 Minutes of the East Moriches PTO Meeting

November 9, 2022

A meeting of the East Moriches PTO was held on Wednesday, November 9, 2022 at 7:00 pm in the East Moriches Elementary School Library.

**PTO Board Attendees**: Co-Presidents – Melanie Adlah & Melissa Davis; Vice-President – Lauren Crennan; Corresponding Secretary – Maureen LaRocca; Recording Sec’y – Vacant; Treasurer – Trish Specht

**PTO Guest Attendees:** E.S. Principal Mr. Schneyer, Phys. Ed. Teacher Mr. Montpetit, and PTO Teacher Reps, Mrs. Percoco and Mrs. Steuerwald were present. Please see PTO Attendance Sheet dated November 9, 2022 for the names of other meeting attendees.

Meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:04 pm. Melissa Davis welcomed everyone.

**Minutes:** The September, 2022 Meeting Minutes were dispensed after members reviewed them. The Minutes are also available online at <https://empto.org>. Motion to approve minutes was made by Heather Bencosme and seconded by Mr. Montpetit.

**Treasurer’s Report:** Trish Specht read the Treasurer’s report. The following is a synopsis for the months of September & October, 2022.

* SEPTEMBER
  1. Accounts’ Opening Balances (09/01/2022) are:
     1. Operating (Checking) Account: $7,595.93
     2. Savings Account: $47,270.77
     3. AMA Account: $24,426.22
  2. Purchases & Expenditures for:
     1. B.J’s Membership renewal: $55.00
     2. E.S. Ice Cream Social: $242.81
     3. GoDaddy website domains subscription: $20.17
     4. Copy Machine paper: $102.29
     5. Amazon Prime subscription: $14.99
     6. Intuit Quickbooks subscription: $86.90
  3. Accounts’ Closing Balances for September (09/30/2022) are:
     1. Operating (Checking) Account: $7,238.77
     2. Savings Account: $47,271.16
     3. AMA Account: $24,426.22
* OCTOBER
  1. Accounts’ Opening Balances (10/01/2022) are:
     1. Operating (checking) Account: $7,238.77
     2. Savings Account: $47,271.16
     3. AMA Account: $24,426.22
  2. Purchases & Expenditures for:
     1. Harvest Festival: $205.56
     2. Trunk or Treat: $31.47
     3. Amazon Prime subscription: $14.99
     4. Intuit Quickbooks subscription: $86.90
     5. 3 Cash Boxes totaling $1,694.00 were requested for the Book Fairs, Harvest Festival and Membership Drive. All funds were returned and deposited back into the account.
  3. Deposits of:
     1. $1,440.00 from the Membership Drive
     2. $3,239.00 in proceeds from the MS Book Fair
     3. $5,249.52 in proceeds from the ES Book Fair
     4. $294.00 in proceeds from the Harvest Fair
     5. $2,036.00 in proceeds from the Spirit Wear Sale.
  4. Accounts’ Closing Balances for October (10/31/2022) are:
     1. Operating (checking) Account: $19,158.47
     2. Savings Account: $47,271.56
     3. AMA Account: $24,426.22

