

Ensign PTA
Special Budget Meeting (1 of 2)

Meeting Minutes for Thursday, May 11, 2023
8:00 PM - 10:00 PM via Zoom

Attendees:

Melissa Brownell, Harry Fishleigh, Betsy Garlish, Therese Huhtala, Elizabeth Lucas, Lisa Mangiapani, Lauren McBrier, Peter Moes, Elizabeth Payne (joined later), Devon Musson Rose, Juliette Tennert (joined later)

Excused: Ashley Anderson, Erik Jacobson, Emily Neuman, Amy Picklesimer

Conducted by: PTA President (Lauren McBrier)

Notes taken by: PTA Secretary (Therese Huhtala)

Welcome (Lauren McBrier; 8:00 p.m.)

Proposed Budget Reports

1. Treasurer (Elizabeth Lucas):

- Elizabeth stated that she will be transitioning her responsibilities soon (to Peter) and will be unable to attend 2023-24 meetings. She wanted VPs to share their proposed budgets (detailing what we as a PTA want to spend next school year), and for the PTA to stick to the budget as approved.
- She expressed that she wants the upcoming budget to be clear.

2. Supporting Teachers VP (Melissa Brownell)

- Melissa B went through her budget (shared screen from 00:52 to 20:00).
 - Melissa B proposed to keep **teacher appreciation gifts** the same (\$750); there are no new teachers, but Ensign is likely getting a new interventionist and maybe one or two new para-professionals. (This amount includes a little buffer.)
 - **Teacher Appreciation Week** amount increased from \$250 to \$300 to include Admin Professionals Day, and goodies/swag for the principal, office staff, cafeteria workers, librarian, etc.; Adding \$50 will allow for doing a bit more for support staff and will provide a buffer.
 - **SEP dinners** line item is the same at \$700.
 - **Faculty lunch** is \$600, the same as last year (for which there was a previous increase).
 - **Classroom Support (supplies)**: Last year, we did not budget for teacher supplies, but we approved individual requests throughout the year (which amounted to \$2,529.82). Melissa B will bring this up again for discussion [later](#) during her report.
 - **Eagle folders**: This year, we ordered about 100 folders for \$462.50 (we need 350), but next year we will need to order the full 350 for \$700 (or more depending on actual cost).
 - **Special purchases**: nothing allocated/spent, but a line item used in prior years.
 - Scavenger Hunt line item is in the current budget for \$458.04 and Asynchronous Days for \$600 (\$516.04 was spent with \$83.96 remaining); these were unallocated costs that were approved last year.
- Teachers want to keep the supplies process the same as last year. Melissa B emailed Erik and Amy last week and that was the response she received from them (the teachers).
 - **Special teacher supplies** line item added (to replace the deleted Classroom Supplies line item): this budget's expenses from the 2022-23 year were mostly all for specials

- (except for one request for Ms Hogan). It included a lot for PE requests and some costs for the computer lab.
- Melissa stated she doesn't want to have to vote for each specials teacher request and would like a buffer instead, so we only would have to vote after the proposed budget of \$2,000 is spent. Teachers can make extra requests if needed, which would require a special vote.
 - Lauren stated she might make the **Monthly Appreciation Gifts** line item an even \$800; she likes Melissa B's proposed budget. **Melissa updated this line item from \$750 to \$800.**
 - Melissa B mentioned that monthly appreciation isn't every month (four or five times during the year) and includes all staff.
 - Melissa B explained why her 2023-24 budget is less:
 - There are no asynchronous days next year.
 - Scavenger hunt won't be needed for next year (per Erik).
 - PTA members discussed the **teacher supplies** process and addressed issues that tend to come up and ways to circumvent those issue:
 - Elizabeth L mentioned that teachers are running low on paper, and some teachers didn't collect enough from parents for supplies at the beginning of the year. Her suggestion is that if a teacher gets less than a certain (to be determined) amount, we could have a special reserve for that teacher (i.e., to prevent the large discrepancies that happen).
 - This main issue is that the majority of teachers want it this way (where they collect for supplies from parents), and PTA doesn't want to do both (where PTA and teachers are asking for money for classroom supplies).
 - Lauren said we can communicate again to teachers that they can ask us like they did this year (teachers can email Melissa B). ***This should be communicated to Amy.***
 - Peter proposed approving a floor amount (i.e., \$250). Melissa B said we should discuss this tomorrow with Erik and Amy.
 - Elizabeth L posed a question: We could respect their vote to collect their own supplies, but should we create a reserve pot for Melissa B to distribute anyway?
 - Lauren said we could mention it to Erik; even if he says no, we can reserve a certain amount, as long as we track it.
 - Elizabeth L suggested a base amount of \$500 because it would be better to not have to vote each time. Lauren thinks \$1,000 would be a good amount.
 - **Melissa B updated her budget: she added back the Classroom Supplies line item and added \$1,000 to it.**
 - **Eagle folders:** Melissa B had a bid for 350 folders (per year), which was \$680ish dollars (ordering more means less per folder). She proposed \$700 for the 2023-24 budget.
 - Additional questions/discussions:
 - Harry asked if this (the budget for Supporting Teachers) comes out of the general fund; Melissa B answered affirmatively. Lauren added that Building Community expenses also comes out of the general fund.
 - Lauren mentioned that they don't have to be separate (general and arts) and explained the history.
 - **Volunteer appreciation** discussed:
 - Lauren asked Devon about funds from a room parent's perspective; Devon mentioned budgeting for a year-end thank you.
 - Melissa B asked what Lauren spent this year, and Lauren said she won the golf/chess activity at the Gallery Stroll and used it for volunteer appreciation.
 - Discussed having some kind of appreciation activity, lunch (like PTA did in prior years), event, or gift (which would be added to the administrative budget instead). Therese mentioned that having a mid-year activity/gift might be better/more meaningful than having something at the end of the year.
 - Therese mentioned thank you cards/putting our students' artwork on items as ideas.

