**Wheelock PTO Meeting Minutes**

**May 4, 2017**

**Attendees:** Donna Olson, Amanda Spears, Karen Seitz, Kelly Wysocki, Jill Werner, Mary Fraser, Maureen Dodge, Karen Vazquez

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

It is the last meeting of the 2016-2017 school year. Jessica Kemp (3rd Grade CoPresident) and Karen Seitz (Vice President) will be leaving their current positions after 2 years of service at the end of this school year. A big thanks for all that they have done!! They will be helping with the transition as we welcome new officers to the board. Amanda Spears will move to 3rd Grade CoPresident, Kelly Wysocki will remain Treasurer, and Jill Werner will remain Secretary. Maureen Dodge is interested in taking on the 2nd Grade CoPresident role and Sarah Powers is interested in taking over the Vice President role.

There was a motion to vote in the new officers and all approved. We will be looking forward to working with the new PTO board.

**Vice President’s Report:**

Karen Seitz was pleased with the volunteer involvement this year. She will be working on transitioning her job responsibilities to new Vice President Sarah Powers. They will work to get a new volunteer sign up form out in June to start planning for the 2017-2018 school year.

Karen questioned whether there were any gaps in the volunteer needs that may need addressing going forward. Kelly shared it would be helpful to have a contact person that supports the planning of Performing Arts programs. This person would help ensure programming payment needs are communicated in a timely manner so that performers can receive their payments promptly. Donna mentioned that this was a role that existed previously and agreed that it would be helpful to the teachers to have a type of “Program Event Coordinator.” This coordinator could help teachers manage (schedule, book, confirm, and pay) different performing arts groups that help enhance learning at Wheelock. This liason role would hopefully alleviate grade level leaders, Erin Watson and Kayla Laliberte, of the extra work involved in planning these special visits and programs. It would also create a streamlined process where Kelly would have advanced noticed on invoices coming due. There was an agreement to reinstate this volunteer liason position going forward.

**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.

**MCPE Report**

Mary Fraser shared that MCPE has awarded $130,000 in grants this year. There are 10 more grants to vote on next week. On the 18th of May, MCPE will hold their annual meeting where they vote in the new board. As a first this year, MCPE received a student-proposed grant. Historically, MCPE grants are written by the principals. MCPE wants to encourage parents, teachers, and students to put forth their thoughts and ideas for grants. They are open to exploring them!

MCPE Spelling Bee was a success. The new team options of 2-4 players worked well. The LCR tournament was also a great success. These 2 events alone brought in $9-10,000.

In the past, MCPE has held monthly meetings for voting on grants. Next year they will be scheduling 4 meetings a year, so there may be a little more time passing between grant approvals.

**Principal’s Report:**

Donna Olson shares that it was a busy year that required adjustments by all. The additional half hour added to the school day was a particularly impactful change for Wheelock. It adjusted not only the start and end times of the day, but also brought about the need for some role adjustments throughout the day. The school relied heavily on aides to fill in for coverage and duties that the teachers no longer fill. It took some time at the beginning of the year but Wheelock successfully adapted to these changes and it has been a great year of growth.

Wheelock staff is continually pursuing professional development that supports long range plans across the curricular areas. This year marks the wrapping up of 4 years of math professional development supporting the Envisions math curriculum. There was a Math Family Game night Wednesday, May 3rd, where students got to show off their math knowledge.

There will be continuing professional development in the area of literacy. Literacy Specialist, Jamee Callahan, will be supporting this. There will also continue to be further professional development in the area of Science. Some teachers have been piloting FOSS kits for science this year and there will be more time, resources, and materials focused in the area of science going forward.

One of Donna’s goals for next year is to continue to provide professional development opportunities for teachers that don’t take them away from their classrooms. Instead of having the programming embedded into the school day, pulling teachers away from their classroom, the majority of professional development will occur during common planning time and after school next year.

Donna feels that the PTO and the school have worked successfully together again this year. There have been many PTO sponsored performances and presentations that continue to enhance the learning that is going on in the 2nd and 3rd grade classrooms. Donna regularly checks with teachers to make sure they feel that the current line up of performances achieves this important goal. Donna thanks the PTO for their help in financially supporting this type of programming at the school.

Donna also thanks the PTO and hospitality committee for the Teacher Appreciation Week treats that have been provided this week.

