

## Minutes of CES PTO Feb 11 , 2025 Meeting

**Officers:** Aaron Zain, Heather Cobb, Jen Rice, Mia Park, Tyson Stoddard

**Attendees:** Aaron Zain, Jen Rice, Mia Park, Heather Cobb, Evin Liljengren, Brendan Mahoney, Tyson Stoddard, Allison Abramson, Dale Bernardoni, Krista Williams, Brian Williams, David Champlin, Amy Sizer, Jen Malaguti, Rebecca Sinusas, Meg Stewart

Motion to begin at 6:01 pm.

### **Approval of January Meeting Minutes (Mia Park)**

- Motion to approve minutes 6:02 pm by Jen Rice and Brendan Mahoney seconds.

### **President's Report (Aaron Zain)**

- CES merchant sale ends Sunday 2/16
- Vote at Essex Savings Bank, ends Feb 28th
- Need a lot of parent help for the basket raffle and bingo night
  - Collection for basket raffle items began this week and ends Friday, Feb. 21
  - Sign-up genius is available for parent volunteers. We need many parents to make this event happen!
  - We are looking for a volunteer to approach local merchants to donate items as "baskets" for the event.
- We are looking for a chair to coordinate the Spring Teachers Appreciation lunch. Please consider stepping up.
- Currently the Spring Fling committee is planning the adult only CES night out. Please join them to help in the planning. This year it is very much about the fish tank fundraising.
- The Halloween Committee has begun planning and coordination on the fall Halloween Town and Haunted Cemetery Walk Event. If anyone is interested in making this a spooky good time - please think about joining the committee. March 3rd is the next planning meeting.
- The executive board is currently seeking replacements and parent volunteers to step into the roles of President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. This organization cannot succeed without a strong board at the helm. If you are even a little bit interested - any one of us are happy to talk about our positions and what is entailed! Just ask! We highly encourage our Committee Chairs to consider stepping forward in an Executive role. Nominations of others can be made by emailing either the CES PTO or Principal Stoddard.
- Be on the lookout for more details about the Fish Tank Fundraiser and our limited edition CES PTO fish tank t-shirts - that all the cool kids will be wearing.
- Happy Valentine's Day to all!

### **Principal and Teachers Report (Tyson Stoddard)**

- Mrs. Lenz appreciates the grant provided for the new domino set which has been popular.
- All students and parents are invited to the Steam Fair on Feb 26, at 6pm. Come support your peers.
- Niki Waz is bringing back problem of the week, which will be posted on her door and wrapped into the positive behavior system (will award glow tickets).
- March 7th is Read Across America Day. Susan Parodi is designing a reading challenge. Two chairs will be set up - one upstairs and one downstairs, and someone will be reading in the chairs all day. Staff, students, 1st selectwoman, highschool student volunteers, etc. The day will end with everyone in the school reading collectively.

### **Board of Education (Dale Bernardoni, Vice-Chair of the BOE )**

- A member of the Chester Board of Education, Region 4 Board of Education, and others.

- Was a teacher for 17 years, principal for 20 years, professor at Southern CT, UCONN
- Presently managing director for Fund for Teachers, funds for professional development
- Goal 1: Chester Board of Education welcomes parents to join their meetings. Bring your kids if you want. They want to hear parent opinions when making decisions.
- Goal 2: There are currently 9 members of the Chester Board of Education. Up to 6 of them are potentially going to end their tenure (end of their 4 year cycle) and will be looking for people to join the board. Would like more parents to be on the BOE
  - Qualifications: resident and voting member of the town of Chester.
  - Responsibilities: OVERALL, represent parents and their needs
    - working with superintendent to hear his initiatives, needs, celebrations and to support them
    - Assist with developing education policy
    - Develop short and long range goals for district
    - Ensure that we have a highly qualified superintendent
  - Key issue: Potential consolidation of elementary schools
    - Student population will decrease based on future projections
    - CES has 191 students - already a small school
      - pros - community
      - cons - limited exposure to different people, reduced economic efficiency
    - Unique budgeting among schools - each school has their own budget so no flexibility in sharing resources among the 5 schools. Conversations about changing this.
    - Want parent input as these conversations develop.
- Typically meet Thursday at CES 7-8:30pm. Meetings are recorded and available online. Sept, Nov, Dec, Jan & February busy to prep budget.
- If on CBoE then you are also on the supervisory board - medical, busing - so will have a few additional meetings to attend.
- The next meeting is this Thursday 6pm and is a second workshop of the school budget. Superintendent White presented presumed requests and needs at the first budget workshop. Second meeting refines the allocations.
- Next regular Board of Education meeting March 27th at 6pm at CES library.
- Question: Are independents invited to join given you need to be endorsed by the republican or democratic party? If interested, you must be recommended by a party chair, but as an independent you can go to the chair of either party and ask to be recommended. They will not deny you because you are not part of their party.
- Further questions, contact Dale 203-671-3052, dbernardoni@reg4.k12.ct.us

