

MINUTES - February 19, 2008
Champlain Elementary School PTO Meeting
Champlain Learning Center 6pm – 8 pm

We met at Champlain Elementary from 6:00 PM until approximately 8:00 PM. Pizza and a movie was available for the children, who all had a great time!

ATTENDEES: Karen Hunt, Jim DeVoe-Talluto, Diane Officer, Russell Beste, Chris Allen-VonDepp, Jessica Nordhaus, Gwen Causer, Parm Padgett, Nancy Zahniser, Jenny Breckenridge, Sandie Marchessault

I. PLANNING FOR UPCOMING EVENTS

a) Walk to School proposal—Sandie (“Ride the Bus” Day?)

Sandie M. shared information from Nancy Pruitt regarding the Walk to School program. Neither Nancy nor Sandie have time to sponsor this, so we need a coordinator for this. There are two events per year and local motion can sponsor this if we move quickly (otherwise they will sponsor another school). In short it involves receiving some money for signage, helmets etc to encourage and continue the walk to school initiative and to create school “safe walk” routes.

b) Principal Interviews Update

Nancy Z. provided an update on the three candidates. Final round of interviews are underway, and Nancy hopes to have a final decision presented by February 22 or so.

c) Winter Music Concert Update

Grade 3-5 will sing on this snow-delayed Wednesday night at 6:30 PM. Afterwards the 4th-5th graders will sponsor a bake sale. Historically the PTO has sponsored a green corsage info for Wednesday, transportation needs. If any older children are available to help handout flyers, see Nancy.

d) Annie Support (3/20-21)? Bake Sale?

Champlain PTO to provide support. Nancy suggested bake sale funding really was not that successful in the past.

e) May 1 - Multicultural Dinner?

Nancy to book musical band, Chris to organize.

f) May 6 - Teacher Appreciation Lunch (also National Teachers Day!)

Need someone to represent from Champlain PTO. Essentially coordinate different food items for 10 or so teachers. PTO should also write a nice note of appreciative thanks to our outstanding Champlain Elementary School Teachers!

g) May 27 - 30 - Spring Book Fair?

Parm to lead, though would like to phase out of this one. Proposal was made of having assistant helpers who would learn, then rotate in the next year.

h) Next Year Bake Sale at Highway Rest Stop

Everyone felt this would be a great revenue generator. Need volunteer.

i) String Concert

PTO usually provides an excellent punch for this event. Need to get recipe, Nancy to share this information.

j) Family Cookout – PTO pays for this, need a decision on cookout, including who will lead from the PTO.

Event should include veggie hamburgers, meat hot dogs, potato chips, and some sort of cookie dessert.

Parents or PTO should bring salads. Low key event.

II. PTO COUNCIL

a) By-laws need our approval.

Champlain PTO voted and approved the bylaws. We also all agreed that we need a chair, 1 person, to act as a point person for the Champlain PTO. Tasks and information would then be delegated as needed by this person. Will try to ID someone to lead the Chair position by the next meeting.

b) Volunteer(s) to represent CES on Council. Next meeting: Thurs., 2/ 21, 6pm EMS

A once per month or so meeting, Jenny was the liason in the past. Need a volunteer by next meeting.

Also discussed was need to get more involvement in PTO. Feeling is that people are afraid to attend because they will be assigned tasks. We agreed to call it the PTO Children's Pizza Night. We also agreed that being on PTO should not mean doing all the work, but rather helping to coordinate work as well.

III. FIRST STEPS IN MUSIC UPDATE

Point person still needed to lead administration of this effort. Nancy to give flyer seeking administrator to music classes for circulation. Work is mostly administrative in nature, and requires someone with internet and computer access as most work is already automated by Pam Laser via spreadsheets. We also agreed we needed to target/find parents with kindergarten or even younger, perhaps at some of the local preschools. This is a high priority item.

