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General Board Meeting

Tuesday, September 9, 2014 6:30PM – 8:30PM

JB Watkins Elementary School Cafeteria

Meeting Minutes

The General Board of J. B. Watkins PTA was called to order at 6:37 pm on September 9, 2014. The following people were present: Kim McComb, Lindsey Whiting, Sarah Porter, Brittany Krebs, Beth Losego, Kerri Potestio, Andrea and Tyler Schmall, Jennifer Underwood, Divya Raman, Jeni Trimmer, Kelly Madures, Maureen Akius, Robyn Bartholomew, Susan Davies, Christan & Peter Karys, J.R. Hogan, Jiaynn Crystal Mantineo, Matt Hassmer, Xiomei Au-Teury, Lauren Kern, Lauren Renschler, Susan Demarest, Gretchen Burch, Amy Shutts, Karen Lawton, Virginia Kasten, Angela Myrick-West, Shannon Underwood, Laura Kurichh, Carrie Saunders, Lucia Osterbind, Gretchen Reid, Violetta Fitzhugh, John Fitzhugh, Mary Patterson, Tracey Malkie, Yvette Thomas, Rebecca Williams, Roxane Harris, Jessica Saunders, Adrienne Haskins, Karen Snidow, Karyn Andersen, Kate Ashley, Alda Anthony, Dana Gates, Tammy MacNeil, Shara Hamilton, Jennifer Beall, Rachel Carlson, Katherine Barnes, Mandy Bracey, Jenny Ferraro, Kimberly Cousins, Emily Pytlik, Martha Smith, Mary Hunter Ayer and Jennifer Salley.

Call to Order

Maggi Lewis, president, called the meeting to order at 6:36 pm.

Approval of Minutes

Kim McComb, secretary, asked if there were any changes to the meeting minutes from June 10, 2014. There were no changes and the minutes were approved as written.

Report of the Treasurer

Shelley Neofotistos, treasurer, presented the proposed budget for the 2014-2015 school year. She announced that budgets were available at the check-in table for viewing during the meeting. She also announced that the annual audit is complete and went well.

Shelley then explained the process for PTA reimbursements and check requests. The forms for these will be placed on the PTA website, jbwpta.com, or you can email Shelley with questions at treasurer@jbwpta.com.

Communications

Kim McComb, secretary, mentioned that the PTA has received many thank you notes from the teachers thanking the PTA for the wonderful Back to School breakfast and the treats in their boxes.

President's Report

Maggi Lewis, president, welcomed everyone to the first PTA meeting. She then encouraged everyone to check out the new JBW PTA website at jbwpta.com. It is still being worked on, but within the next couple of weeks it will contain a wealth of helpful information. Please send any suggestions to Maggi at president@jbwpta.com to help improve our website.

She then introduced and welcomed the new Administration of J.B. Watkins. Mrs. Kimberly Cousins, Principal, Ms. Karyn Andersen, Assistant Principal, and Karen Snidow, Administrative Assistant.

Reports of Standing Committees

Website: *Gretchen Reid*

Gretchen mentioned that the new website is jbwpta.com. It is currently a work in progress, but does include Box Tops information and a PTA calendar. It should be completely up and running in a few weeks.

Box Tops: Kris Perko/Robyn Bartholomew

Kris gave an explanation that Box Tops are on lots of different items, not just food items. You just need to clip them and send them in with your child in baggie with the teacher's name on it. There is a collection box in every classroom. The school PTA gets 10 cents for every Box Top, which adds up. Our first collection will be Friday, September 19. The class with the most Box Tops will win the Summer Challenge and will receive a classroom party.

After the Summer Challenge we will collect Box Tops for the end of the year collection. The winning class at the end of the year will receive an Ice Cream Sundae party.

Box Tops gave our school a goal of \$1000, however we have set our own goal at \$4500.

Kris is also looking for a Kindergarten parent helper to assist with collection and clipping the box tops. Robyn provided a handout showing the growth of our Box Top program over the last couple of years. She also mentioned that the online Box Top program is no longer available.

Denim Drive: Tracey Malkie

Tracey explained that the Denim Drive is currently collecting any type of used denim. Tracey will collect denim from the collection bin in the school cafeteria or you may contact her to drop them off at her house. She will turn in the schools denim collection on the Double Denim Days. The deadline to turn in denim is September 23.

Yearbook: Amy Shutts/Sherry Tremper

Amy encouraged ALL parents to be a part of the production of the yearbook. All parents can send in pictures for possible use in the yearbook. There are also opportunities to be on the yearbook committee. Contact Amy or Sherry at yearbook@jbwpta.com with questions or to volunteer to be on the committee.

The goal is to have all yearbook orders and payments to be done online at:

<http://osp.osmsinc.com/chesterfieldva/> . If prompted to enter the student number please call the JBW office and they will provide you with your child's number.

Staff Appreciation: Mary Patterson

Mary explained that the Staff Appreciation committee provides little treats for teachers at various times throughout the school year. They also provide monthly luncheons for the teachers. Different grade level parents provide these each month. The 5th grade parents will be donating items and time for the first luncheon on October 16.

