

PTA Meeting Minutes Tuesday, May 5, 2015

Maureen Kramer, PTA Co-President, called the meeting to order at 7:36 pm. There were 18 present for the meeting.

Approval of the Minutes

Davida Kales, PTA Secretary, asked if anyone had corrections or additions to the minutes from the March 2015 meeting. As there were none, the minutes were approved and entered into the record.

Treasurer's Report

Nan Hartman, PTA Treasurer, shared the current budget. Drumroll...to date Carnival grossed just shy of \$35,000. As of today the net is \$11,132, with more still coming in from food vendors and tickets sales sold online at payforschool that week. But this amount includes most of the expenses. Nan also shared that out of the \$7,500 total income from the Spring Online Auction, \$2,000 of it went to Carnival (to offset Superchance prizes).

Nan announced that Mama Lucia Night is coming soon – May 13 – so that will be another source of income. Additionally, AIR will be under the amount we budgeted for the year, so we will see a surplus in that area. Nan feels it has been a great year for the PTA, financially, and we really stuck to budget.

Co-Presidents' Report

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

1. Aditi Shrikhande and Judit Markarian for organizing a truly entertaining International and Multicultural Night. And a special thank you to all of the families that shared their delicious family recipes with us.
2. Kristin O'Brien and Crissy Upston for organizing another successful Skate Night at Cabin John Ice Rink.
3. 1st grade and K families for feeding our teachers and staff! The 1st grade families provided a delicious breakfast in March and our K families put together a delightful spread for lunch in April.
4. Tiesa James and Ms. Pickle for collecting, decorating and stuffing pillowcases with lots of goodies for the children in foster care with the Montgomery County Child Welfare Bureau.

5. Our Science Committee for providing our children with a fun and educational Earth Week. Special thanks to An Nguyen for coordinating the buddy planting and bookmark competition; Mikel Moore and the Eco-Defenders for leading the nature recess games; Hallie Lightdale and Mikel Moore for leading the nature scavenger hunt; Francesca Goodall for handling the large collection of recyclables; Lee Anne Graeub, Stephanie Herrington, and the Aqua Eagles for running the bake sale and educating the students about the Chesapeake Bay; and, finally, Chris Dixon-Barone, Jamee Whitten and all of the TFL volunteers for helping out at the April trash free lunch.

6. Helene Krasnoff for organizing another successful restaurant night – this one was at California Tortilla.

7. Leyla Kenny for arranging for nationally recognized sexuality educator, Deborah Roffman, to speak to our parents. We all know a little bit more about how to talk to our kids about sex, sexuality and gender issues. If you weren't able to attend, Leyla can teach you all that you need to know.

8. Davida Kales, Erin Harcourt, Orly Isaacson, Laura Kolton, and Caryn Solomon for helping our parents make good choices when it comes to parking and driving around Westbrook during drop off and pick-up.

9. Jamie Brown for arranging the flowers for our teachers and staff this morning.

10. And last but certainly not least, thank you to Beth Marans and Julie Crain for putting on an amazing Carnival that was fun for the entire family. Carnival is a big, big job and we really appreciate the tremendous amount of time and energy that they put in. Great job! And, of course, thank you to the many, many parents who pitched in to chair a committee, man a station, set-up, clean-up, sell tickets, etc. This event truly takes a village.

Erin Harcourt and Maureen Kramer, PTA Co-Presidents, shared the 2015-2016 Proposed Budget. They noted there were not that many significant changes to the budget, and that the overall budget remained relatively the same (\$2,000 more than last year), but some things shifted. However, the bottom line actually came down, because last year there was a \$20,000 professional teacher grant. The Co-Presidents explained that they had taken that out of the reserves, which is why the budget increased this year. They noted that next year the PTA will be doing a similar pull from the reserves, but it's only \$5,000.

As for a change in Operation Expenses, the Co-Presidents pointed out that the only real change in this focus area is the charitable donations line. They explained that they have found we have gotten MCPS requests (ie backpack collections) to our PTA. They realized they didn't have a line item in the budget for this, it was last August when they received the request, and so they didn't feel like our PTA could make that

donation. So this year they thought we should add a charitable donations budget line to avoid a similar situation in the future.

The Co-Presidents pointed out that they decreased the budget for Planning and Priorities. Maureen explained it was a new line last year recommended by our accountant. "We didn't use it as much as we thought, so we dropped it. We are keeping it, but lowering it."

As for the Special Event Income in our budget, the following was noted by the Co-Presidents: Carnival was changed slightly to match past years a little more closely. Merchandise Sales (Spirit Wear) brought in enough for next year as well. Talent Show was increased last year because there was discussion of moving it to BCC (room rental more expensive), but it didn't, so it has been lowered again.