3. Academic Enrichment VP (Harry Fishleigh/Ashley Anderson)
- Harry Fishleigh went through her budget (shared screen from 29:40 to 1:23:06).
 - Gallery Stroll net profit was \$15,500: In the past, this funding covered the top three academic enrichment items (music, art supplies, and Tanner Dance).
 - **Tanner Dance:** \$1,500 allocated for the \$6,000 total (grant/matching funds); the \$1,500 grant that we need to stay within budget is being reviewed now, and we can support that program if the grant comes through. (Last year, \$4,500 was received in grants/matching funds.)
 - Arts Supplies: \$900 (changed from \$1000 last year).
 - **Music Specialist:** \$14,000 (for Ms Adams; changed from \$14,688)
 - Elizabeth mentioned that Erik is going to be adding another grade to the district music program, which means PTA music spending could be going down. **Need confirmation about this from Erik.**
 - Harry mentioned another grant possibly happening to get pianos for Ms Adams; Ms Adams teachers on a year-to-year basis, and she would stay longer with the pianos because it requires a commitment (~3 years). **Harry will get clarity from Erik on this.**
 - These changes could affect this budget and whether we can pay for it all through Gallery Stroll donations.
 - Music programs showcased at Gallery Stroll brought up by Lauren and discussed:
 - Several members voiced approval of this idea.
 - Elizabeth L mentioned that we used to do this.
 - Therese mentioned the need to coordinate with the district music teachers/Ms Adams and scheduling Gallery Stroll earlier to avoid conflicts with sports/spring activities; Lauren and Harry expressed agreement with moving it to March.
 - Therese asked if district funding for music will cover the needed expenses next year, and Elizabeth L responded that it does fluctuate and Erik thinks the district can provide music for an extra grade next year. **Need confirmation from Erik.**
 - Harry provided more explanation regarding the Tanner Dance grant (and how this year we received an unexpected \$1,500 for this grant and have that amount remaining).
 - Elizabeth L mentioned stripe payments; we will probably end up with a little bit more money in the arts account/a buffer; Elizabeth L asked Lisa if we have collected all of the auction items. **Lisa will look and confirm.**
 - Peter mentioned another grant (through Sorenson Legacy Foundation) that is due on June 1, **which he will send to Harry.**
 - Elizabeth L said we have a reserve for which we can decide as a group how to spend; she will know the amount when she reconciles at the end of the year.
 - **Field Trips Funding** (\$3000; same as last year) discussion:
 - Lauren asked about using field trip funding on “other” educational things when/if teachers don’t use all of their field trip money on buses/admission (for instance, multiple classrooms combine field trip/bus expenses).
 - Devon expressed concerns with trading field trip experiences for other items/souvenirs, and Lisa and Lauren expressed agreement.
 - Elizabeth L asked if we should leave the decision to the teachers/administration. What are the perimeters for field trip funding? She would like to see this clarified/defined.
 - Elizabeth L asked Dani about buses; Dani thinks field trips will cost more next year.
 - Elizabeth L said they spent the last year focusing on manners/social behavioral issues, so field trips might be increasing in the future as those issues resolve.
 - Elizabeth P wants clarity/communication about what the money covers (i.e., not things from the gift shop, but for costs of the bus, supplies, entry fees, tickets, etc.).
 - Devon recommended that we get a sense of the culture around this issue, and Elizabeth P brought up that field trips have to likely be approved by the school anyway. Devon agreed and said that makes it less necessary for PTA to manage field trip specifics.

