

# NEW SCHOOL PARENTS' ASSOCIATION (NSPA)

## NSPA ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES, 4/23/08

**1. Call to Order:** NSPA President Lorie Nierenberg called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m. She then distributed an agenda for this Annual Meeting of NSPA Members.

**Other Board Attendees:** Robin Boniface, Sarah Flanagan, Kathy Ginsburg, Maril Levy, Patti Oehmke, George Richard, Betsy Sue Scott and Nancy Vibert

**Board Members Absent:** Melissa Dana, Dianne Boothe, Richard Delmar, , and Janet Dopsovic

**Other Attendee(s):** Gale Etschmaier, Clare Dean, Lisa Doyle, Caitlin L'Hommedieu, and Anne Heald

**2. Ascertainment of Quorum:** NSPA Secretary Betsy Sue Scott reported that eight of the fifty-five member families had emailed proxies for the meeting. The President determined that the meeting attendees and proxies constituted a quorum of the NSPA membership.

**3. Approval of March Meeting Minutes:** The March meeting minutes were approved with one correction and with the addition of the former Treasurer's March 3<sup>rd</sup> report. Vice President Sarah Flanagan agreed to email the report to the Secretary.

**4. Treasurer's Report:** Acting Treasurer Patti Oehmke presented a balance sheet, and ten-page report, including an income and expense statement, and detailed proposed budget. The NSPA held assets, as of April 23, 2008, totaling \$142,768.91. They represent almost entirely two accounts, one a checking/savings account at Cardinal Bank and the other an investment account at Vanguard. The Acting Treasurer related difficulty in obtaining records of the Vanguard account as the statements now go to a former New School parent, who oversees the account. One Board member expressed surprise at the existence of this account, which had never appeared on reports this year before the Acting Treasurer's tenure. Another member explained the history of the account. It represented the long-term fund originally established with the idea of parents buying the New School should John Potter ever decide to sell it. The Board asked the Acting Treasurer to undertake steps to change the address of record for Vanguard account statements to the NSPA at the New School to the attention of herself and the incoming Treasurer. The Acting Treasurer noted that, according to the September 2006 statement, the last she could locate, the account held approximately 20% in REITs. Board members expressed concern and asked that this investment be reviewed.

There followed an extensive review of the Acting Treasurer's detailed Report. The Board considered the Profit & Loss statement of income and expenses from September 1, 2007 to date, and the Budgeted vs. Actual Profit & Loss for the same period. In addition to studying the Income and Expense Cash Forecast for August 31, 2008, the NSPA's fiscal year end, the Board discussed at length the Budget overview for

the 2008-2009 fiscal/school year. After examining the funding for NSPA scholarships, the Board approved the proposed Budget.

#### **4. Old Business:**

**a) Auction:** The Gala Chair/ NSPA Volunteer Coordinator/Acting Treasurer reported Gala attendance at 82 persons. Tenth Grade Representative Nancy Vibert stated that ten of those were her family and guests. The Board considered the low attendance in view of the time and effort put forth to plan and hold the Gala and whether other fund-raising options might present better alternatives. The Board noted that the Gala and the Rudolph Run raise approximately the same amount of money while the Gala's cost is substantially less than that of the race. Rudolph Run Chair/Parents Council of Washington Representative Lisa Doyle suggested surveying families to find out why so few attended. Faculty Representative Maril Levy recommended staggering the event over alternating years. In particular, she noted that faculty members come back to the school for many events and are reluctant to give up another Saturday evening for still an additional school-related social event. The Gala Chair offered to develop a survey to query parents about the Gala and other events.

**b) Scottish Fiddle Concert:** The Vice President reported that the auction item of Liam's Scottish fiddle concert will held on Saturday, May 31<sup>st</sup> at her home.

