

Burroughs PTA Meeting Minutes

January 30, 2018

6:30-8:30 pm

Officers Present:

Kelly Robbert, President

Stephanie Marolt, Vice President

Angelina Philips, Treasurer

Steven Connelly, Co-Treasurer

Madeline Lohman, Secretary

Jennie Hartman, Volunteer Coordinator

Minutes Approval

The November minutes were approved.

Special budget requests over \$200

Angie presented a request from Linda Fredrickson who runs the media center. She needs a new set of 35 headphones. She will use half of her media equipment budget for the year but still needs \$475 from the PTA. She is keeping the remainder of her media equipment budget because things break in the media center throughout the year, like shelves or chairs, and she has to replace them. The request was approved.

The Read-A-Thon committee requests \$449.86 to buy the featured book this year for all the classrooms. It is a lesser-known book and so Burroughs did not have enough copies to meet the demand during Read-A-Thon. The committee also bought 2 related books for each classroom. One was available through Scholastic and could be purchased with Scholastic dollars, but the other two had to be bought with cash. The request was approved.

Discretionary budget update

Angie presented the discretionary budget update. The PTA started the year with \$15,000 in the discretionary budget and at the beginning of the meeting had \$9500. Two items came in since the last meeting: supplies for the literacy interventionists for \$80 and the PTA's annual filing fee that was not included in the budget for \$25.

Volunteer update

Jennie announced that the PTA is seeking volunteers for the executive committee next year: a Co-Treasurer, a Co-Volunteer Coordinator, and a Vice President. We also need an Auction Co-Chair. All of these are two year terms, where the volunteer serves as the co-person in year one and the full position in year two. The Vice President becomes the President in their second year. She will continue posting opportunities on Facebook as well.

Read-A-Thon update

The opening ceremony is tomorrow at 9:30 am and the RAT starts on Thursday. This year, students can win t-shirts for meeting the reading goal and backpacks for meeting the fundraising goal. Because of district nutritional rules there have been some changes to the reward parties. Instead of ice cream socials, they will now be Johnny Pop parties, and instead of pizza parties, they will now be magicians.

Almost 100% of the 5th grade class is participating in the opening and closing skits. The committee really needs volunteers for the closing ceremony – the burden right now is falling on just a few, which is very hard for them, so 5th grade parents should consider getting involved. Kelly R. talked about the need to make sure our commitments and activities as a PTA match the amount of work parents are willing to offer. If parents aren't available to staff the Read-A-Thon as it has traditionally been run, then it may need to be reconfigured.

Ana will make a guest appearance at the opening ceremony tomorrow. There are also exciting guest readers including the mayor and city council member. Volunteers are needed to greet the VIP readers and escort them to their classroom. The first group is this Friday, February 2. Claire Spinti volunteered.

EZ Bucks update

Box Tops has earned \$1313, almost half of our goal about halfway through the year. The 1st grade won the January contest. Next month, we will award Gold, Silver, and Bronze places. Because these two months have had multiple winners, Lara is running out of gift cards for the teachers, so if anyone is willing to donate gift cards, she would appreciate it. Coke Rewards has earned \$92.69 and Amazon Smile has earned \$127.99. Holy Land Hummus, Country Hearth bread, and Office Depot also have rewards going on now.

Scrip update

Scrip has raised \$386.11 since 11/26. There are 15 people enrolled, 7 have placed orders. The program sounds complicated but it is easy to use and the gift cards can apply to all your regular purchases. The directions are on the fundraising page on the Burroughs website. You get the full value of what you pay for the gift cards and then Burroughs gets a rebate of some percentage of the purchase price, which varies by store. You can also do e-certificates. This can make a lot of money for Burroughs if more people enroll. Kelly R suggested that the PTA explore using Scrip to make purchases, especially for larger items.

Student and Parent Community Service

Margaret Gordon presented the outcome of the Facebook discussion she started on coordinating student and parent community service opportunities. To start, she thinks the best thing to do is keep sign up simple and have lots of possibilities to meet a range of family interests. The organizations that have been most receptive are:

- Simpson Housing – the group would prepare a meal for residents to be served at 7 pm. Some people were really enthusiastic while others thought it was late and hard to do with younger students, so she will open it up and people can select in if they want.

- Walker Senior Center – they were very enthusiastic and open to whatever the group wanted to do: music, art, an ice cream social.
- Special Olympics – needs cheerleaders during their summer events. Families could meet during the school year to make signs and then arrange time to go together during the summer.
- Feed My Starving Children – they have a highly organized system. We'd need parent drivers. One factor to consider is that they are a Christian organization and they ask people to pray at the end, though you don't need to participate. As long as that is clear at sign up, it should be ok.
- International Institute of Minnesota Refugee Resettlement Program – they don't have volunteer opportunities for the kids to interact with their clients, but they would love to have welcome cards. This would be a great activity for families that can't do something more time-intensive and could be a two hour session after school.

