

## Redwood Day School Parents' Association Minutes for the Executive Board Meeting of December 1, 2009

Attending Board members: Margaret Gee, Tony Rimac, Debbie Degenshein, Tracey Borst, Brenda Kienan, Tim Boucher, Michelle Wilson, Mike Riera (Ex-Officio Head of School), Andrew Tilin

### 1) Welcome

Margaret welcomed Board members and other members of RDS and the RDSPA.

### 2) November 2009 Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the November 9, 2009 RDSPA Executive Board meeting were approved contingent on the following changes being made:

- Inclusion of “Garner Weng” under those listed as present at the meeting.
- Correct spelling of the name “Nikki Maguire.”
- Deletion of one sentence in the notes taken during an exchange regarding proposed changes being made to the RDSPA bylaws.

### 3) RDSPA Financial Report/Discussion of Use of Accumulated RDSPA Funds

Tony reviewed the RDSPA financials, again noting that the RDSPA had excess cash reserves. Prior to today's meeting he'd compiled a list of suggestions of how the Board might dispense such funds. The suggestions had been made by other members of the RDSPA Board. They included:

- Additional funds allotted to the annual Fall Picnic
- Lettering created for the Helen Dittmer Library
- Re-landscaping certain parts of the school's campus.

Dialogue followed. There was concern raised over giving away too much money in the current (challenging) economic climate. There was also concern raised over the idea of putting money toward overhauling the school's music portable, which would require significant additional funds and years of time to take effect. Other ideas included an inner-school communication system (for emergencies), additional textbooks so that kids could have copies at home and at school, and electric blinds for the windows in the gym. There was consensus that the surplus might be best spent on improving the gym (window blinds, additional padding, and perhaps a refurbished scoreboard). But Mike suggested that costs be pinpointed before the PA commits any of its money to such a project. The group also agreed to hold off on designating the surplus money for anything until after the spring auction. Funds raised at the auction will give the Board a better idea of the funds available to spend on something like gym improvements.

Tony also suggested that the annual PA budgeting process be moved to the spring of each year, as opposed to the fall (the budget has historically been approved over one month after the school year has begun). He suggested that many committee budgets are based on historical precedent—which means the budgeting process could (theoretically) be moved up. He hopes that the PA Board can submit a 2010-2011 budget in time for a vote by the general membership in May 2010.

### 4) Research of PA Boards with/without 501(c)(3) Status

Michelle and Garner Weng reported preliminary findings on the pros and cons of the RDSPA existing independently of the school (specifically as a 501(c)(3) organization). They distributed a chart summarizing structural differences between PA boards that exist as independent corporate entities, and those that are part of the corporate entities of their respective schools. Michelle and Garner had also created and distributed an online survey that had previously been sent to a number of independent schools (both in the East Bay and in other parts of the nation). The timing of the survey (distributed just prior to Thanksgiving) might have had something to do with the lack of response (approximately 20 percent of the schools surveyed responded). Michelle reported that none of the PA boards of the schools surveyed in her research were independent of their respective schools.

A question was raised: Why research this topic?

Other board members suggested that further research be performed specifically to survey schools with independent PA boards. They suggested that such research might provide valuable feedback to the RDSPA, either in terms of adapting other PA boards' best practices or even in our PA eventually changing its current 501(c)(3) status. The research could prove particularly valuable should RDS become a significantly bigger, K-12 school.

Michelle and Garner agreed to continue their efforts, particularly to remain in step with the work being performed to overhaul the RDSPA bylaws.

#### 5) Miscellaneous Items

—Volunteers for the annual faculty holiday party were confirmed.

—Help was offered by board members for the Prism Committee's upcoming (and first annual) Festival of Lights. Requests were made for all Board members to attend.

END