**Wheelock PTO Meeting Minutes**

**March 9, 2017**

**Attendees:** Donna Olson, Jessica Kemp, Amanda Spears, Karen Seitz, Kelly Wysocki, Jill Werner

5 of 5 Executive board members were present allowing a quorum to vote:

**Vice President’s Report:** Karen Seitz is leading the organization of the upcoming Ice Cream Social which will be held Thursday, March 30th from 5:30-7:30 PM. There will be ice cream served in the cafeteria and there will be a DJ playing music in the gym. Karen will be sending out a SignUp Genius to recruit volunteers to help out the night of the social and to request donations of various sundae toppings. The ice cream will be ordered from Dawn with food services here at Wheelock. This year, there will be an ice cream alternative for those with allergies. Order sheets will go home prior to the event. Pricing will the be the same as last year and there will be angel fund availability as well. There is a need to secure some small prizes to give to the DJ for distribution after some of his dance games. Keep an eye out for a flyer in an upcoming Wheelock NewsFlash.

There was also a discussion about volunteer responsibilities and the budget related to decorating the bulletin board and flower pots near the front entrance. Karen will be contacting the volunteers to start the changeover to spring decorations. We discussed the need to provide clear communication regarding process, calendar, items that are available for reuse, storage options, and budget availability.

**Treasurer’s Report:**

Kelly Wysocki shared the budget and the recent cash flow reports. Currently, we are on budget. Recent payments include performance costs (Tanglewood Marionettes) and the slide repair out on the playground. There will be additional upcoming payments for the Wheelock Reads programming.

Kelly followed up on an unanticipated bank fee that had occurred. It turns out it was in error, and it has been removed.

The grant to cover the slide led the group to talk about the playground and its current condition and its future. There is a budget item for replacement of worn/missing playground supplies, but there was a discussion about whether there should be a line in the budget for playground maintenance/reserves. This would make money available for specific updates and problems that arise regarding the playground structures. On the topic of the recess play areas, Donna shared the exciting news that the Boy Scouts will be building a GaGa Ball pit at Wheelock.

This further led to a discussion about the PTO and their investment approach. Should the PTO choose a big item to focus on each year? Should there be more of a goal-oriented fundraising approach so families donating know specifically what some of their money is going towards?

We also talked about the 3rd Grade DVD, which is a video yearbook that is traditionally given to 3rd graders that are leaving Wheelock and heading onto Dale. The money from the DVD sales does come to the PTO. The pulling together of the DVD has proved challenging in recent years. There was a brainstorming session regarding what other ways we could provide a meaningful and memorable parting gift for graduating 3rd graders (book, imovie, other software programs that could make the collection of pictures easier, downloadable version as opposed to DVD) This year, the DVD will continue as it has in the past. Nothing was decided for the future.

**Secretary’s Report:**

Minutes are now voted on between meetings and will be posted via the newsflash following every PTO meeting. They will also be posted on the PTO Website.

**Principal’s Report:**

Donna Olson expressed great thanks for the grants the PTO has provided to the school. Most recently, she is thankful for the quick response to the slide repair grant. This repair will bring much happiness to the students during their recess time. Donna checks with her teachers regularly to see how they feel about the cultural arts programming that is brought to the school. The teachers continue to approve the performances and the children enjoy them tremendously too. The Tanglewood Marionettes was one of the recent performance groups brought to Wheelock and funded by the PTO.

In a collaboration with the Dale school, Donna is bringing a special performance group called Urban Improv to Wheelock. The group will be performing to 3rd graders on May 16th (postponed from a March date due to a snow day.) Their show will address self-esteem and confidence and will touch a little on bullying as well.

The Read Across America week went well. There were many different themes across the week. One of the most special days involved The Definition Day Parade which included all Wheelock students marching. There was some feedback from parents that managing the different spirit days was a little challenging, but overall the week was a great success! Wheelock Reads is an even bigger reading celebration that will be taking place later this spring. Stay tuned for the exciting programming to come! Please check the Wheelock Flash for all important dates and communications!

Other grant work that Donna will be pursuing this spring involve the MCPE Maguire Award nomination and the MCPE Busconi Grant. She will also be writing a Wrap-up grant where she is surveying the Wheelock teachers regarding needs within their classrooms and the grant will help fund needed sensory tools and classroom items.

A most special addition to Wheelock has been Franklin, the new therapy dog. Donna reports one of the smoothest returns from a vacation week and she thinks Franklin is a big part of that. Kelley Kennedy is Franklin’s new owner and handler and she helped bring Franklin to Wheelock. Before the February break, students learned that Franklin would be joining the school. They had an assembly where they learned the do’s and don’ts of interacting with a therapy dog in our school. Franklin started at school following the February break and he has been both a calming and motivating presence since his arrival. As Franklin is getting acclimated to Wheelock, Kelley and Donna are working on creating a schedule that allows for his shared accessibility. Some of the ways students could be interacting with Franklin are classroom and student visits, reading to him, writing letters to him (Franklin’s mailbox), Skyping with him from classroom to classroom, incorporating him into the Hoot raffle choices, and scheduling exercise periods with him.

There has been some confusion around the town and parent population about who funded Franklin. Donna has shared this information in her Principal’s coffee and her Newsflash. Training a dog like Franklin takes 2 years and can cost up to $40,000. This training is completed by **NEADS** (National Education for Assistance Dog Services) This was not funded by the district and it was not funded by the school. Franklin was found to be a great fit as a therapy dog for Wheelock and he was matched up with his new handler, Kelley Kennedy. Kelley has to do continued training with Franklin. She will also have to raise $8,000 in the next 2-3 years that she must pay back to the NEADS foundation. The Wheelock community and the PTO are proud to support Franklin in our school and we hope to help support Kelley in her fundraising efforts. Fun Franklin-welcoming activities will be planned in the next few months.

**Updates**:

Box Tops collection and competition amongst the schools is ongoing.

The PTO is still looking to secure all its officer positions for next year. Sarah Powers has volunteered to take on the Vice President role. There has also been some interest expressed in the 2nd Grade Co-President role.

**WInter Carnival Update:** Amanda Spears and Kelly Wysocki are heading up the Winter Carnival fundraiser this year. Saturday, March 11th is the big day. The carnival will run from 11-3 at the Memorial school. Things are in good shape.

Amanda is very pleased with the overwhelmingly supportive response in terms of corporate sponsorship, individual donations of money and items, general ticket sales, Angel ticket purchases, lunch donations, and Sweets & Treats bake sale donations. The community has been amazingly generous and it is so appreciated.

Kelly also shares that the Wheelock staff has been incredibly supportive as well. PTO asked for teacher feedback about if they would like to and how they could play a role in the Winter Carnival. The feedback helped the committee find special roles for Wheelock teachers and specialists looking to be a part of the fun day. Keep an eye out for them!

**Next Meeting: Thursday, May 4th 9:00 AM**