

February 8, 2010
Mamaroneck High School

PT Council Minutes

Meeting was called to order by President Cindy Habig at 9:20am.

- I. 1/25/10 Minutes Approved.
- II. PT Council Business
 - a. Email from Emily Marshall – open letter to Governor Patterson with our name listed (part of Westchester PTA) – letter said they had issues with charter schools and went on with other strong viewpoints that were not necessarily how we felt. Cindy and Melany asked that our name not be listed
 - b. Talking to the press: Cindy suggested that if anyone is confronted by the press, that you do not make an immediate statement, but instead, tell them you'll think about it and get back to them. If you do want to make a comment, just make sure you think through it first since statements sometimes get twisted around. You can also ask Debbie (Manetta) who is a helpful resource and experienced in this area. As a member of PT Council, you are not restricted in commenting or speaking with the press.
 - c. Cindy and Melany are part of the Advisory Committee that is interviewing candidates for the Superintendent position. The committee has narrowed the search down to 3 candidates – all sitting Superintendents. Question whether the new Superintendent will have any input on the new budget – the answer is no, however, all are dealing with similar issues in their districts so whoever is hired will have experience for the future.
 - d. Nominating Committee: Jennifer Malherbe will be nominated for the Co-President position. Possibly one more position to fill.
 - e. Mid-Year Elementary Curriculum Update Meeting at MAS last Friday went very well. It included Annie Ward and all 5 elementary principals who spoke about different parts of the curriculum (writing, assessments, TERC, technology). About 75 people attended. It was content heavy so there was no time for Q & A. The information that was given is supported by the web site. The speakers stressed consistency across the schools. There has been positive feedback

about the meeting. Hope to get it on the calendar next year so people can plan attendance more easily.

III. Budget: Paul Fried

- a. February 2nd budget meeting created a lot of discussion. Unfortunately there is no positive outcome with all of this. We will have to reduce staff and make significant changes across the board.
 - i. There is a lot of dissatisfaction about teacher's contracts: some PTC members felt that parents are worried about retribution if people speak out.
 - ii. Budget reductions have brought the increase down to just under 3% (that would still mean a tax increase of over 5%). Paul Fried and his staff are continuing to look at options and there will certainly be additional changes.
 - iii. Request to change the order of discussion for February 9th meeting (Middle/High School first). Felt it was unfortunate that there was no one left by the time the high school changes were discussed.
 - iv. Kindergarten Issues: Huge backlash regarding the change to a ½ day Kindergarten. Parents (and real estate agents) believe this will affect property values. However, an increase in class size can also have a negative impact on property values as well. The ½ day Kindergarten (in 3 or 4 schools) would save over a million dollars. Another option (E) will be presented at the meeting on the 9th which would take ½ day Kindergarten off the table. The Princeton Plan (paired schools) is also a consideration – although not likely for next year. Need to look at Transportation study and understand costs of that system.
 - v. Comparing Districts: There has been a lot of comparison with other districts as we go through this process. This comparison is unfair since these districts have different tax bases and different expenditures per student. For example: Scarsdale spends \$3,000 more per student than Mamaroneck. Mamaroneck spends \$21,300 per student (ranked 24th), however we are ranked higher in the amount spent on programs and lower on administrative costs.

- vi. Teachers' Union: Frustrations and concerns need to be forwarded to the head of the Teachers' Union (Ann Borsellino). The contract is up for negotiation next year and one of the biggest issues will certainly be benefits.
- vii. We need a sustainable plan. Concern that all these changes are just putting a band aid on the problem and we need to address the bigger problems. Question as to whether the school can generate revenue (advertising, etc). Per our lawyers (state education laws), we can't accept advertising (i.e., no big sign on fields with a company's name).
- viii. Other suggestions for decreasing budget: Administrative cuts? Cut down on the number of Assistant Principals. Elementary schools all need the Assistant Principals at lunchtime so the timing would be a problem. If we cut an Assistant Principal at Hommocks or the High School it may not be safe (buildings are so large). Can we cut clerical staff? Cuts have already been made, but they are still looking at this area. Cut Curriculum Administrators? They preserve consistency and teacher quality (needed even more if class size increases) and conduct assessments (APPR). Special Education cuts? We have an obligation to meet the mandated requirements, however, looking at program changes (i.e., co-teaching, etc.).

Meeting adjourned at 11:35am.

Respectfully submitted,
Lori Herbsman

In Attendance:

PTC: Cindy Habig, Co-President, Melany Gray, Co-President; Kristine Budill, Treasurer; Lori Herbsman, Secretary; Laurie Lee, Technology; Rina Beder, Legislation/ Teacher Institute; Laurie Girsky, Jean Meyerowitz, Communications
MHS: Lynne Buly, Sherri Rozansky, Co-Presidents
Central: Jennifer Malherbe, Pam Buchmueller, Co-Presidents.
Chatsworth: Laura Livaccari Herzig, Co-President.
Mamaroneck Avenue: Lisa Boren, Jennifer Vaccaro, Co-Presidents.
Murray Avenue: Ann LoBue, Co-President.
SEPTA: Amy Lieberman, Co-President.
District: Debbie Manetta, Director of Communications.
Guests: Paul Fried