

Downingtown Music Parents Association Regular Meeting October 13, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 7:39 pm by Donna Beard, President.

Honor for Mr. Lewis: Donna reported that Mr. Lewis was honored by the School Board at Monday night's meeting for his quick thinking in administering an epi-pen to a student who had an allergic reaction to a bee sting. He was awarded the District's highest honor, the Apple of Distinction.

Mr. Lewis said he only did what any other staff member would have done. He had encouraged the training be for East's staff, and he had just completed the training himself.

Activity Fees: Donna passed out a budget sheet that showed the district had received more than \$38,000 more in activity fees than it had budgeted for in 2015-16, but none of that money actually goes back to the programs the fees are collected for (be they for sports, music, or clubs).

Patrice stated that the directors are getting their budgets cut but the programs aren't keeping any overage once their budget amounts are distributed. The Board needs to hear from the parents asking where this extra money is going.

Mr. Lewis stated that there are plenty of families that haven't paid their fees yet that are struggling to come up with the funds for the Spring trip. Then they look at the sample band jacket and cannot pay for it.

Donna observed that maybe if there wasn't a \$100 activity fee, they could better afford the jacket.

One parent wanted to know where the money does go. If I pay fees for the music program I want them to go to the music program.

Donna stated that each activity has a fee, with a \$225 cap per student. The money collected from those fees does not go directly back into that organization but goes into the general fund.

Another parent noted that the District bought new instruments for the school recently. They are trying to do more on a cyclical basis because that part of the music program fell by the wayside.

Ed Otto (West band director): Instruments had not been purchased since 1988 and the dilemma was that the budget was whittled away on the maintenance side. Looking at the budgets from years past, I note that Mr. Lewis' budgets are the same now as they were in earlier years. Transportation is what's killing us. It's a safety issue for the kids to be bussed together rather than having them show up at the venue. In the past there used to be 4-6 shows a season plus the games. All of East's games are away games. Without transportation, each program could use \$50,000 a year. But what we get is \$13,000 a year for maintenance & music. That's smaller than Lewis' first year or two plus transportation on top of that. About 2010 was when the participation fee went into effect.

Brent Lewis stated that it costs \$6,000 to go to home games.

Another parent noted that when the idea of the fees was first being presented to the parents, it was framed as a way to overcome the increasing transportation costs. Programs that used buses more often were assigned higher fees.

Sherry Weaver (orchestra): it's important that this question comes from the parents. The shortfalls should be covered by this overage.

Donna asked that it is fair to ask of our School Board members why were funds being cut from the music program when it is clear that plenty of fees are coming in.

Other concerns raised:

A parent noted that when that \$38,000 split among all the schools may not end up as a huge surplus.

Another parent said that it looks like there was a shortfall last year, only \$380,000 was collected. They didn't come back & ask us to pay more last year. I'm okay with having the money goes in and be used where it's needed.

Brent Lewis stated that it's not so much a cut as the budget remaining steady for the last five years, but having expenses go up over that same time period.

One parent stated that they resent that their family struggles to come up with the fee and it ends up in the general fund. What if there was a job loss? If I went back to district and asked for that \$100 back they wouldn't give it back.

Another parent stated that DASD is very presumptuous in what fees the families can afford. She just paid \$15 art fee, which is ridiculous, since it's in the curriculum. When the district presented the fee idea, it was supposed to go towards transportation and offset gas prices. For other activities, it was to offset the cost of utilities being used after hours. We have every right to ask why they are buying technology every 2 years and not have the fees go to the programs the fees are being paid towards. Let's rethink how we're going to put together this puzzle. It would be a good angle to take with the board members. Different faces need to at the Board meetings & people need to make the effort to be there.

Donna asked Ed Otto to confirm if there was a competition that West was planning to go to but didn't because there wasn't money for the buses. The activity fee should have gone to that. Why didn't it?

Ed Otto stated that it would have been a great publicity opportunity for the district—national TV, etc., but it was deemed not that big of an event. He asked for money and was told no.

Donna pointed out that here is an example of transportation that was denied where there is supposed to be funds for it.

Ways & Means.

Nancy Chew reported there were two official fundraisers and one in the works.

1. Pellman's are ready to sell—now through Nov. 2. Nov. 17 is the pickup date in time for Thanksgiving & Christmas. Checks only; no cash. Please don't mark the brochures up; they are reused.
2. This weekend only-- Sat & Sun Oct. 17-18 from noon-7 pm. 15% of food & drinks (pretax) go to students' DSF. Looking for volunteers to be ambassadors for a shift there each day. If the forms are not completed, the student will not get the credit. Turn in to the greeter (not waitress). Texas Roadhouse will also give \$1,000. Overage will go to MPA's general fund.
3. Not rolled out yet but coming: great stocking stuffers. Wawa shorti certificates for \$4 (save \$0.29); student gets \$1. Also Regal movie tickets for \$10 (instead of \$12.25); \$1.50 goes to student. Waiting for approval on those.

Financials: Patrice stated that these are not available, as only a few expenses turned in by the Band directors so far. A small amount of money was made for the Drum Corps show in July. We grossed \$7,000 at the gate for Music in Motion.

