

**Minutes- Manhattan Middle School PTO Meeting**  
**December 14, 2015, 6:30 pm**  
**Manhattan Middle School Library**

**I. Welcome and Introductions, Michele Marshall, Chair ([michelemarshall@comcast.net](mailto:michelemarshall@comcast.net))**

- Michele welcomed the group and introductions were made.
- Meeting participants included Michele Marshall, Mary Dineen, Erica Johnson, John Riggs, Loli Hudson, Nicole Wobus, Julie Chang, Shanna Henkel, Karen Gall, Shannon Collier, Mary Ellen Steele, Darcy Fan, Amanda Wember, Kristin Kusmierek.
- Michele noted that the PTO was asked about contributing to a janitor's holiday gift. Last year each janitor received \$125 each from whole staff. Erica suggested the PTO contribute \$75 to each janitor's gift, so together with the teacher contributions it will total \$125 for each janitor. Funds will go through Manhattan. All members in attendance expressed support for the gift.
- Michele provided an update on the last two community dinners, noting that the November dinner at California Pizza Kitchen raised \$124, and the most recent dinner at Pizza Rev raised \$41.

**II. Principal's Report, John Riggs**

- Mr. Riggs received an email about bond phases. Manhattan was listed as part of phase 3. Had previously been told Manhattan would be in phase 2. Mr. Riggs reached out to the district and now school is back in phase 2, the next group to go through the bond work process. Don Orr, Deputy Superintendent of Operations, was the point of contact.
- Mr. Riggs reported that the open enrollment events (Open House, tours, first of two coffee events) have had great turnout and positive feedback. Roughly 20 parents attended the first Principal's coffee event. A meeting attendee noted that one question that came up during the open enrollment tours was about programming opportunities at the school. Mr. Riggs explained that programming is available as part of the multi-media class, and through the robotics club.
- Mr. Riggs provided an update on the School Accountability Committee's progress. The Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) process is underway. Every school is required to develop a UIP. Teachers are discussing what they can do to support literacy. The district has written 2 goals for Manhattan: literacy and a multi-tiered system for support. The school developed the third goal: to improve student engagement and climate within the student body. The school will support literacy by using the same language across classes / subjects.

**III. Teacher's Report, Mary Ellen Steele**

- Ms. Steele expressed that the teachers are appreciative of the parent volunteer help provided by the Projects Committee.
- Julie Chang, leader of the "Project Committee" explained that teachers ask for help and Julie and others provide the assistance as requested. Julie sent email at beginning of year and Loli sent it on to staff. Julie will send another in January. Some activities the projects committee has helped with in the past include putting black material up on all the hallway bulletin boards, labeling new books, and cleaning the math department storage closet.

- Mr. Riggs noted that it would help to share before / after photos to help tell the story about how all the school communities' donations of money and time are helping the school. Testimonials from teachers would be valuable too. Mr. Riggs is asking teachers to take photos of the things they bought last year to help encourage continued giving during the following year. The school has so many positive things going on. The teachers and administration are working to do a better job of telling the story.

#### **IV. Treasurer's Report, Erica Johnson ([erica@onthedivide.com](mailto:erica@onthedivide.com))**

- Several fundraising sources appearing on the budget report were discussed:
  - "Retail fundraising" was from the Amazon Smile Foundation. The Smile Foundation provides 0.5% in Colorado, though fundraising in other states can earn up to 20%.
  - Manhattan receives regular donations from Benevity as part of a corporate matching program. Those funds are passed through to Math Counts.
  - Phoenix Fund totaled \$34,481.32.
  - The school store had a low month in November.
- The fiscal year is July 1 – June 30.
- "Cost of Goods" consisted of:
  - Magic Phoenix costs, which included PayPal fees.
  - School store costs: snack purchase.
- The group discussed PTO's potential funding for clubs. See notes in "Additional Topics Discussed."
- Erica noted that the next expense will be City of Boulder sales tax for school store items. Last year's taxes were submitted in November. Erica also noted that the yearly state registrations (SOS) are up to date. Profit and loss statements will be posted on the PTO website.
- Kristy Lane has money to contribute for grocery cards.
- Loli noted that the school just received a check from Just Give, part of an employee-matching program, this is for the Magic Phoenix.

