

Byram Hills Teachers Association Meeting of Executive Council May 13, 2008

Attendance: D. Bruskewicz, J.Black, B. DiMartino, M. Delamonico, L. Bastone, M. Hubertus, A. Ancona, M. Roberts, S. Tyrrell, P. Cerreta, M. Chunev, B. LaRue, C. Lewick, C. Beck, D. Glim, R. Drake, S. Davies, A. Lovelace, J. Toscano, J. Rowell, R. Singh

Prior to the opening of the business meeting, the council members assembled letters to remind the 250 Byram Hills residents who are also NYSUT members to vote in support of the school budget on May 20th. Also, telephone numbers of these same residents were given to building VPs, so that each could be contacted on May 19th by volunteers from each building.

Meeting began at 4:12 with the adoption of the agenda.
In the interest of time, minutes for March and April were tabled until the May meeting.

Michelle Delamonico presented the Treasurer's report for March and April. She pointed out that our fund balance has been steadily increasing over the past three years in anticipation of the added expenses of a negotiating year in 2008-2009. She will consider taking out a CD at the close of this year. The report was accepted with thanks.

President's Report:

David Bruskewicz read a thank you note from John Chambers to the Council for a gift sent to him during his recent hospitalization.

The Negotiating team of David Bruskewicz, Angelo Ancona, Maureen Lavin, Barbara Salz, Debbie DeFrancesco, and Chris Lewick will meet with Harry Wilson for preliminary discussions. The team will be looking for volunteers in each school to lead focus groups next fall, to learn the concerns of the members. Harry Wilson will conduct a 2 hour workshop at BHHS on June 2 to "know your contract," in response to a request by the high school faculty. Other sessions may be planned for the other schools. David and Jane reminded the Council that stipends for the Negotiating team have not been increased in ten years, and that stipends for the Executive Board have not been increased in 6 years. They recommended that we consider increases to stipends when we recommend the 2008-2009 Budget to the membership.

David reminded Council members to reserve their place at the Retirement dinner. Le Chateau can accommodate only 200 guests.

The Summer Leadership Conference will be held in Princeton, NJ on August 13 to 15. Places need to be reserved by May 28th. Anyone contemplating position of Grievance chair should attend training at the conference. The AFT National Conference in Chicago will be held on July 10-14. David and Martin Gilbert plan to attend.

Jane Black and Angelo Ancona attended a recent Board of Education meeting where the Board voted to adopt a change in practice in granting FMLA leave. They wish to change from a calendar year to a rolling year as the manner to compute eligibility. BHTA maintains that this is a change in the conditions of employment, since the calendar year has been used by Byram Hills for fifteen years. As such, any change should be negotiated. The District has agreed to have a "conversation" before notifying the faculty of the change in policy. David Bruskewicz expressed a concern that the administration may be considering charging faculty members for special services provided to their

out-of-district children who attend Byram Hills schools, if the home district does not reimburse for these services.

The Negotiating team will discuss both of the above topics with Harry Wilson, to obtain his legal advice. They will also discuss the re-constituting of the sick bank, which will occur in September. In preparation for the freeze to the sick days and implementation of retirement groups 1 through 4, BHTA will update the faculty as to their number of sick days. Letters for faculty committing to their retirement by 2012, and thus qualifying for group 1, need to be filed by June 30th. It was suggested that a draft of the required notification letter be placed on the BHTA website. Jane also said that she would email a copy to those who qualify.

The Nominating committee is preparing for the BHTA vote in all schools, to be held on May 21st. The candidates will be presented at the General Meeting on May 20th. The agenda for that meeting will be the proposed budget for next year, BOE policy on FMLA and tuition for faculty children attending Byram Hills, the Sick Bank update, and the retiree letter of intent.

Angelo Ancona reported on his attendance of the NYSUT Representative Assembly. At the assembly, Andrew Cuomo publicly thanked Byram Hills for the excellent education given his children.

Bob DiMartino asked for updates about the faculty in preparation for the last newsletter of the year. He has made arrangements for the Council dinner at Opus, to follow today's meeting. Al Lovelace and Joanna Nash will be spending 2 days this summer to update the BHTA website.

A discussion of stipend increases for the Negotiating team, Executive Council and Trustees followed. A proposal was made by Loretta Bastone and seconded by Bill LaRue that the following increases be implemented: 25% increase to Negotiating team, 15% to Council officers, an increase of \$100 to Building representatives, an additional \$225 to the Trustees, and \$1000 additional stipend given to the President of BHTA during a negotiating year for his participation. The Council approved, pending recommendation by Michelle Delamonico, who will investigate the impact to the budget.

Executive session followed. Meeting was adjourned at 6:30.

The Council reconvened on May 20th to reconsider stipend increases, in light of the Treasurer's report on budget impact. The General Meeting was therefore postponed. At issue was the necessity to maintain a healthy fund balance for the anticipated contract negotiation expenses, the need to meet a \$19 dues increase imposed by NYSUT and AFT, and the desire to increase stipends for those who serve the membership, all to be accomplished while not over-burdening the membership in the pass-along dues increases.

Several proposals were considered. The final recommendation to be brought to the membership, proposed by Angelo Ancona and seconded by Bob DiMartino, was: 12.5% increase for the Negotiating team, with an additional \$500 to the BHTA President during a negotiating year, 10% increase for Board officers and Trustees, a \$50 increase to building representatives, and a \$35 increase to member dues.

Respectfully submitted,
Loretta Bastone, Recording Secretary