



Bishop School PTO Meeting Minutes

Date: September 13, 2017

Location: Bishop School Library

7 – 9 p.m.

Minutes

- Welcome and Introductions – Meredith Dimola and Sarah Eastman opened the meeting with a brief outline of the agenda. At the time of introductions the following Bishop Community members were present: Meredith Dimola, Mark McAneny, Sheelagh Stirling, Deborah Kokinos, Ami Fatula, Lindsey Baron, Sarah Eastman, Carrie Edwards, Lori Reck, Anna Pisania, Jean Clarke, Judy Geyer, Mark Davila, Lynne Aftuck, Judy Geyer, Angela Christiana, Lindsay Sweeney, Amelia Holander Ames, Colin McCarthy, Tracy Ford, Karla Henry
- Minutes from the June 2017 meeting approved by Anna Pisania.
- Principal's Update (Mark McAneny)

Mr. McAneny welcomed everyone back to school and thanked the room parents for supporting the classes and teachers. He said it was a great beginning to the school year, everyone is energized and setting goals for school year. The teachers are focusing on student learning and professional practice goals. Enrollment at Bishop is 419 this year which is similar to last year. The building and outside grounds look great this year thanks to Kenny Riggles (Sr. Custodian) and Tom Liberty (Jr. Custodian). Last Friday there were split den meetings held (K-2 and 3-5). Respect, Responsibility and Regard was the focus. This was discussed in basic terms for the younger kids and in more detail for older kids. Bishop will be acknowledging Acts of Kindness this year. There will be yellow slips in the main office that kids/staff can write down acts of kindness that were witnessed. Example – 2 fourth graders saw their friend sitting at the allergy table alone and they asked if they could sit with her. The yellow slips will be posted around the school and once a large amount are collected there will be a reward for the school.

Bishop is starting the first year of a three year School Improvement Plan. In the past these have been one year plans. An email was sent out regarding the need for 2 parents for the Bishop Advisory Council. The Bishop Advisory Council will review and approve the School Improvement Plan. In November/December the Bishop School Improvement Plan will be presented to the Arlington School Committee.

Bishop parent, John Cahill, designed a new weekly newsletter that will be used this week. The newsletter will now be in the body of the email rather than an attachment.

- Teacher's Update (Lynne Aftuck)

Ms. Aftuck said the school year started out smoothly. Many teachers did professional development during the summer. Grade 2 and 3 will roll out a new math curriculum. Grade 1 will be using a new reading workshop. Bishop will share this new reading workshop as professional development for other Grade 1 classes in Arlington. The teachers are also very happy with the new custodians and feel that the building is very clean. Ms. Jen Murphy (Grade 1 teacher) will be the new PTO teacher representative this year.

- Co-President's Report (Meredith Dimola and Sarah Eastman)

Meredith Dimola discussed some of the accomplishments of the PTO last year and goals for this year. For the 2016-2017 school year the PTO raised \$48,820 and spent \$63,736 for an average spend of \$160 per student. The following are a few of the items funded by the PTO last year:

- **Enrichment Programs:** The PTO funded all enrichment programs at Bishop last year in excess of \$12,000. The budget for this year allows for increased spending on enrichment programs totaling \$15,500.
- **Bishop Garden:** The PTO funded the Garden last year in excess of \$3,000 which includes the paid professional who integrates the curriculum into each grade. This year the PTO has committed \$4,200 to the Garden.
- **Teacher checks:** Twice a year the PTO distributes checks for \$200 to the Bishop teachers. These funds are to reimburse teachers for any items used for classroom activities, books, and additional supplies. Last year the PTO funded almost \$12,000 in teacher checks and will continue this year.
- **Grants:** The PTO funded almost \$7,000 in technology and curriculum enhancing grants last year. Anyone in the Bishop Community can request a grant. This year the PTO's grant budget has increased to \$14,500. This year a \$6,000 grant has already been funded to purchase speakers in classrooms and throughout the school to go with the new projectors. This was important because the teachers said it was difficult for the students to hear in class because the new projectors were very noisy.

