

Minutes of the Northborough Scholarship Committee

October 20, 2003

7 – 8 p.m. at Town Hall Room C

Present: Margie Hurwitz, Joyce Isen, Laurie Klein, Greg Young

Absent: Stacey Incorvaia, Bob Melican

Minutes of the September 29, 2003 meeting were approved.

Margie reported on her conversation with June Hubbard-Ward, the town treasurer. She handles the income from the scholarship check-off box on the property tax bill. Currently we have \$5536.15. Margie will continue to be our liaison with June. We will invite June to our December meeting. We should decide each fall how much we plan to grant the following spring. Question: can we put a little ad into the next tax bill mailing to promote our fund?

Greg showed how the fund had increased slowly over the years, starting with \$698 in 1989. In 1993 the committee gave out \$500.

Greg reported on the “Dollars for Scholars” program to which we belong for \$200 per year. This is a national organization that assists with fund raising. Benefits: 1) membership guarantees tax deduction status for contributions to our fund; and 2) the organization provides ideas for fund raising, sends out a press kit, gives advice on a timeline, etc. We felt it would be a good idea to remain members for this year while we are getting started.

Greg spoke with Judy Grasso at Algonquin guidance. Judy (351-7010, ext. 136) publishes a list of available scholarships in the “Wednesday Weekly” newsletter for Algonquin seniors. She and Lois Jonis will be our contacts there. Lois is the director of the guidance department (351-7010, ext. 135). Judy suggested getting our applications to Algonquin by Feb. 1. Greg will obtain sample applications from other scholarship programs. Judy recommends giving the award money directly to the student, not to the college.

Laurie’s report on a scholarship committee in Westboro: they don’t have one.

Greg’s report on Grafton: they don’t have one.

Margie’s report on Hudson: they don’t have one, so she researched Holden instead. Holden has one scholarship in honor of a deceased selectman. The money comes from donations from different organizations. They spend the interest. Last year no one applied. The scholarship is for someone interested in town government. A student must complete freshman year before applying. In March, the committee puts a notice on cable TV. The committee is a subcommittee of the board of selectmen. They interview the candidates and present the awards at a selectmen’s meeting.

Joyce had previously e-mailed her report on the Southboro scholarship committee to everyone, so we didn’t review it in depth during the meeting. Southboro is very well organized and has the most objective process we have seen. Joyce also reported on the Algonquin PTO scholarship process, which is pretty simple. The student sends in a transcript (which includes GPA, class rank, list of courses and grades, and SAT/ACT scores), teacher recommendations, a list of extra-curricular activities, work experience, and community service, and a short essay. The PTO subcommittee plus teacher and guidance reps review the applications; there are no interviews. Financial need is not considered. Last year there were four awards of \$500 each.

Greg reported that Shrewsbury also has a well-defined process. They evaluate need, scholarship, character, and service. Before sending out the money, they wait to receive the first quarter college grades, to make sure the student actually enrolled. What works well in Shrewsbury is the flexibility in their process. What needs improvement are publicity and fund raising. Last year they awarded 22 \$500 scholarships.

Stacey is waiting to hear from a committee in Marlboro. She learned from Fairfield County, CT, that they coordinate with other scholarship committees to determine whether one student is getting all the awards that year, and adjust accordingly. Algonquin Guidance can help us with this because they know who is getting what.

We realized we had a lot of factors to look at in setting out our own process, such as: eligibility, how to determine financial need, how to determine character, how to require residency, which year(s) of college the scholarship is for, what year students can apply, etc. Laurie will take home all the information from the other towns and come up with a proposal for all the process factors, plus ideas for the application form. She will e-mail this to us in advance. Discussing her proposal will be the main agenda item for our next meeting.

We noted the state requirements, which are to consider: need, character, scholastic record, community work, and extracurricular activities. Other questions that arose: Are teacher letters of recommendation worthwhile? What does it cost to send a mailing out to all the households in town? How about a postcard? Can we solicit donations from local merchants? Is the EFC number the fairest way to determine financial need?

The first draft that results from our next meeting will be sent to Bob Melican and to the guidance department at Algonquin for comments. The resulting second draft proposal will be presented to the selectmen in December.

Discussion of fund raising ideas will be at a later meeting. Suggestions include selling merchandise and asking local businesses for donations. We also need to work on publicity later. Question: how can we use the town's sandwich sign on Route 20 near the RR tracks?

NEXT MEETINGS:

November 17 (Monday) at 7:30 (note later start time)

December 15 (Monday) at 7:00

Greg will schedule the room and post the meeting notice with the town clerk.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce Isen, Secretary

Distribution:

Scholarship Committee members (5)

Kathleen Polanowicz

File copy for Town Clerk

June Hubbard-Ward

Bob Melican