

Minutes of the East Moriches PTO Meeting

March 15, 2023

A meeting of the East Moriches PTO was held on Wednesday, March 15, 2023 at 7:00 pm in the East Moriches Elementary School.

**PTO Board Attendees**: Co-Presidents – Melissa Davis & Melanie Adlah; Vice-President – Lauren Crennan; Corresponding Secretary – Maureen LaRocca; Treasurer – Patricia Specht

**PTO Guest Attendees:** The Elementary School Principal, Mr. Schneyer, and the PTO Teacher Rep Mrs. Percoco was present. Please see PTO Attendance Sheet dated March 15, 2023 for the names of other meeting attendees.

Meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:05 pm. Melissa Davis welcomed everyone.

**Minutes:** The February 2023 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 Beth Haney and seconded by Lorraine Baierwalter.

**Treasurer’s Report:** Patricia Specht read the Treasurer’s report. Melanie Adlah motioned to approve the report. Maureen LaRocca seconded the motion. The following is a synopsis for February, 2023.

* FEBRUARY:
  1. Accounts’ Opening Balances (02/01/2023) are:
     1. Operating (Checking) Account: $2,061.18
     2. Savings Account: $47,272.77
     3. AMA Account: $45,327.39
  2. Account Activity:
     1. Payment for Amazon Prime subscription: -$14.99
     2. Payment for Intuit Quickbooks subscription: -$92.33
     3. Deposit of Dodgeball Concessions Proceeds: +$136.00
     4. Deposit of Dodgeball Revenue: +$405.00
     5. Cash Box Request for Valentine’s Day Bake Sale for $100.00; funds have since been returned.
     6. Deposit of donations for the Teacher Trial Breakfast(s) in the amount of +$170.00.
     7. Deposit of 2021-2022 Yearbook refund of +$373.76.
     8. Reimbursement to Sue Oldring for the popcorn machine purchase of -$371.29 and for Bingo/Dodgeball Refreshments for -$105.02.
     9. Reimbursement to Hope Kaufman for Valentine’s Day Bake Sale for -$28.66.
     10. Payment to Rocco Ruhue, the Sweetheart Dance DJ, for -$400.00.
     11. Deposit to the AMA Fund of Turkey Trot Donation: +$1,000.00
  3. Accounts’ Closing Balances for February (02/28/2023) are:
     1. Operating (Checking) Account: $2,033.65
     2. Savings Account: $47,272.77 (as of 1/31/2023)
     3. AMA Account: $25,676.22

