

Weston PTO Board Meeting Minutes – January 10, 2012

Present: Liz Hochberger, Leslye Fligor, Karyn Taylor, Tina Chartrand, Cheryl Maloney, Carrie Winchman, Rebecca Hunnewell, Deb Sullivan, Rosemary Tomaso, Robin Ewald, Lilly Yun, Suzanne Vocatura, Dana Markmann, Doreen Shytle, Maris Feinstein, Alison Barlow, Suzanne Lenox, Nancy Trodden

The meeting was called to order at 7:31pm.

Opening Business:

Approval of December 6, 2011 PTO meeting minutes.

The Minutes were approved.

Treasurer's Report: Tina Chartrand

Received a new PTO laptop which is being loaded with the past two years information. This will keep record keeping more efficient and standardized.

Superintendent's Report: Cheryl Maloney

1. Facilities

Field School project is in a very active stage. There is a working group meeting to discuss Design Documents as well as presentations to the Permanent Building Committee. We are finalizing designs, finishes, and room usage. The PBC meetings take place the first and third Wednesdays of every month and the agenda is posted on the town website.

High School science project is also moving forward and the hope is that the new building will be enclosed soon. The contractors have taken advantage of the warm weather and worked weekends. This project is also overseen by a working group and the Permanent Building Committee.

The testing on the contamination sites behind the Recreation/Community Center and the Field School has finally concluded. Our next step is to schedule the removal of the soil, but that involves working with the Town to cover the cost and finding a contractor through the public bidding process. At this point, we anticipate the removal to take place in June at the close of school.

2. Budget

I presented my recommended budget for the 2012-2013 school year last night at the School Committee meeting. It continues to fund a high quality program for pre-k-12 students, but comes in at a reasonable and responsible rate of growth. The increase is at 2.65%. The budget is on line. The next steps for the School Committee include

budget hearings, discussions at upcoming School Committee meetings, and a vote to approve in March.

3. Retirements and Search Committees

Several members of our faculty are retiring at the end of this year and their shoes will be very difficult to fill. Dennis McCowan, David Fuller and Jane Clayton-Matthews have all announced that this will be their last year. We ran an advertisement in the Sunday Boston Globe and we are posting the ad on a variety of website, such as METCO Inc., We will be sending out a request for parents interested on serving on the search committees for the Director of METCO and the Department Chair of Mathematics.

4. Partnership with Regis College

Earlier this fall I met with Toni Hayes the new President of Regis College to talk about ways that we could collaborate. We created a very exciting list of possibilities, including having our students take courses at Regis, participate in summer programs or receive college credit for Weston High School AP course. We also talked about having joint arts projects such as concerts or plays. On February 14th, the Department Heads and Directors will be meeting with Regis faculty to continue this conversation.

School Committee's Report: Danielle Black

Not present.

Legal Council: Aviva Jeruchim

All is quiet on the legal front. No inquiries at all.

Faculty Representative: Rebecca Hunnewell

The whiteboards in the classrooms are so helpful. It allows the teachers to be more uniform with their teaching because they can share information.

New Business: Liz Hochberger

Danielle Black will chair the nominating committee. The first meeting will be on January 18th. Each chair needs to list what positions need to be filled. Suzanne Lenox will be stepping down and this position may be filled by two people.

Some ideas to get the word out about listed positions that need to be filled for the PTO will be word of mouth and the PTO website.

Liz spoke about Global Education. Looking for a coordinator to help find volunteers to host exchange students. We have exchange students from France, Brazil and China. Hosts are needed to house exchange students from China for 3 weeks.

Old Business: Liz Hochberger

Liz spoke about the farm to school initiative. A person has been hired to head this project, she has an abundance of experience and is very energetic. This will be a positive change for the schools.

Liz spoke briefly about the Weston 300 celebration and the role for PTO. She asked if anyone had any specific ideas for this event. February 9th at 7pm there will be a brainstorm session at the Weston Community Center. All are welcome to attend.

COMMITTEE REPORTS**CALENDAR PRODUCTION: Carrie Winchman, Kristin Keating Moeller**

There's no activity to report for calendar production.

MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL: Alison Barlow, Catherine Neimann

There are less than 200 calendars left. These will be discounted and sold off. Some will be taken to the Gospel Jubilee.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH: Laura Miller, Cristen Tabors

Community Outreach is launching the annual Cradle to Crayons "Give Your Pants a Second Chance" drive this month. During the drive, elementary schools will collect new or gently used pants to be donated to Cradle to Crayons. The drive will take place from January 23rd through February 3rd and collection bins will be located at Country School, Woodland School and Field School. Marketing is underway for the drive and will appear in Westword and MyGrapevine during the week of January 16th as well as during the weeks of the drive.

