

Alexander Hamilton HSA Meeting Minutes March 24, 2010

Attendance:

| | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Kathy Heher | Josephine Noone | Jenn Smith | Stacie Giammarino |
| Sue Lawlor | Thomas Ficarra | Diane Barilla-Kay | Lynne Boucher |
| Patricia Cristadoro | Abby Mehlin | Reebe Horan | Beth Vataker |
| Carolyn McClain | Nancy Caputo | Kelly Harte | Lorie Pezzuti |
| Susan Schulte | Judy Clemente | Kevin McAllister | Amy Familo |
| Deanna Quinones | Tricia Rosenkilde | Craig Valenti | Heather Dobbs |

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM

Guest Speaker:

Dr. Thomas Ficarra, Superintendent of the Morris School District, discussed the budget surplus and deficit cuts. Due to the surplus law put into effect by Governor Christie, we have had a loss of surplus of \$3 million dollars as of June 30, 2009. We lost 3 million dollars in tax relief. Also, two months ago, the governor stated that we would lose 15% of our state aid, which translates into 1.4 million dollars...however, he changed this to 5% of our budget, which is \$4.8 million dollars. We will be cutting the following:

- World language program for K-5 levels.
- We will have kindergarten aides for the academic subjects only and aide staff will be cut in half.
- We will lose aides that are not tied to IEP's.
- Class sizes will remain the same Pre-K-12.

These cuts are State driven. A complete school budget presentation will be given in April.

80% of our total budget goes to instruction, 10% facilities, 3% business, and 1% general. The tax impact for Morristown up \$234 per year; Morris Township up \$16.00 per year. Surplus per household impact: Morristown \$85.00 per year; Morris Township \$101.00 per year.

Dr. Ficarra asks that all parents of children in our district get out and vote during the April 20th election. Remember that our vote is to help our children. Our budget has fewer services than last year, however, if it does not pass, we lose all power over the final number of our budget. The Town Council would then have the power to decide what our budget should be for the year.

When the budget presentation is approved, it will be available on the Morris School District website. The official budget hearing is on Saturday, March 27th at 9:30 AM to be held at the Lafayette Learning Center.

Upcoming Events/Thank You's:

Kathy Heher thanked Nancy Caputo for the baked goods for tonight's meeting and for the clothing sale; Heather Dobbs for the light bulb sale which made over \$1,900.00; and Abby Mehlin for organizing the after school clubs – both winter and spring.

Approval of the Minutes/Budget/Miscellaneous:

- A motion to support the Morris School District Budget was unanimously approved.
- The minutes for the February 17th meeting were unanimously approved. The minutes will now be posted via email and on the website. In interest of saving paper, they will no longer be copied and distributed.
- Mrs. McLain, Science teacher suggested that students go to Wal-Mart and use their old boxes in lieu of buying a display board. This is in interest of saving paper and money.

President's Report:

The focus has been on organizing a Get Out and Vote rally for the April 20th election. Diane-Barilla Kay is our rep for AH. Facebook also has a site "I love the Morris School District." AH helped with the kindergarten registration this past month.

Principal's Report:

- Thank you to Dr. Ficarra for his explanation of recently announced cuts in state funding and how these cuts affect the Morris School District budget. Everyone is invited to the Budget Hearing on Saturday, March 27, 2010, at 9:30 a.m. at Lafayette Learning Center.
- Thank you to Mrs. Dobbs for organizing the CFL fundraiser. Thank you to all staff, parents, and students who supported the fundraiser. We raised \$1,971 to use for maintenance of the Ecology Center and future environmental programs.
- Through funding from the Bayer Science Grant, 3rd and 4th grade classes in the Morris School District were awarded \$500 each to purchase resources for hands-on science. Teachers also received professional development focusing on science instruction in November.
- The Morris School District has been awarded a PK-3 Initiative grant from the Foundation for Child Development through the Association for Children of NJ. It is a project that involves a partnership with the Harvard Family Research Project (see HFRP.org) at Harvard University and comes with some money to improve our practices at the PK-3 level. The PK-3 focus is based on research that shows that grade 3 outcomes are good predictors of high school success and that dollars spent in the early primary grades (PK-3) are the most effective in improving student outcomes. We were selected based on our strengths as a district, with awareness that all districts can improve. Our efforts will be published by the ACNJ so that other districts which follow will learn from the things we did--both to know what worked and what did not work. This is a very exciting initiative that will benefit our students, families, and schools. We have nearly completed the 60-day planning phase and need to carry out the work over the next two years. At this time, we are seeking parent representatives for our committee and/or its three sub-committees (family, assessment, and program quality). If you would like to become involved, please email Josephine Noone at josephine.noone@msdk12.net or call (973) 292-2190.
- There is no supervision of students, with the exception of instrumental music rehearsals and Quest, before 8:55 a.m. Please be sure that students do not arrive at school before 8:55 a.m.
- **Past Events in March:**
 - Thank you to parents and family members who attended the third and fifth grade culminating performances for the Community Theatre Residencies. Third grade presented New Jersey Infomercials and Fifth Grade presented Mysteries from History. Thank you to the HSA and MEF for supporting these residencies and to the teachers and students for their hard work and wonderful performances. We also thank Jennifer Crane Turner, the teaching artist, and Kathy Roy, the Director of Education for the Community Theatre, for their hard work in tailoring these residencies to enhance the Morris School District Curriculum.
 - March 12th—Grade 4 students visited Art in the Atrium at the Morris County Courthouse.
 - March 12th—FMS Guidance met with 5th grade students and families.