**Fundraisers/Events Updates:**

1. *Completed*:
   1. M.S. & E.S. Souper Bowl Food Drive: The Souper Bowl was held the week of February 6th. Melanie Adlah and Melissa Davis were co-chairs. Thank you, Melanie and Melissa! The Souper Bowl Totals were: ES 561 vs. MS 282. Once again, the Elementary School will have possession of the Souper Bowl Trophy and title of Most Charitable School. Thank you to parents and students in both schools for supporting this initiative to help our local food pantries!
   2. E.S. 3rd/4th Grade Sweetheart Dance: The Elementary School Sweetheart Dance for 3rd and 4th graders (and their accompanying adult) was held on Thursday, February 9th from 6:00-8:00 pm. Tara Gassick was the chairperson. Tara said the dance went very well; the DJ and MC were great. We will definitely use them again next year. Lucharitos donated Churros. Shirley Carvel donated ice cream. Thank you to all of the volunteers.
   3. M.S. Grade 6, 7, 8 Bingo Nights: The 6th grade Bingo was held on Thursday, February 9th, the 7th grade Bingo was held on Thursday, February 16th, and the 8th grade Bingo was held on Thursday, March 9th. All went well. 151 students attended (43%). There was $446 in total concessions sold. There will be photos in the MS Yearbook. Sue Oldring and Helen Gruber were co-chairs.
   4. E.S. Valentine’s Day Bake Sale: The Bake Sale was held on Tuesday, February 14th during all lunch periods. Hope Kaufman was the chairperson. At the request of the Kindergarten teachers, there were non-food items available for purchase. The Kindergarten teachers were concerned with the amount of sugar the little ones would be ingesting that day, since it was also Valentine’s Day, so they requested that only non-food items be made available to the Kindergarten classes, with the exception of a free bag of popcorn for each Kindergartener. We also sold popcorn at this event to 1st through 4th graders. Hope said that the bake sale was great. There were $550 in sales. Leftover food donations will be sold at bingo nights. Mrs. Percoco said that the children were satisfied with the popcorn and were okay with not having sweets. It was suggested that non-food alternatives also be made available next year, as well as that the bake sale be held separately from Valentine’s Day. Thank you, Hope, and all of the volunteers!
   5. M.S. Grade 6 Greek Olympics: The 6th grade Greek Olympics was held on Friday, February 17th . Sue Oldring spoke about this event. Megan Butofsky was the chairperson for refreshments and did a phenomenal job. Parents were allowed to attend. Mr. Schneyer said that a teacher plans on donating a coffee urn to the PTO. Thank you, Megan!
   6. E.S. K-1 Milk & Cookies Night: Milk & Cookies Night was held on Wednesday, March 1st. Hallie Glick and Michelle Fernandez were co-chairs. The NJHS students and advisors assisted. There was a sports game going on in the gymnasium, so some reshuffling of the itinerary had to be done. The cafeteria had to be used for both the storytime and the milk & cookies time, instead of having one activity in the gym and one in the cafeteria, as it is usually done. The children had a lot of fun. Mrs. Percoco suggested that the event be held in November again, as it used to be. The Fall is a better time for the faculty who volunteer. Mrs. Percoco also suggested that the focus of the event should return to being more centered on reading and promoting literacy. She said that, in the past, each activity table had a different theme based on a popular children’s book. The original purpose of the event was to promote bonding between parent and child through reading. Thank you, Hallie, Michelle and the NJHS!
   7. E.S. Bingo Nights: Kindergarten was on Tuesday, March 7th, Grades 1 & 2 was held on Tuesday, March 14th, and Grades 3 & 4 will be on March 28th. Concessions were sold, including popcorn. Prizes were awarded. The Co-Chairpersons were Beth Haney, Heather Bencosme, and Michelle Fernandez. Beth Haney spoke about this event. A total of 90 kindergarten, 1st and 2nd graders attended. The 50/50 raffle collected a total of $643 (this includes the 50/50 proceeds from the Sweetheart Dance). The winner of the 50/50 raffle at the 1st and 2nd grade event donated $100 of their winnings back to the PTO. Concession sales totaled $97.
   8. Box Tops for Education App: Maureen LaRocca reminded everyone to scan their grocery receipts into the Box Tops for Education App. We are earning extra money every day. It all adds up. There is a post pinned to the PTO Facebook page explaining how to use the app. Thank you, Maureen!
2. *Ongoing or Upcoming Business:*
   1. M.S. Bike Racks: Funding from AMA account was approved on 1/18/23. Thank you for your support! Melanie Adlah will present the Bike Racks Proposal at the next Board of Education meeting for Board approval.
