

Minutes  
Sun Valley PTO- Board Meeting  
Wednesday, September 24, 8:30am

Board Members Present – Meghan Greenwood, Kristen Roath, Jennifer Spilly, Cyd Kesser, Barbara Ayoubpour, Laura Kiff, Elise Sambrano, Kathy Sweet, Diona Polito-Rubin, Toni Postel, Jason Throckmorton, Yvonne Fox, Rebecca Thompson, Jenn Hatch, Lauren Franch, Shanon Kim Gotelli

Others Present – Julie Harris, Paul Kesser, Claudia Frankel, Ilene Snyder, Jennifer Sellers, Kristen Jenkins, Liz Felner, Katherine Shell, Jay Ginwala,

President Meghan Greenwood called the meeting to order at 8:30am

1. PTO General Business

- a. Welcome/Introductions – Meghan Greenwood
- b. Approval of Minutes from last board meeting. Elise Sambrano moved to approve, Kristen Roath second. Approved unanimously.
- c. Principal's Report – Julie Harris – including report from SLT; Julie spoke to how the school is currently funded by the state at 2007-2008 levels which translates to \$4600 per student
  - i. Multiple places the school budget come from: one being the site level budget which district funds 2.5 million and covers salaries including teachers, principal, library, secretary; funding also cover utilities. All other expenditures are covered by the site budget – curriculum materials, extra materials for classroom, intervention, substitutes en masse, curriculum training, etc.
  - ii. \$107,000 from last year (\$18,000 has been carried over) – the current annual funding is \$64,000 but from district giving us Rosa; 50% of Maggie from SEAL coaching – 25% of Maggie from site fund, 25% from PTO for intervention coordination
- d. Budget FAQs (see attachments-1) – Meghan Greenwood – addressed some issues and questions that have come up since approving the budget at the General Meeting at Back to School Night
  - i. People wanted to be able to look at the budget earlier then ask questions at the meeting; idea to have a General Budget meeting before Back to School Night was suggested
  - ii. The budget is created the preceding year by the budget committee (5 members from the staff, 5 PTO members with voting privileges; committee includes Principal Harris and Gayle). The committee evaluates historical spending, teaching/school needs, and the requests from administration and staff.
  - iii. One of the major considerations when doing the budget is the enrichment schedule, how much to allocate, how many weeks, chad & an assistant or just chad; this previous year, classroom funding was the major discussion in terms of adding to PTO gift for each teacher versus asking parent donations
  - iv. This current year's budget includes the reserve (non-profits typical have 25-50%), it was suggested that our current 50-60% for reserve might be too conservative but when considering that the budget covers enrichment salaries, conservative seems to be wise; a less conservative reserve has been suggested.

- v. Parents have questioned that giving for a certain year and not are not comfortable with the idea that money is being banked for future years. This again speaks to the question of when pledge/auction money it is spent against the reserve
- vi. The master schedule is the umbrella for teaching while the focus and primary allocation of budget needs to be on learning and building a schedule around core academics
- vii. Summary - the General Meeting on October 8 will be focusing on spending the reserve, technology upgrades as a priority for classrooms, non-fiction for reading levels, richer deeper stronger – gratitude where there is a surplus. A letter will go out to families this week asking at which level they are comfortable keeping the reserve (attachments-2)
  - 1. provide the budget in advance before asking for approval
  - 2. surplus has to be there for the reserve
  - 3. balance sheet would be helpful to see budget versus spending to visual surplus
  - 4. transparency left more questions than answers or understanding to how the money spent or allocated
  - 5. the reserve would be gone if we upgraded technology
- e. Treasurer’s Report – Elise Sambrano – reimbursement turn around 1 - 2 weeks;
- f. Pledge Update – Jennifer Spilly – pledge messaging is “Keep Sun Valley Strong;” message is always about participation! 95% participation last year, the range being \$1 - \$5000 donations which means families got the message about participation. 20% participation at this point 2 weeks in; this is the best way for all families to participate.
- g. Technology Update. – Jason Throckmorton – Chromebooks. Flatscreens. Reading Eggs. Research into comparable program for 4-5 grade? Last year all teachers received iPads; this year trying to get flat screen TV in the class room to work with Apple TV. The budget is around \$400-500 per classroom, so heavy in research mode to figure out if that is reasonable or even doable; Toni works for company that would be worth making a phone call.
  - i. Reading eggs – Increased their prices this year but also with our school over 500 students we can’t get a contract for the what they offer (\$2500 up to 500 students); suggestion has been presented to exclude 5th and some of the 4th graders and find an alternative to reading eggs for those students. At this point, RE has not been activated this year.

