

March 22, 2010  
Mamaroneck High School

## PT Council Minutes

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

- I. PT Council Announcements (Cindy)
  - a. Central Visit – a shortened presentation will most likely be held on 4/19.
  - b. Race to Nowhere Documentary: Screening will be at the JCC on Tuesday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7:30. Per Debbie Manetta, Bob Sweeney (HS Guidance Counselor) has a number of complementary tickets for anyone interested in attending. This is a documentary about the stress and anxiety in teens today due in large part to test taking. The goal of the documentary is to start the discussion regarding the long term impact of standardized tests, etc. The film has been previewed in some film festivals and received positive feedback. After the screening, our district will decide whether or not to screen the film at Hommocks in April.
  - c. PTA Budget Meetings: Debbie Manetta asked for PTA input regarding the upcoming board meetings (i.e., format, how much background information is need, how much time for Q&A, etc.) in order to prepare for the building budget meetings. Board members will be at each meeting and Paul Fried and/or Meryl Rubinstein will attend some of them as needed.
    - i. High School/Hommocks: Just want a short overview, Principals from both the Hommocks and High School should attend. Topic for the meeting will also be Sex and Teens – this is designed to help pull in a quorum.
    - ii. Chatsworth: will change date so it's not on the same night as the High School/Hommocks. Would like to make the meeting during the day if possible.
    - iii. Murray: Would like Meryl Rubinstein to attend given the amount of financial questions that have come up there.
    - iv. Central: changed the date to April 22<sup>nd</sup>. Would like to have either Paul or Meryl there to answer questions.
    - v. Mamaroneck Avenue School: Whatever combination of board members and administrators will be fine with them.

## II. Paul Fried

a. Line by Line Budget Meeting last Saturday (March 20<sup>th</sup>) went from 9am-3pm. One of the biggest areas of discussion was class trips. Paul and his team will explore options and try to reallocate resources to accommodate some trips. This does not mean adding money back into the budget but will try to rearrange funds instead. These funds would be used for trips that benefit the curriculum and which all children can participate in and relate to what they are learning. For optional trips (per class), the teachers really cannot hold the students accountable for any information gained on these trips since not everyone may participate due to cost.

i. Discussion on how to deal with fund raising efforts by the schools. These efforts can be tricky especially regarding who has a say in how the money gets allocated. It becomes a very complicated issue with 4 schools involved, especially if it's to be equitable across all the schools. For some schools, parents want to know that their money is going toward a trip for their own child and may not be happy to contribute money if it doesn't affect their child and/or school. Some schools feel that the parents may not be as willing to contribute if it's not a "transparent" process and they don't know where their money is being used. One idea is to have an Activity Fund assessment in the beginning of the year to raise money for trips to be used across the entire district.

ii. Other groups will also be interested in "off district" funding as they realize that programs their children participate in will be cut (i.e., sports, musicals, etc.) and there will be more and more "Booster Clubs" organized to benefit a specific program in the district.

### b. Parental Input

i. The Board and Administration have listened to the parents and restored two positions that were originally cut from the budget:

1. Financial Aid Officer at the high school
2. High School English Teacher

ii. Teacher Tenure Process: Per New York State, teachers can get tenure after 3 years (or 2 if they've been tenured

elsewhere). Recommendations for tenure will come from Principals and Central Staff, etc. and will be given to Paul who will then recommend them for tenure to the Board of Education. They can agree to give an additional year, per a written contract, where the teacher will agree not to take legal action if denied after that 4<sup>th</sup> year. Parents can play an important role in this complex process by giving continual feedback about a teacher. Complaints and positive feedback can be brought to the Principal as well as the Board and Administrators. It's often good to start at the building level and move up if the parent is not getting the desired results. For tenure, it doesn't often help to come in at the "11<sup>th</sup> hour" when no prior information has been given regarding a specific teacher.

- iii. Suggestion that it would be great to have a district assessment where district would solicit feedback regularly (like the progress reports we get for the students). This would allow parents to give both positive and negative feedback in a controlled way.

c. Budget: Teacher Concessions

- i. The Teachers Association was formally asked to re-open the contract during the earlier stages of the budget work, but they declined. The Teachers Association was waiting until the official budget was released last Tuesday to make any kind of statement. Now there is speculation that the teachers will try to make some concessions. However, it may not necessarily be something the board will be able to accept. If money is given to the district by the Teacher Association, it can be applied in several ways. Some ways (like bringing back teachers) would have a positive impact, but if the concessions required that the money must be used to offset taxes or if they give concessions but require that we then extend the contract, it may not work for the district.
- ii. Triboro Amendment: This amendment says that if the teachers are out of a contract, all terms of the last contract continue (including raises for step and lane changes) but there are no cost of living or other raises. Approximately 25% of the teachers are at the maximum (highest step) so it will be an incentive for them to want to negotiate next year.

Community will really need to be part of the process – make sure to have FAQs available early on.

### III. Miscellaneous

- a. Superintendent Search: still on track. The Superintendent of Hastings was shown in one of the local papers last week which said that he is one of the finalists. All the finalists are sitting Superintendents.
- b. High School PTA meetings have had budget overload. The process started so early this year that they have found they're already burnt out. They need to stop spending an inordinate amount of time each meeting on the budget so that they can get to other agenda items. Other schools have not found that to be the case and are able to get through their agendas without the budget being the only topic they discuss.

Meeting adjourned at 11:20am.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lori Herbsman

In Attendance:

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

MHS: Lynne Buly, Co-President

Central: Jennifer Malherbe, Pam Buchmueller, Co-Presidents

Chatsworth: Joan Capaldi, Laura Livaccari, Co-Presidents

Mamaroneck Avenue: Lisa Boren, Jennifer Vaccaro, Co-Presidents

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

SEPTA: Cecilia Absher, Co-President

District: Debbie Manetta, Director of Communications

Guests: Paul Fried, Linnet Tse

Approved 4/30/10