

Westbrook PTA Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 7, 2017

1. Meeting called to order at 7:39 p.m.
2. October minutes were approved and added to the record.
3. Treasurer's Report – Ed Valado
4. Here's the details of the uncoded revenue issue in the budget actuals.
- 5.
6. The initial P4SS error was caused by their use of a new payment processor. P4SS usually charges about 26 cents for each parent transaction on the site. Their new processor only charged us 26 cents per weekly deposit (it was about 2 deposits right at the beginning of fundraising). To fix it, they deducted the proper amount from 2 subsequent deposits. Ultimately we received the correct amounts.
- 7.
8. The issues with the budget line item is more of a quickbooks issue combined with my own lack of accounting sophistication. In order to make quickbooks reconcile with the bank account, I have to make sure the P4SS reports match the deposits. Since the error and the fix was handled post-reporting, the reports from the time period don't match the first few deposits making it "impossible" (not really, but I don't know how to do it) to reconcile and close out the books. So to reconcile them, I took the error deposits and lumped them into that category since I couldn't split them into the sub accounts (family contribution, dues, class dues). If you take the sum of the revenue, we surpassed the fundraising goals forecast in the budget.
- 9.
10. I have a budget "fix" but it's pretty labor intensive and I haven't had the time to do it yet. I'm going to consult with a relative that's an accountant and has some familiarity with quickbooks, so I'm hoping they'll have a more elegant solution. Since the "big picture" numbers match up it hasn't been a priority, but I hope to get to it eventually.
 - a. Proposing next year's budget, goal to vote on the budget in May, we'll be putting together a draft and taking comments.
 - b. Want to highlight a few things
 - c. Book fair did very nicely

- d. Spirit Wear team is knocking it out of the park
- e. Getting underway with Carnival, Idara has signed contract with entertainment avenue, took the advice from the team last year with the new vendor, great price, great service, just cut a check for 50% deposit, keeping in line with budget for carnival
- f. Bingo night is coming up, we have budgeted \$1,500. Bingo is a spirit night so it's not intended to make money, bingo night opportunity for families to come together and for 5th graders to sell baked goods for their end of the year party. The PTA does spend money on prizes. We break even for Bingo night. Need to think about is Bingo night, and do we want to spend that much money in future years. Want to think about how we're doing spirit events.
- g. Talent show only costs \$400, negligible due to room rental, etc.
- h. Teacher allocations and staff appreciations – lovely staff appreciation events, sharing coffee and treats, many thanks for that
- i. Gift cards at the holidays as well.
- j. What is the uncoded due to Pay 4 School Stuff, not sure. I know we had some pay 4 school stuff start up stuff. \$22,000 revenue. There is some issue with the reporting, Class dues and PTA dues are off. The room parents piece was the same. The family contribution campaign reached our budget, it may be the \$22k and \$23k figure combined. WE did reach our \$40k goal. Making a note for ed to follow up and clarify
- k. Bottle filling stations are happening. WE spent not all of the money budgeted because we are able to get a deal. We bought t7 and they are here on campus. What we bought is ADA compliant but what we have in the school is taller and shorter fountain, we're removing and installing brand new. So now it's not maintenance it's construction. So they will have to repair the hole in the wall. Ms. Lane has been coordinating. IT is improved for construction, now it's up to assigning the construction

