



# PTA Meeting Notes

*November 29, 2016 @ UTMS Cafeteria, 7pm*

## 1. Opening

- a. Julie called the meeting to order.

## 2. Pledge of Allegiance

## 3. Special Attendees

- a. The President and President-elect of the NJ PTA attended the meeting in a continuing show of support for our organization.

## 4. Meeting Notes from Special Meeting on 11/2

- a. Previously posted on PTA website; approved by general assembly

## 5. Bylaws Vote

- a. Needed a minimum quorum of 11 people; then need approval by  $\frac{2}{3}$  of those present
- b. Only PTA members in good standing are allowed to vote on PTA matters
- c. Bylaws were successfully approved by 15/20 people in attendance

## 6. Open Positions

- a. The Board bestowed the position of 'Honorary President' to Casie Fariello last month based upon her knowledge and commitment to the PTA organization over the last 3+ years. While the Honorary President position has no official duties and does not have Board voting privileges, the Board feels her contribution is invaluable, especially given recent events.
- b. VP of Elementary School and VP of Middle School board positions are currently open.
- c. Question was raised about having a co-VP at UTMS. According to the NJ PTA President, only one person would be "officially" recognized as VP, however two individuals could work together as a team if they choose.
- d. PTA Board to accept all names and officially vote on December 2nd to fill these spots.
- e. The normal nomination process and election will occur in spring 2017 for next year's positions.
- f. Membership Chair, Wufoo forms, Directory Spot, and Weebly (website maintenance) all will have vacancies at the end of this year. Interested parties should speak to Cathy Masiello to learn what is required in each position.
- g. UTES Book Fair-Leila Zengel is stepping down due to her role as temporary librarian. Carrie Minsavage and Laura Joiner are teaming up as co-chairs to replace her.

## 7. Legal Matters

- a. Current Case:
  - i. As communicated via email on 11/14/2016, the UTS PTA has been a victim of theft.
  - ii. Steven Margolis is again representing us in the legal case.
  - iii. The case is active at this time, therefore the Board is unable to share specific details, however we can share that our suspicions were raised once we received access to the Unity Bank account and reviewed the account activity.

- iv. Confirming our findings with NJPTA, an attorney, and the school administration, we were able to move quickly to file a police report, and an arrest was made within a few days.
  - v. The Hunterdon County Prosecutor's office does not yet have the case; they are waiting for the formal report from the NJ State Police.
  - vi. Question was raised about why this was not in the news and what the total loss to the PTA was; PTA is not at liberty to outline the exact amount.
  - vii. The accused will likely be a candidate for Pre-Trial intervention (PTI) as a presumed first-time offender of a non-violent crime. To receive PTI, the accused must make an admission of guilt plus provide full restitution. Typically probation of 6 months to a year is given, and after the probationary period is up, the charge will be removed from the defendant's record.
  - viii. Question was raised about the possibility of a settlement. The PTA Board can communicate our wishes and preferences to the judge, however the charges are solely up to the presiding judge.
  - ix. While we understand the frustration and anger of the UTS community, we are asking all members to remember that this situation is for adult ears only. The children of the accused are innocent and are as much a victim as our children. Please be mindful of negative comments in front of children and help to stop the spread of rumors. We need to rise above the negativity to promote healing in our community.
- b. 2015 Case
- i. The convicted has not made any restitution payments, which is a violation of her probation.
  - ii. She was jailed for 35 days (from Sept. 21-October 24); five years probation has been reset as of October 24, 2016.
  - iii. Question was raised if no payment is received by December 2016, will there be jail time? It is unclear at this time.
  - iv. \$4,000 forgery case with TD Bank was never acted upon last year, therefore it has been initiated by Julie and Anna. At this time, we do not know how long it will take to recoup the \$4K or even if it is a guarantee.

