

Burroughs PTA Meeting Minutes  
November 28, 2017  
6:30-8:30 pm

Officers Present:

Kelly Robbert, President  
Stephanie Marolt, Vice President  
Angelina Philips, Co-Treasurer  
Steven Connelly, Co-Treasurer  
Madeline Lohman, Secretary

**Special budget requests over \$200**

4<sup>th</sup> graders go on a trip to Deep Portage in Hackensack MN every year. They do a lot of scientific investigations and work on social skills. It's been an incredible experience but it's getting more expensive and we want to keep it affordable. The 4<sup>th</sup> grade team last requested an increase 9 years ago and costs have gone up for both buses and the trip itself. We currently have \$2400 budgeted and the teachers are asking for \$5400 to cover the much higher costs of the busing and scholarships for students. Every student is able to come and would be covered by this. Looking at the discretionary budget, we have \$13,185 remaining and Angie is not aware of any other large budget requests planned at this point. The request was approved.

Celeste Spooner from the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade presented a request for funding for Midwest Food Connections. They originally came for a few years for free but then asked for some money and this year are asking for an increase. They offer four lessons for the classroom. Right now, three are funded. We received a grant from Schuyler Shoes for \$500 that covers most of the cost, so we are asking for a small increase. The lessons cover things like eating local, organics, how much sugar is in food, food waste, and other topics. One concern is food allergies and we keep the program accessible by 1) not using any of the foods that are common allergens and 2) sending out a slip to all parents to get permission and information so all kids can safely participate. The PTA has currently budgeted \$1300 and the need for this year is \$1635. On further review, we received a \$500 grant so this year we have a \$200 surplus that we can roll over to next year.

Angie presented a request from the PE teachers for new wireless two-way radios that they use on field trips. The radios are primarily for safety reasons when they go off site, to communicate when a child is hurt or needs to go to the school nurse. Their current radios are dying, and the school budget doesn't have funding for this. The total request is \$516 and that covers two sets. They are planning to use their enrichment funds to cover new gym equipment like jump ropes and bouncy balls. They will use it for radios if they have to but then they would have to push back new gym equipment to next year. The request was approved.

**Minutes Approval**

The September minutes were approved.

**Bylaw Amendments**

A bylaw amendment was proposed to require solicitation of competitive bids for budget items over \$5000, but people felt it was too rigid for the PTA and could potentially limit our ability to respond to

increased budget needs given the current budget crisis. The goal of the amendment was to make sure the PTA had enough information to make an informed decision about spending unusually large sums of money. To accomplish that goal without an amendment, the form for requesting funds will include a new section for items over \$5000 that asks the requestor if they looked for cheaper alternatives and what they found.

### **Auction Update**

The brief update is we had a great year. Current to date net proceeds are \$74,000 and by year end it should be \$87,000. The difference between now and year end is we continue to celebrate Great Gatherings throughout the year. Last year, our year end revenue was \$77,000 so we have a \$10,000 increase. Some of that was bringing down the cost of the venue so my hope is that next year, the co-chair is just going to sign us back up. Another change was being more strategic in the classroom donations raised to see where the holes were in the silent auction donations. The other thing this year was a fund-the-need for classroom books. The goal was \$12,500 and we got a flat \$13,000. The money for the classroom art and art scans will be going to glass display cases for student art work. The only other dedicated line item is the Justice Page field trip, which is \$625 that goes to Page for arranging that tour. After the line items are accounted for, it is anticipated that \$72,000 will be going into the Burroughs Fund at the end of the year.

### **Book Fair Update**

Each teacher got \$50 to spend for classroom needs at the Book Fair and Burroughs got \$9000 in Scholastic money to spend. Scholastic rewards give more value than cash, which is what we used to get. Teachers can use the \$9000 to buy books, carpets, and other classroom supplies.

### **Volunteer Update**

We've recruited 7 key committee chairs and co-chairs this year. Also start thinking about opportunities for next year. The current volunteer opportunities are listed on Sign Up Genius.

### **Art Adventure Update**

Michele Peters started helping coordinating Art Adventures this year and it is a big program to get all the parents trained, into the classroom when scheduled, and arranging the tours at the MIA. The kids love it. One parent did it and said the kindergarteners didn't even let him talk, they were so excited. Let her know if you are interested in being a co-chair next year.

### **Scrip Program**

The Scrip program allows people to buy gift cards through Shop with Scrip and then use those cards to shop at various retailers. The retailers then refund part of the gift card as a rebate to Burroughs. Not all the retailers are accessible in Minnesota but many of them are. Visit the website at [shop.shopwithscrip.com](http://shop.shopwithscrip.com) and use the code for Burroughs 317379FB55215. Beth will approve the enrollment. Once registered, you can look for gift cards by category and other characteristics. Before you get the gift cards, you have to pre-pay all the cards. There are two payment options: 1) giving a check to Beth by using the Scrip box in the main office and 2) using Presto Pay which takes the money directly out of your checking account. You cannot buy the gift cards with credit cards. The deadline for the first round of ordering is 9 am on Monday December 4. Then the cards will arrive at Burroughs on

Friday December 8. For questions, contact Beth Goodpaster at 612-308-0093 or [Scrip.Burroughs@gmail.com](mailto:Scrip.Burroughs@gmail.com). The cards can be given as gifts or used by the buyer. The plan is to have a deadline every two weeks so people can use this for recurring expenses. The PTA will create a page on the Burroughs website with instructions on Shop with Scrip since it is somewhat complicated.