timeline. We have been approved for this year, so it should happen this year. Things are not flowing out as quickly with construction. We need to keep reminding them so they will get moving on it sooner rather than later. Can that be communicated to parents, I am frustrated with the delay on the process. I am hesitant to give money and help to know all of that so that we're not disenfranchised with giving to the school and why am I giving money if nothing is happening with filters and sun shades. Sun Shades are FOWS. We've gotten word as it comes and try to share as we learn, the maintenance isn't always communicative. FOWS and shades, been waiting since August to get approval for installation. There is a MCPS for installation on the grounds. IS there a construction/maintenance plan for the media center. When you give to an organization you expect some returns, some communication. So when I give money to FOWS there is a new media center next year not in three years. We are going through MCPS guidelines to find out what we can do with the space. We need to determine how much costs, how much we need to fundraise. The only thing we're doing now are these parties. For the APR we had to raise the money before MCPS will authorize projects. We need special authorization for projects above a certain budget. Need to showcase designs, get feedback, a whole group of people will work the MCPS angle, parents will have to go and testify about spending above a certain threshold. This is not a PTA issue so we should consider having an open FOWS meeting. I think communication as a whole, there is a feeling of not being looped in on whatever the topic. There could be a way for dissemination not separating FOWS and PTA communications. Pulling the information together makes it less confusing. The communications needs to be as one. I think we may have been too focused on the fundraising role of one vs. the other. And understand MCPS' role.

- I. Welcome suggestions on the budget and will present a draft budget, so there is time for feedback.

11. Co-President's Report – Jesse Nickelson and Karen Thornton

- Brief summary of MoCo Council PHED committee meeting on Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan's impact on public schools
 - Attended the county council meeting, which was a working meeting, not a meeting with a vote or testimony. This was second on the agenda, the PHED was also receiving the White Oak Master Plan, which is much further along. This discussion was at a much earlier level, they're talking about 2031 for this long range planning. As a tax payer, it was interesting. Glenn Orland, deputy council administrator and Joel Gallahoo, MCPS planning. The forecast is part of the Bethesda downtown sector plan, still in draft. Forecasting out to 2013 and what is the school capacity going to look like. MCPS only forecasts out 8 years. Frustration with two silos with two different projections. Using analysis from other sector plans. We could get to where we need to be by getting creative by expanding Westbrook, the new MS and Westland. He's calculated – without visiting the school – if we add classrooms under a capital improvement project plan, open previously closed elementary schools. The schools would be big but not overcrowded. The problem is BCC, it can not be built any bigger. So may now look to Whitman. Their response was with some skepticism, trouble with numbers after making BES bigger and now we have portables. Development is not always an issue, it is also turnover of existing houses. Could also come up with a SW consortium and mix up all the school placements. Left not worried, but have now bookmarked the county council web page. The board of ed wants small class size. The problem to keep an eye on is Westbard, Lyttonville, Downtown Bethesda, county council will use the info to say we can do it but MCPS will say we can't do it. Developers will expand because of the numbers They were not even considering Westbard. The Bethesda reps say they need to come watch the apartment buildings, it's not the existing homes. We have to stay on top of it and Bethesda ES is trying to do a good job and stay on top of it. The schools are not getting much traction, it's more the residential and neighborhoods that are looking at the apartment building development. It would be great for the

builders to look at this. They seem focused on White Oak. If there are interested and concerned parents, would love to have engaged and watch future meetings. They're all streamed on channel 36.

- Water fountain installation
- Science committee
 - Going to be invited STEM professionals from among us so the kids can meet, hear, see the exciting work our stem parents do. Working on something for recess. Earth Week is coming up. We welcome ideas and thoughts. Melanie Corcoran is chairing that committee. Coming together for a planning group. We don't have a designated teach. But we're working with Mrs. Pickle and volunteers at recess. Keep an eye out for emails inviting parents.
- Budget planning for next year
- **Thank You's**
 - Jessica Deighton, Carin Levine and Allison Merton for an amazing Book Fair **PLUS** event
 - Kari Swenson & Regina Reilly for organizing book and Coat Drive donations to Viers Mill Elementary, our Sister School
 - Erin Harcourt & Amanda Miller for purchasing and coordinating staff holiday cards
 - Caryn Solomon for managing the largesse of the Lost & Found table
 - Janet Gaffney for her spirited emails inviting student art for Carnival T's
 - Caroline Smith for organizing student projects for Counseling Appreciation Week

- K & 5th grade families for the chili potluck luncheon, coordinated by Erin Harcourt