Notes from the Co-Presidents about the proposed budget's Program Expenses: As it turns out, FOWS contributes a lot to our building and grounds, so that dropped a bit. Science Night, however, needed a little more based on feedback from the Science Committee and their plans for next year. The 4th Grade Bay Initiative has been the same for the past years, but has not been spent. It has been there as back-up in case the grant doesn't come in. To keep budgeting for it doesn't make sense. But if for some reason the grant doesn't come in for one year, we will figure out how to bring in the funds to keep the program going. Staff Appreciation is going back up because of a miscalculation last year. "We thought we could make it work with fewer funds, but there is a need for more funds for all the special teacher appreciation events we sponsor (ie gift card donations, etc.). This item covers two lunches, 1 breakfast, gift cards at the holidays for support staff, teacher gift card raffle during Teacher Appreciation Week, etc. Trash Free Lunch went up slightly so that the prizes can be a little cooler next year. Several others just shifted slightly (ie PE Allowance, Walking Program, and Field Day). Eagle Eye News teacher stipend increased because we now have two teachers.

Finally, the Co-Presidents pointed out that the Family Contribution is the PTA's biggest income. PTA dues stay the same for next year, and the Family Contribution number is based on 85% of families participating. That projected amount would be \$43,900. This year we brought in \$41,000.

A parent attending the meeting asked about staff water increase line in budget. Answer: Third water cooler was purchased.

PTA Co-President Maureen Kramer made a motion, and then the new Budget was approved.

Principal's Update

Ms. Lane thanked all the generous members of the community for the Staff Appreciation gestures this week. "Our staff loved the Flower Day today, the Chipotle

lunch they are having tomorrow will surely be a hit, and the gift card raffle has been greatly appreciated. We feel loved all year long, but you take it up a notch during Staff Appreciation and we thank you for that. We loved Carnival, and thank you for your hard work on that as well.”

Ms. Lane announced that MCPS is sponsoring a Special Education Summit on 5/16. She added that it is new, will last all day on Saturday, and sounds interesting.

The next Principal’s Coffee is planned for Wednesday, May 20, at 9:30 am. “How do we form our classes?” Ms. Lane predicted that this is a topic that will draw a larger group than the past few coffees. She also noted that today we sent the family input sheets home with students in their backpacks for parents to fill out and return.

Additionally, Ms. Lane announced that there are a lot of great AIR program presentations coming up, as well as the Art Show.

Teacher Liaison’s Report: Natalie Atkinson

K – M Class Testing is currently taking place - the final reading assessment of the school year. They finished writing opinion pieces, for which they started with writing about their favorite things and ended with a letter of persuasion to a parent, teacher, and Ms. Lane.

1 – They are excited to showcase their poem for their upcoming Author’s Celebration in June.

2 – They just finished writing poetry and are starting to write about a personal accomplishment. They will end the quarter by researching an accomplished individual and identifying how they showed effort, motivation, and persistence to achieve their goal. In Math they are working on 3-digit addition and subtraction with composing and decomposing and showing their understanding in a variety of ways.

3 – They are having a great time writing their parody songs with their AIR Alden Phelps. This year they are writing about Greek myths. They are working on 2-step word problems in Math and moving on to telling time and solving word problems with elapsed time as well as measurement units of liters and grams. In Reading they are finishing up their unit on traditional stories (folktales, myths, legends, fables). In Writing they are using facts to support an opinion.

4 – Fourth grade is finishing up their inquiry projects in Writing. The students chose complex topics and planned out how to organize their writing based on the text structure that they thought fit their topic the best. In Reading they are working on reading strategies for non-fiction text, and have been focusing on text-structure and

summarizing. They are studying rocks and minerals in Science, and Maryland state government in Social Studies.

5 – 5th grade is ramping up for their musical (thanks to Mrs. McNeil), with performances on May 27 and 28. They are also making great use of the links to their curriculum in both information literacy and reading.

Committee Reports

BCC Cluster/MCCPTA Update – Dana Rice

As of today, Governor Hogan still hasn't approved the release of the money for the budget. Dana suggested keeping up with the emails so that you are up to date at all times.

The Cluster and the "New Westwood" Development – postcards arrived to your home. Parks and Planning has to rezone the whole area. Dana met with the BCC Cluster and the head of Parks and Planning. He said that he has no say in the rezoning of schools. There's no border war (with Whitman), but Dana highly suggests we remain very involved. "Get to know the people. This is going to impact us in many different ways. As a community, we have to stay aware but also keep our community tight and close."

Co-President Erin Harcourt added: Indeed there are no border wars between BCC and Whitman, but neither high school has room to support all the kids that would come with these extra apartment buildings they have planned.

Parent Marina Bowsher attending the meeting added: The demographics of the neighborhood residents who attended these last meetings was a huge percentage over 65 years old. The schools weren't even mentioned. The focus was mostly on the library. We need to make sure our voices get heard during these planning stages. When planning Friendship Heights, we got a lot of concessions by being present. We need to do the same for this. A huge presence makes a difference. This is when we can still have an impact.

FOWS – Dana Rice

We have an incredible community with amazing events. These events are our life-blood to the community. Dana encourages you to talk to younger parents and families, and bring them in.