## 8. Current Finances

- a. At this time, we currently have \$4,186.25 in our Unity Bank checking account and \$85 in savings.
- b. We are opening a new account at Unity Bank; the bank requires closure of any account that has had theft..
- c. There were some small profits from these recent self-funded events:
  - i. Costume Carnival --\$173.12
  - ii. Trunk or Treat-- \$123.61
  - iii. Spiritwear -- \$206.85
  - iv. PayPal --\$619.55 for Volley for Vets (this \$ was split between a donation to Mission 22 and 8th grade graduation.)
- d. With recent checks written and expenses due for outstanding invoices, the PTA is currently \$3K in the red.
- e. Tiger Clubs are paid in full with the exception of the Technology Vendor who is owed \$2,160. The vendor has kindly agreed to wait 90 days for payment.
- f. NJ PTA has also agreed, for the time being, to hold off on cashing the checks sent in for this year's membership dues.
- g. Concerns were expressed about the tarnished image of the PTA and the lack of families wanting to donate.
- h. Two signatories is a PTA rule, not a bank requirement so there is no accountability on Unity Bank for allowing one signature on checks.
- i. Suggestion was made to have 3 signatures on each PTA check. Routinely, the signatories are President and Treasurer, with Secretary as a back-up.

- j. Suggestion was made to find a volunteer/accountant to reconcile the bank statements on a monthly basis or even have co-Treasurers.
- k. Question was raised about having background checks for future officers; unfortunately, it is too costly.
- l. It is Dr. Hoffman's advice that the PTA stop all events for the foreseeable future to regroup and see how best to move forward to raise money and support the kids and teachers.

## 9. Event Updates

- a. Breakfast with Santa-to go on as scheduled for December 3rd; Girl Scout Troop 81127 to fund and host the event as part of their Silver award.
- b. Winter Tiger Clubs--cancelled
- c. Parents' Night out--cancelled
- d. Assemblies/Mini grants--the budget for these is typically \$8,000, so without funds, there will be no assemblies or mini grants supported for the 2016/2017 school year.

## 10. Policies and Procedures

- a. Documents such as the Financial Code, the Committee Chair Checklist, the Tiger Club Rules, etc will be closely reviewed and updated. The Board is currently working to get these documents in place and to ensure they align with the National/State PTA and school policies.
- b. The Board recognizes that full transparency is needed at EVERY PTA meeting. Copies of meeting minutes, the budget, bank statements, the check book, etc. will be brought by the Treasurer to every meeting.
- c. The Treasurer's report will be posted to the PTA website following each meeting for review by members who were unable to attend in person.
- d. Handing cash at events--
  - i. Treasurer needs to attend each event where money is being collected at some point or make arrangements to meet with the committee chair ASAP.
  - ii. There should always be two people collecting \$ at each designated location.
  - iii. There should always be two people counting the \$ and signing off on the totals at the end of the event.
  - iv. All cash should be given to the Treasurer, who counts the \$ to confirm the totals are correct.
  - v. A suggestion was made to have the Treasurer provide a picture of the deposit slip to the Committee chair for proof that all funds were successfully deposited from said event.
  - vi. Google docs is also a good way to allow the Board and other individuals to have access/see money that is coming in and identified expenses for a specific event.
  - vii. \*Need standardized procedures at every event.
  - viii. A concern was raised that no checks should be held longer than 24-48 hours; every attempt will be made to deposit checks as quickly as possible.

## 11. How to Move Forward

- a. Ideas for small fundraisers include selling coupon cards to be used at local businesses (Just Chill, the cleaners, etc.)--other PTAs have sold them for \$20/card with \$12 going back to the PTA.
- b. Suggestion was made to possibly set up a 'Go Fund Me' page on behalf of the PTA for people in the community who would be willing to help raise money to offset outstanding debts.
- c. Because large fundraisers take time to plan and organize, a suggestion was made to have a fun family type event in the gym or cafeteria for minimal cost.
- d. PTA is planning to bring back the monthly newsletter to improve communication and as a way to highlight all the PTA does to support the kids and teachers. Many in the community are unaware of how much direct involvement the PTA has with organizing AND funding educational things for the kids and supporting teachers throughout the year in various ways.
- e. One possible way to make up for the lack of assemblies this year is to ask the BOE and administration for assistance.

- f. A fundraising meeting is being scheduled in the near term to get fresh ideas.
- g. Possible idea to send a direct appeal letter asking for support for those who might want to make a donation at the end of the year (to the PTA in lieu of another charity). It has been done in the past and for a nominal expense for the mailings, the direct appeal returned a 97% profit. There is also a “donate” button on the PTA website as another way people can support the PTA.
- h. Any donation might also have a corporate match.

## 12. Adjournment

- a. Motion to end the meeting @ 8:19 PM
- b. Meeting adjourned.