

November 23, 2009  
Mamaroneck High School

## PT Council Minutes

Meeting was called to order by President Cindy Habig at 9:15am.

- I. Safety Issues: Lynne and Sherri
  - a. If any of the schools are having skateboard/scooter issues, please email Sherri. Specifically, what the concerns are, what's going on at a specific school with storing them/bringing them into the school (not necessarily the after school issues on the playgrounds).
- II. 11/6/09 Minutes approved – send approved minutes to Laurie Lee so she can post them on the web site.
- III. Health Notices: Joan and Laura said there was a question that came up from a parent at Chatsworth as to why there is no notice sent home for "Type A" Influenza, especially since we get notices for strep and lice. They think this information should also be shared – it would help kids who may be more susceptible (i.e., kids with asthma, etc.) or get other children in the classroom treated faster.
- IV. Rye Panel on Tenure: Cindy Habig
  - a. Interesting discussion on the idea of tenure. Labor believes it is "due process." Talked about "changing the narrative" – change the process for granting tenure to make it more of a milestone – something that's not just a given because they've put in their time. Some felt that teachers who make tenure don't have incentives to keep learning and moving forward. Some of the audience was in favor of putting in place a contract (5 year, 10 year) where you had to "re-meet" the tenure standards. That would allow teachers to be evaluated on real goals, reach performance targets and see progress made on their teaching plans. Getting rid of a teacher with tenure is very complicated (especially the legal end). Meeting was interesting – focusing on things to make process better, but it's an ongoing discussion and one where no real changes can be made at this level. Meeting will be televised and is worth watching.

## V. Budget: Paul Fried and Linnet Tse

- a. November 30<sup>th</sup> is the Budget Meeting. The subject of the meeting will be looking at the budget during these troubled financial times. Objective is to create awareness sooner than later of the challenges we're facing for the upcoming budget. It's also an opportunity for the Board and Administration to listen so that they can leverage that information at a later time. Meeting will be in 2 parts. The first part will be informational. Dr. Fried will discuss the challenges that we are facing. For the 2<sup>nd</sup> part, those attending will be broken up into smaller groups with a facilitator (who will have "conversation starters" ready to get the group talking) and they will talk about priorities and what is special or important about our district and the school system. If warranted, there will be follow up meetings before we approach budget season.
- b. Rollover Budget: taking known factors and moving them forward without adding any new programs or initiatives, at this time the best estimate is that a rollover budget would result in a budget to budget increase of 9% (approximately \$10 million dollars). Last year the increase was 3.23%. Dr. Fried does not expect the community to support a 9% increase, so we need to try and determine what amount of increase the community would support, and how to bridge the gap between those numbers. The contingency budget is still at 0% at this time.
- c. Additional information about the budget: 77% of the budget is fixed "labor" costs which are driven by salary increases and benefits. We have one more year on the teachers' contract. Things may have to change next year. Last contract was negotiated in better financial times and may not be appropriate now.
- d. Question regarding what areas can be eliminated: there are state education regulations that prevent limiting certain departments. Mamaroneck prides itself in offering more music, art and physical education classes than the minimum required; we could reduce some of those, but not all (due to regulations).
- e. Question about electives in the high school: what if we eliminate some of the H.S. electives? We need to make sure that students can graduate with enough credits. Also if we don't offer some of the electives, the students will have a shorter school day which means

they will have more time “out in the community” which may not be a good idea.

- f. Future: There needs to be a structural change of the school system and how education is delivered. Possibilities can include lecture classes, distance learning, on-line classes, etc. The future will require greater flexibility, better use of technology and the ability to deliver quality teaching in a different way. More immediate changes can include increasing the number of periods the elementary art/music teachers teach a day (from 5 to 6).
- g. Some suggestions for the Budget Meeting: Explain the difference between “budget to budget” and “budget to actual.” Explain how much of the 9% increase is due to teachers’ salary and benefit increases. Give specific data (i.e., what cutting specific programs would mean in dollar amounts). Other suggestions for questions were submitted to Debbie Manetta.
- h. Try to get the executive boards involved in budget process now. Many may not be able to attend 11/30 meeting. May use the next PT Council meeting (12/7) to get the exec boards to come and discuss the budget.

VI. Legislation: Rina Beder

- a. Sample letter to the Governor was sent via email to PT Council to distribute to exec boards, etc. There was some negative feedback on these letters, but mostly people thought it was helpful to have a set letter and no drafting required. We will try to have legislative links posted on the PT Council website. Objective is to get people involved and get the information out to parents.
- b. SeeThroughNY: Interesting website – shows ranking of Mamaroneck school district and you can compare it to other districts. It has some interesting information and is worth taking a look at.

Meeting adjourned at 11:05am.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lori Herbsman

In Attendance:

PTC: Cindy Habig, Co-President, Melany Gray, Co-President; Kristine Budill, Treasurer; Lori Herbsman, Secretary; Communications; Laurie Lee, Rina Beder, Legislation/ Teacher Institute, Laurie Girsky, Communications

MHS: Lynne Buly, Sherri Rozansky, Co-Presidents

Central: Jennifer Malherbe, Co-President.

Chatsworth: Joan Capaldi, Laura Livaccari Herzig, Co-Presidents.

Mamaroneck Avenue: Lisa Boren, Co-President.

Murray Avenue: Tracy Owen, Ann LoBue, Co-Presidents.

SEPTA: Amy Lieberman, Cecilia Absher, Co-Presidents.

District: Debbie Manetta, Director of Communications.

Guest: Paul Fried, Linnet Tse

Approved 1/11/10