

Rensselaer Park PTA  
November 2021 Meeting Minutes  
November 4, 2021  
6pm via Google Meet

Present:

Julie Allen, Zerlina Ochis, Emilie Johnson, Terri Sanderson, Elaine Garrett, Sara Plummer, Dr. Abitabile, Sarah Huls, Adam Gregoire, Erica Davis, David Hamilton, Pete Allen, Sara Brandenburg, Rob White, Melissa Santarcangelo, Leo Breton, Olivia Williams, Danielle Jobin, Michelle McMahon, Jamie Cavanaugh and other callers.

**Call to Order 6pm by Julie Allen**

Introduction of Dr. Antonio Abitabile to present the Program and Budget for the Proposed Capital Improvement Project for consideration by district voters.

As enrollment is projected to be consistent for the next 10 years, this proposal will repurpose and add space to Rensselaer Park Elementary School and the adjacent athletic facilities.

Overview:

New:

New cafeteria, bus drop-off, a softball and multi-purpose sports field with accessible bathrooms, installation of new elevator, student managed gardens on patio, outdoor classroom space

Repurposing:

Existing locker rooms into classrooms and PTA room, upgrade of gym windows, basketball hoops and equipment, overhaul of kitchen, backstage to two smaller classrooms, overhaul of art room, accessibility upgrades to bathrooms. Turf field will allow greater seasonal usage and feature walkway.

Cost: \$16.7M

Taxpayers will vote on \$15.5M expense, of which \$14.3M will return in aid as a 92% reimbursement. The balance to taxpayers will be approximately \$1.18M, the equivalent of an additional \$70K per year for 15 years.

Average borne cost:

Locality	Avg increase per property	Total number of properties
Lansingburgh	\$10.08	3778
Brunswick	\$14.05	768
Schaghticoke	\$13.19	1167
Pittstown	\$0.28	5

Timeline of phases:

Design: December 2021-October 2022

NYSED Review: October 2022-January 2023

Bid Process: January 2023-March 2023

Construction: April 2023-August 2024 (2 distinct summers)

Public notice will be via newsletter, website, Facebook and signage, with public information session. The vote will be December 7, 2021 from 12-9pm in the LHS and TES gyms. Voter registration with the district clerk is until 11/23.

#### **Treasurer's Report—Terri Sanderson**

\$16,600 in transactions to date this month with \$13,942 in deposits and 3,700 in expenses for a balance of \$23, 840. We had three events culminating in October: Pumpkinfest (profit of \$600) which also saw a \$500 donation to offset the STEAM activities cost; the Scholastic Book Fair, with transactions totaling \$4,907 for which we receive back a percentage in Scholastic Dollars to redeem for books, and the Fall Fundraisers with sales of \$8,730 (we receive back 40%, approximately \$3488). We are still collecting SaveAround sales and Burghopoly presales. We have 102 PTA members, an all-time high!

*Motion to Approve Treasurer's Report by Pete Allen, seconded by Adam Gregoire.*

#### **Secretary's Report—Elaine Garrett**

Updated and state approved bylaws are on our webpage, along with September minutes. Presentation of October minutes for approval

*Motion to approve September minutes and motion to approve Secretary's report by Pete Allen, seconded by Adam Gregoire.*

#### **Principal's Report-Melissa Santarcangelo**

The principals were amazed to see their first Pumpkinfest, and how the school was transformed in the afterschool hours. THANK YOU to the PTA, staff and volunteers who did all of the set up and cleanup afterwards. Also a big thank you for organizing the Scholastic Book Fair. This week saw 1.5 days of professional development for Superintendent's Conference Day, and administration received positive feedback on the content presented. The Birthday Books program has commenced with certificates and 1:1 time with the principals as they congratulate the birthday month students and present them with a new book. We also had a wonderful Just Run meet here at RPES with lots of staff and parental involvement and support—congratulations to our runners!

#### **Self-Contained Classrooms Report (via email)**

**Baril:** This month we were able to take a field trip to Indian Ladder Farms. We picked pumpkins and we enjoyed cider and donuts. In the classroom, we worked on understanding the word friendship and what it means to be a good friend in the classroom and in our school.

**Conroy:** We have been continuing to work on building our classroom community these past couple of weeks with reading, writing and practicing what it means to be "a good egg", how to be a good friend and how to keep your friends. We have learned how to play some new games together and have discussed why it's important to play by the rules and not "cheat". I have seen great helpers, and team players these past few weeks. We are also learning about the different habitats in science and how important a role each plant and animal plays in their natural habitat.