## **Committee Reports**

### **Bingo Basket Raffle (Brendan Mahoney)**

- 2/28 Friday, 5:30pm doors open, Bingo/Raffle 6-8pm in CES gym
- Permit to accommodate 250 people
- Setup 4:45-5:30 and clean up 8-8:30
- The week of the event, baskets will be on display for students to start buying raffle tickets and build excitement.
- This year, each class will be responsible for creating their own basket. The room parent will help coordinate volunteers.
- Donations will be due in each class by Friday 2/21.
- The weekend before 2/22-23 will be the time for each classroom to create a basket and bring to school on Sunday 4pm.

- If class baskets are light, then PTO will subsidize with prize money, so parents please donate for your class' basket!
- Still looking for volunteers. Sign-up genius is available as of today.
- No toys will be coming from the Chester Hose Company. Have a budget for prizes and will seek donations from merchants.
- Continue with advertising, flyers.

#### **Room Parent Coordinator (Becca Sinusas)**

- Bingo basket raffle coordination
- Moved heart cart for February and took out sixth grade will be taken off this year.
- Suggestion: start with Sixth grade next year and count down

#### **Spring Fling (Caitlin Calder and Meg Stewart)**

- May 17<sup>th</sup> Spring Fair 5-8:30pm
- Thank you for the option to attend remotely
- Planning committee meets weekly and the event is coming together nicely
- Soliciting donations for silent auction - if you have new ideas about silent auction let the planning committee
- Fundraiser will close the PTO budget, which should be minimal, and most funds will go to the fish tank

#### **Spring Book Fair (Heather Cobb)**

- Week of March 17th
- Look for a chair to lead the book fair and will need volunteers
- New: two boxes of value books \$1-5, modern classics, spanish selection
- March 4th, e-wallet setup

#### **Cultural Arts (Tyson on behalf of Laura McGuire)**

- Laura and Tyson will meet to firm up cultural arts activities for each grade.

#### **Treasurer's Report (Heather Cobb)**

##### **Income**

- Bank Interest \$6.46

##### **Expenses**

- Go Daddy Domain Renewal for 2 years \$70.32
- Go Daddy Website Annual Cost \$216.83
- PTO Today Liquor Liability Insurance for Spring Fling \$60
- Steam Fair T-Shirts \$300

#### **Old Business**

##### **Merch Fundraiser (Jen Rice)**

- Spirit Sale Feb 3-16th, orders delivered to school.
- So far 30 items purchased raising \$150 for PTO s far.
- Comment by Becca: PTO could buy one or two t-shirts to raffle off at Kindergarten orientation

##### **Fish Tank Fundraiser (Aaron Zain)**

- School needs to replace existing fish tank, over \$12,000
- James is pursuing sponsorships from Rotary, Whelen, etc.

- T-shirts
  - Dave Nesdale has created t-shirt design
  - Have been ordered with target date of March 1st
  - Any donation above \$20 gets a tshirt
- Aaron has reached out to Spring Fling Committee to focus on fundraising for the fish tank.

### **Comments**

- Parent recommended some system with the bingo prize table where students verify that they won. Checker can provide a ticket when someone wins.
- Parent asked how to recruit more people to PTO meetings.
  - Age old question
  - Keep hybrid approach
  - Talk to parents at pick-up

Next PTO meeting is 6-7pm on Tuesday, March 11<sup>th</sup>.

Motion to adjourn at 7:04 by Aaron Zain and Jen Rice seconds