12. Principal's Update: Jennifer Lane

- a. Thank all the community for the warm welcome as I returned to work. It's nice to be back and thank you for such lovely children. The children welcome. Tomorrow continuing with Spirit week, wear your favorite color
- b. Time to being paying attention to the BOE budget. Superintendence is talking about where he wants to put money may not be good for Westbrook. Biggest impact is reading initiative and class size. It would be good for class size to stay small. Reading inaitaive is on the chopping block and imapcts our reading instruction. If you'd like to speak up it's a great thing to do, or track along. Any opionions good to comm. With elected officals.
- c. New superintendant is refocusing us on data, is always talking about data and the acheivemen tgap. Holding us accountable for milestones. We have three milestones for reading and math across grade levels. Our data at Westbrook is looking good. Our focus group is children receiving special education services. This group continues to not look as good as the rest of the school.
- d. Anyone interested in school improvement plan, we will have a meeting in April. Would be happyt o have parent involvement, posted on the website
- e. Mrs. Reiner retired as our ESOL teacher. We were fortunate that someone in house could pick up those extra hours. She is certified for ESOL. We are really happy we had someone to tap it would have been hard to find someone
- f. Valentine's Day and Community Caring Day together. Building on what last year's fourth grade did with community service projects. We are now doing it as a whole school.
- g. Regarding Community of Caring, it does seem that our children are experiencing a stressful time. We have more angst than in the

past. I ask that you need to be good listeners. Let us know if we can do to support your children. Conflict is part of life so we can give them tools, and information will help us to support them as well. The more we know, the more we can do.

- h. Continuing with Responsive Room, Morning meeting, issue bins and that can be empowering for the kids and feel ownership and solutions oriented. Direct instruction with behavior expectations, continue to teach that. And connect to our core values tied to Community of Caring
- i. Next month will talk more about professional development and budgeting for that
- j. Will be sending date for K orientation on April 6, will confirm soon. Only one day this year. Projecting a smaller class.

13. Teacher Liaison Report – Colleen Dahlem

- a. HRC training
- b. Shawn Lane from the Kennedy Center Arts integration with teacher, fits into responsive classroom and finding artistic ways for children to show what they are learning academically, collaboration and problem solving. For example, tableau. He meets before school and directly in the classrooms. Smaller group of teachers was self selected based on interest.

8. Committee Reports/Other Announcements

- **BCC Cluster (Maureen Kramer and Erin Harcourt)**
- MS #2 is on track to open next year. Boundaries have been set, MS cc, ncc, RCF, MS will be named at somepoint, Principal is Tracey Townsend, PTA is forming. It opens with no 8th grade, so next year Westland will be slightly larger but not over capacity but we don't know if the portable will be moved away. The only thing to keep an eye on for westbrook parents next year or the following year, be thoughtful about foreign language. The biggest impact may be the extent of language offerings. Need to make sure there is education continuity for languages and other subjects. This is where we may

need some voices from parents. Will mitigate some of the crowding problems, the principal is great and all the kids end up together to BCC so we want to make sure they're equivalent. There should be three assistant principals, we will know March 3. So each grade has an assistant principal that stays with each grade. In Elementary there isn't a number, so we should not have an issue with keeping Ms. Curry.

- **Teacher Appreciation**

- We dropped the number of potlucks with two grades covering. There is a bagel breakfast coming up. WE would love some more members for staff appreciation. (note: look at calendar). Thank you for all the hard work of the committee and parents.

- Other

- Indoor Recess Rooms – are the blocks being used, no tv, could we rotate and use the gym, especially as the school is getting smaller. We just got some good feedback from our paraeducators what we can do this year and implement next year. The TV had been turned, but the word went out to all in charge and that should not happen again. TV is not our standard. We are using the blocks, the older kids tend not to like them as much. WE are pulling them out and trying hard to use them. The first grade is using them. Some kids like indoor recess better than outdoor recess. There is not handwashing, there are four hand sanitizers on the way. Can the authority in charge help to have the kids wash the hands. We are always soliciting recess and lunch rangers to help. It's hard to organize they only have 25 minutes to eat, it does take awhile to do
- Kathleen has done inventory of the recess room and has purchased some more blocks, the 4th and 5th grades are harder to manage. We can always use volunteer help during recess and lunch.
- Can we have a comment box to submit
- Junk food in the cafeteria – blue sorbet is making it back
- Community of Caring Valentine's Day has now been combined with Christie Meyer Day. Does that impact the budget – there will be an assembly on Valentine's day but the budget is used throughout the year for budgets. Parents

are donating, but Mrs. Pickle has offered to provide supplies if there isn't much.

