OSTA Minutes for January 2014 Meeting

Meeting was called to order at 9:10. Members in attendance: Ava Wilhelm, Kim Terrel (new), Bethany Lorenz, Joyce Cheatham, Annette Huett, Deborah Hill ( sort of new), Tiffany Neill, Suzanne Spradling, Bob Melton, Beth Allan, Michelle Smith, Tamara Lookabaugh (also sort of new), Mark Rauch (new), Kay Gamble, and Natalie Bowman. Minutes of last meeting had been read by most in attendance. Motion to accept the minutes was made by Natalie.

Treasurer’s Report: Kim is our new treasurer. We have an approximate balance of $12,000. Toni (who had a 10 lb. baby!!!) had prepared a budget handout for us. Kim and Joyce are going to work together on liability insurance and tax reports. Do we need a finance committee? Do we need a CPA? Do we need an audit? These questions were discussed. Bethany’s father-in-law has recommended some firms who work with non-profits. We need a proposal for the cost before we make a decision. We also need a budget. Bethany, Natalie, Joyce, and Kim volunteered to be the budget committee.

President Elect Report: Bethany admitted she isn’t quite sure what a president elect does. Answer: Her main focus will be the fall conference. She gets to go to NSTA Congress in Washington, DC in July.

President’s Report: Joyce voiced that she is looking forward to a great year. She had some sad news to report: We have lost some valuable and precious science teachers in the past few months. Terry Shaw, past president of OSTA, Jessica Hornberger, our Middle School director, and Diane Reece, recipient of the 2102 PAEMST Award. Diane’s daughters will be going to Washington, DC to accept the award in her place. Joyce asked for names to fill Jessica’s MS position. We would like to have someone by February. Tiffany urged the board to pick someone from outside the OKC area. Joyce reported for Tim that we have 3 entries for our OJSS but we need at least 10. She also formally introduced our 4 new members: Kim Terrel, treasurer, Debbie Hill, high school director, Tamara Lookabaugh, director at large, and Mark Rauch, director at large.

State Science Director’s Report: She reported that the public comment period for our new standards had concluded. A whole 22 comments were made and they were very mixed. Tiffany feels the low number of comments is because of good communication beforehand. The writing team will have a virtual meeting sometime within the next two weeks. Tiffany was surprised that there positive comments. She will be presenting an overview of the standards to the state school board this week. It will be presented for final approval in February so that the final touches can be made. There will be an appendix explaining how NGSS was used in the writing of the OK standards. She is posting a professional development module to help teachers with depth of knowledge strategies to help students get ready for testing. It will be on the OKSci Facebook page. She will also send it out through List Serve and post on the state science page. Bethany asked about the roll out for the standards. The state board will approve in February and school districts will have to decide how to phase them in. We won’t be tested on them until 16-17. A question was asked about when the textbooks will be aligned. This should be coming out around March/Aprilish. In OK we will be looking at adoption the spring of 2015. The funds will be released in July 2015. The textbook money for science will HAVE to be used for science textbooks. This is the first time in recent memory this has happened due to fiscal restraints. Bob led a discussion about “evolution” in the standards. That word is not in the standards, but the concept is. There was another discussion about getting science taught in the early grades. Tiffany is thinking about trying to get science testing pushed down to 4th grade. Right now that push is in its infancy stage and no implementation has been considered. She asked us for a description of OSTA benefits so that she could post it on her web page. Bob said he would get that to her.

Science Matters Report: Suzanne reports that the state coordinators for Science Matters have been participating in webinars about NGSS and finding out what other states are doing. She feels OK is in very good shape with our standards. She urged the board to spread the word about NSTA’s Learning Center on its web site. It is a great service that teachers need to take advantage of.

Membership and Communications Report: Bob got to report for himself and Travis. He said that Member Clicks has been fully phased in and 192 members have NOT responded to reminders about renewing membership. Kim has some membership dues checks. We picked up 20 new members in the past month. Communications main role is to keep Member Clicks up and running and keeping the OSTA web site up to date. Bob also reported the results from the survey about the fall conference. 50% were new attendees. The #1 reason to come was networking and learning new teaching techniques. November was the #1 choice for conference time. 70% preferred 20-40 varieties of workshops. 60% of respondents say they have visited our Facebook page. 41% thought it was extremely easy to register for the conference using Member Clicks. COST was the #1 reason for not attending AND that it was on a Saturday. Tiffany interjected that OCTM is going to have their conference in conjunction with Vision 20/20 in July. This is something that we might consider—maybe even a joint conference? This is something we have done in the past. Tiffany also said there is some STEM money that could be used for workshops if we wanted to do something this summer.