Donna continues to encourage consistency across the grade level while still supporting teacher individuality. A recent hot topic nationwide has been the topic of homework at the elementary school level. Donna and the other elementary principals are exploring the homework topic. Donna is reviewing with staff what homework looks like at Wheelock in the different classrooms. She gave a homework survey to her teachers and received really great feedback as a result. As the year is coming to an end, Donna has encouraged teachers to pilot (for a week or two) new homework approaches in their classrooms. She just asks that the teachers clearly communicate any homework changes with parents and that as part of the piloting, that they then survey for parent feedback in response to the trials. Expect that there will be continued exploration of the topic of homework across the district!!

**Updates**:

**Winter Carnival:** The Winter Carnival was a great success, bringing in around $40,000 which will be split between Memorial and Wheelock. Volunteers stepped up and helped make the day a success. The Silent Auction was a big money maker. Food, baskets, and corporate sponsors also brought in good money. Teacher and principal participation at the carnival was a hit with all the families. Even Franklin made an appearance.

**Box Tops**: Memorial won the town-wide Box Top collection competition, but Wheelock still managed to bring $300 in from Box Top Collection.

**Rocky Woods Coordinator:** Karen Vazquez will be stepping in as the new Rocky Woods coordinator. She will be replacing longtime coordinator, Deeni Stevens. At PIN night in the fall, Karen will be putting out an initial request asking for volunteers to help make the day at Rocky Woods a day the kids will never forget. Karen will receive money from the PTO to help support her as she takes on this big project. The PTO encouraged her to come back if she needs any additional support or replacement materials for the program.

**Upcoming Events:**

The PTO will be doing the school supply kits again this year. There will be a 2 week ordering period that will open at the end of the month. There was great feedback on these kits from both families and teachers last year. The Wheelock PTO will be keeping the Wheelock school supply kit pricing the same as it was last year. The PTO would like to order Angel Kits to provide for families who can’t afford to buy the kits. Donna will help us establish an appropriate number of Angel Kits to order. The PTO will work on improving Angel Fund communication to families.

**Treasurer’s Report/New Business**

With around 6 weeks of school left to go, Kelly reports that there is about $3000 currently left over in the budget. That number will decrease with some end of year payments. Most anticipated expenses operated close to on budget this year with some budgeted items left untouched and with a few coming up slightly under budget. Some of this extra money allowed for Board Approved Donations across the year, including a class set of lap desks, slide repair, and bins for the library to name a few.

In terms of incoming money, the Winter Carnival gets the greatest recognition bringing in $20,000, but many other fundraisers helped build up the cash flow. The Ice Cream Social and the Book Fair brought in almost $2000, Box Tops brought in $500, and the ski rentals brought in another $500. The School Supply Kit sales were another great success and it is anticipated that it may be even more successful next year.

The PTO is a nonprofit and we are in good shape financially, so we decided we’d like to take some money in the budget and offer a “Classroom Improvement Stipend” or an “End of Year Improvement” amount to teachers and specialists. With many classrooms getting extremely hot this time of year, the PTO would like to offer teachers a nice, new fan for their room or a set amount of money to be donated to the teacher’s Thank You Fund. (This money can then be used to support classroom needs as the teacher chooses.)

In terms of the proposed budget for 2017-2018, the PTO increased the Luncheon (hospitality) line item with hopes of encouraging the hospitality committee to use the money to run teacher luncheons and rely less heavily on family donations. The PTO also increased the Playground Equipment line item, allowing for a substantial fall purchase of outdoor recess/playground items and a spring purchase/replenishment as well. Next year’s proposed budget will be $24,725.

Next year, Donna encouraged and PTO board members agreed that the PTO should come and speak at an early faculty meeting where they could meet the teachers and give them a better understanding of how the PTO would like to support them in their teaching. This meeting could also serve to demystify the grant writing process and encourage more curriculum enhancing grant requests.

There was a motion to approve the 2017-2018 Proposed Budget. The board voted and all approved the new budget.

**Grants:**

Donna shared an end of the year wish list that she and her teachers generated. She shared this list with the PTO in hopes of receiving some funding for the items on the list.

The PTO approved the funding of an Indoor Recess bucket for each of the classrooms. (With teacher feedback, we’ll supply items that can be used for play during indoor recess periods.)

The PTO approved a Walkie Talkie for The Walking Club

The PTO approved 2 sets of noise cancellation headphones for each classroom.

The PTO chipped in $100 toward the purchase of additional Lapdesk sets as part of a bigger grant request that Donna will be sending to MCPE.

The PTO postponed a vote on a World Language Arts performance grant with intentions of revisiting it in the fall.

**Next Meeting: TBD Sept 2017**