

Washington School PTO Minutes

September 12, 2011

Call to Order: by Courtney Turnbull 6:35 at Washington School

Board Members in attendance: Courtney Turnbull, Amie Keeton, Stephanie Reed, Danny & Diane Uhls, Angie Baker, Amanda Mateer

Attendees: Josh & Tammy Houtzel, Karen Zolfaghari, George Tabatadze, Kelly Nolan, Gregory Braswell, Michelle Sleevar, Marsha Veninga, Becky Bols, Kalpana Bandela

Teachers: Mrs. Mathy, Ms. Killian, Judy Szabo

Principal: Jeff Lockenvitz

Minutes from May meeting approved.

Board member reports:

Principal Report

2011-2012 Proposed Budget: Expenses \$34,400 and Income \$32,500. After various minor adjustments the budget was approved. Mr. Lockenvitz advised the district provided \$25,000 for new furniture including: 80 new desks for 5th grade, 6 new teacher desks, cabinet, 17 rectangular tables, 5 half moon tables, conference table and chairs and podium stand.

Total enrollment is up to 512 students. Washington School added an additional 1st grade class, 4 new teachers and an office assistant: Mrs. Beecher (office asst.), Mrs. Fehr (1st grade), Ms. Sands (2nd grade), Mrs. Weddington (3rd grade) and Mr. Jones (5th grade). Mrs. Fehr was moved to the art room and art is being taught in the classrooms.

Parent Teacher Conferences – ISAT/SAT 10 student performances – Report cards will not be distributed for the first quarter, instead, parents are asked to make appointments for parent/teacher conferences. Teachers have been given permission to hold conferences either before or after school during the week of **October 24-27 or during the day on Friday, October 28th**. We ask for only one conference per student. Student scores on the ISAT from last April will be presented at the parent/teacher conferences in October along with the SAT 10 tests that students took this fall. To schedule a conference, please contact your student's teacher.

Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) system – We have taught students the Washington Way (Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Ready and Be Safe) and we also say the Wolf Creed each morning after the Pledge of Allegiance. Our expectations for various areas

have been taught to students and are posted throughout the building. Periodically, we reward students who have earned “Blue tickets” for achieving expectations.

United Way Campaign – We will hold a campaign for the United Way in October. Students may purchase Wolf Paws for \$1.00. The Students can color the paws and they will be hung in the main hall. Also, for \$5.00, students may paint a wolf paw print in the cafeteria.

Web Site Update – We are working to update the web site and have a lot of information available. Please contact Mrs. Beecher in the office to add information or corrections.

Halloween – A parent letter related to Halloween will be sent home in early October. We will have the usual parade on Monday, October 31 at 2:30 pm.

Arrival/Dismissal – Overall, things seem to be working well. We appreciate your patience and thank you for following our directives for using the queue system. We are still working to make the whole system as good as it can get. If you have comments, questions or concerns please contact Mr. Lockenvitz.

Note from your Cafeteria - We have been serving vegetables from our own garden at lunch and they are a big hit. Many parents are using www.mylunchmoney.com to pay for student meals online with a credit card or debit card. If you have questions about your student’s lunch account, please call your cafeteria manager or the Food & Nutrition Office at 827.6031, x-227.

We.Fit.In – Mrs. Szabo along with Mrs. Barger are working on our school fundraiser. This is an exciting way to encourage physical fitness and raise some substantial funds for Washington School. Funds collected will be used to revamp and update the school library, hallways, purchase additional technology resources (Clicker Systems) and to provide classrooms with additional resources.

Volunteers – We value the close partnership established between the school and home and recognize the importance of the numerous volunteers who help at school. To help us ensure that our students are safe we require volunteers to sign up and provide consent for a brief inquiry. A volunteer must complete either one of two forms and return them to the office. The whole process takes about 48 hours and will need to be completed prior to working in the school.

We have completed the Dibels Next testing SRI and the SAT 10 testing and will continue with the Discovery Assessment testing next week. All of these provide us with different information and we use it to guide our instruction.

President report

Founders' Grove Donation - \$600 donation was made to Washington School PTO and Oakland School PTO. Terry Houtzel suggested the money be used for supplies and up keep of Wolf Park garden. Motion to use funds for Wolf Park, motion was approved.

PTO Express Emails (PEX) – Approximately 235 parent/staff email addresses are in the system. The newsletter was successfully sent using PEX and further information and announcements will be sent via this system. Amie advised a volunteer is needed to maintain this database and information/announcements.

Vice President report

Stephanie advised they have volunteers for pizza with Grandparents on September 21, 22 and 23rd. Due to the limited space in the cafeteria, Ms. Killian suggested we get additional volunteers to serve grandparents directly at the table. This may decrease the congestion in the food line and improve traffic flow. She will work with Stephanie and Amanda to see if this would work better and get additional volunteers.

