

Weston PTO Board Meeting Minutes – October 12, 2011

Present: Liz Hochberger, Karyn Taylor, Rosemary Tomaso, Amanda Grant, Alison Slater, Maris Feinstein, Suzanne Vocatura, Rebecca Parkhill, Deb Sullivan, Nancy Trodden, Doreen Shytle, Alice Benson, Rebecca Hunnewell, Cristen Tabors, Alison Barlow, Laura Miller, Joan Heilbronner, JR Ortiz, Dana Markmann, Leslye Fligor, Lilly Yun, Diane Mayer, Robin Ewald, Danielle Black, Cheryl Maloney

The meeting was called to order at 9:20am.

Opening Business:

Approval of September 6, 2011 PTO meeting minutes.

The Minutes were approved.

Treasurer's Report: Tina Chartrand

Not present.

Superintendent's Report: Cheryl Maloney

Cheryl commented that there is continued compliance with the ADA for the project. There are a number of issues that need to be tackled that should have been done in the 90's but need to be done none the less. This is a good thing to get done.

Concerning next year's school calendar, the school committee established guidelines for start of school before or after Labor day. The thoughts are that the start date for the 2012-2013 school year should be August 15th for the teacher workshop day which would allow the workers one more day to complete the science labs. Cheryl asked for feedback on this issue.

Cheryl reported that the Field School project has been approved by the MSBA for its schematic drawings. A vote will be taken on November 12th, which is a long weekend. The vote is required to take place within a certain time frame from the MSBA approval.

This is a very important vote, a two thirds approval is needed to pass. If the project isn't passed, it would require a 2 year wait before being able to apply again. Absentee ballots are available and easy to acquire and use. The school board is not allowed to tell people how to cast their vote but the consensus is that it is important to get out and vote on November 12th.

Leslye Fligor added that an email should go out through the room parents to remind everyone to vote.

Cheryl gave an update on the arsenic testing being done at Field School by Greenseal. The testing is continuing and waiting for a report from them upon completion.

Although not part of the Field School project but parallel with it is the Greater Case Project. Ed Heller is amazing at looking at what is best for the schools and the town. A campus master plan has been drawn that looks at the whole area, including, Field School, the library, the recreation center/ council on aging and the elementary schools. It shows a series of walking paths, more and better parking, better traffic flow and better looking in general. This is not part of the fall elections, it is a future project.

Cheryl spoke about the 7th grade Ipad initiative. The Ipads are due to go out next week. The struggle with next year is the funding for the program.

Traffic is being looked at again around the middle school and high school. The stripping is complete at Brown Street entrance and speed limit digital signs will also be used. They are looking for crossing guards for 1 hour during the morning rush. This will be a hard position to fill because it doesn't require much time and the pay reflects that.

This weekend an advertisement will go in the Boston Globe seeking a Director of Student Services. Weston Public Schools will be looking for volunteers to serve on the search committee.

School Committee's Report: Danielle Black

Danielle Black spoke about the High School Science labs update. The structural steel is up and on schedule. The labs are due to open next September which means that all students that are juniors this year and under will benefit from these labs. The project is ahead of schedule with the sprinkler install. They will work on this throughout the school year.

Legal Council: Aviva Jeruchim

Not present.

Faculty Representative: Rebecca Hunnewell

Rebecca introduced herself and then had to leave to get back to her classroom. Welcome Rebecca!

New Business: Liz Hochberger

Liz introduced Leila Hewitt from the Council on Aging to speak to the board about volunteering opportunities. She spoke about the need for volunteers for the 3000 + seniors (60 years and older) that live in Weston. Currently, they have 250 volunteers that give anywhere from 1hr. and up at a time. Lots of Helping Hands is a website that offers a volunteer opportunity calendar for people to use to sign up. This is something the whole family can help with.

Leila handed out procures and a sign up sheet to anyone that is interested in volunteering.

Old Business: Liz Hochberger

Liz reported that school elections went off without a hitch.

The METCO family and friends ice cream social was a success.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

CALENDAR PRODUCTION: Carrie Winchman, Kristin Keating Moeller

Lisa Hollis is determining how many new families have registered with the schools since August when the PTO Calendar was printed. If it's a large group (50+) I will retrieve the listings from Case House and print a Student Directory Supplement for PTO members (please note: for security reasons student information cannot be emailed and so we would need to print and mail). If it's decided that we need a supplement, I will list new students and also corrections for any student listings that were misprinted. There were about 4 or 5 misprints that I'm aware of. If you are aware of a correction that has not yet been reported

please send it to: carriewinchman@comcast.net. I will make sure it gets into the school database and into the supplement.

