

Cider Mill PTA Meeting Minutes

April 9th, 2019

Attendees: Amanda Patania, Carolyn Lyon, Lisa Finn, Michelle Krupa, Michelle Montanaro, Catherine O'Keefe, Kevin Smith, Lisa Smith, Chandra Ring, Laura Rowley, Kara Berghaus, Jennifer Bell, Ritu Malik, Meire Mouracade, Juliet Craig, Sabeth Albert

1. Meeting convened at 9:18am
2. Welcome by Amanda Patania and Carolyn Lyon

3. Gifts and Grants

Michelle Krupa presented an Art Grant, for the Art Show on May 6th.

Michelle Montanaro explained there will be 3 workshops at 5:30 - 6:00 before the Art Show, and that is the same for the past few years. It will be free of charge this year. 15 families (30-35 people per studio) can sign up for either a clay workshop or an iPad hands on workshop, for which they need stylus' for. They are asking for supplies for the workshops and storage for the artwork for the Art Show. Laura Rowley made the motion for \$1,900. Chandra Ring seconded. Motion passed, no opposed.

Carolyn Lyon continued with Presidents Report. Field Day shirts are on sale online now, and before Field Day in the cafeteria in May. 5th Grade moving up ceremonies are June 11th and 12th, houses are not set yet. Great Books chairs were thanked. Heather Mroz was thanked for chairing Box Tops competition and it was mentioned they will start going digital as of next year. PTA Open Positions were announced - Co-President, Treasurer, Book Fair Co-chair, 5th Grade Fun Night, 3rd Grade Great Books, Hospitality, School Photos and 3rd Grade Room Rep. Staffle Raffle is happening during lunches from April 22nd until May 3rd. The art teachers were thanked for their part in the FAPA show at the library.

4. The Teacher Rep report was read by Carolyn Lyon.

The PE dept has Zumba, the children had a great time.

The LLC has 3D printers up and running, they are creating a lot of fun projects.

The Art and Music Depts have a town wide show at the Wilton Public Library, artwork is on display and Cider Mill Singers, 5th Grade Chorus, Advanced Strings and Mini-Band all entertained.

3rd Grade students are learning about the 50 States by singing songs and coloring flags. Their concert will be April 9th (South) and April 10th (North).

5th grade music students are rotating between piano keyboard lessons, African drumming and guitar.

With Spring comes interesting things in our new garden.

Zero Waste continues in the cafeteria and throughout the school.

The School celebrated Dr Seuss with a March Madness in the LLC.

5. Principal's Report - Catherine O'Keefe

They are spending time going over budget to see how it impacts Cider Mill.

The staff are excited about participating in the Staffle Raffle.

Tom Quinn, the district tech expert is working to get the Parent Portal open. They will be in touch with more information.

Wilton Reads- the children loved the Whispering Town author, Cider Mill was happy to be a part of the program.

In last Friday's Hive Huddle, the focus was on being Kind. They had a play by the Top Inclusion Models from the High School and loved it.

There was a comment about the Parent Portal that Powerschool needs to be updates with up to date information. Phone numbers are important for emergencies.

The question was asked if there are consequences for not updating. Catherine stated no real consequences, but if they can't reach you in an emergency it's a problem.

The question was asked is the Parent Portal the same as Mobile Arq. Answer is no.

6. Special guest Superintendent Dr. Kevin Smith

NAMM Foundation recognised us as a great school. Friday morning, the Connecticut Association of School Librarians said Wilton has been nominated as Library of the Year. Wilton is in the top 1% of schools in the country. The schools have been strengthened in all areas from Pre K-12, there is lots to celebrate.

We need to pay attention to what is happening both in state and local. There is new Government in State and there have been a record number of bills this year, over 5,000. A lot have been killed in committee and will be over on June 5th, but they can all be introduced until then.

Regionalization - the proposal is now to study it over 3-4 years. It's good news/bad news, not happening now but the concept is not dead.

Talked about shared teacher pension costs by local municipalities and that the State underfunded that account each year, costs will rise because of this. It is not new news, heard this from 2011. Right now this didn't make it out of committee.

The question was asked that our budget is set May 7th, what happens if these bills actually happen in June? Dr. Smith answered that the board of Finance have set aside funds the last couple of years.

He went on to say there are legitimate threats that could come to light. Wilton came together to repel these bills and their voices were heard at State. He said to pay attention and be vocal.

Locally - The Board of finance voted to a 0% increase, Dr Smith working with the school administrations to deal with the large cut. The priorities are Health and safety, Minimizing the impact on students and the Mission Vision.

Protecting Programming - Art and music are not being cut, it's not a budget issue. If enrollment declines, staffing may change.

The current operating budget is frozen and they are looking at what can be scrapped. End of the day it is not good news for everyone.

Question - It would be a shame to lose the Alternative School, could this happen?

Dr Smith - I agree, we do not want to cut this but it may not be achievable.

Question - Are other districts cutting?

Dr Smith - New Canaan are taking a small cut from a huge budget. Bethel have a 5.6% increase. Weston \$800,000-\$900,000 decrease. They may increase class size and get rid of some electives. They also have enrollment decline.

Question - What can we do?

Dr Smith - 3 members of the Board of Education are terming out, please run for the Board of Education. Work with either Democrats or Republicans.

The Board of Finance possibly have 2 or 3 openings, members have a direct influence on the town. Turning up to the town meeting is a must, childcare will be available.

Lisa Smith - The past few years have been nail biters, a lot of people leave after the vote and other cuts are made after. Do not leave after the first cut proposal.

Kara Berghaus - It's not always easy to speak, but is easy to vote.

Chandra Ring - Less than 15% voter turnout passes but this should not be counted on.

7. Treasurer Report

Paid for 4th Grade Fun Night.

Earth Day approved And paid.

Zumbe \$1,200 paid.

8. Membership Report

Total members 394

Parent/ community 356

Teacher 38

Families 296 (60 family)

2 new members

Last year in April - 443 members

9. Fundraising Report

Yankees tickets are still being sold.

10. Secretary Report

Minutes approved.

Please sign in on the sheet.

11. Hospitality Report

Soup and Salad was a success.

Teacher Appreciation Week is coming May 6th.

12. Lost and Found.

Cider Mill Lost and Found was donated April 5th. Bus Barn will be donated April 15th.

13. SEPTA Report.

Diversity and Inclusion month, the high schoolers did a great job with the play. The kids had an education piece with the play and then questions and answers after. Thank you to everyone who helped out.

Dress like a Bee had over 50 submissions but they need more 5th graders next year.

SEPTA has their first Social on April 11th.

14. Wilton Youth Council.

Tuesday, April 23rd 1:00pm-5:00pm, Pop Up Adventure Open House at Comstock. The parents can talk about the concepts of play while the children play. Teachers are being trained the following day at Miller Driscoll.

Meeting Adjourned 10:30am

Next meeting Tuesday May 14th, 9:15am