

PAWS PTO Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Wednesday, 10/18

Attendees: Deena Bolen
Carrie Coleman
Amanda Crowley
Megan LeBlanc
Lorraine Liebenberg
Nicole Meyers
Elizabeth Nelson
Garima Rana
Anouschka Riley
Sachiko Sakurai
Yixin Zhang
Rebecca Zieminski

Important Upcoming Dates

Cycle Bar Spin Class – November 18 at 1:30pm

CPK Night – November (TBD)

Winter Traditions – December 8

Winter Carnival – January 21

Next Auction/Room Parent meeting ?

Next PAWS PTO Meeting ?

Agenda Topics

School Committee Update from Michael D’Ortenzio Jr and Tony Bent

Michael D’Ortenzio Jr and Tony Bent are current members of the Wellesley School Committee. They attended the PTO meeting to give us an update on where things stand with finding more space for PAWS, the HHU project, etc. They took questions, and an outline of their remarks follows.

On the issue of how to increase space for PAWS:

- The School Committee is not interested in splitting PAWS classrooms among elementary schools across town. They noted there would be at most 2 locations (one on either side of town).
- Funds were appropriated in 2015 for a feasibility study. The goal is to start the study in the next year, looking specifically at swing space to house students while construction on new buildings is ongoing.
- Becca raised the following thoughts/concerns/reasons she thinks PAWS belongs in one dedicated building:

- There is an important support network at the main PAWS location for families who have received diagnoses about their children.
 - Equipment needs for two or more locations (eg motor room equipment) would be very expensive.
 - Being in one location fosters vital collaboration among teachers.
 - Parents at Fiske and Hunnewell locations do not get the personal touch/sense of community as those who attend PAWS, where Becca and other staff greet families every morning.
 - Megan also mentioned that specialists waste a good deal of time every week commuting back and forth between locations.
- Key PAWS-related questions the School Committee is looking at at this time are:
 - How large should PAWS be?
 - Does it make sense to allow tuition-paying students from other towns to attend PAWS?

HHU Update:

- School Committee is looking at having 6 elementary schools in Wellesley. Upham or Hardy will close.
- Currently waiting to hear whether there will be state funding available for this project, and also to identify swing space. St. Paul's is a possible option for the latter.
- The number of enrolled students that would trigger the need for a 7th school is 2350. The district is currently at enrollment of 2200 and the level continues to decline.
- There is a multi-year plan in place around this project. The committee will monitor enrollment – if it gets to 2350 a 7th elementary school will be added.
- Town-owned land will not be sold when a school is closed.
- The MSBA will lengthen this process. Initial projections currently indicate that the first school will open in 2021.

District-wide Building Security Project:

- Installation is going well, project is currently ahead of schedule.
- School Committee is now thinking about installing cameras at Wellesley schools, and the parameters around that (eg what footage would be used for, etc).
- Focus right now is on the people aspect of security. The public schools are working with the Wellesley Police Department doing active shooter drills in every school.
- School Committee is also working on establishing dynamic evacuation drills for all schools in the district.

The Wellesley School Committee holds monthly office hours, which are listed on the town website. Their email address is school_committee@wellesleyps.org. We thank Michael and Tony for attending our meeting and sharing their knowledge with us!

President Notes:

- We submitted a grant application to the Wellesley Turkey Trot Foundation for wintertime supplies (indoor physical and educational tools).
- Teacher gift for October was caramel apples with a note: 'PTO thanks you to the (apple) core!'
- Currently thinking about Winter Carnival, specifically how to break even with the event or even raise funds.
- Elizabeth noted that the board should have a more formalized process around applying for grants.
- The application process for the Juniors grant opens soon. Elizabeth volunteered to handle that process.

Treasurer Update:

- Annual Appeal raised \$6,850
- September 2017 expenses were \$2,245. Included Ken the Music Man's monthly payment (\$1560), Teachers' water payment (2 months at \$104.12), Fundraising supplies (\$291). Remainder was spent on Auction preparation.
- Book Fair was ongoing at the time of the meeting. Megan said the total raised at that point was 1/3 of the way to the goal. Update on that at next meeting.

****Please remember to run all expenses by Makara! Any reimbursements will require her approval first.****

Room Coordinator Update:

- Anouschka suggested that there should be a better plan for collecting contact information from parents next year because it can be hard to figure out names and addresses from email alone. Perhaps a template for parents to fill in to capture all of the relevant information.
- One more room parent is needed for PK3 and PK4
- Megan LeBlanc will be attending a meeting with Superintendent Lussier and PTO representatives from all schools to discuss streamlining the email/data collection process.
- Anouschka mentioned that we should be thinking about communicating with room parents around end of (calendar) gifts for teachers. More to come on that at the next meeting.

Library Coordinator Update:

- Paws Library is organized and up and running!
- Library kicked off in classrooms this week.
- Still looking for one parent each in the PK6 morning and PK6 afternoon classes. Please contact Sarah Barton if you would like to get involved.

- It was suggested that it might make sense to have a parent volunteer to help when the Fiske and Hunnewell classes go to Library at their respective schools.

Auction/Events Update:

- **Events**
 - o SEC tailgate was fun but attendance was low. Nicole noted this has been an ongoing issue for parent-focused events.
 - o CycleBar Fundraiser for PAWS will be held on November 18 at 1:30pm. Need at least 18 participants to run this event.
 - o Winter Traditions – looking at December 8 for this event.
 - o Winter Carnival will be held January 21, 2018.
- **Auction**
 - o Date confirmed: Saturday, April 7, 2018
 - o There will be live entertainment.
 - o Save the Date cards are ready to print.
 - o Ticket ‘on sale’ date TBD. Thinking about some sort of early purchase bonus to drive earlier ticket sales.
 - o Nicole will speak with Becca to see how everyone can be included because the ticket price is relatively high.
 - o Classes should have determined their respective basket theme by the November meeting.
 - o Megan will give Nicole and Adrienne access to MySchoolAnywhere for eventual email blasts with Auction information.

PAWS Cares Team Initiative

Becca proposed the idea of creating a group of people who would make themselves available to help members of the PAWS community who may be experiencing different kinds of needs. This would dovetail with Nurse Ann’s efforts with the holiday Mitten Tree and other collections she does for families in need throughout the year.

Amanda Crowley is a member of a similar effort at Schofield School. She shared some of the features of that program:

- Privacy is key
- When people join the team, they get referrals by email when needs come in. They can be very last-minute (eg need something by the end of the day).
- Collected snow pants and boots last year.
- The care team provides gift cards to Target and Walmart when needed.
- Last year they held a ‘Dining for Women’ potluck dinner to go toward gift cards and other expenses, where attendees donate the money they would spend on a night out and a dish to share.

****Reminder****

CORI checks are required for anyone want to volunteer in any classroom at PAWS.
-May want to add this to the newsletter.

Open Board Positions:

- Auction Subcommittee
- Co-VP
- Raffle Chair
- Hospitality Coordinator
- Community Outreach Coordinator
- Garden Coordinator
- Wellesley Green Team Representative
- Spirit Wear Coordinator

Important Long-term Date Reminders to Note:

October/November – Juniors grant

April – Secure photographer for picture day 2018

June 16 – Graduation, courtesy of Anouschka!

Next Meeting: 9NOV at PAWS