

PTSA Annual General Meeting/ Extraordinary General Meeting



Minutes

May 10, 2016 8:30am Loft

Attendance

School:

Craig Coutts, Dennis Stanworth, Bob Pomeroy (Head of School and Staff Representatives together 6 votes)

PTSA Executive Team:

Joan Stewart, Kris Wright, Anna Burman, Suzanne Buchwaldt (4 votes)

PTSA Committee members:

Debra Bajaj, Punitha Aroumougam, Cheryl Jones, Satomi Shimura, Michiko Shu, Midori Murakoshi, Daryl Adams, Karina Jack, Kiran Mocherla (9 votes)

Student Council:

Krysta Nishizawa (Student Representatives 4 votes, but has not voted)

Parents:

9

Number of proxies:

42

There is a total of 70 votes represented in person or by proxy.

According to article VIII.1 and VIII.2 of the PTSA Constitution the required quorum is reached to vote in this PTSA Annual General Meeting/PTSA Extraordinary General Meeting.

Welcome

Joan welcomed all present and explained that because an amendment to the PTSA Constitution is proposed, this meeting is not only an Annual General Meeting, but also an Extraordinary General Meeting. Joan ran those present through the agenda and then introduced Lester Yoshinami-Hitachi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of YIS.

Opening words by Lester Yoshinami-Hitachi

Lester thanked the whole PTSA for their many contributions to the YIS community. Within this community one can feel the elevation, energy and awareness of possibilities. We are capable of more than we think we are capable of. This sense of happiness, brings smiling faces and mobilizes all for a common cause. The PTSA understands that people get smarter when they think in a group. Lester furthermore emphasized the importance of keeping the body and mind in good health and appreciating the body and mind, in the first place by being grateful, but also by action. This is the PTSA's daily practice and hopefully all will continue to do so.

Joan thanked Lester for his wise words and for taking the time to attend this AGM/EGM despite his busy schedule.

PTSA Executive Team Annual Report

Joan explained that she would highlight the PTSA Executive's Team accomplishments and challenges for the 2015–2016 fiscal year.

The new format of the monthly PTSA meetings, comprising a short formal meeting followed by a fun activity, was successful. The PTSA website was reworked and upgraded and the communications tool kit expanded. This was a lot of work for Heike and her team. To show our appreciation for the staff, just before winter break treats were baked and shared to make tangible our appreciation for the faculty members. An additional Meet & Great for new families was organized in January, and the connections between class parents and mid-year arriving families was improved. Other accomplishments included coordination of our fund raising campaigns, repatriation workshops, and a family fun Bingo night. This Bingo event might in the future grow into a fundraising event.

Ongoing challenges include effectively communicating our PTSA Events and Parent Activities and encouraging the use of the website. Parents had difficulties finding specific information on the new YIS website, so a workshop was organized in February to help parents find the relevant information. Another challenge has been finding volunteers and event participants. Identifying and utilizing the skills and talents of our parent community was a wish of this Executive Team but regrettably no tangible results can be shown. Finally, creating and keeping an inventory of all PTSA supplies we still need to meet. As an example Joan showed PTSA banners that are available to showcase that an event was sponsored by the PTSA. These have not been used this year as their existence was not known by current committee members.

Finally, Joan explained that a total of 6,647,230 JPY was spent on grants well distributed over Elementary, Middle School and High School this school year. This amount includes the two special grants that were paid for by the separated funds that were built up during several years.

Joan thanked the whole Executive Team for the fun and great teamwork of this year.

Student Council Report

Krysta introduced herself and explained that the Student Council had three goals for this school year: transparency, improving the quality of events and spending money conscientiously. Student Council made a blog, used an open mailbox and a magazine, but these seemed not very popular with the students. Instead the use of social media was introduced, and this was somewhat more popular and therefore successful. One event that was organized with the financial and practical help from the PTSA was the summer festival. The event's purpose was for new students to be welcomed to Japan and for them to understand Japan better and to be able to meet new people. Other successful events were the games that were organized during cross country day and student-tainment, concerts to raise money for the service group combatting human trafficking. Finally, Spirit Week was organized for the whole school, and the students had a lot of fun dressing up in the last week before Winter Break. The third Student Council goal, to spend money wisely, was successful because the Treasurer kept track of all costs. It was a great year and the Student Council thanked the PTSA for their ongoing support.