The next planned Community Outreach supported event following this drive is the "Birthday Party" drive to benefit Birthday wishes.

PARENT EDUCATION: Deb Sullivan

We're looking forward to hearing Rob Evans speak on January 24th at 7PM at the High School Media Center about "Raising Healthy Teens in Challenging Times". The presentation will be taped for anyone not able to attend.

The next event will be our Parent Forum to educate parents of younger students on how they can get involved in town/community groups. The Forum will take place during the February WCCA Board Meeting - which begins at 9:30AM on Tuesday, February 14th at 14 Whispering Lane (Robin Ewald's home).

WESTWORD: Stacey Philipkosky, Diane Mayer, Margie Ross

No report.

HIGH SCHOOL: Alice Benson, Doreen Shytle

- I. Parent Education Forum—"Human Sexuality Curriculum at the HS" with Genevra Casais, January 19th.
- II. Career Day
- III. Graduation—Already Planning
- IV. Variety of Class Activities—Frog Pond Skating, Black and White Dance (traditional senior activity), Tubing at Nashoba, Special Olympics and fundraising through the sale of scarves, mugs, socks, etc

MIDDLE SCHOOL: Suzanne Vocatura, Lea Kelsey

Holiday Appreciation, December 12 through December 22 – The Grade Heads did a fantastic job providing the faculty and staffs with a delicious and festive spread of breakfast and or lunch foods, along with special holiday treats ☺

The faculty and staffs very much appreciated our efforts during this very busy time.

We may want to consider having a specific sign up by grade for this event, which would include a separate sign up for Administrative, Main Office, Cafeteria and Custodial staffs, which is provided for separately. Currently, the PTO description gives discretion to the PTO Grade Heads to either ask for donations from those that sign up for Food Appreciation Events/Ad Hoc or handle the event amongst the Grade Heads themselves. The faculty & staffs by grade are approximately 24 with an additional approximate 29 shared staff, such as Arts/PE/Special Ed/Guidance/Library. This is a large number to be trying to consider amongst the Grade Heads and may be a lot to ask from parents during this busy season. So, in sum – it may be more considerate if we tap on parents that

specifically sign up to help or we just reduce the time frame to one day per grade and try to choose different days so the week is filled with festive food that inevitable spills over to most all. Lastly, keep in mind that the faculty and staffs when asked preferred lunch over breakfast since we had last provided breakfast in Mid-October and Lunch is a more expensive and harder to coordinate, especially if one wants to be a bit creative.

But it was truly a wonderful event and very heart felt by all. Willie, a day custodian was having surgery during this week – so we provided him a separate lunch and he was so taken by its splendor that he said, “I will take this home and share this with my wife tonight” ☺

Beautification – Karen Ott and Lea Kelsey coordinated a wonderful effort to fill the Middle School containers with holiday greens. ☺

School Store – I worked with the Custodians to remove the dead weight of 2 rather large and consuming metal boxes from the storage shelves resulting in an increase in space by about 30% and a better means to organize.

PTO Events in Progress:

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.

Music Events – Carolann Augustine, Volunteer Coordinator will be working with Rebecca Parkhill to recruit more volunteers because our parent sign up is short.

Our mission continues to be: think big (use and manage a wide spread pool of volunteers), ask less (from volunteers due to a larger and better managed pool) and plan ahead (all goods are donated so budgets are well under) which is resulting in parents feeling included and not over committed or as I call it - a true sense of partnership.

FIELD SCHOOL: Dana Markmann, Beth Kressley-Goldstein

The Field school had two successful winter concerts. The fundraiser for the 5th grade celebration day was wildly popular with over 450 sweatpants and long sleeve t-shirts sold. We should not have to do any more fundraising to pay for celebration day. Our next project is the Kasiisi book fair which we are now requesting book donations and boxes have been placed in Field school, MS, and HS to collect them. The date is Jan 27th and will be open to the public in the afternoon after the kids have had ample time to make all of their purchases. Details to be distributed via email with regard to pricing and timing.

COUNTRY SCHOOL: Rosemary Tomaso, Robin Ewald

Holiday related events including the Wish List program, Cookie Social and the Winter Concert were all successful. We were able to put together a Cookie Recipe PDF for the staff and parent volunteers with about 25 of the recipes featured at the Social.

School Council discussed the Veggigation program beginning this month for our first graders as well as the Dismissal Manager pilot program ongoing through the end of January. We also discussed more Farm to School ideas including hydroponic gardens and expansion of the current 2nd grade garden.

Initial planning underway for Staff Appreciation Luncheon in March; will meet in next two weeks for first meeting.

New Family Hospitality Initiative was launched at the end of November. A committee was formed to provide new families with additional information as they acclimate to Weston. With the support of the WCCA and the Weston Newcomers, a small electronic packet has been distributed listing the Youth organizations in town as well as commonly used acronyms within our district; follow-up phone calls were made by committee members to check in. Response from new families has been positive!

