

Leverett Elementary School PTO Meeting Minutes

October 11, 2018

6pm-8pm

1. Call to order: In attendance: Tessa Young, Siri Om Fuller, Margot Lacey, Ruth Love Barer, Donna Rivers, Nina Eddy, Jai Fuller, Miryam Vesset
2. Approval of September meeting minutes
3. Treasurer's Report
 - a. Review budget
 - i. \$19,600. In the bank
 - ii. \$14,000 is in general fund
 - iii. \$5600 is rolled over from last year for all classes combined; each class is getting \$437.50 this year.
 - iv. Margot would like teachers to spend down their PTO money within each school year so it is used for the students who helped to raise it
 1. Discussion about what to do with leftover funds each year; should be completely transparent when people are communicating what the fund raising is going to be used for;
 2. Should the money follow with the students? Concerns about things being contentious for various reasons; can be a slippery slope; what about the preschool class? They will never have a balance to begin with. Could sixth grade donate leftover money to the preschool?
 3. Teachers don't know how much \$ they have available from PTO.
 4. \$3500 is planned amount to give for field trips each year from PTO; the goal is \$437.50 for each class for field trips from PTO
 5. The overall goal for fundraising for PTO is \$5000 for the year \$3500 is for classrooms for field trips, the rest is for other expenses; talk about raising this number—should really be a minimum of \$6000 to cover fees, insurance, and all the areas PTO supports.
 6. Categories for expenses: Mountain Day, Parent Education, Curriculum Support (science equipment, etc.), Assemblies and Enrichment, special field trips, professional development,
 - a. supporting professional development doesn't necessarily feel like an okay category; would it work to have a matching fund for PD? Discussion about how directly the money spent should impact students (i.e., PD for teacher/staff vs. supplies for a project)
 7. marketing and publication, taxes, insurance, etc. are additional PTO expenses

8. Discussion about continuing to support for PebbleGo. Nonfiction books for K-2 but only grade 1 and 2 use it. Large expense (\$650) for a resources for just 2 grades. In the past cost was split between library funds and PTO. Library funds were cut in half in the budget, not able to pay for half of the PebbleGo cost.
9. Requests for \$50 and under send out in an email to PTO members, allow 24 hours for objections.
10. Requests for over \$50, need to discuss at a meeting.

- b. Cash box for Harvest Festival
- c. Form created for reimbursing members for PTO related purchases
- d. Changing of banks? Now using Florence Savings Bank

4. President's report

- a. Discussion: how is PTO prioritizing disbursement of funding?
 - i. Biggest chunk of money is going to field trips
 - ii. What is next biggest?
 - iii. Margot: PTO would accept applications for funding three times a year. Discussion: deadlines would help with decision making and planning for everyone.
 - iv. Would it be possible to have teachers know what they need/want at the beginning of the year for the whole year? Depends on teacher, class.
 - v.
- b. Renewal of PTO membership and insurance and IRS forms-Treasurer is finishing up the paperwork
- c. Review bylaws regarding votes needed for a quorum: the members of the board are President, Treasurer, Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Director, Officer (6 total voting members).
- d. Suggestion made to write a Friday Post that explains that PTO fully funded transportation for Mountain Day and all Morse Hill Transportation.

5. Principal's Report

- a. New field trip forms
- b. Student activity account
 - i. By-law, any monies raised by parents for kids are supposed to go into a student activities acct.; Policy was never finished; Bruce Turner and Margot are working to set up a checking account to help manage this
 1. When this is set up, there will be a clear system of keeping track of classroom monies (no more keeping cash in the school safe) This is not legal and it can be fraught with issues and liability for teachers
 2. Teachers will need to get more than one check to pay for field trips

- 3. Paying for things in cash is not something we can continue to do; we need a paper trail
- ii. Harvest Fest is not PTO money, it is money that each class has earned
- iii. PTO's own fundraising at Harvest Fest stays with PTO
- iv. Field trip fund idea: if students' families contribute more than what is needed for a field trip then the extra money could go to a field trip fund to help cover families who need it
- v. Concerns that the money raised during Valley Gives was supposed to go towards Morse Hill

- 1. Many items were on the list to fund for Valley Gives but not all of them will be able to be funded.

Sharing buses to save costs came up as well as parent drivers for Field trips (not allowed in public schools in MA)

Morse Hill cost \$9000 last year (admission + transportation)

Discussion: it was a drastic cut to go from monthly MH visit to once a year

Trying to find a way to create a program for all 8 grades, not just the 4-6 grade classes; we are working on implementing a social/emotional program. Kids need this type of learning earlier.

People were surprised to be asked to pay \$25-30 for Morse Hill when Valley Gives was intended to raise funds for this. It was confusing for people. Suggested that PTO put something in the newsletter explaining how the Valley Gives money will be used towards Morse Hill.

Morse Hill transportation funds are coming from Valley Gives; parents were asked to pay for the admission fee to the program

This is a curricular decision not a PTO decision; this has to be balanced with time away from school; a nurse has to go with the class when they go to Morse Hill which is another expense; not all classes go to Morse Hill so not all students benefit. Discussion: students have the expectation they are going

PTO will cover the deficit of Morse Hill program fees that was not covered by parent contributions. (request from 6th grade)

Margot will go through requests from teachers and invoices from Victoria for Morse Hill trips and then pass on the numbers to PTO; PTO will keep the orange forms (PTO \$ request) as a paper trail

- c. Mountain Day/Morse Hill

- i. \$660. For buses for Mountain Day will be covered by PTO

6. Ongoing Events

- a. Harvest Festival: PTO table

- i. T-shirts will be sold; keep track of number of shirts and do inventory after festival

- b. Halloween

- i. Need volunteers for haunted hallway, decorating the gym, setting up the games, setting up cafeteria, and baked goods donations.
 - c. Continue Pierce Brothers Coffee fundraising
 - d. An idea to have a "Giving Tree" in the front of the school. Teachers write their classroom wish list on leaves and place on the "Giving Tree". Any parent can pick up a leaf and fill the wish for any teacher.
- 7. Upcoming Events:
 - a. Halloween, see above.
 - b. Next meeting discuss the big fund-raising event for spring.
 - c. Teacher appreciation fund
 - d. Talent show committee getting ready in November
- 8. Next Meeting: Thursday November 8, 2018 6pm, LES parent room

Donna Rivers, LES librarian