

Cutchogue East PTA Meeting Minutes

05/09/2023

The following board members were in attendance at the meeting:

Kerri Chituk – President

Dina Knudsen – Vice President

Amanda Sena-Ayzenberg – Treasurer

Dana Forlenza – Secretary

Kerri Chituk made a motion to call the meeting to order. The meeting was called to order at 7:09PM. A quorum of members was present.

Kerri Chituk reviewed the PTA website information (www.MC-PTA.org), as well as that membership is available via MemberHub. Kerri also review the PTA Facebook page information (@Cutchogue_East_PTA) and the district Facebook page information (@Cutchogue_East_Elementary_School). Kerri asked the members present if the PTA information being included in Principal Amy Brennan's weekly email blasts has been seen and helpful. Members confirmed that they are receiving and reviewing the information contained in the weekly emails and that this is the favored method of communication as not everyone uses Facebook.

Ilana Finnegan, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Innovation was present and provided an update on the American Rescue Plan Funds. Ms. Finnegan advised that the funds allotted to Cutchogue East have been mostly used. The funds were used to create the Extended Learning Day Program (with transportation), the Summer Learning Program (with transportation), and to add an extra 4th grade section. Ms. Finnegan confirmed that the district is committed to maintaining these programs, and explained that the amount received was based on economic disadvantage and poverty in the district and the funds were received as a grant that runs thru 2024. Ms. Finnegan advised that she is looking for suggestions for programs to implement and encouraged anyone with ideas to reach out to her. Julie Dantes suggested a program to help the younger kids with social skills and learning to make friends, as the younger children seem to have lost some of the opportunity to learn these skills during the COVID restrictions. Amanda Sena-Ayzenberg suggested an Art Therapy program.

Kerri Chituk made a motion to approve the minutes from the 03/08/2023 PTA meeting. The motion was approved.

The following Completed Events were discussed:

- On March 14th, 2023, the PTA held our first Harlem Wizards vs. CE staff basketball game. The game was sold out, at 650 tickets, and Kerri Chituk thanked our community and families for attending the game. The CE staff team consisted of 22 staff members plus Amy Brennan, Jennifer Solomon, and Shawn Petretti. Kerri thanked all of the staff who participated as well as staff and parent volunteers who helped make the evening run smoothly. The PTA collected over \$10,000.00 in sponsorships for the game, with 100% of those funds remaining with the PTA. Special thanks were extended to Tim MacDonald, Gretchen Lang, Kerri Chituk, Dana Forlenza, and Dina Knudsen for obtaining sponsorships from local businesses. The biggest sponsors were Danielle Zeifman of Zeifman Orthodontics who donated a free set of braces or Invisalign to be raffled off. Happy Kids Pediatric Dentistry donated \$2,000.00, and Amos Meringer Builders and Kolb Heating and Cooling each donated \$1,000.00. The Koundourakis family of Amiantos Environmental sponsored the game day shirt sponsors, and Finnegan Law sponsored the team introduction. All businesses that sponsored the game were thanked in a printed game day booklet that was handed to each family at the game, as well as in an ad in the Suffolk Times. A special thank you was extended to Greg Ammirati of Ammirati's on Love Lane for donating the food that the PTA ordered for the Wizards players, CE team players, and volunteers. Amanda Sena-Ayzenberg advised that between the WizFit Challenge, the business sponsorships, the game ticket and merchandise sales, and the raffle for the braces, the PTA grossed about \$40,000.00 and will net \$33,000.00.
- The Square 1 Art fundraiser was started by Clare Finnican over the winter, and was transferred to Kerri Chituk after Ms. Finnican left in April. The students each designed a piece of art on the company's template and the company turns the artwork into keepsakes that families can purchase. Last year this fundraiser was run to have the keepsakes arrive in time for Christmas/holiday gifts, but since fall was so busy, this year it was run to have items arrive in time for Mother's Day/Father's Day gifts. At the time of the meeting, Kerri had heard reports from parents that items were shipping very quickly. The fundraiser officially closed on May 2nd, and as of the time of the meeting the PTA was still waiting for the final numbers. Around 100 families placed orders and total sales were \$5,731.25. Kerri believes the PTA will make 20-30% of the sales, so she was anticipating that the PTA will make \$1,150.00 or more from this fundraiser.
- Field Day T-Shirts have been ordered and will arrive before June 1st. Kerri designed five options and the 6th graders voted for their favorite. The winning design was printed on the order sheet that was sent home with each child. Kerri confirmed that every child in UPK-6th grade is accounted for and will be receiving a field day t-shirt. Many teachers, staff, and families also ordered shirts to support their children. The PTA traditionally pays for the 6th graders shirts as a "graduation gift" and their shirts also have the current year (2023 for this year) with each student's signature on it across the back of the shirt. The PTA got an incentive deal with very competitive pricing as repeat customers of Cedar Stream (FieldDayUSA.com) and decided to switch at the very last minute from EESG to this company to save over \$1,000.00. The price for shirts for UPK-5th grade was kept at \$5 each and the PTA is covering the difference. The actual price per shirt dropped from \$10.00 to \$6.25 per shirt with the last-minute change in companies, along with no upcharge for the printing on the back of the 6th grade shirts. The shirts will be