**Fundraisers/Events Updates:**

1. *Completed*:
   1. E.S. Ice Cream Social: The students who participated in the 2022 Summer Reading Challenge were rewarded with an ice cream social on 9/23/22. The chairpersons for this event were Melanie Adlah and Melissa Davis. The ice cream was purchased at Ultimate Ice Cream in Center Moriches. Melissa stated that working with Ultimate Ice Cream was fantastic. The owner was extremely organized and she gave us everything we needed to host the event. Attendees with dairy allergies were provided with Italian ices as a substitute. The ice cream was affordable and we stayed under budget. Thank you to all of the volunteers who helped to set-up, serve and clean up for this event!
   2. School Pictures Day, 9/28/22: Photo retakes were 11/9/22. Some parents were very displeased with the final photos. It was recommended that they call Lifetouch customer service, which we have found to be very helpful in the past. There was an extended discussion about the photos and choice of companies. Mrs. Percoco stated that there were some errors this year on the placards that label the class photos. It was explained that a couple of years ago, we had a very bad experience with a company that went out of business, and that we interviewed many photography companies, and this is the best replacement we could find. Perhaps now that we are past Covid restrictions, we can have PTO volunteers at School Picture Day to help fix hair, encourage smiles, etc.
   3. E.S. Open House Night, 10/3/22: During the E.S. Open House, we held a Membership Drive. We currently have 127 active members. Thank you to all of the volunteers who helped that night signing people up.
   4. Parents’ Night Out, 10/12/22: Lauren Crennan chaired this very successful event and spoke about it. This was a fun night for PTO parents to get out, chat and mingle outside of school without the kids. The food was delicious, thanks to Heather and Roger Bencosme for hosting this event at their Speonk restaurant, Brewology. We are thinking about doing this again during the Winter.
   5. PTO Book Fairs, 10/18-10/19/22: Special thanks to our chairpersons for these events, Heather Bencosme for the Elementary School and Sue Oldring for the Middle School! Heather thanked Sue for her invaluable guidance and help in chairing the ES event. The ES raised $5,000 in “Scholastic Bucks,” which can be used to purchase books for the school. It was mentioned that perhaps the Scholastic Bucks could be given to teachers to spend on their classroom libraries. Heather asked if we could add a budget line for next year to allow for when a child has insufficient funds to cover their purchase (if needs less than $1.00). So, for example, if a child’s purchase is $8.42, and s/he only has $8.00, the PTO would cover the 42 cents. It was agreed that we would budget $100 per school to cover this. Sue also spoke and said that Heather was an amazing chair, especially being that it was only her first time, and she did a phenomenal job running it. She added nice ideas, like the “Book Fair-ies”, (when shoppers can pay for books teachers pre-selected) which was a success. Heather suggested that, next year, the Sign-Up Genius link could be emailed to all members to generate more volunteers. Sue said that the MS made a profit this year. Everything went very smoothly, from delivery to set-up, and that the registers worked very well. Next year will be Sue’s last year chairing this event. Melanie Adlah volunteered to be a Shadow Chair for the MS Book Fair next year and take over the position when Sue “graduates.” Thank you also for all of the volunteers who helped to make the Book Fair a big success!
   6. E.S. Harvest Festival K-4, 10/19/22: Lauren Crennan chaired this event and spoke about it. She said it was super successful and we had a big turn-out! A big thank you to Brittany Onorato for creating the lovely Fall Colors Balloon Arch! Thank you also to all of the volunteers that made this event a success, especially Tara Gassick, Michelle Fernandez, Beth Haney, and Rebecca Sundin. Also, thank you to Corinn Abbatiello and Maddie Everhart for selling and helping us make a profit on concessions!
   7. EMPTO Budget Vote, 10/19/22: The proposed budget for the 2022-23 school year was approved and adopted. The adopted budget can be found on the PTO website, <https://empto.org> Thank you for your support.
   8. M.S. Grades 5/6 Halloween Dance and Grades 5-8 Trunk or Treat, 10/28/22: Thank you to Sue Oldring and Karen Lee for organizing these fun events! Sue Oldring spoke about them. This year, inflation is greatly affecting our budget, since the cost of supplies has gone up so much. We had just enough money in the budget to cover the events. Fortunately, we got a good deal on a DJ from one of the members and saved money that way. Thank you to the EMFD who brought their trucks to light up the field. The kids played an impromptu night soccer game on the field, which was nice. Next year, we can’t allow inflatable costumes at the dance, as one student’s costume unfortunately popped. We will also need more adult volunteers for crowd control.