Working on making the Math Forum presentation slides available to those parents who were unable to attend the Fall Forums.

WOODLAND SCHOOL: Nancy Trodden, Amanda Grant

We closed out a wonderful 2011 by remaining very busy in acknowledging our fantastic Woodland teachers and staff and enjoying the talents of our students and teachers. We held our ninth annual Woodland School Cookie Exchange on Tuesday, December 13th. The display of cookies and treats was impressive in terms of both number and variety. A true reflection of the parents appreciation for our teachers and staff. We had decorative boxes and tissue for the staff to pack up the treats. It was a great day and the whole room looked beautiful.

Our Winter Concert was held on Friday, December 16th. The performances by the orchestra and the chorus were wonderful! Woodland PTO showed our appreciation to the music staff with boxes of chocolates.

Coming up in January we have the “Kindergarten Readers” Parent Forum in the Woodland Library with Linda Steinberg, Kim Burgess and Christie Wyman.

We will start to plan for the Teacher Appreciation Luncheon schedule for Thursday, March 22nd.

CREATIVE ARTS: Rebecca Parkhill, Maris Feinstein

In January, we have a number of programs scheduled for the schools:

1) Urban Improv 1/10 - Urban Improv will be returning to the Middle School this year to perform for the 7th graders. Urban Improv are a group of professional actors and educators who will be teaching the students ways to explore solutions to challenging, real-life anti-bullying situations.

2) Amidon Dancers - (1/9 and 1/10) Although not technically a Creative Arts program this year, CA worked a bit in conjunction with PE instructor Ron Schlagel and Music instructor Leigh Larkin to help bring in the group. The Amidons will be teaching all 5th graders in both music and PE traditional folk dancing and music.

3) Ball in the House - 1/20. This Boston based acapella group will be performing for the entire Country school body on January 20th.

Looking at Art

Looking at Art hit the ground running as school started back up after the December break. Parent volunteers began visiting K-5 classrooms at Country and Field on Wednesday, Jan 5th. Woodland volunteers will begin their classroom visits the week of January 16th. All K-5 lessons will be completed by the end of January.

The new curriculum for grades 1-3 has been very well received by students, parents and faculty... we've gotten lots of positive notes, comments and emails from all parties who are excited and re-invigorated! As the new lessons continue to roll out over the month, we expect to fine tune and tweak as needed.

The next set of classroom visits will begin in March."

There are no updates for Wordfest this month.

MATH AND SCIENCE COUNCIL: Lilly Yun, Tanya Spranca

This month, we begin our enrichment programming in the Middle and High Schools. 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. Bob Dermody, a renown architect, visits 9th grade students at the High School over two days on January 10th and 12th. For 6th graders, the Museum of Science will present Motion, Speed and Velocity on January 30th.

In the elementary schools, Mike Francis will make his first appearance to the Weston schools, presenting Galileo to the 3rd grade at the Woodland School on January 26th. Finally, we added in a new program from the Museum of Science for the 4th grade called Weather, Wind, Water and Temperature. This ties in nicely with their study of Properties of Water and concept of "cycles". This will be presented on January 27th.

In February, we look forward to Mike Francis presenting Galileo to the 3rd grade at the Country School on February 9th and also Star Lab on February 16th at the Woodland School.

WEBMASTERS: Suzanne Lenox

Suzanne asked that any updates needed please send in to her.

WESTONPAC: Kim Costello

Not present

METCO: Keitric Johnson

Not present

WCCA: Alison Slater

1. WCCA School Age Family Movie night on Friday, Jan. 20 at Woodland and Pancake Breakfast at H.S. on Sat. Jan. 28
2. February 1 WCCA is hosting a forum for parents with Officer Kelley on how to talk to young children about crime and safety.
3. At the Feb 14 WCCA board meeting, a forum of reps from PTO, School committee, WEEFC and other community organizations are invited to educate WCCA leaders about these various town organizations and how to get more involved.
4. WCCA Kindergarten Forum Date is Wednesday evening March 21 at the Country School
5. WCCA is Co-Sponsoring with the PTO and Land's Sake the Nourish forum on healthy eating on April 3.

WEEFC: Joan Heilbronner

Joan spoke about WEEFC launching the STAR program. In a short amount of time, 139 nominations have been made for teachers, tutors, bus drivers, etc.

Kids Kreation is starting soon. This will sell through the elementary schools but will be offered to the older students if they would like to participate. The finished product will be done for Mother's Day.

WEEFC is now in the process of taking applicants to join them. Please let them know if you or anyone you know is interested.

The meeting adjourned at 8:36pm.