- March 15th and 17th—Grade 4 students and teachers enjoyed their trips to Wegmans for Nutritional Education Programs and brought home plenty of healthy goodies.
- On March 19th—students saw presentations from the three candidate organizations selected to participate in our Coins for a Cause fundraiser: Employment Horizons, the Community Soup Kitchen of Morristown, and SNAP (Special Needs Athletic Programs). Voting will be on April 20th. Please keep sending in coins. More information about Coins for a Cause can be found on the Alexander Hamilton Website.
- March 24th—James Gelsey, author, presented *Whodunit: Detectives in Training* to 4th Grade. Students cooperated with the author to brainstorm the setting, villain, suspects, clues, and solution to build a mystery entitled *Scooby Doo and the Mystery of the Kookoo Coconuts*.
- **Events in March/April/May:**
 - March 25th—5th Grade Talent Show at 6:00 p.m.
 - March 26th—Student/Staff Volleyball game at 1:30. Wear your school colors
 - March 29th-April 2nd—Spring Break, School resumes on April 5th
 - April 5th—Spring Clubs begin
 - During the months of April/May Third Grade classes will visit the Thomas Edison Lab which has recently reopened. Each class will go on a separate date (see school calendar)
 - April 13th—Volunteers from Bayer Corporation will teach hands-on, interactive science lessons to all 3rd and 4th grade students at AH. (30 volunteers will teach one hour lessons in each classroom.)
 - April 14th—HSA Meeting and Budget Presentation 9:30 a.m. in AH Auditorium
 - April 14th—End of the 3rd marking period
 - April 14th—Naglieri testing for Grades 3-5, make up testing on April 16th
 - April 14th—Lean Green Clean up Machine Assembly 2:00 p.m., families invited
 - April 15th—Jackie Robinson Assembly 1:40 p.m., families invited
 - **The School Budget Vote will take place on April 20th. Please vote!**
 - **Coins for a Cause: Students will vote for the organization of their choice on April 20th. There will be an Election Night Ice Cream/Dance Party from 6:30-7:00 p.m. in the Alexander Hamilton Gym.**
 - Spring Conferences will take place on April 21st and 22nd.
 - April 30th-Arbor Day/Earth Day Celebration at 1:40.
- **Testing coming up in May:**
 - **Week of May 3rd-Grade 5 NJ ASK testing with make up testing the following week**
 - **Week of May 10th—Grades 3 & 4 NJ ASK testing with make up testing the following week**
 - **Please do not plan family vacations during testing weeks!**

Treasurer's Report:

The current balance is \$16,557.06. Cultural Arts cost this month was approximately \$2,000. School store has been profitable. T-shirt sale numbers are not in as of yet.

Committee Reports

-More information will come about submitting photos for the 5th grade yearbook.

-Colored and white display boards will be sold during the 4/13 school store. It is suggested that you utilize recycled cardboard instead of purchasing these boards.

- After school clubs – All clubs still have openings...Friday, 3/26 is the deadline. Clubs start on Tuesday after the break.
- Katie Skilton acquired a family fitness night from BoxTops on June 3rd. More info. to come.
- Recipes due on Friday, March 26th for the Relay For Life fundraiser. Contact Lori Monetti with questions.

Old/New Business

Project Graduation was very successful. Thanks to all who supported.

MEF Morristown's Got Talent made close to \$30,000 and was sold out.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:56 PM. The next meeting is on April 14^h, at 7 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Stacie Giammarino
Day Secretary