Joan thanked the Krysta for her clear report.

Treasurer's Report

Kris submitted the PTSA Annual Financial Reports, according to Article VII.2 of the PTSA Constitution.

The total revenue in the PTSA fiscal year 2015–2016 amounted to JPY 7,335,666 and the expenses were JPY 10,226,261, resulting in a net income of -2,890,595. The total of Liabilities and Equity as of May 1st 2016 amounts to 5,866,557 JPY. Kris shared that the

final expenses that have to be made for this school year, for example for the Bingo Night and the graduation gifts, will result in a total remaining balance sheet of approximately 5,000,000 JPY. It therefore can be concluded that the financial shape of the PTSA is good, as according to the PTSA Constitution we have to start the school year with an amount of 4,500,000 JPY.

In addition, Kris shared the PTSA Budget for the fiscal year of 2016–2017 starting May 1st 2016 for information purposes according to Article VII.3 of the PTSA Constitution.

The floor was opened for questions or remarks on the Treasurer's Reports. Debra asked, as 2,500,000 JPY is budgeted for grants next school year, what the average amount is that is available for grants. Bob answered that the amount usually lies between 2,000,000 JPY and 4,000,000 JPY. On being asked, Kris explained that the Head of School Quiz Night is a fundraising event and the PTSA only provides for collection and payment of the funds necessary. Lester asked if it would be an option if PTSA sponsors the Senior Prom. Craig explained that in the past this was indeed the case, but it was decided to stop that tradition, because too much PTSA funds would then flow to just one grade. Kris added that the PTSA does sponsor the Senior graduation gifts, which have been budgeted for an amount of 280,000 JPY.

All present, in person or by proxy, voted in favor of adopting the PTSA Annual Financial Reports as shared through the PTSA website. According to Article VIII.4 the decision has been made by majority vote to adopt the PTSA Annual Financial Reports.

Events Team Report

Anna walked those present through the Event Team part of the presentation, pointing out the respective meeting events of Wa-Navi Earthquake Preparedness, Peruvian Weaving Workshop, Shodo Instruction, YIS Website Workshop, O-Bento Workshop and finally the Cross Cultural Simulation. The new format of a short formal meeting with a fun activity after that, has indeed been successful.

Anna then mentioned the special events, such as the James Bond Cocktail Evening. For next year the Events Team will try to involve more teachers and maybe also families. The FoodFair was of course the biggest event and it was a huge succes, taking into account the rain pouring down. The Head of School Quiz Night was a big succes as well because 400,000 JPY was raised for Sanigatachi, the homeless center. In addition, it was very well attended and a lot of fun. The Parent & Staff Art Exhibition Opening Event of last week was very nice: not only beautiful art was shown, but students were also performing. The week of May 23rd will be Teacher Appreciation Week. More information will be sent out soon. Finally the Bingo Night on May 13th, with beautiful prizes to be won, will be a trial for a possible yearly fundraising event.

Joan shared that the left-over drinks that were originally donated for FoodFair, were well used for various PTSA events, thanking our sponsors and the FoodFair Committee.

Parent Activities Report

Cheryl reported that this school year there was a big variety of 14 parent activities, which is the highest number ever. Among these were pilates, teabox making, reiki treatment, fitness & fun, Flamenco dancing and various tours. Cheryl thanked Craig who helped to convince YC&AC to allocate rooms to the PTSA Parent Activities. Also a big thank you to Dr. Amato and Mr. Tananone for their support. Cheryl also gave a huge thank you to all the leaders of the parent activities for sharing their expertise and talents with the YIS community.

Cheryl underlined that parent activities are very important for those parents arriving in Yokohama. It is the best way to meet people and make friends. Cheryl finally thanked her team for the great teamwork and as she has to step down due to the of the term limit set in the PTSA Constitution, she wished her successors all the best.

Approval of the April PTSA Meeting Minutes

All, in person or by proxy, voted in favor of approving the April PTSA Meeting Minutes as shared through the PTSA website. According to Article VIII.4 of the PTSA Constitution the decision has been made by majority vote to approve the April PTSA Meeting Minutes.

