

October 17, 2018

Rowe School PTO Meeting, 6:30–7:30 p.m., Library

DRAFT Minutes

Attending Officers: Kayla Theriault and Caitlyn Watson, Co-Presidents; Amy Hayes, Vice President; Kristin McCabe, Secretary; Lory Davis, Community Building Coordinator; Jennifer Rent, Fundraising Coordinator (absent: Rita Sullivan King, Treasurer)

Other Attendees: Principal Dawn Kenniston, Fiona O’Grady, Hilary Deuben, Susan Baxter, Laura Paul, Aaron Brady, Bethany Schmitt, Leah Deragon, Kera Pingree

Welcome and Introductions

Caitlyn distributed the agenda and called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m. Everyone introduced themselves, and Kristin circulated a sign-in sheet.

Approve Minutes from Previous Meeting

Kristin circulated copies of the draft minutes from last month’s meeting and asked if there were any adjustments or questions. No one had any; the minutes were approved.

Rowe Updates from Dawn

Dawn began her updates by highlighting the school’s Title I status, explaining the history and implications of changes under way. She said Title I is a federal program that provides funding for supplemental services to schools with a high population of students who qualify for free and reduced-price lunch. Superintendent Xavier Botana has reallocated the funding in the district to go to elementary schools rather than the former mix of elementary and middle schools, bringing more equity among the city’s elementary population. Hall School became a “partial Title” school under this shift and is currently completing an application to become “full Title.” The partial status has allowed Rowe to increase literacy interventions and other services for students with certain targeted needs; if full status is granted, all Rowe students will have access to the supplementary services. The application is due in April and will need parents to provide comment, TBA.

Student-led conferences are now under way and continue next week. Parents will have an opportunity to preview the new report cards, which will be sent home in December.

The playground keeps looking better, now with several tons of new mulch on the ground. The installation crew and school leaders have decided to leave the fence in place until spring to protect the fragile plantings, except they will move the fence back to allow access to the paved area (4-square and basketball courts). This area will probably open after Thanksgiving break. In addition, the fence is being moved back from the kindergarten doors to allow students and staff to exit that way in emergencies; staff are also considering ways to move afterschool pickup using the extended space.

Budget Update from Rita (via Caitlyn)

Caitlyn distributed a budget sheet reviewing PTO income and expenses since the last meeting (October 17-November 13), totaling \$16,748 in income and \$2,438 in expenses (for a total of \$21,886 income and \$8,218 expenses since July 1).

She explained what Amazon Smile is and noted that BoxTops were recently submitted, which should bring in another \$257.70 when the check is received.

Caitlyn also said the Hannaford Helps Schools slips are currently being accepted at the Westbrook location only; parents who shop at other Hannaford locations are encouraged to drop off their slips in the PTO mailbox so we can benefit from the donation.

Jen said the PTO Clynk account is now being handled by some 5th graders as a community service project. They plan to send home bags with each student soon.

Walkathon & Auction Updates from Jen

The walkathon was an amazing success financially, bringing in \$9,417! It was great to see the kids engaged in raising money for their school. They also seemed to have fun participating. Many thanks to those who organized and staffed it as well as those who donated money.

The auction at DiMillo's was also lovely, if not as lucrative financially as we'd hoped, bringing in about \$7,300 to date (some money is still coming in). DiMillo's itself made a very generous contribution by offering the space, food, and staff at cost. Nearly all of the people who left early have now picked up and paid for their items. Next we will be organizing a group of volunteers to send thank-you notes; Kristin circulated a sign-up list for those willing to help write notes after Thanksgiving.

The Executive Committee will be debriefing the auction in more detail soon. Jen said she has ideas for improving the success of the classroom projects and the live auction in particular. Parents didn't seem very interested in bidding on the classroom projects. Suggestions for improving that situation included having room parents work on each class's project (rather than having just a couple of volunteers do all of them, like we did this year), to raise more awareness and sense of ownership for them. Jen said she also felt the projects were rushed at the beginning of the school year to accommodate a November 2 auction; moving the date into December would help with that. Others felt December could have other drawbacks, such as holiday-related conflicts keeping attendance down. Jen asked if a Saturday night would be better than a Friday night, and several people said it would.

Jen also said she plans to hold the live auction earlier in the evening, maybe at 7:30, and position it in the middle of the room so attendees can't escape it. Lory added a suggestion to predetermine a checkout/follow-up policy and post it at the event, to clarify how to handle winning bidders who leave early.

Book Fair Update from Kayla

Kayla reported that the fall book fair is almost done being set up in the Maker Space. Tomorrow is the teacher preview day, and the fair will be open Monday and Tuesday during conferences. We are still looking for about eight volunteers, especially from 2:00-4:00 Monday afternoon. Kayla asked that anyone who could stay a few minutes after tonight's meeting please come across the hall to help finish the setup.

Dawn reminded everyone that school is dismissed at 12:30 on both Monday and Tuesday, as went out in an email this afternoon. She said a correction to that email had also gone out, fixing a broken link to a survey about school start and end times. Asked how the staff feels about the current start and end times, Dawn said they definitely required adjustment at first (such as moving staff meetings to the mornings instead of afternoons), but they've worked it out pretty well now. Parents seem to like having a late start time.

Winterfest Heads-Up from Lory

Lory said she is looking for someone to co-chair Winterfest with her and learn the ropes since this is her last year at Rowe. She is also looking for anyone who'd like to be on the planning committee. Fiona asked about the time commitment, and Jen suggested that the first meeting be held December 17 at 7:30 p.m., right after the regular PTO meeting. Then we'll probably need to meet one hour a week in January until the event on the 26th. Caitlyn asked everyone to please let us know if they have a community connection that could assist with volunteers, such as a scout troop, workplace volunteer service, etc.

Wrap Up / Questions

Lory reminded the group that December 14 is our Rowe roller-skating night at Happy Wheels. It doesn't require any volunteers—just come and skate! Leah asked if we needed volunteers to help clean up old social media sites, and we agreed that would be great and said she should connect with Caitlyn, who currently runs our Facebook page.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.