The Weston METCO event was fun and well-attended. Fortunately the sun came out just as the event started and it turned out to be a beautiful day. Thanks to the enthusiasm and contributions of Madelaine Kenyon, Laureen Byrne, and Rachel Caesar, it was so easy to plan this event without a hitch!

MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL: Alison Barlow, Catherine Neimann

I'm now handling about 5 signups/inquiries per week.

The Case House has sold a few Calendars for us.

I continue to post in Westword regarding extra Calendars available for purchase. I have 120+ Calendars remaining (should be plenty for the rest of the year). I have a few checks, which I will bring for Tina.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH: Laura Miller, Cristen Tabors

Community Outreach helped to organize a food drive to benefit local food pantries that service the MetroWest community. The food drive was held over a ten-day period ending on October 11th; a donation bin was centrally located at the Weston Community Center during this time. Food donations went to A Place to Turn, an emergency food pantry in Natick, and the food pantry within the Weston Council on Aging. Weston parent and volunteer at A Place to Turn, Sharon Buenaventura, brought the need to the committee's attention in early September and helped organize the event. Weston Boy Scout Pack 157 and Cub Scout Pack 157 will help to deliver the food to A Place To Turn. The Scouts run a food drive, "Scouting for Food", in late October/early November that also benefits A Place To Turn.

The next Community Outreach supported event is the UNICEF drive in late October. Community Outreach and the Field School Student Council representatives and advisors will visit Country School and Woodland School on the morning of Friday, October 28th. Boxes will be delivered to the schools earlier that week and will be collected on Friday, November 4th.

PARENT EDUCATION: Deb Sullivan

Marketing is underway for Dr. Elizabeth Englander's presentation on November 1st at 7PM at the Amy Potter Center concerning Kids and the Internet. For those unable to attend, the presentation will be taped by Weston Media and later aired on our cable station.

* The next speaker we look forward to is Dr. Robert Evans who will be presenting "Raising Healthy Children in Challenging Times" on Tuesday, January 24th at 7PM in

the High School Media Center. Dr. Evans will review the challenges of raising competent, caring children and offer concrete suggestions to address. While all are welcome to attend this presentation, it will be geared towards the high school/teen years. Dr. Evans is the Executive Director of The Human Relations Services.

GLOBAL EDUCATION: Wendy Teplow

Not present.

WESTWORD: Stacey Philipkosky, Diane Mayer

Westword would just like to report that we are receiving multiple late submissions, and it's been difficult to get them in with the proper review. Otherwise, everything is fine.

HIGH SCHOOL: Alice Benson, Doreen Shytle

First Parent Education Forum – “411” – held in September with over 40 attendees.

School-wide Dance on September 23 – 400 attendees

Upcoming NEASC visit and reception

Principal's Coffee October 20th

Student Leadership Conference October 14

Pumpkin Festival October 15th

MIDDLE SCHOOL: Suzanne Vocatura, Lea Kelsey

PTO Events September 7th through October 11th update:

Principal's Coffee, September 8th - Homemade breads were hot out of the oven, Lea made a lovely small floral arrangement that she offered to Karen Hillman as a welcome aboard jester.

Volunteer Orientation, September 9th – Well attended and went well.

Back to School Night Grade 6, September 26th – Using hospitality as a resource, we were able to offer simple and seasonal fruits, such as figs and blackberries, and a delicious array of home baked goods. I made a large hydrangea arrangement which we gave to Karen Hillman to enjoy. We used for the first time our new \$20 for 5,000 labels and they were a sensational hit, especially because they were considered more sleek and adhered better. Georgian Bossers and Karen Hillman made a point to notice and welcome the

change. We were very well received by Friends of Music and the Metco tables because we accommodated the set up of their tables and with table cloths. Pamela Foster responsible for representing the Metco table offered her assistance and we worked side by side as a team. Cheryl Maloney commented on our diligence and beautiful go greener dispensers, which sported seasonal signs reinforcing our go greener message in the elimination of hundreds of plastic bottles.

Back to School Night Grades 7 & 8, October 6th – Virtually a repeat of 6th grade Back to School Night ☺

Grade 6, Mt Wachusett Field trip, October 7th – Shannon Burrows & Mariana Hersum ran this event and reported that on this absolutely gorgeous day the event went splendidly and was a challenge to hike at all levels – there were 25 volunteers and everyone had a blast with the teachers and kids.