## 2. PTO/SVS News and Events

- a. Family Restaurant Night at Chaat Lotus and Spice 9-25. Cathy Stanley.
- b. Yearbook art entries by 9-26. Need photos (on-going). Elvira Stark.
- c. HeadsUp Raffle Tickets turn in extended to 9-26. Rebecca Thompson.
- d. HeadsUp Summerfest 9-27. – Rebecca Thompson – Desperately need volunteers; please send an email via grade level reps that we are short volunteers; all San Rafael soccer was moved to sunday to allow participation in Summerfest!!
- e. International Walk N Roll to School 10-8. Need “walking bus” leaders. Bridget Hook.
- f. General PTO Meeting and Parent Ed Night 10-8. Need Grade Level Rep help getting the word out about the agenda (see below). Sitters?

- g. No school 10-13, conferences 10-14 through 10-17 (minimum days)
  - h. Book Fair 10-13 through 10-17. Jenn Barsotti and Tracy Scollan.
    - i. The suggestion for a costume swap was brought up. It just needs a volunteer. It has been schedule to coincided with book fair but would be an easy pass this year.
    - ii. There will not be a 5th grade bake sale to raise money for the graduation budget during the bake sale this year as it is conflicts with pushing families to participate in the pledge drive.
  - i. Staff Luncheon hosted by 4<sup>th</sup> grade 10-24
    - i. There is a master sign-up genius, send out 2 weeks before event; help before and after; helpful to clean out refrigerator day before; should be enough plates and forks here in the kitchen. all dishes have to be cleaned out for parent to come and pick up. tupperware for left overs for teachers to take home; staff lunch NOT just teachers
3. Communications
- a. Clarification of roles: Grade Level Reps and Room Parents. – Rebecca – see attachments regarding dividing roles
  - b. Classroom communications
  - c. Help wanted: We still need a communications liaison (newsletter, Facebook, website) – newsletter and website need a liaison
    - i. video or conference call for PTO meetings was suggested (someone to research that avenue); how can we help working families feel connected; evening meetings are not well attended even though there are 5 or 6 evening meetings for parents not available during the day
    - ii. Ilene Synder took care of the newsletter last year
    - iii. Lauren French volunteered to do Facebook stuff
    - iv. Rebecca Thompson defaults to the Monday message for Gayle
  - d. Facebook 300 Likes Raffle winner: Adina Santos
4. Community Project Updates
- a. Directory update. Yvonne Fox/Kalen Donaldson – graphics were the hiccup last year. It was outsourced for last year; they are hoping to get it out by Halloween; the delay is in still selling slots for selling ads and graphics; Kalen needs help filling the ads if anyone has time to contribute.
  - b. Safe Routes Meeting recap – Rebecca Thompson – Next meeting October 17 at 8:30 am. Proposing that every Wednesday will be “walk and roll” day. Rebecca is still gathering walking school buses; thanks to Kristen Roath for the new “do not enter” sign in the driveway; there are also new cones for on 5th up by other entrance; another proposal would be to consider getting paid help for 8am; Kristen reported regarding how Bacich handles their pick-up/drop-off in the mornings using name stickers in front windows and bull-horns; she will investigate if those individuals are volunteers or paid.
  - c. Int’l Sign up to Volunteer Day recap. Still awaiting more takers for raffle. Rebecca Thompson
  - d. Dad’s Club report (Glow ball recap and upcoming Pancake breakfast) – Jason Throckmorton – Glow ball was a huge success with 44 attending; they used Bidding for Good to pay for event,

payment was only for the event and not fundraising; planning is underway for the West End kick off night; Pancake Breakfast is underway; currently working on securing volunteers for HeadsUp Summerfest grilling; discussion has come up in terms of the Dad's Club moving toward "suggested donation" versus paying at events for fundraising purposes in order to be more of a community building emphasis rather than another fundraising entity to the school; Jennifer Spilly raised the issue that perhaps the wrong message has been communicated to the Dad's Club that the PTO is anti-fundraising but trying to find balance between not having "our hand in their pocket" and autonomy; other schools have dad's club operating as its own non-profit but can created tension between the PTO and getting clear on allocated dad's fund-raising

- e. Tree Planters—need photograph of children to present to Marko Lavrishia
  - f. Scrip and Spirit Wear—please keep reminding friends to use United cards. Heather Walker. Amazon smile?
5. Other business
- a. Proposal from BTSN: using buses for field trips (cost analysis and teacher/administrative feedback)
    - i. \$600-800 for a 66 capacity district bus, but these are not readily available as they are needed for pick up and drop off.
    - ii. A charter bus would cost from \$800-1000 for a 48 passenger (which means two per grade level would be needed, at least.
    - iii. Feedback from teachers suggested that would prefer to have a say in spending up to \$2,000 on their grade level and would prefer technology upgrades to bus for field trips.
  - b. Additionally, budget surplus roundtable slated for 10/8/14 General Meeting. Would like general PTO feedback on how to spend "surplus." Best way to structure meeting?
  - c. Proposal: refrigerator for teacher break room. Teacher appreciation week? – under \$1000 gift for appreciate week or out of the site budget. Beth O'Halloran is researching/negotiating for us.
6. Acknowledgments
- a. Pledge Ambassadors
  - b. Int'l Sign up to Volunteer Day
  - c. Glow Ball organizers and participants
  - d. 4/5 Grade Level Social
  - e. 2/3 Grade Level Social

Kristen Roath motion to adjourn, Jennifer Spill seconded. Meeting adjourned at 10:10am.