- Responsive Classroom – it's a national program, elected by Westbrook. When and how is it chosen. We looked at the discipline programs a few years ago. The staff and parents joint group selected and adopted for Westbrook. Will it get looked at it again, we look at it constantly to see if it is service us. WE haven't seen any data to see that it's not serving us. It has to do with engaging instruction as well as getting along with each other. Wood Acres also uses it. Rarely used in MS, typically more of an elementary school program.
- Ms. Lee – long term sub, she has gotten the certification, she is a full-time teacher. This would be a key point of communication to let parent's know. We were so fortunate to do that, but some communications are missing about teacher updates. We're losing a sense of community, we used to list these items in the school newsletter. It effects the community to not have that feeling. WE have a lot new teachers, we used to get a lot out of the office and a lot more information. The retirement, new hire, babies communications would be good to create a sense of community. Wasn't cognizant of that, but it's our community not just our school. Parent participation in the grades is vastly different. There is PTA bulletin board in the main office and I have not seen that utilized once, if I was a new family I would say what. A new family is not going to be on the list serve so it would be good to see all the activities going on in the website. As the parent of a first grader, the shine of Westbrook is off. One of the communication pieces would be an intro to the new teachers at the beginning of the year, who are the teachers at the school and keep a book with the info in the office so when you go into the next year you know the teachers. If the school doesn't communicate with the parents, the parents don't know any better. The first grade is different from 5th grade because they don't know, there is a different school. IT's unacceptable that we don't know that Ms. Lee was hired. You have got to let the parents know what's happening at the school, if they're giving money to PTA they need to know where their money is going and if they're giving money to FOWS they need to know where they're money is going. If there is a comms problem both ways need to figure it out. The more you communicate the better. Families need to join the listserve and we try to push it in the office. Change can

happen soon. The more communication may impact the volunteer commitment. It also needs to be grassroots, you need to reach out to your friends and encourage involvement. Sometimes some of the things people want to keep it personal. Ms. Reiner was very private about it and share it in the February newsletter. Can't answer when someone is coming back from leave. Community Building with information. A lot of people want to hear more about staff, particularly about what will impact the child's education.

- Photography Vendor – what do I need to do move this forward, not happy with LifeTouch, could be making more money with a better photography vendor, would like to see a better service implemented, we're the only elementary school in our cluster, it's mediocre as best, if it's a revenue stream. There are four vendors used in our cluster, everyone seems to like them, happy to talk to them and sign the contract. Can't delegate that to someone who's not a school system employee. Haven't spent time worrying about it, have reached out to our cluster and will bring in the vendors to see the contract, and weigh the pros and cons.
- Can we get a dog disposable garbage can, so it's not in the waste cans or recycling cans, is this something that comes from the office to the community list serve, better for the community to send it out

9. Upcoming Events:

- **February 14:** Class Valentine's Day Parties, 2 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.
- **February 15:** Jump Rope for Heart
- **February 20:** NO SCHOOL
- **February 24:** Talent Show, Westland, 6 p.m.
- **March 3:** EARLY RELEASE
- **March 5:** International & Multicultural Night, 5:30 -7:30p.m.
- **March 7:** Trash Free Lunch
- **March 7:** Principal Town Hall & PTA Meeting, 7p.m.
- **March 11:** Skate Night, Cabin John Skate Rink, 6:30 – 8:30p.m.
- **March 29:** 2nd & 3rd Grades Host Staff Lunch

10. Meeting adjourned at 9:11 p.m.