- Lauren asked if we should increase the bus fund or leave it the same. Elizabeth L said **Dani will tell us by the end of May what the expenses will be next year. And Erik will also need to confirm district music funding.**
 - Lauren suggested leaving it at \$3,000 and re-evaluating if there is a bus increase.
 - Therese mentioned expected class size increases affecting bus expenses.
 - **Write Your Heart Out:**
 - Last year, we allocated \$500 (and spent \$30); **Harry updated this item from \$0 to \$470.**
 - We don't typically have expenses because the teachers run it, and it gets donations.
 - Harry asked if the \$470 remainder funding carries over; Elizabeth L explained that everything gets put into the two pots, and we allocate for the next year and don't typically carry anything over.
 - She also explained the arts account reimburses the general when expenses are made.
 - Harry asked about writing checks for expenses (specifically grant funding checks); checks are written to "Ensign PTA"; Elizabeth L explained that PTA gets invoiced from Ensign for certain expenses and grants should be written directly to "Ensign PTA."
 - **BizTown/Jr. Achievement:** \$500 for next year (for 2022-23, BizTown happened through the school because of an unexpected issue where it ended up being free).
 - **Spelling Bee:** \$225 allocated (same as last year).
 - **STEAM Fair:** \$200 allocated (same as last year).
 - Harry said there is a volunteer for next year; we don't spend money on supplies, but we do typically set aside money for families who need help.
 - Someone asked about the poster boards; Therese mentioned that the district provided them this year but is not sure if they will in the future.
 - Elizabeth L mentioned that boards, ribbons, and certificates were needed this year, and Harry clarified they wouldn't need them next year.
 - **Odyssey of the Mind:** This program has no expenses allocated this year (last year it was \$500), but Juliette said she thinks the parent leading it did spend money; Elizabeth L hasn't seen any requests yet. ***This line item might need to be updated.***
 - **Tinikling:** the money budgeted will be spent next year (i.e., t-shirts, bus/field trip, buying or repairing poles, new poles, etc.). Elizabeth L stated that the \$770 (what was allocated last year) is more reflective of the cost. ***Harry updated this line item from \$0 to \$700.***
 - **Outdoor Classroom:** Last year, \$3,000 was allocated, and there is still about \$2,500 in grant money for this project, so next year's budget does not need to include funding for it.
4. Building Community (Elizabeth Payne)
- No report/proposal provided for Building Community at this time.
 - There is not yet a commissioner/VP to replace Elizabeth P.
 - Therese asked about the stagnant school financial report account balances and members thought a discussion at the next meeting/in the future would be a good idea.
 - The Building Community budget is unique with a lot of small items (for which we budgeted correctly) plus larger items that pay for themselves.
 - Elizabeth L expressed that this process/setup is working for her well from a Treasurer's perspective. Elizabeth P went over the 2022-23 working budget (and Elizabeth P shared her screen at 1:31:25):
 - We had a goal income and a target max spend (expense that doesn't need approval).
 - This worked well for Elizabeth L.
 - We increased some of the budgeted amounts.
 - Elizabeth P thinks we can go with the same numbers next year because they seemed to work this year.
 - One big line item that might need to be increased is **Field Day**; this year's budgeted amount of \$200 covers popsicles, but PTA later approved the 9-square, which was a Specials Teacher request and is in the Supporting Teachers budget (even though it was used for Field Day).

- **Additional School-wide Events:** Includes various events; Cookies/Cocoa was donated and nothing was spent on Talent Show or Spring Stomp, but we could put those amounts in next year's budget.
- **Talent Show** is in the "Additional School-wide Events" but **Lauren mentioned having it be its own line item and would like to see more money budgeted for it;** Elizabeth P agreed that pulling it would be a good idea.
- A **Spring Stomp** revival was discussed.

Additional Discussion

- We discussed the budget timeline; it is due in the fall.
- Elizabeth L said if everyone can send her what they have, she will make a master spreadsheet.
- Lauren mentioned having budget approvals done via email later (after tomorrow's meeting).
- Lauren said we can go over administrative costs tomorrow; next year's numbers will be different. For instance, we need more budgeted for printing per Elizabeth L (everything has to be printed and put in the binders).
- Elizabeth L mentioned that there was an email regarding the website cost; Lauren stated that she got a 50% off coupon, so that line item will be less in next year's budget.
- Lauren laid out the plan for tomorrow: pressing reports, fundraising, administrative budget, and getting the budget as close to finalized as possible.
- Elizabeth L will send out the reconciliation report and a draft treasurer's report for tomorrow.

Meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.