

PTA Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 2, 2014

Erin Harcourt, PTA Co-President, called the meeting to order at 7:50 pm.

Approval of the Minutes

Davida Kales, PTA Secretary, asked if anyone had corrections or additions to the minutes from the October 2014 meeting. As there were none, the minutes were approved and entered into the record.

Treasurer's Report

Nan Hartman, PTA Treasurer, announced that Family Contribution letters distributed for tax purposes will be reworded before Winter Break. She announced that the Family Contribution total collected was at just over \$40,000, which is about \$1,464 shy of our goal. Good news was that our Accounting fees were over-budgeted, so we pick up roughly \$700 there.

Nan reported that the Book Fair was a huge success, raising roughly \$1,000 more than we expected. She noted that this also offsets not fully meeting the Family Contribution goal.

Spirit Wear Sales are also going reportedly well. Additionally, Ledo's Pizza Night earned approximately \$750 (and this does not include Chipotle Night – so the total will be higher once it gets calculated in).

We have had some recent Program expenses, including AIR - 1st and 3rd grade just paid for their Artist in Residence, and Teacher stipends - for which we are only allowed to pay \$1450 per teacher because of an MCPS limitation. We did use \$360 extra we had from Eagle Eye News to add into teacher stipend.

Co-President's Report

Maureen Kramer and Erin Harcourt, PTA Co-Presidents, thanked many parents in our hard-working community.

1. Treasurer, Nan Hartman, for getting the PTA member cards out to families. Assistant Treasurer, Susan Higgins, for keeping the PTA's books in order. And we are happy to reiterate that their fewer billable hours with the accountant saved us some money!
2. Tracy Schwartz and Amanda Crider for organizing an amazing Book Fair this year. There were great books, great fun and a little money for the school and PTA.

3. Kari Swenson and Katie Spurlock for organizing the book collection and the coat drive for our sister school, Viers Mill Elementary. We donated approximately 90 books, and they were very appreciative. Please note that the coat drive is still going on.
4. The entire Science Committee for working so hard this Fall. They organized and sponsored recess activities with American University during National Chemistry Week, planted and harvested vegetables in the container garden, sponsored several trash free lunches, and put together the incredible STEM lunches for K-3rd graders. Thank you, also, to the volunteers that helped make the STEM lunch possible.
5. Ami Susan Petrucelli and Erika Newell for spearheading the Fall Clean Up Day. There was lots of raking, mulching, weeding, and a lot of kids came to help.
6. Our Co-Vice President, Leyla Kenny, and the Wellness Committee for organizing our October PTA Speaker, Kelly Dorfman.
7. The Wellness Committee for organizing the Westbrook Walks to School day in October.
8. Kathleen McDermott and Nicole Schwenker for selling our Spirit Wear at the Book Fair, and throughout the fall.
9. Helene Krasnoff for organizing the Ledo's Pizza and Chipotle Nights. Also, Brenda Petrilli, Westbrook parent and Chipotle Manager, for making it happen.
10. Kerry Lawrence and Christine Ryan for organizing this year's Pie Day for our staff before Thanksgiving break.
11. The 5th grade families for hosting our first Staff Appreciation Potluck in October, a chili lunch. 4th grade will host a Staff Appreciation Breakfast next week.
12. FOWS for hosting the 75th Anniversary Tea for Westbrook students, parents, alumni and neighbors.

PTA Co-President Erin Harcourt provided those attending the meeting with an Assistant Principal update: The process has officially begun to try to get one for Westbrook. She sent out a letter with 240 signatures that went to Dr. Starr. It was mailed and emailed, and then she followed up with an additional email to Dr. Starr's Chief of Staff. MCPS is currently focusing on its Operating Budget, so hopefully our timing for this request is good. PTA Co-Presidents Erin Harcourt and Maureen Kramer will be in touch whether our adding an Assistant Principal made it into his budget. However, the BOE can always cut things from Dr. Starr's budget. We remain hopeful.