**Next Board Meeting:** Wednesday, October 8th, 2014 in MPR. General meeting follows at 6:30pm.

(attachments-1)

## Budget 2014/2015 FAQ's

*This document has been prepared in response to questions raised by PTO stakeholders. We will try to address some concerns here and follow up at the next General PTO meeting (currently scheduled for Wed. 10/8).*

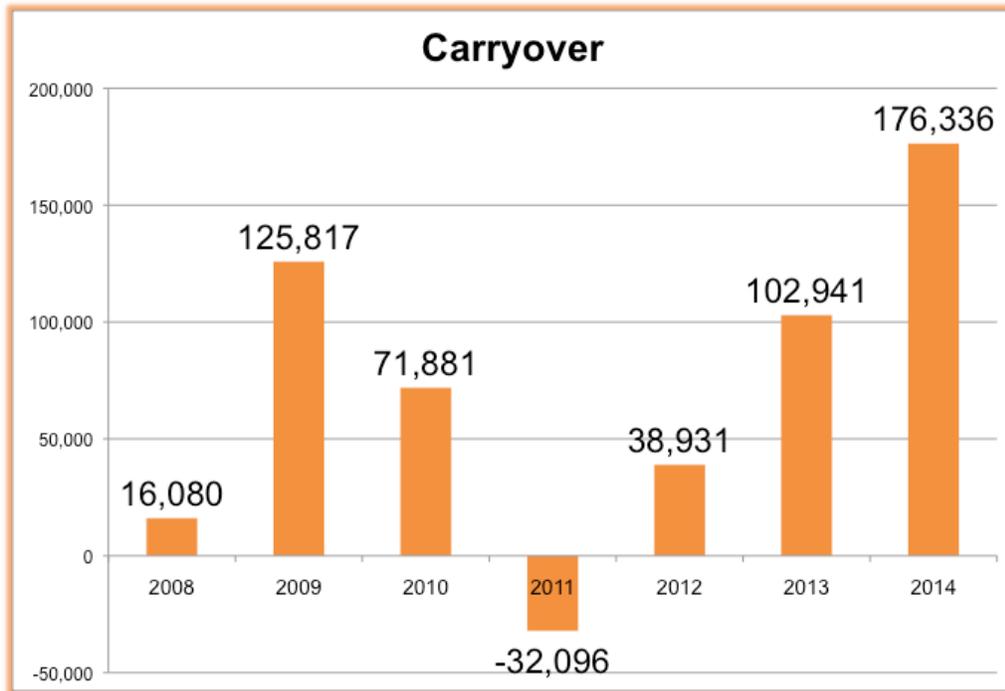
### **How is the Budget Committee created and what is the process?**

The Budget Committee (BC) is a formal sub-committee created according to the adopted by-laws of the Sun Valley Elementary School PTO (please see the attached for the exact language of the by-laws, 10.1-10.5). Members of the BC include 5 representatives from the certificated teaching staff, 5 representatives from the PTO (including the treasurer and president) and Principal Harris. The BC works with historical revenue & expense information, teacher and administrative requests and annual general survey results to craft a reasonable and sustainable annual budget.

Beginning in May (after auction \$ are counted), requests are gathered from teachers & staff for financial support in the classrooms and for special projects like poetry and classroom connections. Towards the end of the year, we try to confirm the enrichment budget salary commitment. Usually this large number is a moving target until the fall semester starts. This has historically been a challenge in crafting an annual budget in time for BTS night, but changing the employees to a monthly stipend over hourly pay has helped control and predicts expenses much more precisely. Large changes to annual budgeted expenses are usually at the behest of the Principal and outlined in the budget presentation.

## How are recommendations for reserve (carry-over) established?

No detailed policy is in place for the exact amount or percentage for the “general reserve fund” referred to in the PTO by-laws. Last year we established a very conservative amount based on 50% of the budgeted expenses. Historically, our reserves have ebbed and flowed with the general economy and excess spending. As you can see from the chart below, we have had a very healthy uptick in our carry-over.