Next upcoming FOWS event is a bench being installed, in memory of our former PTA President, the late Valerie Baruch.

Spring Clean-Up – Erika Newell

"It is more fun to weed at Westbrook than in your own yards!" The kids help fill the wheelbarrow and climb on the mulch piles. We have a lot of fun. We did a lot of work last spring to the front bed. This year it will all be very clear because we carefully removed only weeds last year. We did mulching in the fall, so it won't be too much work. But we need to have enough people, and tools, on Saturday, May 16, from 9-12. You don't have to stay the whole time. Just come and have donuts and coffee, and spend 30 minutes with us.

Cathy Stocker added: At the end of the clean up, at noon, there will be a dedication of a bench in honor of former Westbrook mom and PTA President Valerie Baruch. "Terry Fry, Valerie's husband, really wanted it to happen on a day of service because Valerie was always rolling up her sleeve and it seemed appropriate to honor her when parents are coming together for a day of service." Additional refreshments will be served along with this dedication.

Aqua Eagles – Lee Anne Graueb

We most recently took a boat trip on the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers, through the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. The students learned bird identification via binoculars. They also learned to read navigational maps, storm runoff maps, and geography charts. They took part in water quality testing. On their way back from Anacostia to Potomac, the kids got to help drive the boat. They pulled the fishnets up onto the boat, and the kids got to hear about the different types of fish in the Bay. It was a great field trip. The kids have true hands-on learning in the environment and this allows them to ask questions and understand the importance of our watershed and the impact of what we do on the Bay.

Last week we celebrated the Shad Release. The kids got to release the shad that came on Monday as baby eggs and had hatched by Thursday. There were presentations and the kids get excited about teaching other kids who came out for the event.

Teacher Stephanie Herrington has been doing an amazing job with this program that continues to still go strong.

Directory – Marina Bowsher

We are looking for someone to take over this position. Also, if anyone wants to advertise their business, or support a business, we are starting to sell ad space. It doesn't have to be a Westbrook community business.

Field Day – Kathleen McDermott

Field Day is next Wednesday and Thursday. No rain dates are scheduled. Since we do a lot of activities in the gym, we hope to be able to work it out. A Sign Up Genius was sent out to the school listserve today.

Trash Free Lunch and AIR – Erin Harcourt on behalf of Chris Dixon Barone

Thank you for your support of the Trash Free Lunch program. We held Trash Free Lunch during Earth Week and handed out seed paper for kids to go home and plant their own wild flowers. The kids loved it so it's likely something we'll do again – maybe even this year – so keep packing those trash free lunches.

Kindergarten worked with Mary Gresock of Odyssey Opera in March. Each class performed their own Opera based on the story "The Gingerbread Man" to a packed house. Thanks to all the families who came out, helped make costumes (a BIG effort) and for supporting our budding opera singers.

The week after Spring Break, 1st graders worked with Synetic Theater and performed their play based on the book "Just a Dream." Synetic is a "physical theatre" company so the students told their story with their actions, not their words. They also performed to a packed house of proud parents, grandparents, and siblings.

Third graders are working with Alden Phelps, singer and songwriter. Their final performance will be Monday, May 11, at 2:05 pm in the APR, where each class will sing a parody based on a Greek Myth.

Fifth graders' musical, *Guys and Dolls*, will be performed on May 27 and 28.

Maureen Kramer, PTA Co-President, had one last Committee note to share on behalf of Master A. During the Spring Break Auction we auctioned off one week of summer camp with On the Mat. Given recent news about On the Mat, they will not be offering camps. Marina Bowsher reached out to Master A at Flying Kicks, and he has offered a replacement week at his camp.

Nominating Committee – Presentation of 2015-2016 Executive Board Slate

Kathleen McDermott, Marina Bowsher, and Aditi Shrikhande announced the following proposed Executive Board Slate for the PTA 2015-2016 year:

Orly Isaacson- Co-President
Leyla Kenny- Co- President
Jesse Nickelson- Co-Vice President
Leticia (Tish) Brekke-Co-Vice President
Susan Higgins- Treasurer
Ed Valado-Asst. Treasurer
Erika Newell- Secretary

Cathy Stocker moved to vote on the new slate. Slate was approved.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:36 pm.

Upcoming Westbrook Activities/Important Dates

May 4th-May 8th – Teacher Appreciation Week

May 7th – 4th Grade Choral Performance (APR)/Art Show

May 11th – 3rd Grade Artist in Residence Performance (APR)

May 12th – SGA Sponsored Crazy Hair Day/Hat Day

May 13th – Field Day (K-2)

May 13th – Mamma Lucia Night

May 14th – Field Day (3-5)

May 16th – Spring Clean-Up Day, 9AM – 12 PM

May 20th – Principal's Coffee (Fireplace Room)

May 25th – NO SCHOOL – Memorial Day

May 27th and 28th – 5th Grade Musical (APR)

June 2nd – PTA Meeting, 7:30 (Media Center)

June 5th – End of School Picnic, 6-8 PM (APR/Field)