

Weston PTO Board Meeting Minutes –December 6, 2011

Present: Liz Hochberger, Karyn Taylor, Tina Chartrand, Cheryl Maloney, Kristin Moeller, Dana Markmann, Joan Heilbronner, Doreen Shytle, Deb Sullivan, Alison Slater, Rebecca Parkhill, Cat Niemann, Rebecca Hunnewell, Cristen Tabors, Laura Miller, Aviva Jeruchim, JR Ortiz, Robin Ewald, Rosemary Tomaso, Nancy Trodden, Carrie Winchman, Lea Kelsey, Tanya Spranca

The meeting was called to order at 7:35pm.

Opening Business:

Approval of November 8, 2011 PTO meeting minutes.

The Minutes were approved.

Treasurer's Report: Tina Chartrand

Tina reported that she just finished the taxes. She noticed that the number are down, 142 memberships. She asked Alison if anything was outstanding. There were 150 PTO books left over and they had a higher cost for the books as well. This will need to be evaluated for next year.

Many bills have been coming in from Tess Sousa in food services. Just a reminder that when coffee is ordered it will be billed to your account. Please keep a watch on this.

Superintendent's Report: Cheryl Maloney

Today there was a visit with the finalist for the Director of Student Services. This is not just about filling the position but making sure it is filled with the absolute best candidate. That is why only one candidate has been forwarded by the search committee. She was very well received. She had a grueling day from 7:30am – 6:30pm going around to meet all the constituents. She handled herself well.

Facilities Update:

Science Labs – All the slabs are poured. They hope to enclose the structure before snow comes. There were a few setbacks with all the rain that we had but we remain hopeful to keep moving forward.

Field School – The vote passed. Thank you to everyone for attending the meeting. The next phase is the design development, meet with the design committee. This is moving forward and very exciting.

The High School Boiler project – There is a grant available from the MSBA to replace old boilers for new, more efficient ones. There was a town wide energy audit. The High School Boiler was installed 50+ years ago. With a grant, the state may help us replace it. We will bid for this grant this year.

Budget Process – Cheryl will present the budget on January 8th. She is trying hard not to have an increase and not to cut any programs. She is optimistic about the budget and to have a budget the town supports.

In March, Cheryl would like to have a Superintendent’s Open Coffee to get back in touch with the schools. She has been so busy with all the other projects ongoing that this would be getting back in touch with people.

School Committee’s Report: Danielle Black

Not present.

Legal Council: Aviva Jeruchim

No activity on the legal front.

Faculty Representative: Rebecca Hunnewell

Rebecca said Thanks for having her in the PTO. She mentioned that this school district has wonderful parental support. The staff appreciation was great.

New Business: Liz Hochberger

Liz spoke about getting ready to put the nominating committee together. Liz asked that everyone email her and let her know what positions need to be filled for next year. She also would like to get job descriptions for each position posted on the website so that interested parties have an idea of what the position entails.

Old Business: Liz Hochberger

Liz discussed the school committee meeting briefly. Alyson Muzila needs someone to take over for the Green Team.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

CALENDAR PRODUCTION: Carrie Winchman, Kristin Keating Moeller

Nothing to report this month.

MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL: Alison Barlow, Catherine Neimann

Membership doesn't have much to report. Basically no one is renewing Membership by this point... we're basically in a holding pattern until we do a \$5 Calendar drive in a month or so.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH: Laura Miller, Cristen Tabors

Community Outreach has recently completed two successful events: the Trick or Treat for UNICEF and the food drive to benefit Bristol Lodge.

UNICEF: As a result of the 1230 UNICEF boxes that were distributed to Country School, Woodland School, Field School and the Middle School, nearly \$3,000 was collected and donated to UNICEF by the Weston Public Schools. These funds will help to provide basic necessities to children in need around the world.

Bristol Lodge: The annual food drive to benefit the Bristol Lodge Food Pantry of Waltham was a huge success. In particular, the Country School launched the food drive in a unique way this year. After meeting with a representative from the Bristol Lodge, the 2nd graders at the Country School gave presentations in each Country School classroom and explained to their schoolmates the purpose for the drive and what they could do to help. Each morning during the drive, the 2nd graders visited their assigned classrooms to pick up donations. All collected items were placed on the cafeteria stage and recorded by classroom on a huge bar graph in the main hallway. This allowed the entire school community to visually see the impact of their collective efforts. The Country School as a whole and the 2nd graders in particular were extremely proud of their efforts.

The collection of the food donations the day before Thanksgiving was quite an impressive sight. There were over 4000 items collected and distributed to those in need. Fortunately the success of the food drive was highlighted with photos and a short writeup in the Town Crier, so the entire Weston community could see the generosity of our young students.

PARENT EDUCATION: Deb Sullivan

Dr. Elizabeth Englander presented “Kids and the Internet – Cyber Issues All Parents Should Know” on Thursday, December 1st at the Middle School. Englander was both informative and entertaining. I believe the rescheduled date of December 1st (original presentation was for Nov 1st when we had no power), impacted the turnout for this event. Approx. 75 people came - many others asked if they could access the taped presentation, as they had conflicts/could not attend in person. Early Nov. will remain the target time frame for fall speakers.