**c) High School Prom:** Students Lizzie Wilson and Nora Daly addressed the Board about their Prom preparations. The Prom will take place on Friday, June 13<sup>th</sup>, at the Star Lounge on Little River Turnpike in Annandale. The Prom's theme is "Alice in Wonderland" with student involvement including contributing decorations to keep Prom costs down and selling screen-printed tee-shirts for fund-raising. Nora and Lizzie presented a proposed budget for the Prom. It forecasted expenses of \$5,335 and income of \$9,125. The budget projected a repayment of the NSPA's \$1,825 loan, voted by the Board online after the last NSPA meeting on March 10<sup>th</sup>. The students expected tickets to be sold out, as they have always been in the past. Faculty advisor Alvin has signed the contract for the venue and will check with the faculty regarding attendance. The venue has one exit, which will permit egress control by chaperones enforcing the policy of not allowing the return of an attendee who has left the premises. Parents will chaperone the outside area near the exit and will collect entry tickets. Tickets will only be sold in advance and no tickets will be sold at the door.

**d) Scholarships:** The Vice President advised that the scholarship applications are ready to go up on the NSPA's website. Initial discussion centered on having two versions of the application, one for this school year and the other for the next year. However, one application will be used and it will be generic for use in applying to both the NSPA and also to the New School. A legend will note that a separate application would need to be submitted to each. Webmaster George Richards reported that the website has information concerning scholarships and posting the application will take place quickly once it has been finalized.

e) **Culver Fortna's Request for Funding:** The President reported that faculty member Culver Fortna has received the Board-approved payment of \$461 for a graduate course the NSPA promised funding for in 2006/2007. She related his gratitude for this assistance from the NSPA.

f) **Meeting with John Potter:** The President, Vice President, Faculty Rep, Acting Treasurer, and Rudolph Run Chair met with John Potter on Thursday, March 13<sup>th</sup>, at 9:30am. They discussed Lisa Doyle's Rudolph Run memorandum, the NSPA's new scholarship process, and possible candidates for next year's NSPA Board of Directors.

g) **Administrative Professionals Day:** The Board expressed its appreciation to Nancy Vibert for organizing the NSPA's gifts and having her son deliver balloons, lemon bars and cards to Val and Abby for Administrative Professionals Day. It was suggested that this date be calendared for the next school year for ample advance planning. The Board's post-March 10<sup>th</sup> meeting online decision was reiterated that Val and Abby will both be invited to attend the Faculty Appreciation Luncheon and will receive gifts at that time, along with the teachers.

h) **NewsWorthy Newsletter:** Joan Bardee may put out a *NewsWorthy* newsletter within the next week or two. The President asked that articles be forwarded to the editor as soon as possible.

## 5. New Business:

a) **Adopt-a-Program:** Parent Anne Heald presented a review of the goals and history of Adopt-a-Program. It resulted from discussions between parents, the faculty and last year's NSPA board in 2006. Its goal is to encourage enrichment programs for New School students utilizing NSPA funds and parent volunteers. She noted that the first step in promoting this program would be the identification of a parent volunteer to coordinate efforts. The Board discussed this program at length, found several questions remaining to be resolved before any action could be taken, and noted that no volunteer had stepped forward to coordinate the program during the past year or for next year.

b) **Cappies:** The Vice President informed the Board that the Cappies would attend the Friday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, (N.B. After the minutes were approved, it was noted that this date should be May 2<sup>nd</sup>) New School performance of "A History of American Film." She and the Secretary explained that the Cappies are a group of Washington, D.C. metro area students who review plays and productions at schools throughout the region during the school year. At the end of the school year, the group holds an award ceremony at the Kennedy Center for best reviews and other categories. Both officers expressed concern that the only three Cappies at the New School would graduate as seniors this Spring. The Board recommended that the Vice President send an email to school parents describing the Cappies program and requesting donations of food for the Friday performance and also that she submit an article about the Cappies to the upcoming newsletter.