#### **V. Committee Reports**

- **The Magic Phoenix Fund, Amanda Wember ([awember@yahoo.com](mailto:awember@yahoo.com))**
  - Amanda noted that current funds stand at \$34,400 at the time of the meeting. Once adding outstanding funds already committed it will bring the total amount to \$37,400. There are still some expenses to pay for (e.g., give-aways), which are likely to total approximately \$1,000. However, there are also still some funds coming in.
  - Amanda noted that the 2015 fundraising effort increased the target from \$25,000 to \$30,000.
  - The PTO thanks the Village Coffee Shop and other local businesses that offered support and promotional assistance.
  - Amanda highlighted that it is essential to find someone to lead the Magic Phoenix fundraising effort next year. She also recognized that the PTO chair plays a very large role in the fundraising effort, and the majority of the PTO board is parents of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, so will need to be replaced next year.

- Mr. Riggs noted that it would be helpful for the PTO to create documentation of the Magic Phoenix process from this year. Amanda explained that she has a full calendar and record of documents sent to the teachers. In the new year she will meet with Zennia and Alaina to review what went well, and what can be improved upon from last year.
- Got request on Facebook., from a local orthodontist. This is fundraising effort that would reward MMS with \$1 for every like that they received. Although, this is a wonderful opportunity, it can open the door to other advertising opportunities that may not be in the best interest of the school.
- Michele noted that the PTO still owes the kids an ice cream party to reward them for their Magic Phoenix fundraising efforts, and will aim to do that in January.
- The Magic Phoenix request from teachers was for under \$30,000 (\$28,145). The PTO raised more than the teachers asked for. The PTO needs to determine what to spend the surplus on. This links with the earlier discussion of the need to form a budget committee to determine how to direct unallocated funds.
  - Amanda suggested creating a budget committee in early January to determine how to spend the surplus funds.
  - Mr. Riggs said he (working with Ms. Steele) would collect ideas from staff for items or activities that would benefit the school during the current school year. Last year the school bought speakers for the auditorium.
  - Amanda suggested looking for opportunities that would get students out of the building and engaging in an experience. Michele mentioned that this year's 8<sup>th</sup> grade already has plans to do a field trip to the Fiske Planetarium. Some parents suggested forming a field trip fund.
- Michele noted that the remaining funds will come from a family foundation. The surplus is likely to amount to approximately \$7,000. The premise of the Magic Phoenix fundraising is that it will get spent on things that will benefit current students during this school year. Therefore, the surplus funds cannot simply be placed in reserve for future use.
- **Grocery (Reloadable) Cards Report:** (Kristy Lane, klane@earthnet.net)
  - Kristy Lane will take over the grocery cards effort going forward.
  - Michele suggested designating the reloadable card funds for a specific purpose. She noted that in the past the community dinners that have gotten the best response have had a specific fundraising focus. The best response was after the flood.
  - Another participant noted that the PTO may not want to restrict the funds to something specific. They suggested that a budget committee formed to determine how to spend surplus Magic Phoenix funds could also address this issue of the grocery card money. Since this money is not direct parent donations, the earned money could be set aside for a specific goal, even for next year.
  - Mr. Riggs noted that the benefit of dedicating funds to a specific purpose is to help market and make a more compelling appeal for the fundraising effort.
  - Kristy noted that it's helpful to explain what past money has been spent on. She hopes to send routine emails to update people on how the money has been spent.

- A participant noted that the PTO has received some negative feedback in past about how money is spent. Some community members are willing to support certain fundraisers but only if they support what the money will be spend on.
- The school doesn't receive funds every month from the reloadable cards program. The program is set so the school has to hit the \$5,000 level before receiving a check.
- Different companies offer different percentages back:
  - Ozo has a card that gives back more. Give 10% back.
  - Chipotle and Kitchen Next Door give back a large percentage, (50%).
- **Trip Tracker Program Report, Lori Winslow ([icecreamalchemy@msn.com](mailto:icecreamalchemy@msn.com)) reported by [Karen Gall](#)**
  - PTO committed \$700 to the Trip Tracker program. The program was by far more successful than expected. The program has to pay participating businesses 50 cents on each Trip Tracker dollar.
  - Historically Longmont and St. Vrain have spent 100% of their Trip Tracker dollars. The program needs to plan based on the assumption that all the dollars will be spent, and it is looking for additional funds. The program receives no funding from BVSD. The grant originally received can't sustain the program going forward.
  - The program organizer proposed not issuing trip tracker dollars in December and have it all get paid out in February, but ultimately decided to reward for December. The program is not going to reward for April.
  - December reporting will open on December 18.
  - Elementary schools are very active in the program. Southern Hills has an app. Bear Creek, Southern Hills, and Uni Hill PTOs are very active with the trip tracker program. Bear Creek gave extra money to support the program since their enrollment in the program has increased so much..

