**PTA Meeting Minutes**

**January 21, 2015**

Present: Katie Seawell, Dave Seawell, Perry Parsons, Harold Churchill (Board Member), Mary Murray (President), Tim Lohraff (Board Member), Maureen Merrill, Karen Rosenberg (Co-Secretary), Lindsay Zaccara (Communications and Co-Secretary), Molly Laster (Vice-President), Katie Welsh, Nelia Flores

**General Update**

The Scholastic Book Fair held in December/during Literacy Night raised approximately $1300. Thanks to Maureen Merrill for her leadership with the event.

There was a great turnout for the recent open gym event for incoming families. This year’s marketing plan seemed effective, and it is nice to see incoming families meeting Hawthorne teachers and other families to set their transition up for success! Thanks to Gabe Sheffer for his leadership with this event.

Lindsay Zaccara is working on a Hawthorne handbook and improving written communication with Hawthorne families. She is seeking input from FOH and Hawthorne staff.

Molly Laster moved to approve the minutes for the 12/3 meeting. Harold Churchill seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Financial Review Report**

Tim Lohraff discussed the recent financial review that he conducted with FOH members Iain Mourer and Katie Seawell. Please see attached document for details of the report.

Tim recommended that FOH discuss whether it would like to continue using the Alliance for Education as its fiscal sponsor or if it would like to return to being a stand-alone nonprofit organization. Tim suggested this topic be placed on a future FOH PTA meeting agenda.

Tim will review FOH’s insurance policies before the March 4 PTA meeting to make sure that FOH carries appropriate insurance coverage for its activities.

Tim reported that the Financial Review Committee recommends creating a position for a neutral observer. This observer would be an FOH member who has viewing privileges on FOH financial accounts and will review financial transactions on a regular basis. Molly suggested that the vice-president take on this role as a way of gaining exposure to FOH budgeting processes.

Tim moved to create a neutral observer role. FOH president will assign this role to the vice-president or another board member (excluding the treasurer). The neutral observer would have viewing privileges on all FOH accounts but would not have transactional privileges. Dave Seawell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mary Murray appointed Vice President Molly Laster to the neutral observer role for the remainder of the 2014-15 term.

**Nominating Committee**

PTA bylaws require the formation of a nominating committee to put together a slate of candidates for the annual board elections. Nominating committee members cannot serve on the board themselves. Former nominating committee member Perry Parsons explained that the role of the committee is to disseminate information encouraging Hawthorne community members to run for board positions. The committee did this via written and personal communication channels; Hawthorne staff members helped recruit new candidates as well. Dave and Katie Seawell volunteered to serve on the nominating committee this year. *There will be nominations for board members at the March 4th meeting and the membership will vote on the new slate of candidates at the April 22 meeting.* NOTE: This timeline is different from what was stated on the original 2014-2015 calendar of meetings.

Mary Murray moved to appoint Dave and Katie Seawell to the nominating committee. Lindsay Zaccara seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Vision and Planning: 2015-2016 Budget Priorities**

Mary explained in past years FOH has started budget discussions at the March meeting, but the board decided to move the initial conversation to January to leave more time to discuss values and strategic priorities that inform budgeting process. Please see attached budget sheet for additional information.

Several members discussed the importance of evaluating the impact of previous expenditures, such as funds used to support Hawthorne artists-in-residence. In addition to speaking informally with Hawthorne staff, FOH members discussed the possibility of creating and disseminating a survey to assess the impact of the artist-in-residence program. Mary agreed to draft a survey. Molly Laster, Maureen Merrill and Karen Rosenberg offered to review the survey.

This conversation segued into a discussion of ways FOH members could get more input from Hawthorne teachers without adding to the teachers’ workload (i.e., without a teacher having to commit to serving on the FOH board). Members encouraged each other to speak informally with teachers to get their input on ways FOH could best support their work and to invite teachers to key FOH meetings (e.g., budget meetings).

Members then discussed the importance of prioritizing the many areas that could use additional funding. These questions ask FOH to consider how it frames its role vis-à-vis supporting and strengthening the Hawthorne community.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30. Next meeting February 11, 6:00-7:30. Potluck in the cafeteria. Topic: Student Safety at Home and School

Attachments: “FOH Budget Planning Process” (in same electronic document) and Financial Review Committee Report (separate PDF)

**FOH Budget Planning Process**

* In February and March, we will seek input into budget priorities for 2015-2016 and explain how budget requests can be submitted
  + Visit staff and teachers’ meetings
  + Ask Ms. Scott and Ms. Gray
  + Bring it up at FOH meetings
  + Invite people to join the budget committee
* After the March 28 auction, we will know more about how much we have to spend next year
  + It will take a while to get a precise number from the auction
  + We already have income from the Walk a Thon, Tree Sale, Book Fair, etc.
* We will discuss a draft budget on April 22
  + Usually we have more requests than funds, and this is when we “cut”
  + We can leave that meeting and ask follow up clarification questions
* We will vote to on a budget on May 13
* In the past, budget priorities were guided by:
  + STEAM. Does it fund science, art, technology, etc?
  + Does it impact a large array of students? For example…
    - We complemented a Page Ahead grant so that all students will take a book home this summer, not just the younger grades
    - School-wide events
    - Buses for field trips for every class.
  + History of funding it.
    - We fund some things simply because FOH historically has.
  + Filling gaps in funding
    - If the school used to do with district or Title 1 or LAP $$ and those got cut, we tried to keep it.
  + Values-based exceptions
    - Child-care for ESL classes in evening.
    - Families in crisis.
  + Value of supporting teachers and classrooms
    - We reimburse supplies for teachers to a certain amount

**Discussion Questions**

* What criteria would you use to prioritize how we budget?
* What values should guide FOH’s budgeting?
* What specific suggestions or recommendations do you have for this year’s budget priorities?