sorted when they are delivered and will be sent home with students right before Field Day on June 8th (rain date June 15th). The PTA is still looking into an end of the year “gift” to the students (last year was CE water bottles), Kerri asked anyone who has suggestions for the gift to let her know.

- Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week took place from May 1st – May 5th. The theme this year was FRIENDS, with the quote “We’ll be there for you!” The PTA worked with Greg Ammirati who provided breakfast and coffee for the whole staff on Monday. Kerri thanked Greg again for always working with the PTA and for giving us a great price! On Wednesday, the PTA was able to secure a coffee donation from Starbucks in Mattituck, as well as 150 Munchkins donated from Dunkin Donuts in Jamesport, and Kerri thanked both businesses for their generous donations. The PTA also purchased bagels and cream cheese/butter from Black Sheep Bagels at a discounted price. Wednesday and Thursday the PTA helped restock the classroom supplies by making a table in the lounge for staff to go “shopping” at. Friday was Cinco de Mayo and the PTA put together a festive celebration including 4 mocktails (thank you’s were extended to Kerri Chituk and Gretchen Lang) and chips and several dips (thank you’s were extended to Dina Knudsen, Kerri Chituk, Molly Jernick, Libby Avalos, and Morgan Maul). The teachers also had the chance to fill out an optional FRIENDS Trivia Sheet during the week and each person was entered into a drawing to win one of 10 beautiful plants/flowers that were donated by BJ’s in Riverhead. Kerri thanked BJ’s for their generous donation. The other 25 staff members were given a large “pencil” whose contents were donated by Bridge Lane, Pellegrini, Kontokosata, and Pugliese. Kerri thanked all of these businesses, as well as everyone who participated and volunteered. Students and families helped spoil the teachers and staff by chalking the walk, sending in notes of appreciation, flowers, classroom supplies, etc. The numbers are not in for this yet.
- WINGO did not take place in April, due to the short month with break, but did take place on Friday, May 5th. Amanda Sena-Ayzenberg advised that May WINGO brought in \$122.00. The last WINGO of the year will take place in June, however, the date may change due to a conflict with a local dance recital.

The following upcoming events were discussed:

- Author Visits will be taking place for 3rd and 4th grade, and Kindergarten and 1st grade. Peggy Dickerson will be visiting the 3rd and 4th graders on Monday May 15th to talk about her book “Moonglow.” On Thursday June 1st, Sarah Bagley Steele will be visiting the Kindergarten and 1st graders to talk about her book “The Happiest Kid.” Once these visits are complete, each grade level K-6 will have had an author visit this year.
- Tuck Night Jr. will be taking place on Friday, May 19th. This is an evening of friendly blue vs. gold competition for 5th and 6th graders. Mr. Ellwood runs the evening’s events and rotations in the gym, and then everyone ends up in the cafeteria for an ice cream social to cool down. Forms to participate were sent home and are due back to the PTA mailing with \$5.00 by Friday May 12th. A form must be filled out ahead of time to participate so teams can be made up.
- Field Day will take place on Thursday June 8th (Rain Date June 15th). The PTA supports the school however needed in the morning activities and also sets up a hydration station with water refills and watermelon slices. Later in the afternoon, we will have a DJ and Kona Ice Truck (the ice truck

was won as a fundraising reward during the WizFit Challenge). Julie Dantes, Courtney Stewart, and Molly Jernick, have taken on this event and would also love to include a calming/sensory cool down space for students who seem overwhelmed, or just need a break.