Awards Report: Suzanne feels the awards committee needs to function better and the spreadsheet for nominations is confusing and hard to read. That being said, we did have a great slate of awardees. Perhaps we should start soliciting nominees in the spring, rather than in the fall. Bob says we could put it on the web site for teachers to consider NOW. The consensus was that we could accept nominations starting now and keep it open until the middle of September.

Nominations Report: Beth congratulated the new board members. She recommended that outgoing board members help find their replacement. She also suggested that we have a RURAL director and that we have webinar meetings so that we could better include Lawton and Tulsa. We may need a subscription to Go Webinar or Adobe Connect or a partnership with someone who does. There was then discussion about regional meetings. Maybe this is the year to do that because districts want support for the new standards. Adding a rural director would be a constitutional change that members would have to vote on. Beth suggested an outreach committee to solicit OSTA events in their district. Tamara, Tiffany, and Joyce volunteered to be the committee. The SciLeadership group is a great place to start. Regional universities are also a good place to look.

Professional Development Report: Michelle needs ideas for OSTA PD. She urged us to ask our colleagues what needs they might have. She also voiced that we need the PD committee to function better. There was discussion about a possible partnership with the Oklahoma Writing Project. The main hindrance is the cost. Tamara suggested a workshop geared to high school teachers and testing. Tiffany suggested an online PD and explained what OETA and NSTA are doing. She thinks it could be an intermediate support system and something we should consider.

**Old Business**

Reception: Joyce asked if there were any concerns. Kay asked that we put a time limit on awardee speeches. Joyce felt that we should also consider limiting the number of guests that they could bring. Tiffany also suggested guidelines for those who presented the awardees. Mark suggested having the awards reception on a Saturday night. Our numbers support having it on a Friday night because they have gone up since we started doing it that way.

Conference: Tiffany felt the agenda needed to get out earlier so presenters and attendees can have more prep time. There was discussion about strands.

Engineering Design Conference: It will be on February 8th. Bob and Beth wrote a grant in partnership with OSTA and UCO and LEED and MSP and OU. The conference is open to all members and anyone else wanting to attend. Most workshops will be STEM oriented. They are anticipating 110 participants, mostly from middle and high school levels. Pearson and OERB are paying all costs.

**New Business**

Membership fee: Currently it is $15. Tiffany suggested an all-inclusive fee for reading, math, and social studies. This would greatly benefit elementary level teachers. Bob was concerned about the logistics of such an endeavor. He says we have the capability of hosting it through our web site. He asked Tiffany for contact people so that he could reach out and get needed information. He has already contacted the Social Studies Council and OCTM. Beth moved that we keep dues at $15 for now and Kay seconded. Motion passed.

OJAS- It is now called OSSEF. It will be March 7th and 8th in Ada. Kay and Tiffany will be there and can present awards. We give 2 junior high and 2 high school level awards. Recipients get $100 and a certificate. Kay volunteered to make the certificates. Tamara interjected that we need guidelines for the awards and volunteered to help Kay write them. She then withdrew her volunteering because she has students participating.

Possibility of an Executive Director: We would have to do some field work before we could make decisions on this. The exec director would work outside the board to build partnerships and solicit grants. It could be instituted as an ad hoc committee of 1. The exec director would be the central contact for the board and have a long range perspective of the board’s work. The exec director would also be paid a nominal fee. Kay, Bob, Suzanne, Beth, Tina, and Joyce will be our task force exploring this idea.

OESE (OK Excellence in Science Ed): They are having a field trip in May. This year it will be in Tulsa. They want us to handle their registration through Member Clicks and will pass it on to OESE. Bob asked the board for our blessing on this. All members thought this was a terrific idea. OESE will be acknowledging us a partner.

Pre-Service Board Member: We have an opening for this position but we have not filled it. SNU, OU, ECU, OSU, and UCO--- Those professors need to be contacted for possible nominees. Joyce felt this is something Tim could handle as college director and she will call him.

South Central USA Climate Science Center in Norman: They are sponsored by the Chickasaw Nation and the Department of the Interior. They are a research organization. They want to identify Native American science teachers. They want to have workshops for those teachers and for teachers of Native American students. Native Americans have a much different perspective on climate change. Could this be an opportunity for a “science café?”

Next Meetings: March 29, April 26, June 7, August 9, September 6, October 11.

Conference will be November 1 with the reception on Halloween. Joyce asked the board to be thinking about a theme for the conference and a keynote speaker. Mtg adjourned at 12:15!