### **EZ Bucks Update**

Our goal this year is to earn \$5200 total, with Scrip bringing in \$1000. I have a request to increase our budget. We currently have \$100 and that barely covers our current expenses. Other schools often have cumulative prizes that could be something like key chains or magnets as students get to certain levels of total box tops. Last year, none of the classes got to the higher levels but this year some classrooms have already brought in 1000 box tops so we may hit those higher levels this year. Lara is requesting \$355 for a total of \$455. One parent suggested that students really like some of the free activities like PJ days or cozy days where they can bring in a stuffed animal and those are free. Another parent mentioned wanting to limit small items coming come as another reason to focus on free, activity-based prizes.

### **Mindfulness Update**

Teachers are participating in classroom mindfulness lessons and that has really helped the students stay engaged. We started in October and Jen has been going into the classroom about once a week and that will be continuing through January. The students have been focusing on gratitude and each wrote something they were thankful for on a colorful heart and built a tree of gratitude. Students and teachers have really liked being part of something the whole school is working on. A few examples of how mindfulness is helping the school:

- A second grade parent mentioned how this is transferable. Her daughter was stuck on a gymnastics skill that she had decided was scary, but then she remembered that sometimes her guard dog is barking even when it doesn't need to and she started practicing the skill.
- Another student wrote on an evaluation that they got really mad at their sister, but before they hit her, they took a mindful breath and stopped.

We will do a mindfulness night in the spring and possibly have students bring their parents to go through mindfulness stations together.

The PTA will archive Jen's weekly mindfulness message on the Burroughs website so people can see how the lessons are progressing.

If people have connections to other sources of funding, Jen would be interested in writing grants to cover the rest of the school year. The original intention was that teachers would incorporate this into their teaching, but that might be too burdensome and maybe the PTA wants to continue to fund this. It is fairly easy to incorporate small mindfulness practices throughout the day, but to teach a 20 minute curriculum every week is probably too much for teachers. Kelly Woods suggested consulting teachers on what they need and then the PTA can examine the best way to structure the program moving forward.

### **Positive School-wide Engagement team and Racial Equity team update**

Rich Lee is one of the parent representatives on the teams, which are combined. Last year, they had a community discussion that generated a lot of ideas, some of which the school is already implementing. This year, the team is talking about how to have school-wide events. Parents and teachers still struggle

with having healthy conversations about race, especially with children. It is possible to have difficult conversations with children in a developmentally appropriate way. We have suggested that we hold events around *A Good Time for the Truth*, a volume of works by authors of color in MN. They have been doing a lot of work with schools around the state. We would read the book and bring the authors in for conversations. There are 15 short essays. Some teachers already read this last year. Rich will come back to the next meeting with a budget proposal for this. He believes this is a really important issue to discuss at our school. The authors charge between \$300-500 for the conversations and the team is in contact with the MN Historical Society for a bulk rate to buy a smaller set of books for parents or teachers who can't cover the cost. The goal would be to have events in February, March, and April to bring in one author to each event. One parent suggested bringing in other schools to the events, which was a suggestion from last year. Kelly R suggested continuing the conversation online after the meeting.

### **State of the School**

Kelly Woods presented the current State of the School. She expressed her thanks for all of the support she has received since Ana Bartl has gone on maternity leave. She clarified that while Ana is gone, she will be acting as interim principal and then Jackie Hanson is here as support for her. Ana is still in the loop on things that are happening, and Kelly is committed to carrying out the plans they've made.

Kelly also provided handouts on the budget timeline. There is going to be a \$33 million budget cut for 2018-2019. Principals have the same information that has been distributed publicly. The paper talks about the timeline for Burroughs. The school will follow the same process they did last year, except they are going to bump up when they get information from parents. They will be sending out a survey to get information from families on programming. It should be coming out soon and they ask that it should be completed by Dec. 22. The timeline on the back came from the district and is subject to change. There are some links on where to provide information at the bottom of the handout. For us to be able to capture what our community needs, email Kelly Woods and she can pass it on to Ron Wagner, the school associate. Carolyn Brownlie suggested emailing Superintendent Graff with concerns about the district survey. There is also a group called Minneapolis Rising with ideas about potential changes, a group that is organizing to lobby at the state capitol, and teachers are starting contract negotiations and parents can attend. Kelly said that the Superintendent is interested in getting feedback, which is not what happened previously.

### **Treasurer Update**

The PTA got all of our federal and state filings done by Nov. 15, the deadline. On income, we are doing well. On expenses, we are overall under budget. We are over budget on a few items. A few teachers went over budget a little on their enrichment budgets. We are also over budget on babysitting. The PTA has started hiring adult babysitters for curriculum nights and PTA meetings, instead of just using middle school students, which has significantly increased costs. The discretionary budget at the start of the meeting was \$13,185, but that does not include the new requests. With the new requests approved at the beginning of the meeting, the current discretionary budget is \$9314.43.