Margaret is not from Minnesota and doesn't work in nonprofits, so she is very open to hearing other ideas for potential community service.

Parents wondered if this connected with any classroom learning. The 5th grade celebration has a service learning component that is coordinated by the parents who run the event. Individual teachers also sometimes have projects, and outside groups like the Girl Scouts do service learning. Grades could have specialization to foster that connection. The first step is to figure out what is already happening and what service learning teachers already do, and then look at the feasibility of doing this without putting more burden on the teachers.

PSWE (Positive Schoolwide Engagement) and Racial Equity update

The PSWE and Racial Equity team are both district-mandated teams. The PSWE team has 2 parent representatives, Jen Aspengren and Rich Lee, who also sit on the racial equity team. The PSWE team also has teachers, but it is voluntary, so right now it is the kindergarten teachers and then other staff. Last year, the teams had a meeting in the lunch room on ways to make Burroughs more inclusive and welcoming.

Building on that meeting, Jen and Rich propose a two-event series built around *A Good Time for the Truth: Race in Minnesota*, a recent book of short essays. The authors are Minnesotans of color, many of them from Minneapolis. They are doing a lot of conversations about race in schools in other districts. There was a lot of feedback in the meeting last year from parents on how to be a multiracial family and kids' experiences at Burroughs, and these events would help explore those topics. The PSWE team usually deals with day-to-day environment at Burroughs, like hallway behavior, and so doesn't have the capacity to address long-term issues. This would be an opportunity to start doing that.

March 8 would be a Meet the Authors event facilitated by the editor, Sun Yung Shin, with 2-3 authors, depending on availability. The authors would ideally be ones with school age kids so they can address talking to kids about race. There would be readings and a facilitated Q & A with books for sale.

April 19 would be a more in-depth conversation with parents and teachers on how to talk about race, facilitated by Sun Yung Shin. Sun Yung Shin is a skilled facilitator for these conversations and an educator.

The goal would be the creation of a parent-led racial equity team that could sponsor events and activities throughout the year, and possibly the use of some of the essays in 5th grade classes.

The events would cost a maximum of \$3000 and probably less: \$500 for each event that Sun Yung Shin facilitates, \$350 for each author, \$200 for refreshments, and \$200 for child care.

The events would be for the Burroughs community. There is a lot of interest in doing events with other schools, especially the feeder schools to Page Middle School, but Jen and Rich felt that Burroughs needed to have a conversation first on our own issues internally that doesn't get diverted into the needs of other schools. One parent suggested inviting the Superintendent and our school board member, and it was agreed those could be useful additions.

Another concern was aligning whatever Burroughs does to be more inclusive with the efforts at Page – they may have something more formal and it would be worth making sure that our efforts are consistent with theirs. This could be a next step after the book events, which are really intended to generate enthusiasm and parent engagement in that overall effort.

Parents asked about other outcomes from last year's meeting and Rich mentioned using the book money raised at the auction to buy more inclusive books for classroom libraries.

Parents also asked about plans for promoting the events, since we would want to engage a large number of parents. Rich and Jen were planning to send home flyers to families, send out an e-blast on just this event, as well as posting it in the Bulletin and on Facebook. It can also be mentioned at the Read-A-Thon ceremonies, since the theme links in with the theme of this year's RAT book.

Angie confirmed that the PTA had the budget to cover the event and that she did not expect any more large budget items between now and the end of the year. The request was approved.

Budget update

For income, we are on pace for fundraising, though the RAT is a huge fundraiser so we'll see how it goes. We are \$500 over budget on spending at this point but Angie expects that as other funds aren't fully used that we will end the year under budget.

Mindfulness update

Mindfulness lessons in classrooms have now ended for the year. Jen Feriancek surveyed teachers on their feedback – some were neutral, some positive, and some very positive. She is surveying students as well but the results are not in yet. She is working with staff on how to make mindfulness something that is part of the Burroughs culture outside of her classroom lessons. She will use the remaining amount of her funds on coaching teachers and professional development. Some people were wondering about a parent or family mindfulness night – if people are interested, please contact her.

State of the School

Assistant Principal Kelly Woods provided some updates.

- This week is Spirit Week, planned by the Student Council and it is going well, students seem very enthusiastic.
- Ana Bartl returns from maternity leave on March 5.

- Melody, the long-time Burroughs secretary, left and they have put in an offer to someone for her position so that will hopefully be filled in the next few weeks. The staff and teachers had a very nice party for her. The PTA is giving her a gift card and if people want to donate to that, Kelly R will follow up.
- In 4th grade, Ms. Larson is leaving. Melissa Favero, one of the math interventionists, took over that position permanently.

Parents were interested in being more involved in the school-level budget discussion before that is decided to give input and learn about the differing needs of Burroughs families. The district budget is supposed to come out at the end of February and then Burroughs must send in the school budget in March, but there are no exact dates yet. The Site Council reviews the budget but does not approve it. A community budget discussion could be held at the end of February. Kelly R will talk to the Site Council and Ana Bartl about coordinating this.