We’ll begin marketing Robert Evans’ Presentation “Raising Healthy Teens in Challenging Times”, scheduled for January 24th at 7PM in the HS Media Center, to the MS and HS parents, right before winter break.

We’re working with the WCCA to pull together a forum to help educate parents of younger kids as to how they can get involved in town. Whether through Town Gov’t, School Council, PTO, WEEFC, etc. Many current members of these organizations have older students; to the extent we can attract that “next generation” of parents to get involved now, it would be beneficial.

WESTWORD: Stacey Philipkosky, Diane Mayer, Margie Ross

Not present.

HIGH SCHOOL: Alice Benson, Doreen Shytle

- Construction Continues to go well. Tremendous collective effort from School Administration including School Committee, Town, HS and outside parties.
- Thanksgiving Day Pancake Breakfast
- Anticipate late January Beyond the Classroom presentation
- HS Parent Education—“Return of the Graduates Panel”—December 20th at 9am.
- Hypnotist January 6, 2012. Open to Community.
- Several class sponsored community service activities/organizations—Cradles to Crayons, MSPCA and Special Olympics.
- Due to some very serious allergies of students and faculty—over 50 people require epy pens—we have instituted much stricter rules about where, when and what kinds of food can be brought into and consumed at the high school.

- TEC has been incredibly successful this year.
- Variety of Class events planned from skating at Frog Pond, a Scavenger Hunt, dances and Tubing

MIDDLE SCHOOL: Suzanne Vocatura, Lea Kelsey

PTO Events November 8th through December 6th update:

Magazine Drive, October 25th thru November 8th – We extended the date to further accommodate in light of power outages and the apparent need for additional time. Thank you Elizabeth Nagarajah!

Guest Speaker Dr. Elizabeth Englander on “Kids & the Internet – cyber issues”, rescheduled to December 1st – Defer to Deb Sullivan, Parent Ed coordinator for commentary. This is the first event under the new umbrella of Parent Ed, great idea! *Welcome new 7th Grade Head Gabriela Rigobon* replacing Joanne Melikian-Cate and Kathy Mullen, leaving to represent 7th Grade parent Discussion groups ☺

PTO Events in Progress:

Holiday Appreciation, December 12 through December 21 – The Grade Heads are all off and running having spoken to respective Teacher Grade Heads in setting days and menus. The Chair (Suzanne), Co-Chair (Lea) and New Volunteer Coordinator (Carolann) will coordinate the Admin/Caf & Custodian group. To this end we are making special provisions for the 5 custodians working the night shift. Interestingly enough Danette Alamanos ran the staff numbers by grade and there are approximately 20 – 24 teachers in each grade with as high as 29 shared staff, such as Arts/PE/Special Ed/Guidance/Library. As a result, each Grade Head will take this shared staff into consideration.

At this point the two days chosen from each group will lend a very festive appreciation taking place almost every day for this period ☺

Art Show – Headed by Lauren Sabot and Annie Shapiro, who are well on their way in planning for this big event, in March. They have met with the Art Dept, Margaret & Dawn and are awaiting their thoughts on a theme. All volunteers will be communicated with right after the holidays.

FIELD SCHOOL: Dana Markmann, Beth Kressley-Goldstein

The Field school is ready for the holidays. The pots and planter were greened just in time for the delivery of the 74 Staff Appreciation Gifts this past Friday. Each class was assigned a certain number of each of the products or they could make a monetary donation. Participation was voluntary. Each staff member was given a red reusable grocery bag adorned with paper mittens that were tied on with red and white string. The bags were all filled with a pancake and waffle mix, hot chocolate and marshmallow mix, a bottle of syrup, chocolate chip cookie mix, gingerbread cookie mix, and a homemade snack of pretzel, hersheys kiss and m+m creation. All items were Stonewall Kitchen

products. There were snowflakes suspended above the tables with the gifts and a large cutout of a snowglobe with a thank you to the Field staff imprinted on the base. The 4th grade had a parent cocktail party and it was well attended at the Vandervort's home. The parent coffee evening coffee had to be cancelled due to a conflict with Matt's schedule.

Also, our first 5th grade celebration day fundraiser was hugely successful. We sold over 450 pieces. The offering was a Field or Weston white long sleeve t-shirt and W or Field school grey sweatpants. They should be delivered in time for curl up and read day and the holidays.

COUNTRY SCHOOL: Rosemary Tomaso, Robin Ewald

Math Forums for K through Grade 3 were held and fairly well attended. Many working parents have asked for handouts and/or slides from these meetings as they were unable to attend. Tracy Mansouridis is working on making these available.

Kindergarten Writers' Forum held at Country for both Country and Woodland parents; as usual very informative – about 40 parents in attendance.

Country School launched the annual Bristol Lodge Food Drive in a unique way this year. The 2nd Graders became program “ambassadors” and delivered mini-presentations to their schoolmates telling them about the Drive and how they could help. This turned out to be a very successful approach. The children across all grades took ownership of this project and they “ran with it”. As a result of their efforts, Country School was able to donate close to 2000 items to Bristol Lodge the day before Thanksgiving! We will definitely be looking to give ownership of other community projects to our students as they are eager to help and have proven they are up for the challenge.

