

## **Weston PTO Board Meeting Minutes – November 8, 2011**

Present: Liz Hochberger, Karyn Taylor, Tina Chartrand, Amber Bock, Alice Benson, Doreen Shytle, Rosemary Tomaso, Nancy Trodden, Deb Sullivan, Joan Heilbronner, Carrie Winchman, Maris Feinstein, JR Ortiz, Madelaine Kenyon

The meeting was called to order at 7:10pm.

### **Opening Business:**

#### **Approval of October 12, 2011 PTO meeting minutes.**

The Minutes were approved.

#### **Treasurer's Report: Tina Chartrand**

Financial report will be attached.

#### **Superintendent's Report: Amber Bock**

Amber reported that it is important to get the word out about voting on the Field School project this weekend.

The arsenic found in the soil near the Field school will have further testing. While this is not at dangerous levels, it will be removed at some point in time. As more information on this subject is found, it will be pushed out.

The WEEFC auction was a success. The venue for the event was very nice. Important to remember that the kids directly benefit from WEEFC so thank you to everyone for the support.

Regis Miller is retired and there is a committee committed to finding a replacement. This is a very essential position for all dimensions of education. There is a good pool to choose from.

The school calendar for the 2012-2013 year has been approved. School will start the Wednesday after Labor Day to allow construction at the High School to have one extra day without the students in case they need it.

**School Committee's Report: Danielle Black**

Not present.

**Legal Council: Aviva Jeruchim**

No inquiries on the legal front.

**Faculty Representative: Rebecca Hunnewell**

Not present.

**New Business: Liz Hochberger**

The vote for the Field School project is an important one. Information will be pushed out to the schools reminding everyone to go and vote. Saturday the vote is by ballot, Monday evening the vote is town wide by hands.

Liz reported on the Farm to School initiative. This is about the use of local farms to service local schools. Framingham does this, their head gardner is a senior, students get community service for working in the garden. Financially, this can work. The next meeting about this is on November 21<sup>st</sup> from 3-5pm at the high school in the media center.

Leslye reported on the Middle School council. The school council is a great forum for questions, for example, the curriculum, transportation, etc. Anyone can attend the meeting in person or send in questions to be addressed. There is a myriad of topics discussed. There are opportunities here to get involved.

**Old Business: Liz Hochberger**

Not reported.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **CALENDAR PRODUCTION: Carrie Winchman, Kristin Keating Moeller**

In October, we asked each school to submit the number of new students registered in September and October in order to evaluate the need for a directory supplement. We also asked Case House to submit any registrations processed since August. Because the total number of new students was 41 this year, which is low relative to previous years (81 in 2010), and given that calendar production exceeded its budget this year it was decided that a supplement would not be a worthwhile cost to the PTO.

### **MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL: Alison Barlow, Catherine Neimann**

New sign ups have tapered off to 1 or 2 a month. People can still become members (\$50) and pick up a Calendar. They can do this online, or by stopping by the Case House. I also have them at my home at an outside pick-up box. Extra Calendars (\$10) are also available (both at Case and online/my home).

### **COMMUNITY OUTREACH: Laura Miller, Cristen Tabors**

Community Outreach is currently coordinating two annual events: The Trick or Treat for UNICEF drive and the food drive to benefit Bristol Lodge.

UNICEF: Approximately 1230 UNICEF boxes were distributed to Country School, Woodland School, Field School and the Middle School on October 28<sup>th</sup>. All boxes will be returned to schools by November 9<sup>th</sup> and we expect to have the fundraiser completed by November 15<sup>th</sup>.

Bristol Lodge: Plans are fully underway for the 2011 Bristol Lodge drive. The elementary schools will collect canned goods, cereal, pasta, and other non-perishable foods items. In addition, personal care items will be collected to benefit the Men's and Women's shelters at Bristol Lodge. Collection boxes will be set up in the elementary schools on November 8<sup>th</sup> and will remain in school lobbies through November 23<sup>rd</sup>. Dick Rogers of Bristol Lodge will attend and speak at each of the schools' Thanksgiving assemblies on November 23<sup>rd</sup>. Marketing communications for the drive have been prepared and submitted.

The next Community Outreach supported event is the Cradles to Crayons Drive in January.

