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Minutes of Special Virtual Budget PTA Meeting

September 1, 2020

Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm

President, Cindi St. George: Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance. Welcomed all to our Special Virtual PTA meeting, introduced officers and noted that a quorum was present to conduct business.

Introduced officers:

Kate Martin: Vice-President

Jessica Cona: Secretary

Nicole Annunziata: Treasurer

TREASURER REPORT: This report will cover the month of September 2020. The Unqua Elementary School PTA bank account had \$26,885.37 on July 1, 2020. The bank reconciliation for August 2020 has not been done yet. I will include the details in the next Treasurer report. There was only one payment of \$1,038.50, payable to Schoolmate for this year's planners. The planners are for the 2nd through 4th grades. No deposits were made. An audit for the 2019 – 2020 school year was performed on July 5, 2020. The audit committee conducted its audit of the receivables and payables of the Unqua PTA for the 2019 – 2020 year. They examined all deposits and payments made from July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020. There were no inconsistencies found. Going forward they agreed that all deposits should have the original deposit slip accompanied with the paperwork.

On the audit committee were Erica Cevallos, Kelly Collins, Maria Curreri, Beth Guglielmi. Denise Pacchiano (Treasurer) was present to answer any questions.

NEW BUSINESS: Cindi outlined why this special meeting was called-the PTA would like to purchase items for back to school so will need to vote on the proposed PTA Budget for 2020-2021 tonight. She reviewed line items of the proposed budget. Unfortunately, most programs are not able to run as usual due to restrictions because of COVID. She let us know at this time, no events or group functions/activities including Arts in Ed, Back to School BBQ, Halloween, Boys Bash and Little Ladies Dance will take place as per communication from school administration. Picture Day, Plant Sale, Field Day and Ice Cream Social we are hoping to still have in spring. Holiday Fair and Book Fair we are looking to hold on-line. Reflections, Red Ribbon Week and PARP we are still planning to take place, even if we are not in school at that time. There will be very limited visitor access to the building.

The PTA is going to try and continue to use Apparel as the one primary fundraiser this year, mainly because parents ask for it. Apparel cannot be delivered to school and distributed through backpacks. It will need to be picked up from New Wave directly or shipped to your home. We still have membership as a source of income but that line was reduced as we are unsure if parents will still join the PTA this year.

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PTA purchased clip on hand sanitizers for the teachers as a Welcome to Back to School for \$281.00. PTA purchased sanitizers, masks, and lanyards for Welcome Back to School for the students for \$4,800.00. The PTA would like to purchase towels for each child at a cost of \$5,200.00. The thought is that they will be used for outdoor learning. In the elementary school presentation, Mrs. Iconis mentioned that each school will have a tent for outdoor learning and for the kids to get fresh air. Mrs. Catapano also mentioned that as well.

PTA will be hosting Staff Appreciation Welcome Back Lunch on September 2, 2020 and they will be provided a grab and go sandwich from Jersey Mikes along with other goodies donated by our PTA Staff Appreciation and Helping Hands committees. Staff Appreciation generally consists of 3 events throughout the year. A Welcome Back Lunch, a Holiday Lunch during parent-teacher conferences and a week-long Staff Appreciation recognition in May. The only event we are committed to hold is the week long May recognition. The Welcome Back Luncheon and Holiday Lunch are not part of Staff Appreciation Week, however our Unqua Procedures state both events are to be organized and held depending on the budget for that school year and clearly the proposed budget allowed to plan for all 3 events. As you can see from the proposed budget as compared to the past few years in which it has ranged from \$2,000-\$2,200, the budget was increased by \$300-\$500 to cover the cost of having to have food individually wrapped or packaged, as we are also requiring for class parties.

At this time Cindi took questions and concerns from the PTA Membership regarding the proposed 2020-2021 budget which is noted below. Wording may not be verbatim, but these were the overall questions and answers.

QUESTIONS/CONCERNS:

Q- Are you buying the towels now or in the spring? Especially not knowing what kind of income will come in.
(Stacey Saieva-Hock)

A- Towels would be bought now. There is about a 2-week turnaround and we'd like to have them as soon as possible for outdoor learning. We came in with over \$26,000 carryover from last year and have a proposed income of \$11,600 for this year.
(Cindi St. George)

Q- Seems like we are suggesting spending the bulk of the money with assumptions on income and not knowing if there will be any events in the spring. This should be held back until we have more information about what is possible in the spring.
(Michael Dell'Anno)

A- We came in with over \$26,000 and have enough to spend on the gifts for the kids. Even if we don't pull in our proposed income of \$11,600, we still have money to spend from last year. (Cindi St. George)