PTA Co-President Maureen Kramer added an update on the Westbard Development. Equity One has purchased the property at Westbard (the Giant and building surrounding it). Equity One has also asked the county to revise the sector plan for

that area. The county is fast tracking the sector plan revision (ie: How tall will buildings be? Will there be retail? Etc.). At the Equity One meetings there were voices heard of residents/homeowners/school parents (largest concern is for over-population). Equity One listened, and then pre-Thanksgiving presented their “big plan,” and was not at all what was expected based on those voices. They presented 75-foot buildings, apartments, and 1900 new housing units. They made a provision for the schools: Moving the Little Falls Library to the center of this new development, and placing an elementary school on the current Little Falls Library property, which it turns out isn’t large enough land based on MCPS restrictions. At the public meeting there were many upset with this plan, but they emphasized it is just a plan and they are going “back to the drawing board” before they present to the MC Planning Board in April. PTA Co-President Maureen Kramer has asked our parents to please pay attention to what is going on, and promised she and PTA Co-President Erin Harcourt will continue to attend the meetings. She encouraged anyone who would like to join them, or go and represent for them, that that would be appreciated. She emphasized that these decisions will affect our neighborhood, schools, and houses moving forward, so asks we please be involved while we continue to advocate for our schools. You can go to www.westbardvision.com if you want to take a closer look at the proposed plan.

A parent asked whether Whitman would be more impacted than BCC. PTA Co-President Maureen Kramer encouraged parents to not rely on that. More immediately it wouldn’t impact us, but she pointed out they might need to redistrict so we want to stay involved just in case.

Principal’s Update

Jennifer Lane announced that an additional PEP class is being added. This class is open to children turning 3 or 4 in the fall. If you know any family with a child this age in the neighborhood, we would love for them to join us. Also, there will be a morning and afternoon class offering next year, versus only a morning class this year.

Ms. Lane mentioned there will be a Kindergarten coffee for rising Kindergartners on Monday. Do you know anyone who didn’t take the time to call the school? Encourage them to come to the coffee. Preliminary numbers (class total projections) that were sent from the county are right on the line for whether or not there will be a need for two or three Kindergarten teachers. She emphasized how much she would hate for us to lose a teacher.

Ms. Lane showed a video made by our 5th graders about safe arrival and dismissal. “Eagle Eye News Bike Safety” stresses that if your children ride bikes, please make sure they are being safe.

Ms. Lane thanked everyone for the Staff Pie Day. “I used the pie from Pie Day to serve at our Thanksgiving dinner.”

Teacher Liaison's Report: Natalie Atkinson

Natalie Atkinson reported the following activity going on within each grade level's classrooms:

K – Learning and reading how to ask and answer questions about text. During Writing we are learning how to write pattern books. We are making globes this week. A Field Trip is scheduled for 12/17 to the Botanical Gardens. We are waiting on a bus issue. In Math we are working on substituting numbers.

1 – Field Trip to the Capitol is coming up. Mrs. Kim is reminding all to bring in Field Trip forms.

2 – In Reading we are working on identifying text features in non-fiction texts. We will also be working on finding the main idea of short sections of texts. We are creating brochures on a special place. Students will be using sensory details to describe this place. In Math, we are working on addition and subtraction of 2-digit numbers with composing and decomposing.

3 – Beginning our informational writing piece about how technology has changed over time to reflect human needs and wants. In Math we are continuing to learn about and explore the relationship between multiplications and division, and beginning to use multiplication to solve for the area of a rectangle. In Reading we are looking at plays to find the theme and central message.

4 – Learning about the economic activities in Bethesda and researching information about the population, businesses, and land use. We have just started using our research to begin writing our community profiles. In Science, learning about natural changes that affect our environment, such as earthquakes and volcanoes. Later this quarter we will test how human-made changes like pollution affect the environment. In Reading, finishing reading poems and plays, and are now working on informational texts in group, and reading fiction novels in book club.

5 – Researching movements of change, using Noodle tools (an important tool for middle school and beyond). We are gearing up for our Science unit on electricity and magnetism.

Committee Reports

MCCPTA Update

Dana Rice explained that MCCPTA is the Montgomery County Council of PTAs, and they work on larger advocacy efforts. We (our cluster) reached out to them last year via a big push in Annapolis to get state funding. We still didn't get state funding

needed to build BCC's expansion. They will ramp up and meet again in January. MCCPTA doesn't carry Westbrook's (Assistant Principal) message specifically, but it is important to point out to them the need for funding based on initiatives we support. They acknowledge schools are growing, but they didn't have a piece to support that our staff will be growing too. There are some very specific meetings, and if you have an issue that is important, just ask me, and then we will gear up again and go to Annapolis.