**PARENT EDUCATION: Deb Sullivan**

Due to the power outages, we had to reschedule Dr. Elizabeth Englander's presentation "Kids and the Internet – Cyber Issues all Parents Should Know". The new date is Thursday, December 1<sup>st</sup> at 7PM in the Amy Potter Center (WMS).

We are working with the Green Team and others in the community to pull together a program about healthy eating, knowing where your food's from, the benefits of buying local and what we're doing about it in Weston. Still need to define the scope of the project, target audience, etc but we're hoping to have something together the beginning of the new year.

**GLOBAL EDUCATION: Wendy Teplow**

Not present.

**WESTWORD: Stacey Philipkosky, Diane Mayer, Margie Ross**

Just a few reminders re: WESTWORD

submissions should be 40 words or less, no attachments, use links whenever possible in order to shorten submissions. Also, please send submissions directly to [westword@mail.Weston.org](mailto:westword@mail.Weston.org) and not to our personal emails. Submissions get posted for 2 weeks and we want to keep the information fresh and current.

**HIGH SCHOOL: Alice Benson, Doreen Shytle**

NEASC Review Completed

HS METCO Sponsored Dance November 5, 2011– 400 attendees

Haunted House. Despite power outage and closing 45 minutes early, still a very strong turnout.

Upcoming Community Events:

Pancake Breakfast—Thanksgiving Day, 7-9am

Junior Class Cradles to Crayons clothing drive in November

Variety of Class events planned from skating at Frog Pond, a Scavenger Hunt and Tubing

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL: Suzanne Vocatura, Lea Kelsey**

*Faculty and Staff Appreciation Breakfast, October 14<sup>th</sup>* - Menu developed by hospitality, Rose Hattabaugh and Lisa Casey keeping the recipes simple and seasonal: Frittatas, broccoli, black forest ham and cheddar or leek & asparagus; Faga Greek yogurt with strawberries, raspberries and blueberries, along with homemade granola and honey; Martha Stewart pumpkin bread with icing and Iggy's cranberry pecan rolls with Jam and European butter. Our new volunteer coordinator position completed the coordination of all foods, beverages, paper goods and services, within 3 hours. The decorations were cut hydrangeas from a garden placed in one large and 3 short vases. The only funds expended were for coffee by foodservices. I picked up all the frittatas the night before and after heating them in the school ovens which Rose kindly turned on at 6:30, Lea Kelsey and Carolann Augustine cut them into large cubes and piled them onto a large white ceramic serving platter. All foods were placed and arranged on large white serving platters set on top of a sage green paisley cloth that accented with the pink, beige and green hydrangeas. Claire Seel made the icing for the pumpkin bread that morning fresh, I cut and washed the fruit fresh and Janet Mitchell organized the table. The faculty and staff were delighted with the fresh whole goodness of the breakfast. Recipes were requested and provided.

*Magazine Drive, October 25<sup>th</sup> thru November 8<sup>th</sup>* – Elizabeth Nagarajah is the head and quite experienced – so doing a great job with the details.

*Guest Speaker Sarah Ward on Executive Functioning, October 25<sup>th</sup>* - Hosted by PTO & PAC. Coordinated one payment from MS PTO, PAC and PTO Discretionary Fund/Spark Fund – Thank You Tina! Peter Kidwell assisted with equipment and the custodians were fabulous! It was a full house – approximately 141 parents attended. The hand out was quite voluminous at 30 pages. We made 50 copies and took email addresses from every parent upon entry and within 24 hours the packet was emailed to all parents. The lecture received such rave reviews that we put the hand out on the PTO and MS websites. Also, Gloria Cole from Weston Studio taped the lecture in order to air it on Weston Public Broadcasting. I spoke to Peter Kidwell in working with Gloria to have the tape permanently on file for parents to check out – he is thinking of making a CD and will be back in touch. We offered water with lemon slices from our decanters and a bowl of candy corn that came with small serving sizes individually wrapped ☺

*Principal's Coffee, October 28<sup>th</sup>* – Lea and I provided fresh baked breads, coffee and water with lemon slices to a well attended parent audience who listened to Lee McCann speak about the 7<sup>th</sup> Grader IPAD Program that had just been launched. Lee was great in that he welcomed parent input/feedback regarding the Program's future. One main decision on the table concerns whether the 7<sup>th</sup> graders take the IPAD into 8<sup>th</sup> grade, resulting in 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers requiring to be trained or IPADs stay with 7<sup>th</sup> graders, where teachers are trained but valuable information gained through continuity is lost. There is not enough funding at this point to do both.

