify as a snack, food has to be under 200 calories. Not everything sold is food; Deana has sold six clarinet reeds.

E. Other Fundraisers (not committee-related)

Because the money from the sale of Payback coupon books goes to the PE department, Magic Phoenix money does not go to PE. This year, PE will receive 75% of the Payback receipts, with Mr. Riggs distributing the remaining 25% to other teachers who ask for funds. Last year, sales of Payback books brought in about \$7,400.

The Magic Phoenix used to be the school's only fundraiser, but it did not raise enough money. Income from Payback coupon books goes to the PE department because in the past, a parent had suggested Payback books for fundraising, and the presentation about Payback books occurred the same PTO meeting as the PE department asked for money for a climbing wall.

A parent objected to students who sold a lot of Payback books being rewarded with candy or getting out of running in gym class, because this is not consistent with the goals of physical education.

The group also discussed ways to direct credit card rewards to Manhattan. Target and Amazon Smiles have mechanisms for doing so.

F. Parent Engagement Network (PEN): Trina Faatz

We are a PEN sponsor, having voted at the end of last year to contribute \$500 to PEN.

Trina distributed a schedule of upcoming PEN events, which is included with these minutes. She is organizing an event that will probably occur in early November. She is looking into getting speakers on eating disorders and cutting, which has been described as an epidemic among school-aged children.

VI. Volunteering Opportunities

A. International Walk to School Day Coordinator

Kari volunteered to chair this committee but will be out of town on October 8th, the walk to school day.

B. Second Vice Chair

Michele asked for someone to fill this role.

C. Volunteer Coordinator Assistant

Anna has volunteered to do this.

D. Magic Phoenix

Amanda could use some help with this, especially for dressing up in the parking lot while asking for contributions.

E. Vision and Hearing Screening

This event is going to be rescheduled.

F. Conference Meals (October)

So far, we look in pretty good shape for this.

G. School Store

Rebekah Hartman will be handling Thursdays. We need someone for Mondays.

H. Winter Social (January)

We will discuss this at a later meeting, but we will need volunteers.

I. PEN

Trina said that PEN needs another volunteer.

VII. Upcoming Events

Allies Night: Tuesday September 9th, 6:30 to 7:30pm in MMS Library.
Community Dinner: Wednesday, September 24th at California Pizza Kitchen.

VIII. Other Comments or Questions

This is an open time for anyone.

A. MMS Directory

The group agreed that another directory would be very useful. Anna Karplus has volunteered to help the PTO facilitate this. We may use an opt-in form.

B. Dress Code

With reference to the statement in the 8/29/14 Principal's Letter that "short shorts, open backed shirts, large armhole tank tops and midriff shirts" are not appropriate for school wear, a parent asked if it would be acceptable for girls to wear tank tops under their shirts. Mr. Riggs said tanks tops would be OK but it would not be OK to have just bras visible under large armhole tops. A teacher added that skin exposure has been an issue.

Mr. Riggs said that due to some concerns with girls not being comfortable with a male talking to them about their outfits, a group of women on the staff would be addressing dress code issues with female students.

IX. Next scheduled PTO meeting

Monday October 6th, 6:30-8 pm in MMS library