**We will be exploring options to spend down the reserve to less conservative levels. Additionally, a new formal reserve policy will be proposed that uses best practices of similar non-profit corporations. An amount of 25-50% of operating expenses is currently recommended for non-profits in our sector.**

Our budgeted operating expenses for the year are \$255k (total expenses less capitol budget). The recommended range would therefore be \$64k to \$127.5k in general reserve, leaving a surplus of \$48.5k to \$112k. If we settle on a 33% (or 1/3) reserve, we would need approx. \$84k in reserve and be able to spend \$92k this year.

### **How are amendments to the budget made?**

Amendments can be made with a proposal to the BS or PTO Executive Board. Amounts over \$5000 are reported at the next General PTO meeting.

### **How should we spend the surplus?**

Wisely & with input from all stakeholders – capital project – playground structure/ additional comebook labs/ other (from new survey).

### **Why should I pledge?**

The main reason for our success in our annual pledge drive has been participation. Constantly over 90% participation, our pledge drive has been a model that other PTA's & PTO's have hoped to emulate. We feel it is one of our proudest achievements. The recommended dollar amount (\$600 per child this year) would more than cover our entire budget should we receive that from every family. Unfortunately, this has not been the case (yet!). While the cash flow coming in is extremely important to **KEEP SUN VALLEY STRONG**, we understand that \$600 per child does not work for every family. That is why we really push for participation; we feel it is key to our success.

*Questions/suggestions? Please contact Meghan Greenwood at: [meghan.greenwood@gmail.com](mailto:meghan.greenwood@gmail.com)  
or Jenn Hatch at:  
[Jennhatch415@gmail.com](mailto:Jennhatch415@gmail.com)*

**\*\*From PTO Bylaws v.1.2\*\***

## **10. Finance**

- 10.1. The PTO shall raise funds as necessary to carry out its objectives, with all such money to be deposited in a general fund, a general reserve fund, or a capital reserve fund (as appropriate).
- 10.2. An annual budget will be developed by the Budget Committee by the end of May, based in part on expenditure requests from administrators, teachers, and parents of Sun Valley School. The annual budget shall be submitted in writing by the Executive Board to the general membership at the September general meeting, and shall be approved or amended at the general meeting by a simple majority of members present.
- 10.3. Budgeted money may be expended with the authorization of the Executive Board.
- 10.4. Any amendments to or deviations greater than \$5,000 from the budget must be reported at the next general membership meeting.
- 10.5. The budget year shall be August 1 to July 31. On July 31, all money allocated but not expended shall revert to the general or reserve fund with the exception of money designated to a specific fund (e.g., a specific capital improvement project).

(attachments-2)

September 24, 2014

Sun Valley Community:

We hear you and need your feedback to **KEEP SUN VALLEY STRONG**. The approval of our PTO's annual budget brought up some great questions from our community we would like to address:

**1) How much money should we hold in reserve?**

Typically, non-profits like ours that are responsible for paying enrichment salaries, keep between three and six months spending in reserve. This equates to about 25-50% of our operating budget. Our budgeted operating expenses for the year are \$247K (total expenses less capital budget). Therefore, the recommended reserve could be as low \$62K as or as high as \$124K (please note that the PTO bylaws require a reserve, but do not specify an exact amount). Our generous surplus totaled \$176K in carryover from the past two years.

We are open to your feedback on how much the PTO should keep in reserve vs spending; please indicate your preference below:

*(Please check one)*

- Reserve \$124,000 (and maintain a 50% in the general reserve fund)
- Reserve \$82,000 (33% reserve remains)
- Reserve \$62,000 (25% reserve remains)

**2) How should the surplus be spent?**

Once we establish a reserve amount, we will have surplus spending available and will be soliciting suggestions from our administrative team, our teachers, and from our parents. Please join our **PTO General Meeting October 8 at 6:30 p.m.** for the results of this polling and to hear and help create proposals for enriching our school. *Keep in mind, this surplus spending is additional to the 2014-2015 Budget Expenses approved at our 9-10-14 General PTO Meeting. (Go to [www.sunvalleypto.com](http://www.sunvalleypto.com) to review 2014-2015 Sun Valley PTO Budget detail).*

**3) Why should I contribute to PLEDGE if the PTO reserve is so large?**

The main reason for our continued success in our annual pledge drive has been participation. At consistently over 85% participation, our Pledge Drive has been a model that other PTA's and PTO's have hoped to emulate. We feel it is one of our proudest achievements. The recommended dollar amount (\$600 per child this year) *would* cover our entire annual budget of almost \$300K should we receive this amount from every family. Unfortunately, this has not been the case (yet!). While the cash flow coming in is extremely important to **keep Sun Valley strong**, we understand that \$600 per child does not work in every family. That is why we ask for participation; we feel it is key to our success as a community.

Questions? [sunvalleypto75@gmail.com](mailto:sunvalleypto75@gmail.com)

Please return this form in your Friday Folders or to the front office by Monday, October 6.