One parent brought up an interesting point concerning the potential harmful rays coming through the IPADs that have not been proven one way or another. This parent suggested that since there is no conclusive evidence that the school should take a position to train kids to use IPADs not on their laps to reduce harmful rays in the event they may exist.

PTO Events in Progress:

*Guest Speaker Dr. Elizabeth Englander on "Kids & the Internet – cyber issues", November 1<sup>st</sup>* – This event was cancelled and postponed to a date to be determined due to the recent snow storm taking down power extensively, including the Middle School on that evening.

General:

*Lost and Found* – Mariana Hersum is the head and working with volunteers to sort items by category into 6 bins to facilitate the finding process, since racks cannot be used in the small allotted space.

*Beautification* – Karin Ott is the Head and worked with volunteers to put together lovely seasonal containers.

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**

Field school is chugging along. We had the fall pots done with mums, pumpkins for the International Walk to School Day. This was the first time we participated and it was done on October 20th. The kids buses dropped them off at Regis College where they met up with parents who accompanied them to school. I was waiting at the front door to get some good photos and the remark heard most often from the kids was: "That was so fun can we do it again?" They all had smiles on their faces and felt energized for the school day. We hope to participate again next year. Photographers have started get some good shots of the kids for the 5th grade video and we had our first organizational meeting for the video production. One of our primary fundraisers for 5th grade celebration day this year is going to be an offering of pj pants and long sleeve t-shirts. We hope to get an order form out this week, just in time for the holiday shopping. We decided to go with a shirt offering too at the encouragement of various parents and teachers. We have a parent coffee this month in the evening to hopefully get those parents who's schedules don't allow them to attend in the mornings.

**COUNTRY SCHOOL: Rosemary Tomaso, Robin Ewald**

K - 3 Grade Level Parent Forums as well as the Grade 2 & 3 Math Forum are complete and for the most part were well attended. We also used the opportunity to answer any questions regarding the Field School vote. Weston Windows BTSN was also held mid October and all went well. Upcoming Parent Forums in November include the K & 1 Math Forum as well as the "Kindergarten Writer's" Parent Forum on November 10th and 17th, respectively.

The Annual Bristol Lodge Food Drive is underway. We have expanded upon this year's

drive at Country School under Nan Thompson's direction. She has observed that children are not exactly sure why they are bringing the food items in year after year. Representatives from Bristol Lodge came to Country School to speak with the second graders, who are leading an effort to educate the other grades about Bristol Lodge's mission and how we can help. Each second grader played a role in mini-presentations that were given to the other classrooms throughout Country School. Second graders will collect items from each classroom on a daily basis and track/graph their progress for display within the school. Boxes, decorated by the second graders, will be stored with the food on the cafetorium stage allowing the children to see their progress as well. The hope is that the additional peer explanations coupled with the daily visuals will result in a greater quantity of items collected and donated. The second grade teaching team is excited to tie this event back into their curriculum with references to math and "People Who Make a Difference". The second graders, themselves, are extremely excited to be leading this charge and are looking forward to Bristol Lodge's return just before Thanksgiving Break!

School Council has met once and is beginning to dig into our goals for the upcoming year.

We are generating our Holiday Wish Lists for our teaching staff and are looking forward to the Cookie Social on December 8th.

### **WOODLAND SCHOOL: Nancy Trodden, Amanda Grant**

October was another busy month at Woodland. We held the 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Forum on October 18<sup>th</sup> which was very well attended. Then on October 25<sup>th</sup>, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Forum took place and again there was a great turn out of parents. The discussions included a wide range of topics and parents contributed by asking great questions.

Due to the storm we had to postpone Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Math Forum until early December. Our School Council meeting also had to be rescheduled due to the storm.

We have a beautiful new decoration in the foyer of the Woodland School. Thanks to the Creative Arts Committee, WEEFC and many parent volunteers, the children along with weaver Sarah Haskell created a beautiful Mandala. Each child from Kindergarten through Third Grade created their own little clothespin person representing different cultures of the world. We welcome all to come and see this amazing work of art.