Secretary report

No report

Treasurer report

Danny reported the current balance is approximately \$20,000. Diane advised there is a submission form for expense reimbursement available in the office and online at the school website. Also, she has available a magazine, Jumpin! Connecting Home & School, from PTO Express. It has lots of good information for parents who want to get involved.

Teacher Reps

Mrs. Mathy - Thank you for 1st teacher breakfast!

Committee Updates

Chess Club – Rahul Bafna reports Washington School Chess Club starts September 21, 2011. The club meets every Wednesday from 3:15 to 4:15 pm. The Friday chess tournament last year was a success so we decided to host a Saturday tournament this year. We have reserved December 3rd for Washington School Chess Tournament and the Bloomington Normal Scholastic Area Chess (BNASC.org) website is updated with this information. At the beginning of last year, we were short of funds to run the chess club, but we are happy to report that last year's tournament gave us enough funds to cover all the expenses. In fact, we still have funds

left over from last year in our Chess Club account. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped us make the first tournament a great success.

It takes over \$1500 a year to run the Chess club which includes our chess coach fee. Our expenses increased last year because as of 2009, we no longer had a parent volunteer coaching free of charge who also brought in a State Farm good neighbor grant. We found another coach last year, Joe Alford, who is one of the top coaches in Bloomington Normal and a Class A player. He will coach this year as well. We hope to have about \$2000 in our chess account if our 2012 tournament is as successful as we have planned.

Volunteers are essential to the chess clubs' success. We had very good help last year and will need more this year especially with a Saturday tournament. To volunteer to help at a tournament or on Wednesday nights please call Rahul Bafna at 309-287-0293 or email bafnafamily@gmail.com.

Science Club – Marsha Veninga reports this is her third year teaching Science Club. It is sponsored by the PTO and available to 3rd – 5th grade students. There is no charge to students for participation in this club. Classes are separated into 8 week terms and meet on Tuesdays from 3:15 to 4:15. Nineteen students are enrolled at this time. A club project includes the Terracycle program which collects zipper bags and storage containers, juice pouches, chip bags, candy wrappers, glue sticks and bottles. She is in the process of purchasing a new and improved container system for this program. Marsha offered to help teach lunch staff and students the new collection system for Terracycle, recycle, compose and garbage material when it is available.

Junior Great Books – Michelle Sleevar proposed a possible change in the program. Junior Great Book curriculum was designed for classroom use and perhaps not ideally suited for a fun, leisurely activity for lunch/recess time. She likes the Reading Wolves program which promotes contemporary literature and provides the kids their own books to keep. Michelle would like to explore the option of changing to a program like Reading wolves or combining with the current Reading Wolves program. The teacher representatives will meet with book coordinators to discuss options and bring topic to future meeting.

Back to School Picnic – Kalpana Bandela reports they are purchasing food for 800 people this year. McDonald's is donating cookies and orange drink. We may also provide lemonade. All other supplies has been purchased. Estimated cost not expected to exceed \$1300. More volunteers are needed to help with this event.

New Business

Mrs. Szabo – We.Fit.In – This program is designed to promote physical fitness and raise funds for Washington School. Students raise funds and earn fitness prizes. An envelope detailing the prize and donation structure will be going out this week. Students have three weeks to raise money. There are new t-shirts for prizes which were a big hit last year. Mrs. Szabo, Stacy Barger and Mr. Lockenvitz will contact last year sponsors hoping to get them to sponsor again this year. In return for donations, sponsors get as much advertising as we can provide (newsletter, signs). \$250 is the minimum donation to be a sponsor. Any help increasing sponsorship is appreciated. Teachers will be allowed to purchase t-shirts, possibly even with their name printed on the back.

Ms. Killian – Scholarships – Last year the PTO voted to offer 2 scholarships for \$250 to former Washington School students graduating from Bloomington High School. After researching other school scholarship programs, Ms. Killian thinks offering 1 scholarship of \$500 is more significant to an applicant. Discussion included ideas about how to increase amount even further. Topic will be discussed further at future meeting.

Market Day – Karen Zolfaghari advised first Market Day earnings were \$110. She would like to reduce the number of flyers distributed perhaps by sending one per household. Like last year, earning will be allocated to a specific grade each month: Aug – PTO, Sept – 4th grade, Oct – 5th grade, Nov – Kindergarten, Jan 5th – PTO, Jan 30th – 2nd grade, Feb – 1st grade, Apr – 3rd grade and May – Specialists. Ms. Killian will encourage teachers to get parent involvement per grade. A note will go out explaining orders not picked up on Market Day have to be paid by PTO funds. Also, there is limited space in the freezer to store orders that are not picked up.

Motion to adjourn by Amie at 8:15.