

Nova PTO

Meeting Minutes

March 2016

“Strengthening the Nova Community”

Our Mission: Nova Classical Academy NPTO is an organization of volunteers engaging families, teachers and staff in fostering a school community that actively supports Nova’s mission and enriches the students and the school. Any and all current Nova parents and staff are considered members. There are no dues.

I. Welcome and Roll Call (Sam)

- A. In attendance: Samantha Fischer, Chair; Jessie McClary, Vice-Chair; Sara Knudsen, Vice-Chair; Claire Helin, Secretary; Liz Halverson, Treasurer; Beth Hawley, Board Liaison; Dr. Williams, Executive Director; Mari Bergerson, Upper School Principal; Melissa Hernandez, Lower School Office Manager; Jane Lagerquist, Upper School Parent Advisory Chair; Jennifer Bateman-Grover, Great Gatherings; Mina Lee, room parent; Eric Tennessen, prospective parent.
- B. Agenda Review

II. Requests for additions (Sam)

- A. Great Gatherings
- B. Panera fundraiser
- C. School of Rhetoric request

III. Approval of minutes from last meeting (Claire)– February Minutes were approved.

IV. Officer Reports

- A. Board Meeting Report (Beth)
 - i. There was a presentation by Minnesota Solar about getting solar panels put on the roof.
 - a. There is no cost to the school.

- b. Nova would get a discount on power, and after 15 years, the school would own it.
 - c. The life span of the panels is about 25 years.
 - d. The Board agreed to put in an application to see if it gets approved, and then they will make a decision.
 - ii. Ms. Tousignant is working on a silent dismissal program.
 - a. There is potential to begin this program soon so it is in place before school starts in the fall.
 - iii. Ms. Danforth talked about weighted grading and whether grades should be waived from PSEO.
 - a. There will be further discussion at a future meeting and a vote taken.
 - iv. Mr. Rovn talked about extracurriculars and high participation.
 - a. Facility space may soon become an issue with increasing numbers.
 - v. Ann Brodeur resigned her Board of Directors position.
 - a. The Governance Committee is working to appoint someone to fill the remaining months of her role.
 - b. There will now be three parent seats available in the coming Board election.
 - vi. Robb Westawker, Gender Inclusion Task Force Chair, asked that all comments and suggestions go through public comment rather than individual Board members for transparency's sake.
 - vii. Jeff Ellerd gave a comprehensive update on what is happening with the potential apartment building going up and what families can do in response.
- B. Executive Director's Update (Dr. Williams)
 - i. Dr. Williams elaborated on weighted grades.
 - a. Grades are weighted according to the rigor of a course to encourage students to challenge themselves.

- b. After researching weighted grades at surrounding schools, no schools were found that give weighted grades for PSEO.
 - ii. Free Breakfast Survey feedback
 - a. Many Lower School families responded with a desire to see more nutritious options offered.
 - i. Nova is waiting to hear back with other food options.
 - b. The majority of Lower School parents were in favor of the program.
 - iii. Update on the development of the land next to the first and second grade classrooms
 - a. Nova filed an appeal with the City of Saint Paul to participate in a public hearing.
 - i. The hearing date is not set.
 - ii. The hearing will happen after the zoning meeting, which is on March 10th at 3:30pm.
 - iv. Nova is considering using Gmail instead of the current server.
 - a. There is a cost benefit to the school.
 - b. Many teachers are already familiar with Google docs.
- C. Treasurer's Report/Development Committee (Liza)
 - i. The NPTO checking account is at \$81,000.
 - ii. There was continued discussion at the Development Committee meeting about SweeTen.
 - a. They are now considering keeping SweeTen in April instead of moving it to Carnival week.
 - b. They are still considering renaming this fundraiser.
 - iii. There was conversation about having a breakfast food truck at the Nova Classic, which would leave before the Carnival begins.

D. Upper School Parent Advisory (Jane)

- i. There were no updates from Jane because the USPA has not met again since the last NPTO meeting.
- ii. Jennifer Bateman–Grover shared about the Hankey family sending used school supplies to Haiti.
 - a. Their family has packaged used school supplies for many years but are leaving.
 - b. There was discussion about asking National Honors Society to take over this as community outreach.

V. Updates and Upcoming Events

A. Room Parent Events (Sam)

- i. The all–school rollerskating party is coming up on March 6th.
 - a. There will be another reminder in the Nova Notes.
 - b. 900 plus flyers will go out as well.
- ii. The week of April 18th is Staff Appreciation.

VI. Discussion/Action Items

A. Vice–Chair email update

- i. Jessie shared that there will be a new email address since we have changed the title from “Co–Chair” to “Vice–Chair.”

B. NPTO Board Elections will be held at the May meeting.

- i. We will begin to spread the word about open seats.
- ii. There will be information in the Nova Notes.

C. Coffee Maker

- i. The coffee maker is still broken, and there was discussion whether to fix it or sell it.
 - a. We discussed asking the company to replace the part and fix it without charge.
 - b. With moving to room 210 there are considerations with where to put it.

- c. We did not have time to finish this discussion, but Jessie will talk to Angela to see how often it is used and also connect with the company again.
- D. Badlands Snow Tubing (Hudson, WI)– possible USPA event
 - i. Jane introduced this as a possible community building activity for Nova.
- E. Thank you from Ms. Urbrock and the fourth graders
 - i. They thanked the NPTO for sponsoring the Opera for the Young and giving them an opportunity to sing in the opera.
- F. Great Gatherings
 - i. They plan to have Cafe Latte again.
 - a. Jennifer Bateman–Grover currently has \$400 in Cafe Latte gift cards.
 - ii. Jennifer is looking for an “understudy” to take her position.
 - a. Great Gatherings needs some fresh ideas.
 - b. Jennifer has served for six years and will not do it again this fall.
 - c. The person who takes her position will have her help for the next two years with the transition.
 - d. There will be information in the Nova Notes, asking for new volunteers and someone to fill this position.
 - iii. A motion was approved for the NPTO to take over the Giving Tree fundraiser at the Great Gatherings.
- G. Panera fundraiser
 - i. Last year we made about \$350 with the Panera fundraiser and it was simple to organize.
 - ii. A motion was approved to do it again this school year.
- H. School of Rhetoric request for a new hot water pot
 - i. For several years students in the School of Rhetoric have enjoyed hot tea as an option in Mr. Garvin’s room, but the hot water pot is broken.

- ii. A motion was approved to buy a new hot water pot after Liza double checks the numbers.

VII. Public Comment on Today's Discussion

VIII. Adjourn