

Rotary Club of Swarthmore
Board Agenda
January 15, 2025
5:00 p.m. via Zoom

Present: Carr Everbach, Lisa O'Mahony, Brian Casey, Rosemary Fox, Jan Billings, Hillard Pouncy, George Whitfield, Joe Lesniak, Lori Markusfeld, Marc Berneski, Sarah Pita

Not Present/Excused: Josh Twersky, Maria Zissimos, Elizabeth Church, Ken Wright

Approval of December Minutes

Treasurer's Report - Joe Lesniak reviewed the December financials and reported that as of January 10 the club has an account balance of \$26,145.46, including recent donations to CADES (\$250) and to SHHS Silvertones (\$300). Carr moved to approve the Financials; Hillard seconded and the Board approved them unanimously.

Committee Reports

- **Club Programs** - Hillard Pouncy. Hillard has a goal of having speakers booked out a month ahead, and remains on track as of mid-January. He's working on March, February is booked.
- **Membership/Fun Fair** - Carr Everbach.
 - **Membership** has seen a lot of interest lately. Carr has been in touch with Jeff Haviland, who intends to come next Thursday, but can't make it this week. Betsy Crane has recruited Joan and Hugh Phibbs, who are new to town and interested in coming tomorrow to help stuff bags! Heather recruited Shaun Eyring. She is a recently retired National Park Service Employee. George suggests connecting Shaun with Mary Laxton, who apparently also worked for the National Park Service. Hillard has been working on recruiting the honorary consul general for Japan to the club; Carr shared that the consul has been invited to join the club for lunch but had a schedule conflict emerge the previous week.
 - **The Fun Fair** is scheduled for May 18. The permit request has been filed, and things are moving forward. No major changes are envisioned but there will be some incremental improvements, such as adding food trucks! John Hearne of the Village Vine will be missed with his Mac and Cheese Cookoff idea. Refreshments from Swarthmore College were discussed – last year the college donated funds instead of food to sell.
- **Rotary Arts Conversation** - Jane Billings reported in lieu of Ken. There is a lot of interest in Friday's talk by photographer Ron Tarver. Discussion of whether Friday night is actually the optimal day and time for these events. Might Saturday be better?
- **Rotary Foundation** - No report.
- **Service Projects** - Lisa O'Mahoney. December was a busy month for service projects, with the recurring Yale Road Cleanup, volunteering at Loaves and Fishes and the annual toy drive for the Chester Housing Authority. The January 16 club meeting to make Comfort Kits for Nick's House/Headstrong Foundation is lined up and ready to go, with supplies for 75 care kits. Looking ahead, Hope for Hallie's annual April fundraising run will need 8 volunteers to help with setup or cleanup, and perhaps help with a Light Up the Night event with purple lightbulbs. Sean McCormick may be helping with a smoking/vaping awareness event at SHHS. The annual Fun Fair and World of Work events are coming up in spring. Ann Hansen is managing a children's book donation drive. Lori is working on a litter-free school zones initiative - maybe for Earth Day? The Cheetah Conservation Fund opportunity is on the back burner but still possible.

- **Youth/Interact** - Marc Berneski. Interact has not met yet this year. He expressed that the club, in this first year of its existence, seems to be a bit overextended and thus struggling with executing projects, which can be a valuable life-learning experience but hard to report on. They are regrouping and working on plans for next year. This year they held a used sports equipment drive and are working on coordinating work with Project Cure. Marc shared the Roger Taylor Speech Contest opportunity with them and learned that the group does not seem to be familiar, yet, with the Four Way Test. Board members felt that this would be a good thing for them to learn.
- **Public Image** - Rosemary Fox reports that Swarthmore Rotary is up to 92 followers on Instagram and 600+ on Facebook, huzzah! The Ron Tarver Rotary Arts Conversation (RAC) is sold out; George complimented Rosemary's marketing chops for the first-ever sold-out RAC.
- **Grants** - No report.

Old Business:

- Mohammed Fakhry, District Peace Fellow, is interested in coming to visit Swarthmore Rotary. The financial commitment to Mohammed and his family that has already been incurred by Swarthmore Rotary (\$20K) concerns club members, especially as the promise of \$20K (made in order to facilitate Mohammed's family coming to the US) was made with the assumption that the District would be taking on some of that amount and providing substantial fundraising support, which has not happened yet. Regarding the potential visit, the Board discussed options to help cover the cost of Mohammed's visit, such as tying it to an official Rotary event like the district conference. There was discussion of piggybacking other events to Mohammed's visit, such as arranging a speaking opportunity with the Swarthmore College Peace and Conflict Studies Department. Alternately, or in addition, the club could consider a freestanding fundraising event with Mohammed present; Rosemary offers the PAC Center as a possible venue.

New Business:

- Club President – 2025-26. Sarah Pita with great regret withdraws from the role of Club President, citing expanded demands at work and changed family circumstances, and setting off a search for a new president for 2025-26. Procedurally, this means that Club President Jane Billings needs to select a search committee chair. George recommended that the new committee try to recruit both the 2025-26 club president and the 2026-27 club president, as that nomination will also be due soon.
- Disaster Relief: The District has sent out an appeal for donations to the Los Angeles Rotary District for aid for Rotarians impacted by the fires. Carr proposed and moved to donate \$500; George seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.
- RYLA. Brian Casey expressed appreciation for the club's willingness to support 12 students. Unfortunately, as of the time of the meeting, the District has received only 25 applications, 3 from SHHS, and he observes a real dearth of complete, substantive applications from well-qualified candidates.

Meeting adjourned at 6 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Sarah Pita, Secretary