

February 11, 2011
Hommocks Middle School

PT Council Minutes

Meeting was called to order by President Melany Gray at 9:20am.

I. Minutes for 1/10/11 approved

II. Revisions of Standing Rules

- a. The PT Council Standing Rules were last revised in May 2004. In December, the Rules were circulated to all members of PTC and Cecilia and Melany subsequently proposed several revisions (see attached). After extensive review and discussion, the Council unanimously approved numerous revisions to the Standing Rules. The revisions will be formally adopted once all units have approved the revised by-laws, so that the Standing Rules are harmonious. In order to guide the nominating committee in its work, the following language was proposed and approved:
 - i. The nominating committee is charged with filling the positions of co-presidents, secretary and treasurer. In determining who to nominate for co-president, the committee should take into consideration all applicable factors, giving preference to candidates with the following characteristics:
 1. A parent or guardian of a child or children currently enrolled in the district schools, preferably without a spouse on the school board.
 2. Service as a co-president of a PTA unit (or, in the absence of a suitable candidate with such experience, service on the executive committee of a PTA unit).
 3. Experience as a parent in more than one of the district schools.
 4. A parent or guardian of a child who is attending, or has graduated from, Mamaroneck High School.

III. Superintendent's Report (Dr. Shaps)

- a. **PCBs in Lighting:** The issue is that heat/tar melting in old lighting fixtures can expose children to PCBs. This happened recently at a school in NYC. There has been concern from parents that this could be happening in our district. The good news is that district records

show that in 1991 there was an energy upgrade across the entire district replacing almost all lighting fixtures and the new ones do not contain PCBs. There remain approximately 30-40 of the old type of lighting and a spot check (George McNally) was completed on these fixtures (looking at each school) and we do not have this type of lighting problem since the old fixtures are constructed so that there is no risk of PCB exposure.

- b. **Power Outage at Murray on February 9th:** At approximately 11:30am, the power went out due to a branch coming down on a power line. The Fire Chief reported that the power would likely be out for the rest of the day. There is a 2003 ruling called the Commissioners Rule that states if a building is without heat or water for more than 90 minutes, they have to close the building. Given that the Fire Department said the heat/power would be off for longer than that, they had to call an emergency dismissal. The power ended up being turned as the children were being dismissed, but they were not able to reverse the decision once it's made.

This incident gave way to discussion regarding snow give back days. There has been debate as to what are the best days to give back first. Many feel that the first give back day should be the Memorial Day week-end, not the April vacation when there are likely to be more people traveling due to the Easter holiday.

- c. **High School Principal Search:** Started early to advertise the position and create a Search Interview Committee. The committee screened resumes and interviewed 12 candidates, narrowing it down to two, then one. A Central Administration interview was conducted of that one candidate, and after much discussion, they decided not to pursue this individual. One problem is there is a shortage of administrators especially given New York State's pension system which prevents administrators from bringing pensions from another state. The position is now being posted internally to see if there are internal candidates with the necessary qualifications and certifications. It is important to grow leaders and support those with potential.
- d. **Sound Shore Alliance:** One voice approach to issues regarding funding public schools. The Rye Neck Superintendent is hoping to build a grass roots effort to build one voice on the value of public schools – a singular message. They now have a web page to help support initiatives aligned to this purpose. They would like to partner with PT Council and the PTAs. They are currently working

on a preliminary draft of letter regarding the tax cap. Need to get information out – educate before advocate.

IV. Presentation by Seth Weitzman, Principal

- a. **Introduction of new Assistant Principal, Mark Barnett.**
- b. **Writing at Hommocks:** The ERB writing assessment (independently scored) is an invaluable tool – compares our students to rigorous “normal” group (best students in the country). It’s given in early fall which allows scores to come back early so teachers can use it for instructional purposes. Increased emphasis was placed on teaching writing at Hommocks a couple of years ago in response to disappointing ERB scores.

Dr. Weitzman showed “How to Teach Writing” slide and passed out ERB “anchor papers” (samples of student writing) for review and discussion. As part of district goals, middle school is developing writing standards. A request was made to post these on the website to inform/engage parents. Dr. Weitzman also explained that, once a quarter there is an extended writing test or a writing portfolio that is sent home to parents.

V. Board of Education Report (Robin Nichinsky)

- a. **School District Budget:** March is an important month for the district budget. PTA leaders encouraged to be informed. The Superintendent’s Proposed Budget will be presented on March 15. The line-by-line budget review will be on March 19 at 9am.

Respectfully submitted,
Lori Herbsman and Ann LoBue

In Attendance:

PTC: Melany Gray, Co-President, Jennifer Malherbe, Co-President; Past President: Cindy Habig; Lori Herbsman, Secretary; Kristine Budhill, Treasurer;
Central: Pam Buchmueller, Barbara Lambert, Co-Presidents
Chatsworth: Laura Livaccari, Lisa Samson, Co-Presidents
Mamaroneck Avenue School: Lisa Boren, Co-President
Murray Avenue: Ann LoBue, Liz Paras, Co-Presidents
Hommocks: Rachel Goldman, Co-President

Mamaroneck High School: Sherri Rozansky, Amy Rothman, Co-Presidents
SEPTA: Cecilia Absher, Co-President
District: Debbie Manetta, Director of Communications
Board Liaison: Robin Nichinsky
Special Guest: Dr. Weitzman, Dr. Shaps

Approved 3/14/11