   2. M.S. & E.S. GaGa Ball Pits’ Surfaces: Funding from AMA account was approved on 1/18/23. Thank you for your support! Melanie Adlah will present the GaGa Ball Pits’ Surfaces’ Proposal at the next Board of Education meeting for Board approval.
   3. Class Set of Ukuleles: Funding from AMA account was approved on 1/18/23. Thank you for your support! Maureen LaRocca is working with Ms. Ghosio on ordering the ukuleles. The website says they are backordered, so we are looking for alternatives.
   4. M.S. St. Patrick’s Day Bake Sale & Cupcake Wars: Sue Oldring is chair and spoke about this event. Popcorn will be sold. Volunteers are needed. There will be 3 teacher judges: Ms. Johnson, Ms. Wilson, and Señor Sarvis. The grand prize will be a $25 gift card to the Moriches Bay Deli. The second prize will be a $10 Amazon gift card. Students will also vote on their favorite cupcake. The winner of the student vote will be awarded a $10 Amazon gift card.
   5. Vote on Purchase of 2 Rubbermaid Rolling Carts: The PTO would like to purchase 2 rolling carts, one for each school’s main office. They are $150 each. Sue Oldring described them as very heavy-duty. Vote Results: Funding was approved with 20 Yays, 0 Nays, 0 Abstain.
   6. 7th Grade Frost Valley Breakfast: will be on Wednesday, March 22nd. Sue Oldring & Trish Specht are co-chairs. Melissa Davis will order the bagels. They will need a total of 80 bagels, half with cream cheese, half with butter.
   7. E.S. Poet School Visit: If the membership approves funding tonight, the poet visit will be on Friday, March 24th. Maureen LaRocca spoke about this. Our visiting author is Darren Sardelli, a local poet who grew up in Smithtown. He is relatable and engaging. His website is [www.laughalotpoetry.com](http://www.laughalotpoetry.com). If the event is a go, Darren Sardelli will give parents an opportunity to purchase discounted, personalized autographed books. An order form will be sent home. He also donated books to our school library in anticipation of his visit. Jocelyn Kaleita questioned where the event chairperson (Maureen LaRocca) found this author. Mr. Schneyer had provided the PTO with a list of BOCES approved authors, and we chose one from that list.
   8. Vote on ES Author Visit Funding: There was unanimous support to fund Poet Darren Sardelli’s visit on Friday, 3/24/23 for $1,100 from the AMA account. Vote Results were 20 Yays, 0 Nays, 0 Abstain.
   9. Hardship Fund: The PTO sponsored a Middle School student for the Washington, DC trip.
   10. 8th Grade Washington D.C. Trip Grab n’ Go Breakfast: will be on Tuesday, April 4th. Melissa Davis will order the bagels. Thank you, Melissa & Trish!
   11. Hardship Fund: The Hardship Fund was created to help economically disadvantaged students attend trips that they might not have the means for. There’s a possibility that a MS student may be in need of financial assistance for the DC trip. Mr. Holl will fill us in on the details, while keeping the student’s anonymity.
   12. Second Grade Assembly: will be on Tuesday, 4/25/23 at 7:00 pm. Jester Jim will perform. Student must be accompanied by a parent, no siblings. Concessions will be sold. There will be a 50/50 raffle for parents. Thank you, Lauren, for organizing this event. More information is forthcoming.
   13. E.S. K-4 Spring Pictures: will be on Wednesday, April 26th. We will need volunteers during spring pictures to help students be camera ready.
   14. Camp Paquatuck Scholarship: Hope Kaufman spoke about this. She has asked the PTO to sponsor a special needs student(s) from our school district to attend summer camp at Camp Paquatuck. She has spoken to a representative at Camp Paquatuck. The cost to attend the camp is $1,450 per week. Eligible students will submit applications for the scholarship(s). There would be a blind application process and the camp would select the scholarship recipient(s). The camp would conduct an intake interview with the student(s). Hope spoke to the director of special education, Ms. Pepey, who said that possibly 100 district students could be eligible. A decision has to be made whether or not we would offer one scholarship, or split the funds between two scholarships, one for an elementary school student and one for a middle school student.
   15. Camp Paquatuck Scholarship Vote: The membership voted to approve the scholarship as described above. The vote results were unanimous, with 20 yays, 0 nays, 0 abstain.
3. New Business:
   1. By-Laws Amendment Proposal:
      1. According to our current ByLaws, which state “Article IX Amendments Section 1 – Any proposed amendments to these by-laws shall be read or presented in writing at a regular meeting of the membership and tabled until the next regular meeting. Section 2 – These by-laws may be amended, altered, or adopted by a majority vote of the members present at any regular meeting, provided that notice of the proposed amendment(s) is given at the previous meeting. A minimum of 10 members must be present.”
