

# Amerman Elementary School PTA General Membership Meeting Minutes

**Date:** May 13, 2020, 6:30pm

**Location:** Zoom call

**Board Members Present:** Sarah Allen, Laura Christensen Guthrie, Olivia Hawkins, Carrie Hurney, Dianna Shamus

## **Welcome** (Laura Christensen Guthrie)

Laura welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 6:37pm. Laura advised attendees of online voting procedures to ensure accurate records.

- It was determined from the chat comments that a quorum of PTA members was reached.

## **Secretary's Report** (Dianna Shamus)

Dianna shared the following:

- The March 12, 2020 meeting minutes were presented for approval. A motion was made to approve the minutes as-is by Olivia Hawkins and was seconded by Ana Resce Klein. The motion passed unopposed.
- Although the 5th Grade Party had to be cancelled, the PTA will still be providing a gift to all 5th graders. Many thanks to Krissie Krenz for her work on ordering Beach towels for each student. The towels are black and orange (NHS colors) and will be embroidered with "Class of 2027." Distribution is TBD at this time.
- Gift Crowd will be set up for end-of-school year gift-giving. This is the same service that was offered in December, where families can contribute to a group gift for staff, and staff can elect a single gift card or a combination of gift cards in different amounts to redeem their gifts.
  - The service will open on Monday, June 1 and will close on Thursday, June 11, at 11:59pm.
  - Gifts will be delivered to staff on Friday, June 12.

## **Treasurer's Report** (Carrie Hurney)

Carrie shared the following:

- A Budget Overview was provided online. The fiscal year ends on 6/30, so although the year is technically not yet over, we are close. As of today:
  - Our revenue is 56% of what was planned and will likely stay at the level, given that we are unable to hold our biggest fundraiser of the year, the Bobcat Bash. No other active fundraisers are planned for the remainder of the year.
  - We spent 67% of our planned budget and some spending will still occur (remaining teacher stipends, Booktober campaign, and 5th grade gift). There are slightly less expenditures than anticipated for the year, given the cancellation of remaining events and end-of-school year activities.
  - Although we did have a strong 9 months (July '19-March '20), we will be in a lower financial position than anticipated going into next school year, falling several thousand short of our projected goal. This will impact how we shape our budget and what we can do for the next school year.

- A summer budget proxy must be approved for expenses that arise in the summer and for back-to-school planning and events. A motion was made by Olivia Hawkins to approve the budget as-is for summer spending and was seconded by Mike Fahie. The motion passed unopposed.

## **Vice President's Reports**

### **VP Gold Report** (Olivia Hawkins)

Olivia shared the following:

- Thank you to Janie Fliotsos for her efforts on the Amerman Adventure Raffle. 3 great prizes were raffled off and \$4760 was raised. Thank you to all those who purchased tickets!
- As Chair of the Nomination Committee, Olivia presented the slate of candidates for the 2020-2021 PTA Executive Board. Each candidate shared a little about themselves and their background:
  - President - Olivia Hawkins
  - Vice Presidents - Ana Resce-Klein and Rabecca Plenchette
  - Secretary - Bethany Tyndall
  - Treasurer - Carrie Hurney (no change, as Carrie is completing the second of a two-year term).
  - Laura asked for any nominations from the floor. None presented.
  - Laura made a motion to approve the slate as-is. There were no "nays" or "abstains." The motion passed unopposed.

### **VP Blue Report** (Sarah Allen)

Sarah shared the following:

- Yearbook sales have been extended to June 30 and will be distributed in the Fall. Many thanks to Barb Morad for her efforts! Please note that there will be a Special "Quarantine" section. You may post pictures to the Amerman PTA Facebook page for possible inclusion in this section.
- Thank you to Heather Bell for organizing this year's Reflections contest, and thanks to all those who submitted entries. A party was held in February for all who participated, and National winners have been chosen.

### **VP Bobcat** (Laura Christensen Guthrie on behalf of Marlene Mendoza)

Laura shared that there are no updates to report.

### **President's Report** (Laura Christensen Guthrie)

Laura shared the following:

- EduKits will be offered again this year. EduKits are the one and only annual fundraiser for the NPS PTA Co-Council and are organized by school and grade. Order by 6/12 for best pricing and delivery to the school. Orders placed after 6/12 will incur an additional fee and will be shipped to the student's home. EduKits can be ordered at <https://www.edukitinc.com/schools/11882/>
- The NEF Thank-a-Staff campaign ends May 22. This is the opportunity to certificate with a customizable message and special gift for any NPS staff member. It is anticipated that we will need more financial support for NPS than ever next year. Certificates can be purchased at <https://supportnef.org/Thank-A-Staff.html>
- The Northville STEAM Fair was a virtual event this year and Amerman was well-represented (especially Mrs. Parnin's class). Projects can be seen here: <http://www.northvillesteamfair.com/Ideas---Inspiration.html>