Q- Also, I noticed PARP was cut. (Stacey Saieva-Hock)

A- Last year we spent \$1,800.00 and this year we brought it down to \$1,500 because we are unable to run it the same way. Bulletin boards and decorations will be cut back. (Cindi St. George)

Q- Are the towels for kids going into the building for in person learning or will remote learners get one as well? (Lauren Newman)

A- Any PTA gift given out will go to all students both remote and in-person. Remote learners will have their PTA gifts delivered. The only thing we can't include remote learners for is class parties. I am currently working with Council and we are trying to figure out a way to include remote learners and remote teachers for things like class parties and Staff Appreciation. (Cindi St. George)

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Q- I know we have a missing bank statement but based on what we have with this budget what do we expect to have as a carryover into next year? (Kelly Collins)

A- Hard to predict. If I had to guess, I'd say \$6,800. (Cindi St. George)

Q- It seems a little fiscally irresponsible to spend over \$10,000.00 before school evens start even with the potential of cancelling events. I am concerned about completely depleting our resources. (Stacey Saieva-Hock)

A- If we are not able to run Arts in Education this year, which is budgeted for \$6,500 and we also have a credit from Nassau BOCES because of the Arts in Ed programs that were cancelled last year, we are not depleting our resources and will have money to start up next year. We still have budgeted our expenses this year that need to be paid regardless if we are remote or in-person, such as Council Dues, 5th Grade Student Directory, Installation Ceremony, Insurance and Senior Scholarships which are awarded to former Unqua students. We are also still running PTA initiative and Council programs, such as Reflections, PARP, Staff Appreciation, and Health and Wellness (Red Ribbon Week). (Cindi St. George)

Q- I could not agree more, especially when we could put it towards additional things for the classrooms like paper towels or hand sanitizer. (Michael Dell'Anno)

A- We discussed classroom supplies such as these and not all officers were in agreement because the district was supplying these. It was meant more of a welcome back on-time classroom gift, but because district was providing paper towels and hand sanitizer, I thought of the towel for the outdoor learning. (Cindi St. George)

Q- But if things change you are hoping to run an Ice Cream Social and Field Day. You do not think we could add some events at the end of the year if the COVID situation changes? But if we spend all our money now, we will not be able to do that. (Christina Dell'Anno)

A- We kept those two specific events on because they are towards the very end of the year. I'd love to have a school wide assembly and we have a budget line for that. If we are able to run something earlier in the spring, we could always charge a fee for an event we run if need be and the ticket money will be used to run an event and purchase supplies. For the past few years, we've tried to keep ticket prices to \$5 pp, but in almost 10 years at Unqua, I have seen ticket prices as much as \$15pp. (Cindi St. George)

Q- People's situation may have changed and they cannot afford that now. That might be a stretch for some families. (Michael Dell'Anno)

Q- Awards night budget was cut. That is a wonderful event. I would hope we can still honor all our teachers and staff and parents and \$400 is a lot to cut from that line. Can you allot to student event lines instead of misc. COVID 19? I hope we can budget for events for 2021 boys bash, ladies dance and more later. (Jennifer Brown)

A- Awards Night was separated into two separate lines this year on the proposed budget and it was compared to what was spent last year. (Nicole Annunziata).

A- We can always look to add events in the spring as guidance is given and restrictions are lifted. (Cindi St. George)

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Q- What is the donation to Unqua line? (Stacey Saieva-Hock)

A- That is line that we may use things like purchasing whip cream for gym staff to use for pie in your face to promote Jump Rope for Heart with our students. This is for things we might not know in advance but would like it to go to the kids. It is not a line to purchase something such as a swing set or permanent structure for the school. We can combine it with the Misc. COVID line and call it Student Enhancements if people are more comfortable with that and there were no objections to a Student Enhancement Line. (Cindi St. George)

Q- But we are not having a spring fundraiser. (Christina Dell'Anno)

A- We don't need a lot of fundraisers this year because there was money from last year. We are coming in with over \$26,000. And last year pre-COVID, our spring fundraiser was also cancelled because we didn't need the money. We can always add a Spring Fundraiser if we need, such as Mixed Bags, in which the items can be shipped to a home. (Cindi St. George).

Q- Where is the actual for last year? (Jennifer Brown)

A- Cindi St. George shared screen with actuals from last year.