      2. The following proposal was written at an Executive Board Meeting on 3/14/23. All Board members were present, including Melanie Adlah, Melissa Davis, Trish Specht, Lauren Crennan, and Maureen LaRocca. The Board members present were in 100% agreement that this proposal should be presented to the Membership at the March meeting and voted on at the April Meeting. This in no way indicates individual board members’ voting preferences, which are private. The Board is in 100% agreement that it up to the Membership to decide whether this Amendment should be made to the by-laws or not. It was read aloud during the General Membership meeting on 3/15/23.
      3. ByLaws Amendment Proposal Wording: The Board wholly agrees that we would like to propose an amendment to the current By-Laws. We propose to amend Article V: “Election of Officers” to more accurately match the Board elections for all positions that occurred in 2022. We propose that this said amendment specify that the President(s) and Secretary(ies) positions would be re-elected every EVEN year. The Vice President’s and Treasurer’s positions would be reelected every ODD year, with the exception of the current year. This Amendment proposal will be voted on at the April meeting.
      4. The By-Laws Amendment Proposal was read aloud to the membership and explained. There was a contentious discussion. Sue Oldring voiced her opposition to the proposed By-Laws Amendment. The Board’s reasoning for the Proposed Amendment was clearly explained with transparency. The Board respects all members’ concerns and tried diligently to answer all questions. The vote to approve this amendment will be at the April meeting.
   2. Kindergarten Orientation: will be on May 24th. The PTO is giving every Kindergartener an Orientation T-shirt. They are currently being made.
   3. Disability Awareness “Walk in Someone Else’s Shoes”: Hope Kaufman spoke about this. She would like to do an initiative called “Walk in Someone Else’s Shoes.” Students would receive a paper sneaker to decorate and write about how they can show empathy to others, treat others with kindness, and make others feel included. The slogan would be “Put Yourself in Other People’s Shoes.” Participating families would also be invited to donate $1.00 or more for the Nassau Suffolk Autism Society of America.
   4. Down Syndrome Crazy Sock Day: This will be on March 21st. For more details, please see Mrs. Chernis.
   5. Autism Awareness: During the month of April, students will be invited to wear blue every Monday for autism awareness. There will be a pajama day on April 28th to raise Autism awareness.
   6. “Duct Tape the Principals to the Wall” Fundraiser: Melanie Adlah and Melissa Davis spoke about this initiative. This event is still in the planning stages. More information is forthcoming.
   7. Harlem Wizards Fundraiser: Melanie Adlah spoke about this as a possible fundraiser for the next school year. Center Moriches and Westhampton Beach school districts both have this fundraiser every year. It is a fun event in which teachers can also participate. Logistical questions include whether or not our Middle School gym is big enough for this event. One possibility is to limit the number of tickets we sell.
   8. Fun Fair Field Day/Hot Dog Day: Sue Oldring suggested that a new grill be purchased for our annual hot dog day. She spoke with one of the custodians and researched the costs of a grill. The cost would be approximately $480. She is requesting $600 to cover the grill and accessories. Shortly after this discussion, Stephanie Wiwczar said she would donate a grill, which is just amazing! Thank you so much Stephanie!!!
   9. Committees: This year, we will need an auditing committee, a bylaws committee, and a nominating committee. These committees are being formed according to the current bylaws. The auditing committee will review the current budget and propose a budget for the next school year. The bylaws committee will review the current bylaws and propose additions, deletions or revisions. Both of these proposals will be presented at the PTO meeting in May. The membership will have the opportunity to vote on the proposed budget and the proposed bylaws at the June PTO meeting. In the event that our current proposed bylaws amendment vote does not pass, the nominating committee will announce nominees for the executive board positions of president and secretary at the April meeting.
   10. Breakfast for E.S. Faculty & Staff (2nd trial is over): Tabled.
   11. High School Senior Scholarships (ESM, WHB, CMO)
   12. 8th Grade Scholarships
   13. Field Day T-Shirts
   14. Discussion on the possibility of a tree planting: (suggested by Michelle Fernandez). This topic was tabled.

* **Miscellaneous:** There being no further business, Melissa Davis motioned to adjourn and Patricia Specht seconded the motion. The PTO meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm. The next P.T.O. Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 26th, 2023 at 7:00 pm at the Middle School.