### **Superintendent's Report** (Mrs. Mary Kay Gallagher)

Mrs. Gallagher welcomed everyone and shared the following:

- Thank you to all of our families for exercising patience and grace during this incredibly challenging time.
- Hats off to Mrs. Caudill and our families for appreciating teachers in multiple ways, which were warmly received and deserved. Our community stepped up to support one another, which is very appreciated. One strength of our district is the involvement of our parents.
- Thank you to existing PTA leadership and welcome to the new Executive Board members.
- The last Amerman PTA meeting was held on the last day of in-person school. At that meeting, mindfulness was discussed and has certainly been practiced over these last weeks!
- Since the school closure, the district moved from offering resources and support to formalized Continuity of Learning plans.
  - Thanks to staff for all they did in a short amount of time.
  - A Survey was sent to district parents/students/staff seeking feedback on the current plan.
    - Results are in a link in the most recent NPS District newsletter
    - Survey results largely affirmed the current balance of synchronous and asynchronous learning. There are many different perspectives and family situations to accommodate and it is the hope of NPS that families see the range of opportunities available.
- The district is putting together a Task Force regarding school re-entry scenario planning. The Task Force will include Central Office employees, principals, parents, and teachers. The district would welcome a few more parents, especially anyone with a background in planning/logistics.
  - School is, by nature, a large group gathering. Because the path forward for large groups is unclear at this time, we are looking at different options including returning full-time in person, blended options, or distance learning. For full-time or blended options, the district is examining what added precautions would be taken to keep students safe.
  - We will follow guidance outlined by the state of Michigan and any applicable best practices from other states that have re-opened.
- For summer 2020, NPS will continue to offer virtual options, as in the past; however, the district will also be adding a backpack program, individualized support for students on reading plans, and math support for those in tiered math interventions. The district is also looking to add additional support for those entering transition years (Kindergarten, 6th grade, 9th grade).
  - For 2020 graduates, the district would like to hold a modified in-person graduation, potentially in late July or early August, if at all possible and depending on the 'phase' that the state is in. If unable to hold a modified graduation, a virtual recognition is also being put together, so the district is prepared either way.
- For those not yet aware, Mrs. Devon Caudill transitioned from interim to full-time principal at Amerman at the close of March, following resoundingly positive feedback from the administrative team, parents, and families.
- A question was asked whether requests for Open Enrollment at Amerman will be honored this coming fall?
  - Mrs. Gallagher answered that a preliminary response will be sent in June, depending on the space/capacity of both the sending and receiving schools. With the ALPS program at Amerman, it can be challenging to accommodate all families who want to send a sibling based on older siblings enrolled in ALPS.
- At this time, the district expects a significant economic impact from COVID. Districts have been advised that the state budget will not be issued until October 1, so our district budget must be completed in absence of this guidance.
  - NPS has been both fortunate and conservative, with an engaged and supportive community; however, for re-entry plans looking at full time or blended options, we cannot afford to hire enough teachers to offer significantly reduced-size classes.

- Instead, the district is looking at options such as dividing each elementary school population into two groups with one group attending Monday/Wednesday/every other Friday and the other group attending Tuesday/Thursday/every other Friday.
  - Cleaning protocols make daily half-day attendance for each group prohibitive.
  - Re-entry is more challenging at the middle and high school levels, with the hourly changing of classes. For these grades, the district is considering more of a flipped model and strengthening virtual distance learning opportunities.
  - Even if classes resume full-time in person, NPS will need to consider alternatives for families who remain uncomfortable with in-person attendance or who have students/family members who fall into high-risk groups.
  - NPS is also trying to accommodate staff needs, as well.
  - The ultimate goal is to keep people as safe as possible.
- Over 800 people virtually attended the most recent Board of Education meeting. Given the strong turn-out, the district will continue to offer virtual options for attendance. Mrs. Gallagher encouraged PTAs to keep offering virtual options, as well, to increase engagement/attendance.
- A question was asked as to whether school attendance could be alternated by week, rather than by day?
  - Mrs. Gallagher answered that a variety of opportunities will be explored, and that if students aren't in school, a synchronous component will be part of the distance learning mix. Some countries have opted to bring younger kids back to physical school as they have more difficulty with the online learning, but are doing more blended/distance learning with older kids who can work more independently. Early childhood programs and before/after care programs are also being discussed, with regard to balancing the offerings with the ability to keep toys cleaned and how to effectively socially-distance preschoolers.
- A question was asked whether the district has considered how they will get children to wear masks and whether any consideration is being made for breathability, comfort, and durability?
  - Mrs. Gallagher indicated that it is less likely that the district will provide masks and more likely that families will be asked to figure out and provide the type of mask that works best for their own child. Mrs. Gallagher encouraged parents to start getting kids used to wearing masks when at play at home so it becomes normalized for them. The Task Force will be looking at these types of issues, and families are encouraged to share any ideas or approaches with the Board of Education.
- NPS wanted to open tennis courts, tracks, etc.; however, these cannot be monitored by NPS personnel and consequently depends on people to maintain proper social distancing, etc.