Photo Day, October 11th – Shannon Burrows coordinated this effort. Shannon spoke to the person who coordinated the prior year and read PTO notes from the previous year. In general the event went well, but could have been better streamlined. Shannon made terrific and simple notes of important considerations which have been passed onto both the Chair for next year and Karen Hillman. In general – I plan to construct an outline of all PTO events with simple but important considerations.

PTO Events in Progress:

Faculty/Staff Appreciation Breakfast, October 14th – Menu developed by hospitality, simple and seasonal (frittatas, yogurt bar with homemade granola, pumpkin bread and cranberry/pecan rolls). Our new volunteer coordinator position completed the coordination of all foods, beverages, paper goods and services, within 3 hours.

Guest Speaker Sarah Ward on Executive Functioning, October 25th - Hosted by PTO & PAC; Coordinating payment from 3 different sources: MS PTO, PAC and PTO Discretionary Fund/Spark Fund; MS APC set aside and working with contract on items required such as projector etc.

General:

Our mission is to *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

We had our room parent orientation for both grades the first week of September. Field school had two successful BTSNs and we decided not to provide refreshments due to the feedback received for past couple of years and they were not missed. We have had our first school council meeting with our newest member, Heather Ahern. We are going to participate in the International Walk to School Day this year. On October 20th, the kids will arrive at school on their usual bus leave their backpacks, etc and return to their usual bus to be dropped off at Regis and accompanied by parents on the walk to school. We could use more volunteers. The theme has been decided for the staff appreciation gift for the holiday season and the email will go out soon looking for donations or option to

purchase the requested items. Jenna Vettel is heading up that effort. We have also started and almost completed the 5th grade video permission slips. Photographers will be snapping away soon. The host house for the 4th grade cocktail party has been secured, but no date decided yet.

COUNTRY SCHOOL: Rosemary Tomaso, Robin Ewald

The following events were held in September: New Family Coffee, Picture Day and K-3 Back to School nights. All went well and were well attended. Weston Windows Back to School night will be held this Thursday evening at 7 pm.

We were able to clean up the Devlin Memorial Beds with help from the St. Julia Parish community. They donated some plant material from their annual outdoor mass which was put in the bed.

Grade Level Forums began last week. The Third Grade Forum was well attended. Dr. Price utilizes a "Yardstick" pamphlet which highlights the social, physical and cognitive development of children. Parents really seem to appreciate this reference. She plans to make these available to all parents, irregardless of their attendance at the forums. The remainder of the forums will take place every Thursday in October at 9 am.

Country School students are participating in the town wide scarecrow competition. Last Thursday and Friday, Dr. Price had a scarecrow making activity available to all children at their lunch recess. Parent volunteers guided the children in their endeavors and the final creations are on display on Wellesley Street (in between Case and Field School).

Upcoming October/November events include our first School Council meeting on 10/19 at 3 pm, Math Forums on 11/3 and 11/10, the Kindergarten Writers' Forum on 11/17 and a visit from author, Giles Laroche on 11/16 & 11/17.

WOODLAND SCHOOL: Nancy Trodden, Amanda Grant

September was a very busy month at Woodland School! The month started with Room Parent Orientation and the New Family Coffee. Both were well attended and buzzing with good energy.

Next were the Back-to-School Nights. As always, the school looked great – thanks to the custodial staff. The teachers provided a relaxed and informative overview of curriculum, as well as classroom expectations. And, afterwards, the PTO provided refreshments in the lobby, and an opportunity for parents to catch-up. All-in-all, two successful evenings!

We had a smooth School Council election process. We had two candidates for two positions. Erin Furey Patterson and John Willi are the new parent representatives. Our first School Council Meeting will be held in a few weeks. Our first council meeting needed to be re-scheduled due to a conflict.

School Picture Day was October 7th. We had a beautiful day so the pictures were taken outdoors, and the process was smooth and efficient, and there were definitely many fantastic smiles!

The Grade Forums began last Tuesday starting with Kindergarten. We had a nice intimate group, and lots of good sharing and advice on typical kindergarten concerns. We hosted the Third Grade Homework Forum yesterday morning, and look forward to hosting the 1st and 2nd Grade Forums on the following two Tuesdays.

On October 5th the children began their day with a walk to the Country School in honor of International Walk to School Day. The children received an apple at the Country School then walked back to Woodland School. My children told me Country School has the most delicious apples!

In November, we will catch our breath!!!