**VI. TAG, District Accountability Committee (DAC) and & Boulder Valley Gifted and Talented (BVG) Report: Kristin Kusmierek ([kusberry@me.com](mailto:kusberry@me.com))**

- Karen Gall knows of a Creekside parent who will send a child to Manhattan next year and can likely represent Manhattan for DAC next year: Rebecca Baker.
- For TAG the district is looking at planning and legislation in the world of gifted and talented.
- Boulder Valley Gifted and Talented has two upcoming programs. At the beginning of February Jim DeLisle will speak. He has written books about education and TAG. He will talk about the teenage brain. In the spring, Janice McNally will speak. She is a licensed psychotherapist.

**VII. Additional Topics Discussed**

- **Recruiting New PTO Members / Board:** There's a strong need to recruit new PTO participants and board members. Three of the current board members are parents of 8<sup>th</sup> graders. There may be some candidates to fill the treasurer role, but the chair and vice chair roles will need to be filled. A participant suggested that one way to help promote PTO

participation is to better communicate when PTO meetings are happening (e.g., including it on the school calendar, and in the “notices” and upcoming events on the school website).

- **Planning for Upcoming Events:** Michele noted that the PTO board is looking at potential days for the Winter Social. The PTO sponsors the event, with ice cream and popcorn that is free to all. This is fun evening for all families with the idea that they get to meet new families and see old friends. The 360 leaders help with the activities on this night.
- **Magic Phoenix Ice Cream Party:** After a brief discussion, the PTO decided to fulfill the ice cream commitment of the Magic Phoenix this Friday. PTO members will hand out ice cream sandwiches at the end of the school day as students leave for winter break. This is a great way to reward the kids for a job well done.
- **Potential Additional Funding Sources:** There was some discussion about unique potential sources of funding, as well as the associated pros, cons and review needed.
  - A participant explained that a local business offered to give the school \$1 per “like” for the business’ Facebook page.
  - Amanda suggested creating a PTO newsletter where that type of information could be posted.
  - Loli explained that BVSD high schools charge businesses to put banners in gyms, and Mr. Riggs expressed that any fundraising activity with like receiving funds for Facebook “likes” for a business would need to be reviewed by him. Loli highlighted that the district provides a list of community resources, and has always said that the school cannot endorse any person or business.
  - A participant highlighted that there is a community board near school entrance that is open to anyone to post information that the entire school community can benefit from.
- **Funding for Clubs:**
  - The Magic Phoenix Fund does not support clubs. Erica highlighted that the Magic Phoenix fund supports classroom resources only. Clubs can request funding from community dinner fundraising. The idea is to focus community dinners on a specific club to rally participation in the dinners. Clubs can ask for money via that fundraising channel at any time.
  - Three clubs were supported this month: Minecraft, Robotics and Latina Leadership.
  - A participant suggested that at end of the year, PTO puts out a request for funds for the following year in order to form a queue of funding needed.
  - The Destination Imagination (DI) club was discussed, along with the potential for funding the club with community dinner funds.
    - Loli asked whether Alison Woods is a sponsor of DI, although Alison was initially involved a parent, Darcy Fan, runs this club.
    - Julie Chang explained that DI is a competition among all grades, nationally. Kids are given 7 challenges that they work on for 5 months, then present at a conference. The club includes service- learning activities working with a non-profit community organization. Earlier this year the kids made food for the homeless. The idea is to work as a team to solve a problem or create a narrative in a collaborative way.

- Parents involved are Jennifer Reiger and Darcy Fan. Five kids are currently participating. It is not just for TAG students, but the club is closed to new participants for this year. The club has already engaged in several team building and training-type activities and are starting to work on their challenges. The club meets on Fridays and Sundays. Information about formation of the club was circulated through word of mouth and in the principal's blog.
- A participant suggested that, in general, if a club is closed at only 5 kids then it's not a good candidate for fundraising from a school community event. Michele expressed support for hosting a community dinner to support kids working for a non-profit, as DI kids have.
- Michele noted that there are currently no requests for funds from clubs. We did support the three mentioned previously thru community dinners. Allies did at one point and then rescinded the request because the club received funding from a non-profit to provide lunch for their in-service day. Allies is also closed to new participants at this point in the year. It has 25 participants from each grade. It was closed to help foster a sense of community and trust among the current club members.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

- Amanda will form a budget committee in January to determine how to allocate surplus funds from the Magic Phoenix fundraiser and other funds currently not linked to a specific spending line item.
- Amanda will prepare documentation of the Magic Phoenix fundraising process for use by future fundraising committees.
- Mr. Riggs and Ms. Steele will collect ideas from the teachers in January for spending the surplus Magic Phoenix funds.
- Michele: Send meeting notice and agenda out on January 6 for the meeting scheduled for the 11<sup>th</sup>.
- Julie Chang will send out another Project Committee offer of assistance to teachers for the spring semester.