- **Classroom Supplies:** Multiple times a year a group of volunteers go to Costco in order to fill the teacher closet with supplies. Last year the PTO funded \$3,800 for classroom items such as cleaning supplies, glue sticks, soap, tissues, water bottles for the nurse, paper towels, etc. The PTO will continue to fund these items this year.
- **Playground Improvements:** Last year the PTO funded in excess of \$5,000 for items such as the installation of new basketball hoops, tether ball, the tree in memory of Greg Wright and new plantings. This year the PTO has increased the playground improvement budget to \$10,000 which includes funding a new seating area in the Garden.
- **Bishop Library:** The Bishop Library is not given a budget by the Town. As a result the PTO funds the Bishop Library each year. Last year the PTO contributed \$2,000 to the Library and will continue doing so this year.

This year the PTO has increased its fundraising goal for the Annual Fund. The budget deficit that resulted from the level of spending last year of approximately \$15,000 was paid for through surpluses that had been accrued over several years. These surpluses have now been depleted and as a result more fundraising is necessary this year to rebuild these accounts. The PTO has increased its suggested donation amount for the Annual Fund to \$125 per child (\$100 donation to the annual fund and \$25 classroom donation previously collected by the room parents). Please note, this is only a suggested amount. This year the PTO will be distributing checks to the Room Parents to fund classroom activities and parties throughout the year. In the past the Room Parents have requested \$25-\$30 per family and have collected these funds directly. This year the PTO is asking that these contributions be made as part of a donation to the Annual Fund. Some of the reasons for this change are that some Room Parents did not like asking people for contributions, some Room Parents were paying for classroom expenses out of pocket if they weren't able to collect enough, and also some people felt that they were being asked for too much money too many times per year. The PTO hopes this will streamline the process.

Question from Lindsay Sweeney: Are the increases in the budget items due to inflation?

Response from Meredith Dimola: There are varying reasons for these increases such as if an event went over budget last year, an increase in the number of students in the school, etc. Response from Ami Fatula: These line items increased specifically because we want to increase spending this year and do more. Comment from Mark Davila: Since this is such a large increase this year it should be communicated to the Bishop Community more often in the Principal's newsletter. Question from Angela Christiana: How much is in the "rainy day fund". Response from Ami Fatula: There is approximately \$20,000 in the "rainy day fund" and that is set aside in case the Bear Fair is unable to

occur due to the weather. The Bear Fair is such a large generator of income for the PTO that if it were not able to happen this “rainy day fund” would be used to pay for expenses that have already been incurred throughout the year. Comment from Jean Clarke: I think the message needs to be communicated constantly that the large surplus from previous years is no longer there. Many people are under the impression that it is. Also, it should also be communicated that donations to the annual fund can be made throughout the year and don’t have to be made up front especially for families with more than one child if they would like to contribute the suggested donation of \$125/child. Comment from Deborah Kokinos: It is a good thing that we have spent down the surplus because we want to be able to fund things in the school and improve it. Question from Angela Christiana: Do you think you will be able to raise that much more money this year? Response from Deborah Kokinos: This year we will be making some events fundraisers rather than community events. Response from Lindsay Baron: A lot of fundraising can be done without a lot of work like using your stop and shop card to raise money for the school. Response from Meredith Dimola: We agree that this is a large increase in fundraising. We are going to try our best to do it. We review the budget every month and can adjust down if necessary.

- Arlington Education Foundation Presentation (Judy Geyer)

Arlington Education Foundation (AEF) – AEF raises money through community donations. AEF distributes more than \$100,000 annually in grants in all level of Arlington Public Schools. The Bishop Garden benefitted from an AEF grant. Mr. Hamm and Ms. Capaldo have also been awarded grants. AEF welcomes any ideas for grants and the Bishop Ambassador for AEF, Judy Geyer, can help with the grant application which gets presented to the AEF board. The AEF Star Program is very popular in which a family can make a donation and the teacher of their choice receives a star as recognition.

- Public Comment/Questions

1. Comment from Jean Clarke – Picture day is October 2nd and retakes usually happen a few weeks later. This year it’s possible to offer sibling photos on retake day if we decide that is something we would like to offer the Bishop Community.
2. Comment from Karla Henry: I am working on fundraising with Lindsay and wondering if we should use the Bishop eBay site for bigger ticket items or keep things local for the silent auction. Response from Meredith Dimola: We are trying to do more with the silent auction but we may be interested in bigger ticket items that are being sold throughout the year. Let’s discuss after the meeting.

- Room Parent Orientation (Anna Pisania)

A PowerPoint presentation is available on the Bishop PTO website.