**Nolin:** The Room 109 squad has been improving at following our classroom rules and routines every day. We have been focusing on practicing our skills for learning and also how to make a "good plan" to solve problems when we are feeling upset or frustrated.

**Wild:** We have been learning about different kinds of maps and how to use the parts of a map (the title, compass rose, and key). We built a map of our classroom using blocks! We have also been working hard on using touch points to add two numbers.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Report—David Hamilton**

**ELA:** We are finishing “Stone Fox” for our fiction unit, using text answers to describe the author’s purpose. We are rebuilding and reviewing “e” and multi-syllable words and using checklists and rubrics to self-reflect and evaluate before publishing.

**Math:** We are creating our own pictogram and bar graphs with information and scales.

**Social Studies:** reviewing the content in Social Studies Weekly

**Science:** learning about inherited traits and working on a nearpod lesson.

Next week Mr. Hamilton and Mrs. Eckler’s classes will present a Veteran’s Day video and song.

Thank you again for a successful, volunteer driven Just Run program!

### **4<sup>th</sup> Grade Report-Pete Allen**

**ELA:** Nonfiction unit and informational writing (explaining/describing function in a concept). We have finished with personal narrative and fiction unit.

**Math:** Multiplication review –parent review will really help students learn their foundational skills; please make time to work with them. We will then move onto 2 digit x2 digit multiplication.

**Science:** Energy and energy transfer and how humans use it

**Social Studies:** Native American impact on NYS history and modern life.

Looking for suggestions for 4<sup>th</sup> grade field trips!

### **5<sup>th</sup> Grade Report—Adam Gregoire and Rob White**

**Math:** Standard algorithm whole and decimal multiplication. Also seeing the need for review with covid learning loss effect, it is a major issue to make sure students acquire the necessary foundation for multiplication mastery and preparation for algebra. Also discussed: accountability with peers and more sophistication in finding solutions.

**Science:** Property of matter with physical and chemical changes. Using information, reasoning and inquiry based labs to investigate natural phenomena—weathering of a gargoyle—and using descriptive paragraphs for short response reports.

Ms. Simson’s class designed pumpkin catapults that also tied to math with rules governing budget and accuracy/distance. The 5<sup>th</sup> grade students also enjoyed a science scavenger hunt in Oakwood Cemetery. Thank you to Zerlina Ochis for accompanying the Roman/White classes on their trip.

This year’s Haunted House at Pumpkifest was the best yet with 335 guests; a wonderful memory built for students and the money raised will go directly to the 5<sup>th</sup> grade end of year activities.

Mr. White: thank yous for Mr. Hamilton’s mentorship in Just Run and Mrs. Santarcangelo and Dr. Abitabile’s support for productive professional development days.

**ELA:** “seeing ourselves” (representation) in books, and writing realistic stories. Next will be a shift to nonfiction reading and writing.

**Old Business—Julie Allen**

The Book Fair beat our goals and allowed the PTA and parents to purchase the teacher wish list books for their classroom libraries. The Pumpkinfest had a great turnout, and we are thankful for a bit of normalcy returning. Thank you to all the volunteers who made it possible. Haunted House was a highlight.

Trick or Treat Street at Knickerbacker Park saw a great turnout by RPES faculty and PTA members and the students were excited to see their teachers in costume and with decorated vehicles. Blippi's celebrity appearance caused major excitement with the younger crowd.

We are up to 103 memberships!

**New Business—Julie Allen**

The Fall Fundraiser items will arrive next week, and the new spiritwear was all delivered. We are pleased to open an online store this month for ordering in time for holiday delivery. Fall Pictures arrived today and will be distributed to students tomorrow.

Fundraiser Pickup and Bingo Night 11/18

Picture retake Day 12/7 AM (half day and capital project vote)

Holiday Shop 12/9 and 10

The Winter Event will be virtual to ensure healthy distancing prior to the holidays. It will be an arts and crafts and cookie decorating event.

**Comments**

Dr. Abitabile hopes to schedule a vaccine clinic soon (1/3<sup>rd</sup> Pfizer dosage, 2 clinics 3 weeks apart) before winter break if possible. About 1000 students are now eligible and vaccination will reduce quarantine length in the case of exposure with no symptoms. Danielle Jobin asked if post vaccine illness will be an excused absence. Dr. Abitabile hopes to schedule around school holidays to avoid school absence.

*Motion to adjourn November PTA meeting by Pete Allen, seconded by Adam Gregoire*

**Meeting adjourned at 6:52PM by Julie Allen**