IV. PARENT WORKSHOP PROPOSAL (Jessica for Melissa McConnell)

- a) Louise Dietzel, in conjunction with Pine Forest Child Care Center. Team was excited about this, thought not so thrilled with the wording of the title ("Guilt" does not sound like an inspirational topic). Price seemed a bit high, but people were generally excited by Melissa McConnell's email suggestion of combining with Pine Forest Center preschool (they'd contribute \$100, camp/PTO \$200) as it would mitigate costs and enhance communication with next generation of kids.
- b) Team also discussed in detail ideas of other inspirational speakers. Nancy said in years past this was a very common, popular thing. We discussed various types of speakers to have in addition to Louise, including:
 - 1) A speaker targeting parents of k-2 kids
 - 2) A speaker targeting parents of 3-5 kids, and in particular one oriented towards sex ed eg. Dr. Frankowski, who evidently gives excellent talks on this subject. Chris to speak with Karen Prouty to discuss possible relevant topics for discussion.

V. FUNDRAISING (Jenny and Karen)

- a) Equal Exchange
Jenny indicated that envelopes were still coming in. Group discussed possibility of rotating in other fundraising events, perhaps rotated over a two year period. In particular, while Innsbruck has been very successful financially, there was some discussion of doing it every other year. Other ideas were discussed including Red Barn (all Vermont food), 7th Generation, a Raffle, a Silent Auction (worked great this year, but a lot of effort to implement), a Penny Competition by grade to see which class could get the most pennies and have the pennies publically displayed in a plexiglass collection bin. Group agreed to explore event rotation, but also to stay focused on no more than four events per year.
- b) Spring Cleaning
- c) Innsbruck – Discussion on whether to have next year, mixed views, might want to rotate every other year.
- d) Budget Review—Camp Scholarship v. General Fund.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS: WEBSITE/EMAIL (Russell) and NEWSLETTER (Jessica)

- a) Website/e-Newsletter Feedback/Suggestions.
Keep e-newsletter brief, 4-5 bullet items. Update website to publicly display PTO minutes.
- b) Newsletter Feedback/Suggestions.
- c) Chris – to arrange facilities scheduling.

VII. GENERAL MEETING & ORGANIZATION PLANNING

- a) 3rd Tuesday Monthly Meetings, 6 PM Reminder. - Next General Meeting: 3/18/08, 6pm. Everyone agreed that at least for now it is easiest to focus on each 3rd Tuesday of the month. It is simply too difficult to schedule everyone, and group felt we'd have best attendance if people could know in advance a fixed annual schedule.
- b) Steering Committee Meeting: March 12th, 8:15am
Barbara will be attend, need 2 or so PTO representatives.
- c) Process and Timing for recruiting volunteers to

chair committees, events, etc. To aide in this process, we should have an available physical binder with Treasurers Report, By Laws, etc. Should also have pictures available of past PTO meetings "in action", also with kids and pizza to convey the monthly excitement of our meetings!

d) Food Committee –

e) Champlain Elementary Landscaping and Improvement – need PTO leader to assist in obtaining small trees, a landscape vision for moving forward with the schoolyard, funds estimate etc.

f) New Science Curriculum – questions on whether Champlain Elementary should continue to maintain the natural habitat in the learning center, as it requires a fair amount of work to keep it running.

VIII. COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENTS

IX. OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

a) School Budget Update—On March 4 Ballot, don't forget to vote. Friends of Education yard signs are available from Rob Backus (130 Home Ave).

b) March 4 Ballot Misc. News - Some concern over Moran Plant vote on absentee ballots, as the remodel option appeared on one page, tear down and reconstruct on the next page. People who selected the first option were unable to change their vote since vote filled-in with pen.

c) Next Steps on Excellence and Equity - magnet school discussion. The BTV School Board has secured a consultant group to assist in Identification of what type of magnet school should be pursued.

d) Report on Dev. Review Board Meeting re: proposed Dry Cleaning facility on Sears Ave. Gwen attended the meeting and report that they'd obtained basic approvals to run dry cleaning operation for a Dorsett St dry cleaning store. The operation is closed loop with cleaning solvents, though it was not clear from the vendor how often their facility would be inspected. Parm commented that based upon her expertise in the area, that these types of closed loop operations were heavily regulated.

e) Magician - Sandi has obtained an outstanding Magician for the May 9-11 Show (10 AM – 11 AM)!

f) Burlington Magazine is an outstanding new magazine (free) that showcases Burlington. Perhaps Champlain Elementary can be included in it?

g) March 11, 2:45 PM - Teacher Meeting to include a few representatives (Gwen, Jenny) from the Champlain PTO. PTO will get about 30 minutes to discuss what the PTO does, and to find how it can better facilitate parent-teacher interaction, how PTO is used, improvements and suggestions.