

February 9, 2010 PTSA Meeting

The February meeting began at 9:35. In attendance were: Kim Breda, Jean B. Tompkins, Lauri Harder, Jen Wastrom, Pam Robey, Jennifer Bodurtha, Joan Winter, Arlene Darrow, Anne Andrews, Miriam Meese, Lisa DeVoto, Laurie Bruhin, Jim DeVoto, Mary Pat Cieri and Ann Greenberg. From the Administration: Tom McMorran, Anne Kipp, and Gina Pin.

Mr. McMorran started the meeting with a movie called "A Day in the Life of a Freshman" which was made entirely by students at Joel Barlow and should help ease the anxiety of students transitioning from middle school to high school. This movie will be played for parents of 8th graders at both middle schools. The movie may also be put on the JBHS website.

In a "Coffee with the Principal" format, Mr. McMorran, Ms. Kipp and Ms. Pin opened the floor to questions and topics for discussion. The first topic concerned the senior synthesis paper and due date, which is the week when students return from winter break. Apparently there is little time before midterm grades for all of these papers to be reviewed and then oral defenses made; thus, the early January deadline. Discussion about the feasibility of moving the due date was discussed, given the fact that most college application deadlines are January 1. Then Mr. McMorran was asked to explain where we are in the budget process. He gave an overview, with more information to follow at the March meeting. He also touched on a proposal from NABR (a Redding community group) for a 10% tax cut in 2010: this may be very harmful to Barlow. Another discussion point was a request for grade-specific evening meetings similar to Open House. Mr. McMorran informed us that the staff contract allows for only a certain number of evening meetings and it would be hard to accommodate this request. Ms. Kipp suggested the possibility of adding 30 minutes to the end of the Open House for a short grade-specific meeting. The last question for the administration was a request for a second semester Open House since many students change classes/teachers midyear, and this idea will be considered.

HEAD OF SCHOOL REPORT

Mr. Tom McMorran started the business portion of the meeting at 10:45 and told us about the winter show last weekend, put on by The Barlow Players, and about the REACT club which is doing a "Wounded Warrior" valentine project. Kim suggested that we include some of these messages in an article for Focus, as well as a write-up on the show.

Minutes of the January meeting were approved. (Robey)

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Staff Luncheon (Winter): Thank you to Candy and Steph for all of their hard work!

Post Prom: Kim reported that the Post-Prom Committee has picked New York City as the theme. Organizational meetings are being held.

Senior Events: Miriam Meese and Pam Robey said the senior luncheon will be held the day after the teacher luncheon. It is a very low key event and the exact date will depend on snow days and the last day of school for the seniors.

FOCUS: The new Focus is now available. Diane is already at work on the March/April edition and welcomes pictures and info. The next deadline is March 26th. This Focus will include information regarding the Referendum.

Mini Grants: Kim gave us some follow up information on the mini-grant request from Juli Givoni for \$250 for a portable microphone system to be used for Music Department-sponsored events. The system they would like to purchase costs \$400 and they have raised \$150. The request to the JBHS PTSA is for the additional \$250. Phyllis and Kim have discussed the possibility of using Arts Foundation funds for this request, and there are funds available. A motion was made to grant the request, to be funded by the AF, and it was approved by all.

Arts Foundation: Jen Wastrom gave an overview on efforts so far about attempts to acquire a better piano for the auditorium. Kim and Phyllis have been discussing ideas with Juli Givoni, and Jen had suggested a possible source of a piano donation to the school. Unfortunately, there have been complications. The Arts Foundation will continue to research the viability of PTSA involvement in such a project, and will report back at the next meeting.

Treasurer: Mary Pat says we are in good shape. She has 8 Caraluzzi gift cards @\$100 each if anyone would like to purchase one. To finish payment for the winter Staff Luncheon, she is waiting for the bill from O'Neill's.

NEW BUSINESS

CT PTA Annual Conference in Trumbull on April 8-9: If anyone would like to attend, please contact Kim. It will be funded by the PTSA.

PTA Council Luncheons: Bill Gillotti is the PTA Council Chair. There is a budget and strategy session that will be held at Bill's house on Feb. 24th. Kim is not available to go.

Region 9 Board of Education Meetings: The meeting dates can be found online. This is where the work will be done on the JBHS budget.

Research into the formation of a new "Outreach" committee: Jen gave an overview of the Staples High School (Westport) PTSA Sunshine Committee (for which her sister volunteers) and how it works and we discussed starting a similar program. Kim is doing research and would like to have a "point person" on this, if anyone is interested.

PRIOR BUSINESS

Update on "Alternatives to 4 Year College" events: Kim said we may repeat the "Gap Year" presentation, in Easton this time. Also, she is trying to locate any recent graduates who did not go onto college, who would be willing to speak about their life experiences to Barlow students and parents at an evening event.

TOPIC, COMMENTARY, QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

None

The meeting adjourned at 11:25.

The next meeting will take place March 9th from 9:30-11:30 am. The topic of discussion by Tom McMorran will be the Barlow budget, as well as strategies for getting out the vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Lauri Harder
Recording Secretary