- 6th Grade Moving Up Celebration will take place on Thursday June 20th. Traditionally, the PTA organizes and pays for a celebration after the 6th grade moving up ceremony. This usually entails decorating the stage area for the ceremony and then setting up the MHS library for cupcakes, pictures, refreshments, etc. The PTA is looking for volunteers for planning, set-up, and night-of help. This is something usually taken on by 5th grade parents. Kerri asked that anyone interested in helping reach out.
- 6th Grade Luncheon takes place the day after the moving up ceremony. Traditionally, the PTA pays for the luncheon, but it is run by 6th grade parents. This event consists of limited decorating, refreshments, pizza, and ice cream bar. This event also includes time for the 6th graders to sign each other's year books. Kerri asked that any parent (specifically 6th grade) interested in helping reach out.
- Possible Year-End Celebration for UPK-6th grade families. Kerri advised that there has been talk about wanting to bring back the outdoor movie night that took place last year. Tim MacDonald has volunteered to take this on, and there are still details to discuss and figure out. Kerri advised that if this event happens, it will likely take place the Friday evening of the last day of school, June 23rd.

Treasurer's Report:

Amanda Sena-Ayzenberg gave the Treasurer's Report. Amanda advised that as of April 15th, the PTA has spent about 80% of its budget for this year. Amanda advised that this is on track given where we are in the school year. So far this year, the PTA has made \$78,753.49, and has spent \$41,026.55 (thru April 15th). The checking account has a balance of \$51,567.01, the savings account has a balance of \$47,922.45 (this is where the Wizards money is, and this account started the year with a little over \$10,000.00), and another savings account has a balance of \$15,208.92. As of now, the PTA is netting about \$46,000.00 based on the net income from all fundraisers and events this year, but Amanda advised this may change slightly as we complete our final events and close out the year.

Looking Ahead to Next Year:

As this is the last PTA meeting of the 2022-2023 school year, Kerri Chituk asked what parents would like to see next year. Kerri advised that the Harlem Wizards have been reaching out to her about booking again for next year and told her that most schools do re-book annually. She was told that as long as enough teachers/staff/volunteers are on board, the Wizards said they would have different prizes for the WizFit Challenge next year, and new material/incentives, the Wizards told her that they have seen a 100% increase in fundraising in the second year of WizFit. Kerri asked the members in attendance what they thought of having another Harlem Wizards game next year. Many members expressed concerns at the cost and were unsure if the kids would be as interested in doing it again so soon. There were also

concerns raised about business sponsorships being harder to obtain, as many local businesses participated this year. Kerri asked Shawn Petretti how often MHS did the game in the years before COVID-19, and he advised that he believed the game was happening every 3 years at MHS.

Kerri also presented some ideas for Penny Wars, a CE Cookbook, a possible back to school supply shopping company, and switching out the Prestige Fundraiser for a different company for next year.

Kerri Chituk advised that the PTA is looking for volunteers for events and volunteers to chair events for next year. She explained that the board cannot continue to run the organization and also put on every event of the year. She asked that anyone interested in volunteering or chairing events please reach out, and thanked everyone who has been volunteering and helping out when needed.

Board Positions for the 2023-2024 School Year:

For the 2023-2024 school year, Kerri Chituk plans to maintain her role as President, Dina Knudsen plans to maintain her role as Vice President, and Amanda Sena-Ayzenberg plans to maintain her role as Treasurer. Dana Forlenza will be stepping down as Secretary, so the PTA is looking to fill this position for the upcoming year.

The PTA is also looking for people to join the board for the 2024-2025 school year.

Superintendent's Report:

Superintendent Shawn Petretti presented the budget that is being put to a vote on May 16th. The budget information is available online at www.mufsd.com and the budget vote is May 16th from 3pm-9pm in the MHS gym.

Kerri Chituk made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:46pm.

Members and Guests in Attendance:

Morgan Maul

Molly Jernick

Lauren Ocker

Danielle Jacobs-Erwin

Kelly Collamore

Pat Arslanian

Ilana Finnegan

Amy Opisso

Julie Dantes

Kim Lappe

Jill Kubetz

Emma Mirsky

Amy Brennan

Shawn Petretti