   9. E.S. Decorations for Fall Costume Parade K-4, 10/31/22: Melissa Davis spoke about this. We want to thank Baha’s Farm Stand (on Montauk Hwy. in EMO) for his generosity in helping Melissa Davis and Melanie Adlah decorate for this event every year! He lets us borrow items from his farm stand to decorate for the parade and then helps us again by returning to pick them up. Please patronize his farm stand, if you can, and leave a review on Google. Someone mentioned that perhaps the students can write him thank-you notes.
   10. Halloween Candy Buy-Back Fundraiser, week of 11/3/22: Lauren Crennan organized and spoke about this event. Thank you to Riverhead orthodontist, Dr. Vic Grazina, who generously donated $149 to the PTO, in exchange for 149 lbs of our unwanted Halloween candy. The candy will be given to local food banks, as well as being shipped to military troops overseas. Next year, let’s get the word out earlier to increase participation. Someone had the idea to make a competition out of it between classes or grade levels, to see who could bring in the most candy, with the winner getting extra recess or another reward.
   11. Fall Spirit Wear Sale ended 9/30/22. Melanie Adlah spoke about this fundraiser. The Spirit Wear Sale is completed and the orders will be distributed to students in both schools on 11/9 and 11/10/22.
   12. E.S. Milk and Cookies Night K-1: Lauren Crennan spoke about this. This event is typically run with the help of the MS National Honor Society. Since the Honor Society’s advisor is currently in transition, this event will be postponed to a later date (TBA).
2. *Ongoing or Upcoming Events:*
   1. Red White & Blue Day, 11/10/22: Lauren Crennan spoke about this. This patriotic event honors our local veterans and this is the first year since the pandemic hit that we are allowed to have veterans attend in person. Thank you so much to Tara Gassick for helping to make the red, white, and blue balloon garland arch that will decorate the stage. The PTO will provide mini American flags for the students to wave during their performance.
   2. M.S. Grades 5-8 Spelling Bee, 11/17/22: Sue Oldring spoke about this event. There will be separate heats in each grade level before the finals. Trophies will be awarded for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place in each grade level and a trophy for the school champion. A reception will follow.
   3. Sixth Annual EMO Turkey Trot “In Memory of Lisa Ringhoff” 5K Run/Walk, Thanksgiving Day 11/24/22: Mr. Montpetit spoke about this community/family event. The Turkey Trot will start at the M.S. at 9:00 am, rain or shine. So far, 250 racers have pre-registered. You can pre-register at <https://events.elitefeats.com/22emo> . This is a certified race, with a town permit and a timer set up. 400 royal blue and white T-shirts have been ordered for the participants. Businesses who have sponsored the event will have signs on display. Emergency personnel will be present, and there will be water stations and mile markers set up. The National Honor Society students will be handing out participants’ T-shirts on the Tuesday before the race. The proceeds from this event will go into the AMA account, which pays for extra recreational items for the students. Mr. Montpetit suggested buying turf for the new Ga-Ga ball pits. Thank you, Mr. Montpetit, for organizing this wonderful event every year!
   4. Holiday Gift Fair: The M.S. Holiday Fair will be 11/29 - 11/30/22. The E.S. Holiday Fair will be 12/1 - 12/2/22. Karen Lee is chairing this event. Volunteers are needed.
   5. E.S. Winter Wonderland, 12/1/22, 6:00 pm: Lauren Crennan spoke about this event. It will be held outdoors. Santa will be there, as well as crafts, a light show, hot cocoa and concessions. It was recommended that we increase the price of concessions. Volunteers are needed.
   6. Moe’s Holiday Ornaments Fundraiser: Hope Kaufman is chairing this fundraiser. Good quality, personalized holiday ornaments are available to order online, with immediate shipping. 25% of sales go to the PTO. The last day to order ornaments is 12/10/22. There will be weekly updates on the PTO Facebook page. If you’ve purchased ornaments, please share pics on our Facebook page to generate interest.
   7. Notepads & Pens for 2022-2023 PTO members – All active members will be given a PTO pen and a ”Note to School” notepad as a thank you for their continued support. They are being ordered and will be distributed soon.