FOWS Update

Dana Rice reported that at the FOWS annual Board meeting, Kerri will be taking over from Susan Higgins as Treasurer. We are currently recruiting for more board members. We will also be spearheading the Count Me In parties. There will be no Winter Social this year. No giant auction, but instead online sign ups for the Count Me In parties. The next general meeting for FOWS will be 1/12, 7 pm, at Claire Slabaugh's house.

The Sock Hop was postponed for now. The Tea was so successful, however! It was great to be together with the other generations in the community. We want to find something else that is community based. Don't know if it will be a Sock Hop or perhaps something else.

Box Tops Update

PTA Co-President Maureen Kramer shared on Sarah McCollough's behalf that all the clippings have paid off. Westbrook has earned \$358 worth of box tops. Please keep collecting and drop them off (via your child's backpack or directly to the table outside the Media Center).

Science and Environment

We will hear next month about how the STEM lunches went.

Recess Rangers

PTA Co-President Erin Harcourt shared on Kathleen McDermott's behalf that she is encouraging everyone to come help out as Recess Rangers, and now you don't even need to sign up beforehand! You can just come and help out at recess. Just sign in at the office and come help out. The hope is to get the kids engaged - the recess teachers keep the kids safe - so just come to help out when children struggle to figure out what to do. Indoor recess is an especially helpful time for Recess Rangers.

Sister School

PTA Co-President Maureen Kramer reminded everyone that the Viers Mills Coat Drive continues through December 10. We are collecting children's coats, as well as

adult's. Also, hats, gloves, mittens are being collected. You can drop off your donations in a box outside the Media Center, or at Kari Swenson's house, or Maureen Kramer's house.

Special Needs

PTA Co-President Erin Harcourt reminded everyone on behalf of Anna Jewel that there is a Special Needs listserv for families with those at Westbrook with special needs and/or IEPs. Anna Jewel and Meredith Hammond are co-chairs for that listserv, if you want to contact them directly.

Community of Caring Update

PTA Co-President Maureen Kramer shared on behalf of Tiesa James that this month teachers will be reading "The Giving Tree" by Shel Silverstein. Along with this reading, there will be a drive to collect hats, gloves, etc. for students at Viers Mills Elementary.

Bingo Night Tiffany Rowan

PTA Co-President Erin Harcourt announced on behalf of Tiffany Rowan that Bingo Night will take place Sunday, 1/25, 5-7 pm at Westland. Plan to bring your family for a fun night. A collection box is coming to the front office for prizes to be handed out. New gifts/toys only, please.

Talent Show

PTA Co-President Maureen Kramer announced on Robyn Miller-Tarnoff's behalf that the Talent Show is scheduled for 2/26 at Westland, time TBD. Information for auditions to come in January. The Talent Show is for students in grades 2-5 only. One act per student. Co-chairs would love extra hands via volunteers. Contact Orly Isaacson, Robyn Miller-Tarnoff, Pam Krooth, or Meredith Hammond.

Other

There was a question from a parent about the new middle school. She was asked when Pam Mebane left last year to be the NAACP rep. She received a message last night that was a bit alarming. They have strong concerns around diversity, and how it impacts Westland, and so are proposing re-zoning. Maureen Kramer responded that at the last cluster meeting this came up – there is no PTA at this middle school yet, so no advocacy exists, thus no one can speak up yet. As it stands now, they won't let us know until Spring 2016 (6 months before school opens) who will be going there. They were asking for support from Westbrook. I will follow up with you. BCC Cluster is really pushing MCPS to figure this out. There will be re-zoning and diversity issues. The November before school opens in August they start the

process, but nothing gets announced until April. Send us your email and we will follow up with the cluster. They are definitely advocating for finding out early.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Upcoming Westbrook Activities/Dates

December 1-10th: Coat Drive for Viers Mill Elementary School

December 8th: Incoming Kindergarten Parent Coffee, 9:15 Fireplace Room

December 10th: Staff Appreciation Breakfast hosted by 4th Grade Families

December 12-15th: 2nd Grade Artist in Residence

December 17th: 4th Grade Winter Choral Concert (APR)

December 18th: 5th Grade Winter Choral Concert (APR)

December 24th: Winter Break Begins

January 5th: School Resumes (NO PTA MEETING THIS MONTH)

January 14 and 22: 2nd Grade Artist in Residence

January 25th: Bingo Night, 5-7 PM (Westland Middle School)

January 30th: STEM Learning Lunches

February 3rd: PTA Meeting, 7:30 PM (Media Center)

February 5th: Part 2 of 4th Grade Artist in Residence