Q- Anything we can give for chromebooks? All kids will have this year. (Amy Ruiz)

A- Nothing really for those. The chromebooks come with its own carrying case and place to put a name, which is all supplied by the district. (Cindi St. George)

Q- But what about when all the towels are spread outside? (Stacey Saieva-Hock)

A- There were three different size towels I priced out. The largest one was more of a beach towel and not what I was looking for. I opted against the smaller one because it would have defeated the purpose of social distancing. Therefore, I went with the medium sized towel because the kids would still be able to keep distance from each other. (Cindi St. George)

Q- Is it realistic to have the \$4,000 from photos in here? (Kelly Collins)

A- Yes, that is what we have made in the past for fall photos. (Nicole Annunziata)

Q- Is there something that can be purchased for use in the classrooms that could enhance their learning or make it more interesting for them? Especially since there are no assemblies. I feel that it is a better use of the money. (Stacey Saieva-Hock) A We did look into that and Mrs. Catapano did not want anything extra for students/teachers to do in the classroom or to take home. In the classroom, they still have a curriculum they need to follow. I asked specifically about a Mad Science kit for the second grade because that would have been their Arts in Ed program. (Cindi St. George)

Q- I agree. Towels not a great idea. Knowing my kid, he'd take any towel. If he brought in his Yankee towel, he would know that was his. (Michael Dell'Anno)

A- The kids certainly don't have to bring this towel in and are free to use whatever towel they want. Another student can also have the same lunch bag or backpack. The teachers will be monitoring the kids and they would physically be sitting on the towel and carrying their other supplies such as a book or pencil. All students will have their own desk or designated space to put towels away or in their backpack or bag, including Kindergartners who in the past have shared a table. All students this year will have their own desk. (Cindi St. George)

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Q- If we get a towel, I am putting a label on my sons or can you write a name on the tag if there is one. Or take the towel home and use a different towel? (Maryanne Leszczak)

A- Yes, and teachers can help write names on tags also and make sure kids take their own. (Cindi St. George)

Q- We could put it in a reserve fund until we find out what is going to happen in the spring? (Michael Dell'Anno)

A- We cannot do a reserve line and we don't even know if we will be in-person in the spring. (Cindi St. George)

Q- I am the president of a small non-profit and we have a reserve line. (Michael Dell'Anno)

A- Schools may be different and we cannot do that. The money should be spent the year it was raised. This year was a bit different because of COVID and so much being cancelled at the end of last year so we should be spending the money this year. (Cindi St. George)

A- Yes, that is correct, PTAs do not have reserve lines. Because we are a non-profit organization we should be carrying over this time of income as well. It's a red flag for a school PTA to have this much money in the bank every year. The money should be spent in the year it was taken in or at the very least the next year depending on when we received the bulk of the income. (Nicole Annunziata)

Q- What if fundraisers get cancelled for next year and we have no money? (Michael Dell'Anno)

A- If a fundraiser is cancelled for next year due to COVID restrictions, chances are PTA programs and events will be cancelled as well. We cannot hold money for the following year. (Cindi St. George)

Q- Much of PARP is done at home. Is there a way to keep the budget the same and add additional programs at home? (Katie Beleckas)

Q- Do we have the actual numbers for what was spent last year? (Proposed and actual) for last year? (Kelly Collins)

A- Cindi St. George shared both screens with the proposed and actuals from last year

Q- I think the overall concern is that we are spending money and unsure if we will have any money next year for basics like planners. (Kelly Collins)

A- We will have enough money for planners next year. They are on the expense line of the proposed budget. A spring fundraiser is generally planned to raise funds to help start up the next school year. We can add a spring fundraiser if we need. (Cindi St. George)

Q- We should be pushing to have events for our kids. Dr. McCaw told us to have a plan a, b and c. (Jennifer Brown and Katie Beleckas)

A- Every school or PTA is different and we do things for our kids that other schools do not and vice versa. We planned based on the guidance we were given due to COVID restrictions. (Cindi St. George)

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Q- You are not following the mission of the PTA. (Stacey Saieva-Hock)

A- Before my meeting with Mrs. Catapano, I contacted every single vendor we work with to see what their protocol is now and how they are going forward with events. I wanted to be prepared. We went over the budget line by line to discuss what our options were. We can only plan with the guidance we were given. There are many restrictions from district and we have to follow them. There will be no assemblies, there will be no outside groups, visitors will be limited. Cub Scouts and Girl Scouts can't even use the building anymore. We are not even using the PTA mailbox at the school this year because I am not able to go into the school to check it. We are still running all NYS PTA initiative programs, such as Reflections, Red Ribbon Week and PARP, even if we are not in school. All the extras that we do, like Back to School BBQ, Boys Bash, Little Ladies Dance, Holiday Fair, we do not have to run.....those are all extras. I can tell you that I already have a plan b for the Holiday Fair but haven't announced it yet because what if our vendor closes. Then what do we do.....have disappointed kids and families. We will plan for events/programs at the appropriate time depending on COVID restrictions. The school's primary focus and goal is to get all the kids back to school for in-person learning 5 days a week and we should be supporting that and wanting that also. (Cindi St. George)