**New Business:**

1. E.S. “We’re Grateful for You” Breakfast, 11/23/22: Lauren Crennan spoke about this. We are planning to host a breakfast for the Elementary School’s faculty and staff, to boost morale after recent emotionally taxing events. Since this is an impromptu event, and therefore does not have a budget line in the approved budget, we will be asking for donations. Initially, the Board was planning on asking for food donations from the members (yogurts, granola bars, bagels etc.). Then, member Michelle Fernandez posed a question to the teachers who were present asking what their preferences for the breakfast were. In response to Michelle’s query, Mr. Montpetit suggested that catering a breakfast from a local deli would be appreciated. After some discussion, it was decided that the Board would forgo asking for food donations for the “potluck breakfast” idea and instead order breakfast heroes and other items to be catered from Hurricanes Deli in WHB. Maureen LaRocca will be sending an email to all members asking for monetary donations towards paying for the breakfast, since it is not in the budget. Trish Specht will be collecting the money, ordering the food, and setting up the morning of. Donations will be accepted in cash or via Venmo to Trish. Venmo info to follow.
2. Purchase of a Balloon Arch: Lauren Crennan said that we really could use our own balloon arch for future events. Sue Oldring said there is money in the Halloween Dance budget to cover it.
3. E.S. Gingerbread House Fundraiser Idea: Lauren Crennan spoke about doing a Gingerbread House fundraiser in December. Many options were discussed. Some ideas were: parents buy kit from the PTO to complete at home, host a gingerbread house making event at school and/or piggyback onto Winter Wonderland event. Heather Bencosme suggested a Gingerbread House Contest, in which families would make their gingerbread houses at home and bring photos or actual house to school for display and voting. Michelle Fernandez suggested charging a contest entry fee, like $10. The voting for best gingerbread house could be held during the Winter Wonderland event. Another person suggested auctioning off the best gingerbread house. There was a discussion of what the prize(s) would be for the winner, and it will likely be a gift card to a local establishment.
4. E.S. Author/Illustrator Visit: Maureen LaRocca spoke about this. She said that she has spoken with Ms. Eich about arranging to have an author or illustrator come to visit the school. Ms. Eich suggested an evening event for families, sort of like a meet-and-greet with a book signing and offered some contacts with the Long Island Authors and Illustrators group. We were thinking more along the lines of having the author/illustrator visit the students during the school day, in smaller groups, so that the students could more closely observe the writing and/or illustrative process. Mr. Schneyer said that it can be done during the school day. One member, Corrin Abbatiello, says she knows an author named Susan Verde who might want to visit. Another member , Jocelyn Kaleita, said that she owns a bookstore and could help with ordering the books. Mr. Montpetit said the funds to pay for it could come out of the AMA account.
5. Purchase of New M.S. Bike Racks: Melanie Adlah spoke about this and said that new bike racks are really needed at the M.S. There aren’t enough safe places for students to lock up their bikes during the school day. Mr. Montpetit said that the funds to cover the bike racks could come out of the AMA account.
6. A.H.A. Kids’ Heart Challenge: Mr. Montpetit stated that he could use about $100 to purchase supplies for the Kids’ Heart Challenge event (“Pie in the Face,” etc.). This was approved.

**Questions** **and** **Comments**:

* Mr. Schneyer clarified that the school district policy is to limit as much as possible the paper flyers that go home with students. Each event can have only one flyer going home. Other avenues of advertising events are: posting the flyer on the PTO website, post link or flyer on the PTO Facebook page, or post on Twitter and tag the school.
* Sue Oldring shared that the students wrote letters of encouragement to schools in Florida, who are suffering after the most recent hurricane. She shared their correspondences, which were incredibly sweet and caring.

**Miscellaneous:**

There being no further business, the PTO Meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm.

The next P.T.O. Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 7, 2022 at 7:00 pm in the Middle School.