Countryside PTO Meeting Minutes

5/28/20, hosted via Zoom

Start 7:32am

In attendance – Beth Herlihy, Barbara Mauger, Shion (Shy) Walsh, Becky Schwartz, Sue Johnston, Jess Lourie, Lori Zinner, Jennifer Terrazzino, Jen Behr, Kerry Prasad, Sangeeta, Jen Tomaneng, Adam Howes, Ryan Brennan, Emily Restivo

**Recent/upcoming Events**

SEL Parent Coffee feedback – attendees were hoping for more info/take-home tips. Important to have time away from screen – to prep for return to school, and for kids to learn how to entertain self without technology. Ways to encourage play. Principal Herlihy will send email/maybe plan another coffee, with emphasis on SEL/how to maintain skills over summer.

Incoming K coffee – plan on initial brief welcome coffee and welcome on 6/8. Then another welcome coffee/event later in the summer, once more details are known.

5th grade – virtual graduation on 6/18. Planning on some citywide events – spirit week.

**Distance Learning update**

General feedback was solicited. The last week will be different - more fun activities, spirit activities etc.

End of year progress reports, district will be deciding soon.

Next year unknown – will prioritize welcoming kids back.

**Returning personal items**

Parents will be scheduled to come in on 6/2. Hope to have most pick up this day. Will have option later for those who can’t make it, don’t have car etc but this is dependent on teacher volunteers so hopefully will have most pickups that day.

Will also have gamewright delivery that day.

Library books – trying to get 5th grade books. Optional for other classes. They will have bins for library books, but ok to keep over summer.

Maybe try to remind people - raffle responses low, only ~50% response rate.

Teacher gifts

Beckie and Jess updated. Room parent coordinators emailed room parents to remind them to work on end-of-year teacher gifts.

We should make sure all classes got emails, in case some room parents are unavailable/unable to coordinate at this time given circumstances. Maybe Jess or Becky could send followup email to confirm all classes are participating.

**Planning for next year, upcoming events**

Discussed upcoming events like picnics, Halloween party. Hard to predict but seems unlikely that such large gatherings will be feasible by fall. Principal Herlihy will keep us updated as she knows more. We can discuss more over summer once more details are known. Plan to have f/u meeting in summer to revisit these issues.

Sangeeta usually organizes the picnic. She is happy to organize over summer if able. Could do homecoming for 5th graders at picnic too, if it is possible.

Volunteer appreciation party – usually have annually in June. Could make end of year PTO video – with people’s names and pics. Kerry suggested writing a letter of gratitude expressing thanks and why event was important. Could give little tokens of appreciation. Could do tshirt – similar to 5th grade tshirt idea. Or could take this money and make donation in memory of volunteer.

**PTO Board**

Planning and Board positions for next year were reviewed. There are excellent candidates for President/leadership positions. Barbara and Shy will send email with info about voting. All in attendance expressed their special thanks and appreciation for Barbara and Shy. Losing a lot of 5th grade parents. People were encouraged to email Barbara and Shy with questions, and volunteer ideas/interests, etc. Vote upcoming – Barbara & Shy will share details.

**Understanding Our Differences**

Kerry gave an update. UOD has been planning for next year - probably won’t be feasible to have large groups next year, so they are transitioning to online program. Pilot program planned. Doing great job of preparing for next year, and transitioning to COVID-appropriate program.

**Equity**

NPS Equity Committee has examined equity guidelines for PTO spending, to make suggestions to the School Committee about how to amend those guidelines. Made presentation to School Committee on March 11 and again May 27 . Recommendations include: remove CAS from equity cap – smaller schools struggle with $80 cap as they pay per speaker, not per child, which is not equitable. Recommend 3 CAS experiences per student per year. Rec equity changes to $40 per student. Does not include technology – this will stay at $20 pp. Recommend these be implemented in 7/2021. School committee will vote at next meeting. For CS, we are spending roughly $42 per student. Most of our spending has been on CAS, so with this removed, we should be able to easily work within this framework with current population.

Next year will be very different, in terms of fundraising etc. Maybe this is the year to pool resources, maybe a central fund. For the Annual fund, will need to review budget, and we may have different needs next year given COVID restrictions. Hard to plan ahead – all dependent on state guidelines.

**Green Team/BOKS Appalachian Trail challenge**

Julie gave overview. This ran in the Update the past 2 weeks. Asked for ideas on ways to spread the word and increase involvement. Could extend into summer to boost participation. Could do other challenges like rocky mtns – triple crown etc .

**Playground**

Julie recently met with Gary Gentile, who recommended sanding/staining, and also multiple reapirs. Presented his proposal. Board agreed we should definitely sand and stain. The repairs are less clear - ?what are Parks & Rec responsibilities, vs PTO? There were some concerns expressed about liability. No injuries so far with current structure, but want to be safe and vigilant. Staining wood and maintaining wood is definitely PTO responsibility. Mr. Repta has newton parks contact – could review with them for feedback – Principal Herlihy will send to him. Do we need to oil the rail for the triangles? If there are real safety concerns, should involve Parks & Rec. Board recommended that we proceed with sanding/staining. Julie will book.

**Miscellaneous:**

Message board

Was broken into it, with locks broken and strange message. Proper authorities and police notified. Repairs in progress.

Principal coffee upcoming

School supplies

Lori is working on this. Another reminder blast sent. Dolly to send info to new K families.

Adjourned 9:19pm