Q- Can we look into personalizing the towels? (Kim Beer)

A- No. It would cost too much. (Cindi St. George)

Q- I think that instead of rushing this why do not we have to get it right now. Get input from membership about how we think we can better spend this. Take suggestions. (Stacey Saieva-Hock)

A- Even if we spend the money on the towels, there is still over \$1,800 from the misc COVID line and Donations to Unqua line if anyone has any suggestions how to spend that money. Please reach out to one of the officers, text me or call me with any suggestions. The reason to get them now is because kids will be outside as much as possible. Mrs. Iconis mentioned that each school will have a tent for outdoor learning and for the kids to get fresh air and Mrs. Catapano said that also. I found a cute Rocky keychain that all officers liked last year but was too late to order and all officers like this year, but I felt the towels supported the outdoor learning and were more useful. (Cindi St. George)

Q- If field day ends up being cancelled and we have to do it virtually again. How are we going to do that for only \$2,800.00 that was budgeted? (Stacey Saieva-Hock)

A- If Field Day has to run virtually again, we will use the money that was budgeted for the Ice Cream Social, NYSSMA and from any other event/program that is cancelled because if field day has to be virtual, we will most likely not be able to have other events that take place at the end of the year either. We would motion to move any leftover funds to a Virtual Field Day just like you did last year. (Cindi St. George)

Q- Will there be yearbook photos for the 5th grade? (Maryann Leszczak)

A- There is nothing planned at this time. Our vendor also cannot take any class or group photos due to COVID restrictions. Mrs. Catapano will be able to expand further. (Cindi St. George)

Q- How often is the budget going to be looked at and assessed? (Kelly Collins)

A- As often as necessary. This budget isn't set in stone and we can make any changes we need as long as we vote on it. (Cindi St. George)

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Q- I think my last question was multi-part. I think towels should at the very least be held until the spring. There is only a short amount of time before it gets cold now. (Stacey Saieva-Hock)

A- Holding until the spring doesn't make sense because we don't even know if they will be in school or remote in the spring. Outdoor learning will start right away to get the kids outside in fresh air and district rented tents for all the schools. The kids could be going out if the weather is 32 degrees and above, just like they do for recess. (Cindi St. George)

Q- Are they really going to be doing lessons outside if it's 32? (Stacey Saieva-Hock)

A- You'd have to check with Mrs. Catapano on that. I don't know what the set-up is and which classes go outside and when. (Cindi St. George)

Q- Normally a budget isn't voted on until the first meeting. I think now that people have started to discuss this, let people come back with some suggestions. Why rush to approve this now? If they don't get towels, we can do something else. (Stacey Saieva-Hock)

A- That is why I called this special meeting. So we can vote on the proposed budget so we can start ordering stuff for the kids. You saw how hard it was to spend money towards the end of last year due to cancelled events and I don't want to be left in that same situation. (Cindi St. George)

Q- So, put this out to all of membership, not just the 20 people who are online. Ask people for suggestions. (Stacey Saieva-Hock)

Budget Vote was held to vote on proposed budget. Cindi St. George put her cell number in the chat in case someone didn't want to vote within the chat (even though it is not a confidential or blind ballot vote). Kate Martin was asked by Cindi St. George prior to the meeting to verify all participants were current PTA members. One person couldn't vote because she is an incoming Kindergarten parent and not a current member. The budget was voted on and approved by majority vote and adopted with 12 yes', 4 no's and 1 abstained. Nicole will combine Donations to Unqua and Misc. COVID expense lines from the proposed budget and change to Student Enhancements, as we agreed before the vote, on the Adopted Budget.

Q- Please send me the budget so I can inquire with the state PTA on this voting format. (Michael Dell'Anno) A- The proposed budget was already emailed and the adopted budget will be emailed with the agenda for the September General PTA meeting. (Cindi St. George)

Q- Who is the name of the litigatory contact? (Michael Dell'Anno)

A- I will pass along the name and contact of our AD to you. (Cindi St. George)

The updated approved adopted budget will be emailed out with the next meetings Agenda and minutes from tonight's meeting.

CLOSING:

Our next virtual meeting will be Wednesday, September 16, 2020 at 9:45 am.

Meeting adjourned 9:20 pm.