c) **2008-2009 NSPA Board:** The President reported that the full Board for 2008-2009 had not yet been finalized. However, Tom Grumbly, an 8<sup>th</sup> grade parent, agreed to

serve as President and Nancy Vibert will serve as Vice President. Maril Levy, Betsy Sue Scott and Patti Oehmke will remain in their current positions, Faculty Rep, Secretary and Assistant Treasurer, respectively. Kathy Ginsburg will move to Elementary School Rep and Melissa Dana will become co-Middle School Rep with Donnalynn Adams, new to the Board as the other MS Rep. Clare Dean will act as Volunteer Coordinator and Patti Oehmke will add the At-Large Rep to her existing duties. Joanna Cole, a 2003 New School graduate now working in the school's Media Center, volunteered to serve as Alumni Rep. During the discussion, Caitlin L'Hommedieu offered to serve as the Junior Class Rep. Remaining positions to be filled included Freshman, Sophomore and Senior Class Reps, Webmaster, Newsletter Editor and Parents Council of Washington Representative. The NSPA members present and by proxy approved the above slate of Board officers and members and further authorized the President to complete filling the open positions. The Webmaster will post the slate on the NSPA website with a request for volunteers for the remaining positions.

**d) 2008-2009 Budget:** In addition to the budget discussion conducted during the Assistant Treasurer's Report, the Webmaster noted that webhosting and domain name re-registration fees will be due next year. He also reminded the Board that the registered Administrator of the website will need to be changed once a new Webmaster is appointed. Clare Dean inquired whether the NSPA had investigated obtaining a postage permit which would allow the NSPA to save significant sums on mailing expenses. The Board agreed that a postage permit should be pursued and a fee budgeted to purchase one.

**e) Teacher Appreciation Day:** May 21<sup>st</sup> is set as Teacher Appreciation Day. The Volunteer Coordinator has lined up volunteers to work on this event.

**f) Graduation:** Graduation is calendared for Saturday, June 21<sup>st</sup>. The amount of \$2,700 has been approved and budgeted for Graduation. Traditionally, Juniors host a reception on site after the ceremony and running to approximately 3 p.m. Val Boone has caps and gowns. Julie Boyne is helping with the announcements and each family will receive ten. John Potter will take photos. The Faculty Rep and Secretary noted that the Year Book is underway.

**g) Parents Council of Washington:** Lisa Doyle reported on the April 22<sup>nd</sup> Parents Council of Washington program by Common Sense Media. The well-attended program, held at National Cathedral School in D.C., was on "The Other Parent – Today's Media" and focused on FaceBook, Cyberbullying and other issues of concern to parents. She will write up a summary for the upcoming newsletter. The Secretary, who is also the Council's Board of Directors liaison to the New School, related that information on the program will be posted on the PCW's website at [www.parentscouncil.org](http://www.parentscouncil.org).

The President brought up the school's Recycling Committee request to the NSPA that appeared in the recent submission to the PCW's Best Practices Forum on "Going Green: Sustainability Programs" at member schools. The request sought recycling bins for the school. Both the Vice President and the PCW Rep advised that Fairfax City will

give recycling bins to schools for free. The Faculty Rep said that she would let Caroline and Juana know this.

The President also noted that a rep would be needed for next year. Lisa Doyle said that she could not serve in the Fall with Rudolph Run preparations at their height, but might be able to serve in the Spring. The Secretary/PCW Board member noted that each member school can have two representatives to the Council.

**h) Alumni Affairs:** Joanna Cole '03, who offered to serve on next year's Board as Alum Rep, has also offered to organize alumni activities. To that end, she has requested whether the NSPA would fund an event. The Board remarked that the organizing of alumni is a positive development and that the Board will work with her going forward.

**6. Next Meeting** – The next meeting will be May 21<sup>st</sup> at 7 p.m. It will be a transition meeting with next year's Board members and officers asked to attend to accept the functions of outgoing Board members and officers .

**7. Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 9:47 p.m.

**Minutes prepared by Betsy Sue Scott, Board Secretary**