

Byram Hills Teachers Association
Meeting of Executive Council
May 15, 2007

Attendance: D Bruskewicz, J Black, B DiMartino, L Bastone, B Gallivan, A Ancona, M Roberts, S Tyrrell, P Cerreta, L Jones , C Lewick, C Beck, T. Slosek, J Rowell, K Russell, S Davies, M Goodman. Excused: M. Delamonico, D. Glim

The agenda of May 15 was accepted with addition.

The minutes of April 10 were accepted as amended.

David Bruskewicz presented the Treasurer's report for April. David and Michele Delamonico will be meeting to prepare the proposed Annual Budget for the General Meeting to be held on May 29th. At that time, they will determine whether the annual dues will be increased to keep up with the increases from NYSUT and AFT.

Harry Wilson, Labor Relations specialist from NYSUT, addressed the council. He distributed information on the history and current status of Weingarten rights and Cadet rights. In a recent ruling, the NYS Court of Appeals upheld a lower court ruling that denied Weingarten rights to union members. The Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals disagreed with the Court's decision. In her dissenting opinion, she suggested that this flaw be remedied through legislation, by an amendment to the Taylor law. NYSUT will lobby for a remedy, through Vote COPE. In the meantime, Harry Wilson disseminated a list of strategies to assure members the continued protection of these rights, in cooperation with their individual school district's policies and practices.

D. Bruskewicz reported on recent Board of Education meetings of 4/17 and 5/8. BOE meetings have focused on the finalization of the budget for the District vote. The Fine Arts department made a presentation/performance. A parent group spoke to advocate for the continuation of the activity bus. They presented the Board with 1200 signatures in support, and Superintendent Chambers assured them that the bus will be continued next year.

Jane Black reported that Vote COPE materials have arrived and that she will distribute them to each building. She suggested that building VPs focus on signing everyone up for payroll deduction, and that each member be asked to increase the level of their contribution. Besides lobbying for Weingarten rights to be returned to members, Vote COPE will lobby to ensure that members whose service is 10 years or more will not be asked to re-assume the 3% contribution to TRS, as New York state is asking.

A decision has been reached involving a Coman Hill teacher who is returning from maternity leave. That teacher will return to Coman Hill, and the least senior probationary teacher will move to Wampus. Contract language will be addressed in the next negotiation to specifically define what constitutes an "involuntary transfer." In addition, returning teachers need to be educated about possible teaching assignments within their certification area.

The Board of Education has recently been recommending against granting a second year of child-care leave to faculty seeking such. The practice is based upon the difficulty in obtaining quality hires as replacements for faculty on child-care leave. Many of the high-achieving Districts have adopted a similar practice.

The BHTA board voted to assume one of two options to follow in its tribute of Dr. Robert Pavlica. Angelo Ancona moved and Pat Cerreta seconded a motion to begin the annual BHTA-sponsored \$500 stipend to be attached to the Science award granted by the BHHS faculty at the annual Awards assembly. The vote was 17 in favor and 1 abstention. Members asked to see a description of the criteria for the Science award.

At the Relay for Life, 18 teachers joined the BHTA team and raised \$575 for the Cancer Society in honor of Bob Pavlica. Each year, this event raises between \$30,000 to \$35,000 to fight Cancer. Pictures of the event will be sent to Marge Pavlica.

A slate of nominees has been presented for the annual BHTA election of executives and representatives. Petitions to add additional names to the slate will be accepted for a week, but must be accompanied by 5 (building) or 15(district) support signatures. The vote will be conducted in each building on May 30th. The elementary divisions currently have 2 representatives each; an increase to 3 reps may more fairly represent the number of sections at these schools. A vote to support this increase must be taken at the General meeting on May 29th and, if approved, can be implemented the following day at the election. Nominating committees at Wampus and Coman Hill must make sure their slate includes at least three choices for building representatives.

The General meeting will take place at 3:45 at HCC on May 29th. The dinner for the Board and BHTA committee members will follow at Opus. Bob DiMartino will remind the membership via email of the meeting. Bob asked for updates from each building for the newsletter.

At the NYSUT RA, Governor Spitzer spoke and said that he is allocating huge funds to education, but that schools will be held accountable for effective use and student achievement. Comptroller DiNapoli said the TRS is in good shape and he is protecting our fund.

The Summer Leadership Conference (Aug 15-17) has 5 participants committed to attend: David Bruskwicz, Maureen Lavin, Sue Ornstein, Jen Rowell, and Aaron Lockwood. Robin Drake may also attend.

We are looking for those interested in attending the AFT Quest conference from July 12-15.

A position as Director of EAP has been posted and several people have indicated interest.

Meeting adjourned at 5:50.

Respectfully submitted,
Loretta Bastone, Recording Secretary