School Council discussed energy expenditures and how we can improve our use patterns.

The Holiday Wish List program is underway.

The Teddy Bear Drive is ongoing through December 9th; collection bins are located in the lobby.

Invites have gone out for our annual Holiday Cookie Social to be held December 8th.

We are looking forward to our Holiday Concert on December 20th.

WOODLAND SCHOOL: Nancy Trodden, Amanda Grant

November was a relatively quiet month for PTO at Woodland School.

On November 15th, we hosted the second and third grade Math Forum, and this morning we hosted the kindergarten and first grade Math Forum. The team leaders, together with the new mathematics curriculum specialist, presented a very interactive look at how children develop foundational math skills in these early grades.

School Council met yesterday afternoon. The discussion was primarily an update on school activities over the past month.

Right now we are busy recruiting parents to bake cookies for the 9th annual Cookie Exchange on December 13th. This event has become perhaps the most beloved PTO event of all by the Woodland faculty and staff! We are looking forward to the Winter Concert on December 16th.

In January, we will host the Kindergarten Readers Parent Forum Workshop in the Woodland Library.

CREATIVE ARTS: Rebecca Parkhill, Maris Feinstein

This month, we have our first High School Program. Richard Smith, a local historian will be performing "in character" as Henry Thoreau for the 10th graders on Friday, December 9th. Additionally, on the 9th, the Revels will, once again, be performing the Tale of Immigration for the 4th graders. This wonderful performance allows a number of our students to participate in the performance, re-enacting immigrant family experiences as they come to America. Additionally, all the students have been learning a number of the songs with the music teacher, Ms Larkin, so full grade participation should be wonderful to see.

Westword

- Grace Lin coming next Thursday and Friday, December 8th and 9th for the 1st grade.
- Lyn Littlefield Hoopes finishes her poetry stint at Woodland next week. The annual Poetry Breakfast will be held on Feb. 1. Ms. Hoopes starts at Country School in January.
- Jack Gantos comes to the 6th grade at the end of January.

MATH AND SCIENCE COUNCIL: Lilly Yun, Tanya Spranca

The month of November included the Museum of Science visiting 3th grade students with its Electromagnetism program at the Woodland School on November 23rd. They will be making the same presentation to the Country School on December 7th. Additionally, the MOS will also begin the first of two visits to the Field school, presenting "Geology: Rock Detectives" for the 4th grade students on December 16th.

Looking ahead into the new year, Mike Francis will make his first appearance to the Weston schools, presenting Galileo at the Woodland School on January 26th, 2012. We also begin our enrichment programming in the Middle and High Schools in the month of January. Bob Dermody, a renown architect, visits 9th grade students at the High School the week of January 9th. Art Benjamin, a professor of mathematics and a magician, has created a dynamic presentation of "Mathmagics", where he demonstrates and explains his secrets for tackling rapid mental calculations faster than a calculator. He will present his high-energy talk to the entire Middle School and 10th grade high school students on

January 9th. Finally at the Middle School, the Museum of Science will present Motion, Speed and Velocity to the 6th grade on January 30th.

WEBMASTERS: Suzanne Lenox

Not present.

WESTONPAC: Kim Costello

Not present.

METCO: Keitric Johnson, JR Ortiz

JR thanked everyone that came into Boston for the last meeting.

The METCO fruit sale will be delivered December 12th.

March 14th is Lobby Day. This event is worth participating in.

Ad space is available to purchase for the Gospel Jubilee.

WCCA: Alison Slater

1. Nov. 15--co-sponsored with WestonPac a Special Ed forum at my house about transitioning from Early Intervention to Special Education. Had Dianna Mullen, Kim Costello, Rep from Riverside, Mary McDonough (special ed inclusion coordinator) and Nelly O'Malley (preschool teacher from Weston Windows). Allowed moms to really open up about their experiences in an intimate setting and offer support for other moms, as well as hear useful information. Hope to do it again next year.
2. School Age Family Movie night on Friday, Jan. 20 at Woodland and Pancake Breakfast at H.S. on Sat. Jan. 28
3. Organizing for February a forum for parents with Officer Kelley and hopefully one of the elementary school counselors on how to talk to young children about crime and safety.
4. Hope for WCCA to take on more of a role next year in planning pot-luck dinners for elementary school parents
5. Organizing for the Feb WCCA board meeting, a forum of reps from PTO, School committee, WEEFC and other community organizations to educate WCCA leaders about these various town organizations and how to get more involved.

WEEFC: Joan Heilbronner

Joan reported that WEEFC is winding down its fund raising campaign. They are launching a new WEEFC STAR campaign. Any staff member from the schools can be nominated with a donation. The money will be used for professional development. At the end of the year, all winners will be put into a drawing for a gift card.

After the first of the year, the Kids Creation fundraiser will return. The projects will be done in time for Mothers Day.

The alumni page will eventually become a website. This is to keep the alumni tied back to the schools.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40pm.