Amendment of the PTSA Constitution

Joan shared the wish of the candidate Executive Team for the school year 2016–2017 to amend the PTSA Constitution. The PTSA Constitution provides for 6 roles on the Executive Team: President, Secretary, Treasurer, Co-ordinator Events, Co-ordinator Communications and Board of Directors Liaison. As currently worded, there is no flexibility to have any other roles on the Executive Team. For example, it is common in PTSA's to have a Vice-President, whose main role is to work closely with the President and assist in decision making. Another important benefit of having a Vice-President can be to facilitate succession planning and generally provide continuity in the functioning of the Executive Team, which can be an especially important benefit in transient communities such as ours.

The proposed amendment does not request the establishment of a permanent Vice President, or any other permanent positions, on the Executive Team. This proposal merely seeks to give the Executive Team the ability and flexibility to structure its team in a way that best meets the needs, circumstances and volunteers in any given year.

Proposed wording of Article V.1 second sentence PTSA Constitution:

"The PTSA Executive Team shall consist of a President, Treasurer, Secretary, Co-ordinator Events, Co-ordinator Communications, a Board of Director Liaison and any role as deemed necessary and as determined from time to time by vote in a PTSA Annual Meeting, each elected from the Parents according to Article VI."

All but one, in person or by proxy, voted in favor of amending the PTSA Constitution as shared through the PTSA website. According to Article X and VIII of the PTSA Constitution the decision has been made by majority vote to amend the PTSA Constitution as stated herewith.

Adding the role of Vice-President to the Executive Team

Joan shared the wish of the candidate Executive Team for the school year 2016–2017 to add the role of Vice-President to the Executive Team. The proposed job description of the Vice-President is:

- Assists the President
- Performs the duties of the President in her/his absence
- Attends PTSA executive team meetings
- Represents PTSA at YIS community events.

Jennifer asked if the job-description of PTSA roles can be changed. Suzanne answered that all roles of the PTSA Committee can be changed by vote in a PTSA Meeting according to Article V.3 of the PTSA Constitution.

64, in person or by proxy, voted in favor of adding the role of Vice-President to the Executive Team and in favor of the Vice-President job description and 6 voted against adding the role of Vice-President to the Executive Team and voted against the Vice-President job description. According to Article V and Article VIII of the PTSA Constitution the decision has been made by majority vote to add the role of Vice-President to the Executive Team and to approve the job description of the Vice-President.

Election of PTSA Committee members

Joan proposed one vote on the slate of candidates for the PTSA Executive Team and a second vote on the slate of candidates for the PTSA Committee, both which had been

shared through the PTSA website in one vote. No objections were made to this proposal. Joan introduced all candidate Executive Team members to those present.

All present, in person or by proxy, voted in favor of appointing the candidates for the PTSA Executive Team as well as the PTSA Committee as shared through the PTSA website.

Joan congratulated the newly appointed members and wished them all the best in their endeavors.

Thank you and Farewell

Joan thanked all PTSA Committee members for the school year 2015–2016 for all the hard work done. The PTSA cannot survive without the enthusiasm and energy of its members, so their efforts are very much appreciated. On behalf of the Executive Team, Joan offered all PTSA Committee members a YIS mug as a tangible token of appreciation.

Closing remarks by Head of School

Craig pointed out that YIS is so special because of its strong sense of community. The Administration and the PTSA Executive Team meet on a monthly basis and share ideas, opinions and developments. This is not the case in many schools and it proves that working closely together within the YIS community is considered very important. Craig thanked the Executive Team as well as the whole PTSA Committee for all the great events and activities that add to this great sense of community. Craig also shared that next to these ‘ups’, there were also ‘downs’ this school year. A number of members of the YIS community fell seriously ill. The support of the YIS community in these cases was very important and this was shown time and time again.

The focus on the One–School concept in which Elementary, Middle School, and High School, have a common interest, was quite successful. The horizon of this concept will be broadened next year in order to also include the parents. The Parent Panel on assessments that took place recently was a great example of this: with a high level of trust, parents shared their ideas and questions with the faculty.

Craig thanked Joan for her great leadership and congratulated the newly appointed PTSA Committee and indicated that he looks forward to working with them.

Joan thanked all present for attending this PTSA AGM/EGM, thanked all for the wonderful experience and closed the meeting by stating: “Once a dragon, always a dragon”.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday, September 13th, 2016 8:30am in (probably) Loft