Coke Rewards: Shara Hamilton

Shara explained that we also collect Coke bottle tops and earn points for these. With the points we can buy school supplies, gym supplies, paper, etc... We are half way to our goal of 10,000 points. There is a collection box in the mailroom adjacent to the school main office. You can also send these into teachers with the Box Tops and they will be delivered to the correct box. You can also register online and choose to donate the points to our school without having to send in items.

Shara is looking for someone to help here with data entry. Please contact her at sharahamilton@gmail.com if you are interested.

Administrator's Report

Kimberly Cousins, Principal, introduced herself and thanked all of the teachers for coming as well. She mentioned that the first week of school was the smoothest start to a school year that she's

experienced in her 12 years as an Administrator. She stated that she hired 8 new faculty members over the summer months. She thanked the current faculty for being a great support to the newest faculty members.

The projected enrollment at Watkins was 980 students, and as of September 9 they are at 1030 students. With this huge enrollment they have successfully gotten all classrooms into the building, except for the 5th grade, which is in the Mega trailer.

Ms. Cousins then referred to the Voicemail that parents received over Labor Day weekend explaining new procedures for the school year. Then she took time to expand on these new procedures.

First, it is imperative that all visitors sign in using the computer in the office. She then explained that while the decision to have no lunch visitations during the first 2 weeks of school was unpopular, it was for safety of the children. It is very important for all students to learn who works at the school for their own safety and security. She stated that she would put our kids first! All parents will be invited to return during lunch beginning on September 15.

Second, she attended to the new dismissal plan. Ms. Cousins met with security, police, teachers and Dr. Scott last spring. The biggest concern was with safety and she has made it her goal to know where ALL kids are at ALL times. She asked parents to please be patient with the delay in the busses leaving school in the afternoon. It is not the fault of the school; they have to wait for busses to get to Watkins after completing middle and high school bus routes. This delay is already improving. The first day busses left at 4:36 and today, September 9 they left at 4:05. The school's goal is to have busses pull out by 3:55 pm.

Third, Ms. Cousins addressed the new Parent Pick up procedure. She stated that all daycare van riders and parent pick up students are dismissed first, to the cafeteria and the gym. Once all students are in the gym/cafeteria and the school day ends, the doors will be opened and manned by staff. This cannot happen until the school day is over at 3:45. There are many parents that opt to pick up their children at the end of the day, causing a long line.

At this time multiple parents expressed concern about the long line and length of time that it is taking at parent pickup. They also asked if there would be a contingency plan during bad weather. Ms. Cousins said that they were in the process of working on a contingency plan, but the safety of the children at dismissal continues to be her first concern. Two parents and two teachers also spoke in favor of the new parent pickup procedure, stating that they appreciate the new safety measure and the much more organized dismissal.

Fourth, Ms. Cousins addressed an issue that has been popping up around the county about removal of recess. She stated that she wants kids to move, all students are encouraged to move at recess, and all students in all grades will continue to have recess at J.B. Watkins.

Fifth, she announced that all students are welcome to bring in a snack each day. Grades K-2 have a designated time for snack, and grades 3-5 have a "working snack".

Finally, she stated that many in the community are concerned about how Dreambox will be integrated into the schools. Ms. Cousins stated that they are still trying to figure out how to make Dreambox work best in our school. She will roll it out, but going slow with it to ensure it is done properly.

At this time Ms. Cousins allowed teachers to speak to share any experiences from the first 2 weeks of school.

Mary Hunter Ayer, 4th grade teacher, stated that this years dismissals have been the best in her 37 years of teaching.

Emily Pytlik, 3rd grade teacher, stated that she supports the changes and improvements.

Martha Smith, 1st grade teacher, stated that she's been teaching for 29 years. She knows that change is very hard, but it really has been a nice change.

New Business

A motion was made to pass the 2014-2015 proposed budget. A vote was taken and passed unanimously. A vote was also taken at the two Back to School Nights on September 23 and September 30. Again the budget passed unanimously.

Maggi Lewis, president, stated that we are near our goal for the PTA fundraiser, but encouraged parents to continue to send in donations.

She announced that in the spring parents will have an opportunity to buy Entertainment Coupon Books and the PTA will receive a percentage of these sales. This will not be a fundraiser, just an opportunity for those interested.

Maggi then gave a brief explanation of the events and programs that the J.B. Watkins PTA sponsors. The three big events are the Pumpkin Lighting, the Watkins Wiggle, and the Spring Carnival.

She mentioned that there are still lots of volunteer opportunities in the PTA. The Reflections chair, Kelly Madures, is looking for help with her committee. The Reflection theme this year is "World Will Be a Better Place If...". Information will be coming out about this soon.

The PTA's biggest need for volunteers is a chairperson for the Watkins Wiggle, Volunteer Coordinator, Ways and Means chairperson and a WEP (Watkins Enrichment Program) co-chair.

Our school has partnered with the Chick fil a in Westchester Commons for this year. They are great partners with our PTA by supplying coupons for our staff and students, catered the teacher breakfast, and much more. This year the teachers will be invited to attend Chick fil a nights to spin the prize wheel. Mrs. Cousins also mentioned that maybe the administrators would also come out to spin the wheel.

Announcements

The next PTA meeting will be on October 14 at 6:30 pm.

Remember to sign up for volunteer positions.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55.

Approved as written _____ date _____