### **CREATIVE ARTS: Rebecca Parkhill, Maris Feinstein**

Creative Arts - Co- Chairs – Maris Feinstein and Rebecca Parkhill

- Epic Brass – The award winning, Boston based Brass quintet will be performing for all grades at both Woodland and Country on November 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, respectively this month. The group performed last month for Field and was a big success. They will be performing at 9am and 10 am on both days. Please feel free to come and watch.
- Sarah Haskell –Recap The weaving residency at Woodland school was completed at the end of last month. Every child in Woodland worked (during Art class) to create a Mandala representing their community and the greater worldwide community. Sara Haskell was a hit with the kids and the teachers. The program was very well received by all. Word spread about the program and we had had visitors from the HS arts department down to take a look at the kids in action. The Mandala is installed in the front lobby of the Woodland school. Please stop by to see.

Wordfest Committee Jennie Lucas and Pat Kehoe

- Lyn Littlefield-Hoopers will be starting her poetry residency with the 3rd grade at Woodland School. She is beginning a week later due to the no school days last week and thus will be here on December 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>.
- We also have Giles Laroche returning to the 2nd grade, 2 days at each school. For Country - (11/16 and 11/17). For Woodland (11/21 and 11/22)

Looking At Art - Co-Chairs Ali Fernandez and Jean Arturi

Looking at Art launched its 2011-2012 year with a well-attended orientation on Oct 28th. Our curriculum team is busy writing new material for 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade, which we will roll out at our Grade Level meetings in December. We have our volunteers set and are looking forward to getting everyone up to speed before the holidays. We are really looking forward to getting into the classrooms in January.

**MATH AND SCIENCE COUNCIL: Lilly Yun, Tanya Spranca**

The month of October included the Science and Math Council's first event with the Museum of Science visiting the 5th graders with its "Motion: Force and Work" presentation. We were also excited to have Mike Byster from Brainetics visit our schools this month. On Wednesday, October 26th, Mike presented to the 4th and 5th grade students at the Field School and on Thursday, October 27th, at the Middle School to the 6th and 7th grade students. Mike Byster is a mathematician and dynamic speaker who has created a system for solving complex math problems by using a series of patterns that demystifies how numbers work. He also demonstrates how parents and children can work

together to improve achievement. Parents were welcomed and in attendance to all presentations.

Looking ahead, the Museum of Science will visit 3<sup>th</sup> grade students with its Electromagnetism program at the Woodland School at the end of November and then the Country School in early December. They will also begin the first of two visits to the Field school, presenting "Geology: Rock Detectives" for the 4th grade students in mid-December.

**WEBMASTERS: Suzanne Lenox**

Not present.

**WESTONPAC: Kim Costello**

Not present.

**METCO: Keitric Johnson, JR Ortiz**

Madelaine Kenyon reported talked about the Family and Friends initiative. They are in the middle of pairing kindergarten kids with their new friends. It is important to make early connections.

The ice cream social was well attended. Thank you to the PTO for helping out.

There was a tent at the recent pumpkin festival which served as a meeting point for Family and Friends to meet up and enjoy the festivities together.

The notepad fundraiser is in. The notepads were delivered yesterday.

Donation envelopes went out for the Weston METCO scholarship fund.

Cheryl Antoine reported that they are very lucky to have Amber Bock, who is very supportive of the METCO program. She also thanked JR and Katrice for being part of the PTO. Five METCO parents participate on the student councils this year.

**WCCA: Alison Slater**

I. First Annual WCCA School Age Mini Marathon: The mini-marathon on October 15<sup>th</sup> was a great success. We had over 130 children from K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade at both Country and Woodland schools participate. Families stayed to cheer on their kids. Doug MacDougall was instrumental in the success of the event. Each child received a t-shirt and medal for participating. Children raised \$633 dollars to support summer programs at the Blue Hill Boys and Girls Club.

2. Family “sleep under” pajama movie: will take place on Friday night, January 20, 5:30-8:00pm at the Woodland Cafetorium. Children will watch a movie and have pizza and popcorn. Parents will have the opportunity to socialize in an adjacent room.
3. Sent out emails to all our members about the Nov. 12 election and Nov. 14<sup>th</sup> Town Meeting.
4. WCCA is collaborating with WestonPac on an informational forum for parents regarding Early intervention and transitioning to Weston public schools on Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>. Dianna Mullen and a Representative from Riverside Early Intervention will both be present.

**WEEFC: Joan Heilbronner**

The meeting adjourned at 9:00pm.