Concessions did well in Sept. but not in Oct. so far. With the rain, a whole football game's worth of business was lost the night of East's Homecoming game & also with the West/Coatesville game. We are definitely behind. The good news is that the teams are winning. If they continue to win, there will be playoff games (two at least, one for each team). We should break \$10,000 at the East-West game. Kottmeyer stadium will also host the Cavalcade State competitions Nov. 14 & 15. Another thing in our favor—our concessions are imitated but not duplicated; for example, I was recently at Marple-Newtown's stand had a 40 minutes wait & only 7 people were working their stand.

The directors have been asked to request a budget for what they need this year, and there is a considerable budget, which we cannot guarantee next year based on concession sales thus far. As a note, 2010-11 was last time Lewis' budget was raised.

Concessions: Kyle reported that a few Fridays in a row were wet. It's not fun watching at halftime where usually people are lined up 10-15 feet, and instead the counter people were doing nothing. With East & West's seasons going so well, if they stay undefeated at the end of season, the East-West game will be huger than huge. We'll need all the help we can get. I would be happy to have the problem of sending people away for lack of something for them to do than not having enough volunteers. There could be playoff games as well.

States Cavalcade will be at Kottmeyer on Nov. 14-15. The list of volunteers and shifts will be posted soon.

A parent stated that the schedule has Patriot A class at Kottmeyer and Patroit Open class at Hershey. This could pull the West Band parents away from being able to help.

Kyle is retiring from his concessions role at the end of this year. Neil Johnson is taking over but he does not have same work schedule as Kyle so he will need a team. A meeting will be held Oct. 28 at 7 pm to discuss that. You don't have to want to be set player on the team; you just want to have to discuss it. If we are to continue to this well-oiled machine, we need to get this done.

Directors' Reports

Brian Lloyd, STEM Choir: Open Mike Night will be on Thursday, Oct. 29. Open to all three schools.

Sherry Weaver, Orchestra: thanked the MPA for funding for her workshop for the string players on October 4 from noon-4 pm. The students worked with two different people on technique & sectionals with violin, viola, cello, & bass instructors. There was a noticeable difference in their playing the next time I saw them. Registration is Nov. 9 for Districts. Nov. 20th is a concert at East.

Brent Lewis, East Band: Thanks to Ed Otto who was the real host for the Music in Motion show. We co-hosted but it really was Ed's show. Thanks to Matt for the program book. Thanks to the parents for all the other ways you help—sewing, fundraisers, cooking the delicious hot dogs. The Florida plans are going well. The initial deposit was for more than what asked for from each kid for their first payment. The plea went out to see if anyone could pay all the money up front, and with those that responded there was enough to lock in all the plane seats.

Adam Speakman, East Choir: Their dress rehearsal date was changed to Thursday, Oct. 29, so hope to participate in a future Open Mike event. A group went to the STEM recording studio for recording of an entry for the Macy's a capella Challenge. Pentatonix will be judging. One school will win \$25,000, so here's hoping. Might be a long shot, but worth the effort.

Matt McCloskey, West Choir: Our goal is fundraising for a program for cavalcade. For Music in Motion, the sale of ads was \$2,270 with \$486 going back to students' DSFs. The first two full-pages got inside the front cover & were full color; the rest was black & white. The goal was to pay for the show if it was rained out & we did meet that. We printed through the District this year so didn't have to pay for printing.

We only had 3 weeks to put the book together, which was a rush. It would be easier with digital files. There were some technical issues which we hope to avoid next time. Maybe in future, might not charge for it. Other contests' books have been thicker.

Parent: if could have more time, we could put together a bigger program.

Brent Lewis stated that information could be put together for in kids at band camp & can get out to others over e-mail earlier in the summer.

Other suggestions: asking churches to place ads, half-page ad options for parents of seniors, QR codes, coupons for restaurants for two weeks after the event.

Ed Otto, West band: we have collected a deposit for our trip as well, which will be right after Christmas. We've had a great response; we'd like for it to be 100%. The itinerary has been issued. For fundraising, the Texas roadhouse fundraiser is on the Facebook page. There is also a West Sprit Wear fundraiser. Kids are doing great in their competitions; they won at Marple-Newtown last week. The double-bookings have been silly. Two games had been scheduled at the same time at Kottmeyer so there were some changes to dates. Thanks for the cavalcade show—if it were not for the parents, it would not have been possible. While Brent says it's not a co-sponsorship, everything I do is based off what Brent did when I was rifle instructor at West in 1981.

Correspondence: Donna Beard shared the following thank-yous:

Cynthia Hallman—a thank-you for the flowers sent when her husband passed away. She made a donation on behalf of her husband for future student needs.

Matt Jong, a recipient of a \$1,000 scholarship from West—a thank-you for the scholarship.

Hallie Everett, East drum major—a thank-you for covering the cost of the George N. Parks Drum Major Academy at West Chester University this past summer. Patrice noted that it's a Vivace productions event. Her daughter wasn't even a drum major and went two years in a row. It teaches wonderful leadership and life skills and is life-changing.

Meeting adjourned at 8:43 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Deischer-Eddy, Recording co-Secretary, DEHS