### **Principal's Report (Mrs. Caudill)**

Mrs. Caudill shared the following:

- Amerman has been working hard to figure out how to best honor our outgoing 5th graders and make up for what they are missing out on. The following things will be done to help celebrate them:
  - A new tradition will be started this year with yard signs. Reusable yard signs have been ordered for each individual 5th grader and they can be displayed in their front yard throughout the summer. At the end of the summer, families will be asked to bring the signs back to Amerman for re-use by the following class of 5th graders. Distribution of signs will be done either via parent pick-up or by staff delivery to the students' front yards. An email will be sent to all 5th grade families offering the opportunity to opt-out of receiving a sign.
  - Personalized diplomas/certificates will be given to each individual 5th grader.
  - In addition to the embroidered beach towels, the PTA is sponsoring a free Custard Time ice cream cone for each student.

- The Amerman 5th Grade team is working on a video.
- Options for a Clap-Out, subject to social distancing rules, are being discussed, including:
  - Drive-through the Loop, where staff can be lined up to clap for students as they drive through.
  - Virtual clap-out, where students and staff will be recorded clapping for students.
- The emotional toll of the pandemic on our kids is being discussed. Our kids are experiencing trauma. Because they do not always know how to express their emotions, they may be acting out in ways that are different than normal. The staff is completing a voluntary professional development summer learning book study to help ensure that they are prepared and have resources in their 'toolkits' to support students both academically and social-emotionally.
  - A question was asked whether parents could have access to the book that the teachers are working through, so we are all on the same page when it comes to helping out kids?
    - Mrs. Caudill answered that the book is called "Help for Billy" and is available on Amazon, Audible, etc. It comes highly recommended and has been used by staff at other NPS schools, including Moraine. It discusses how we, as parents, are not mentally available for our children — even though we are physically present with them — which is very traumatic for our kids. It talks through how to support our children and to recognize how they use behaviors to express feelings that they have no other way of expressing.
  - A question was asked about whether the district was still planning to implement social-emotional learning (SEL) for the school year?
    - Mrs. Caudill answered that a formal SEL objective will be added for next school year; however, Amerman has already implemented SEL best practices including:
      - welcoming inclusion, optimistic closures, routines, mindfulness, breathing.
      - Programs such as 2nd Step and weekly MTSS team meetings to talk through students needing additional support in distance learning.
      - Collaborative community council efforts with the social workers, psychologists, the Northville Youth Network, and grief support groups.
      - Ensuring that each school has a full-time social worker on staff.
      - Additional efforts regarding SEL around the district include a Wellness class added at NHS and push-in education around mental health, suicide, etc. for grades 6-12.
      - It was noted that the Leader in Me program is also a SEL program, encouraging student voice, goal-setting, developing strong social relationships, etc.
      - Mrs. Caudill thanked Ms. LaManna and Mrs. Parnin for their work in guiding student Lighthouse team members to create and publish the weekly Bobcat Pride Press, focusing on the 7 Habits. We are seeing excellent leadership from our students!

## **New Business**

- Laura thanked Mrs. Caudill for all of her work and efforts.
- Olivia noted that there is a different pace for online learning and asked whether materials could continue to be available over the summer so that parents/students can continue to work? This might alleviate some stress/pressure for families who are struggling to keep up with everything right now.
  - Mrs. Caudill noted that the Humanities teachers were already planning to keep their Google classrooms open throughout the summer. She will look into having teachers keep their classrooms open in order to access materials. Mrs. Caudill said that she and the staff are cognizant that not everyone can do everything and that every family's situation is different. This

is why there are no 4th marking period grades as we would not want to 'punish' students for pandemic circumstances outside of their control.

- Laura asked whether teachers could provide some structure/advice for summer?
  - Mrs. Caudill indicated that many of our online resources will be available over the summer for student use, including TumbleBooks, RazzKids

## **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Dianna Shamus.

Attendees (as recorded from Chat Comments in the online Zoom meeting):

*\* denotes PTA member*

Jen Adler\*

Sarah Allen\*

Michelle Boschert\*

Devon Caudill\*

Jenni Colagiovanni\*

Mike Fahie

Shamira Fahie

Nitasha Gaur

Laura Christensen Guthrie\*

Audra Hall\*

Olivia Hawkins\*

Carrie Hurney\*

Emily Katariski\*

Ana Resce Klein\*

Elizabeth LaManna\*

Nellie Lee\*

Elijia Levitte\*

Marlene Mendoza\*

Cristina Muresan\*

Mara Navarre\*

Rabecca Plenchette\*

Courtney Rosenau

Dianna Shamus\*

Lindsay Sivier\*

Terrinya Spain\*

Bethany Tindell\*