CREATIVE ARTS: Rebecca Parkhill, Maris Feinstein

- Epic Brass – An award winning, Boston based Brass quintet will be performing for 4th and 5th graders on October 13th at the Field school at 8:30 and 9:30 am. Please feel free to come and watch.
- Sarah Haskell - The Woodland school will be having an artist in residence for four days during the week of October 25th. Sarah is a master weaver and will work with all the students to create a permanent installation in the lobby at Woodland. Sara, with the help of the Art teacher will work with each class to create a Mandala with varied materials. The Mandala should be installed in the Woodland lobby by the end of that week, so please drop by to see it.

Wordfest Committee Jennie Lucas and Pat Kehoe

- Barbara O'Connor – On October 4th, 6th and 7th, Author Barbara O'Connor visited the 5th graders at Field School for a 3 day writing workshop.
- Suzy Klein - On October 21st, Suzy Kline will be visiting the 2nd graders at Country School.
- Ben Sandalls Program Update - The Wordfest Committee is working to secure an author for the Country and Woodland Schools for this Spring. As the High School has Career Day this year, the program will circle back to the High School the following year and then follow suit to the middle and elementary schools, thereafter.

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

Looking at Art has selected and invited their classroom volunteers for the year. The orientation meeting for new and returning crew will be on October 28th, at 930am in the Country school Cafetorium.

In addition they are actively in the process of writing new curriculum based on the pedagogy for grades 1, 2, and 3 and coordinating these efforts with Colleen Lucas and Beth Bosworth. The new curriculums will correspond with the grade level orientations in December.

MATH AND SCIENCE COUNCIL: Lilly Yun, Tanya Spranca

The Science and Math council hosted it's first enrichment program on October 5th with the Museum of Science presenting "Motion: Force and Work" to the 5th grade at the Field school gym. Additionally, the council was able to coordinate a presentation by Brainetics at the Field School on October 26th and the Middle School on October 27th. Brainetics is math and memory system that teaches skills of focus, problem solving and memory improvement, particularly as it relates to math.

For the months of November and December, we are preparing for the Musuem of Science's next visits to the Woodland and Country Schools. They will be presenting Electromagnitism to the 3rd grade. Museum of Science also visits the 4th grade in mid-December, presenting Geology Rock Detectives.

Finally, Marilyn Savage, our High School Iason is sponsoring a mentoring session for 10th grade highschool students who will be launching a six week unit of independent research projects. Last year, we recruited nine parent volunteers from Harvard, MIT, Brandeis, Genzyme etc. all working in scientific capacities to sit with the students and advise to the content, feasibility and management of their projects. We are currently looking for volunteers to help students toward the end of January with their independent research projects. If you know anyone with a science and math background or have any interest in acting as a mentor, please contact Denise and Lilly.

WEBMASTERS: Suzanne Lenox

Not present.

WESTONPAC: Kim Costello

Not present.

METCO: Keitric Johnson

JR thanked everyone for their help with the METCO family and friends ice cream social.

October 20th is the next METCO meeting. November 8th is the Weston/METCO joint meeting to take place in Boston this year. The Gospel Jubilee will take place on January 28th. They are working on fundraising. The fruit sale is ongoing.

WCCA: Alison Slater

I. First Annual WCCA School Age Mini Marathon: will take place this Saturday morning, October 15, 8:30-10AM at the Field School Field. We have 120 k-3rd graders signed up from both Woodland and Country. Kids will run by grade, every participant will receive a t-shirt and medal. Kids have been encouraged to raise extra money for the Blue Hill Boys and Girls Club. Of the 120 kids signed up, only 42% are WCCA members. This shows that interest for such an event is town wide and not just limited to WCCA member families, many of whom don't yet have children who are school age. In planning this event, we have worked closely with the principals of both country and woodland as well as the gym teachers at each school who have incorporated "training" for the mini-marathon into their gym classes this fall.

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. The WCCA is co-sponsoring the Elizabeth Englander talk on Nov. 1 with the PTO and have been advertising the event to our membership.

General Question: For both the mini-marathon and the movie night and other WCCA school age family events, is there someone specific on the PTO board we should be collaborating with who is in charge of planning PTO family events?

WEEFC: Joan Heilbronner

Joan reported that WEEFC is already working hard on the auction. There are great items out already. There is a committee meeting on the 19th at 9am. Decoration days is coming up.

Photo days with coffee pond is on the 15th and the 22nd. There is space still available. WEEFC gets a portion of the sitting fees.

The meeting adjourned at 10:45am.

