

**Rotary Club of Swarthmore**  
**Board Agenda**  
**February 19, 2025**  
**5:00 p.m. via Zoom**

**Present: Jane Billings, George Whitfield, Sarah Pita, Hillard Pouncy, Brian Casey, Joe Lesniak, Lisa O’Mahony, Carr Everbach, Lori Markusfeld, Ken Wright, Marc Berneski, Elizabeth Church**

**Absent: Josh Twersky, Maria Zissimos, Rosemary Fox**

**Approval of January Minutes:** Ken moves, Lori seconds; minutes adopted unanimously.

**Treasurer’s Report** - Joe Lesniak. Dues for Rotary International and District paid as invoiced for the year. Per the club’s arrangement, Rotary Peace Fellow Mohammed Fakhry’s monthly rent of \$1,550 has been paid. The account balance is reported at \$23,288. 37. Report approved unanimously.

**Committee Reports**

- **Club Programs** – Hillard Pouncy. Hillard needs a club assembly date. Hillard presented a possible combined speaker/club activity for consideration: the Pan-African Sisterhood Health Initiative (PASHI), a group featured in the Inquirer who are working on the issue of menstrual product access by leveraging the power of volunteer sewing circles. He envisions an activity where Rotary sponsors the gathering for local sewers on a Saturday, and has a group representative come to the club to talk. One benefit of this activity is that it can be invaluable for sparking conversations, not only about the heartbreaking problem of lack of menstrual education and products and how it impacts access to education for girls and women in poor countries, but also between dads and daughters. Service Projects Committee will get the event moving.
- **Membership/Fun Fair** – Carr Everbach.
  - Membership: A nice fireside chat with Joan and Hugh Phibbs, and also a nice fireside chat with Shaun Eyring; the membership emails should start flying imminently. Hillard’s contact, the Consul General of Japan, and Jeff Haviland both have proven harder to pin down. Generally, there has been a steady flow of interested new members for the club.
  - Fun Fair. The Fun Fair will be like past years, but with some nice additions including a fun run (registration is open!) and food trucks, sponsored by Swarthmore College. Carr met with John Hearn to talk about the Mac and Cheese cookoff. Additionally, there will be 2 performance stages, bouncy houses, and a bungee jump. So far, 26 charities have registered. We are still selling ads in the *Swarthmorean*. Details on the fun run: Registration costs \$30, \$10 for kids, and the kids’ registration includes a bracelet for the inflatables. There will be no parade this year.
- **Rotary Arts Conversation** – Ken Wright provided an update on January’s very successful talk by photographer Ron Tarver. Other speakers set through the end of the year (no event in February).
- **Rotary Foundation** – Elizabeth Church. Donations to the Foundation have been strong; Elizabeth will contact those members who have not donated yet. We are hoping to achieve “Every Rotarian Every Year” status for the club.

- **Service Projects** – Lisa O’Mahony. At the January meeting, the club successfully assembled 72 comfort kits for Nick’s House; donations for materials exceeded what was needed to purchase items for the kits so she will use the extra for gift certificates to Renato’s. Hope for Hallie Color Fun Run/Walk is the club’s next event and will need volunteers. Spring is the ideal time for Lori’s Litter Free Schools initiative. Project Cure is unclear. Anne Hansen is doing a drive for gently used books. Marc asks for more info, and could invite Interact to help out.
- **Youth/Interact** – Marc Berneski. The SHHS Interact Club wants to fundraise for Project Cure instead of going to the warehouse, which has proven challenging in terms of timing. There would be a tie-in to the annual SHHS International Day Assembly. Marc requested that the club invite the Interact leaders to a recognition event at the end of the school year.
- **Grants** – Discussion of a request from Ruth Bennet Farms for a \$2,500 grant to assist in distributing food from the farm to the community. This is the third year this project is requesting club funding. Brian and Lori both flagged that this is considerably above the stated upper limit of \$1,500 for club grants. After a general discussion on the club’s grant-making process, the club approved a \$1,500 grant. Discussion included:
  - The 3-year time limit has been flagged by a club member (who is prominent in the Delco nonprofit community) as inequitable. Club members present defended the 3-year rule as being designed to keep beneficiaries from becoming too dependent on this one source of funding.
  - The approval/denial criteria have become loose and are not outlined in a rubric or any sort of public-facing set of guidelines.
  - Sarah proposes adopting a definition of “community” (ie who is eligible to apply based on “being a part of the community.”

Brian offers to draft revised rules and website content and bring it to the Grants Committee.

**Old Business:**

- Jane reported that she and Joy have discussed various ideas for fundraising to assist in support for Peace Fellow Mohammed Fakhry. Mohammed will be visiting the club.
- Jane reported that she has agreed to stay on an additional year as president. George suggested that the proper protocol would be for the nominating committee to formally approve her as a candidate and submit it to the membership as required in the club by-laws. Hillard will follow up, and also look for a President-Nominee (2026-27).

**New Business: Discussion of the following deferred until March:**

- Future of SHHS Scholarships
- Corporate memberships

Respectfully submitted,  
Sarah Pita, Secretary

**Next Meeting:  
March 19, 2025 via Zoom**