

Winooski PTO Meeting Minutes Wednesday, September 15, 2021

Attendees: Laura Lee, Kate Simone, Chris Freije, Amelie Thurston, Jennifer Milizia, Arica Bronz, Joe Smith, Kate Cappleman Sinz, Keagan Calkins, Lucy D'Aponte, Jessica Audette, Nancy Johnson, Sean McMannon, Sarah McGowan-Freije, Lydia Mungeon, Tori Cleiland, Nikki Cabral, Joy Yonan-Renold

Welcome/Introductions

- Welcome everyone and introductions
 - Name, pronouns, anything else you'd like the group to know
 - Check-in question: *Why are you here tonight?*

Land Acknowledgement

"The PTO would like to acknowledge that we meet in community on Abenaki land. Our city of Winooski reminds us with its Abenaki name, "land of the wild onion" of the indigenous people that lived and stewarded the land of Vermont long before the Europeans arrived in North America. It is with respect and gratitude that we work towards practices of cultural equity to benefit current and future generations."

Amelie read the land acknowledgment.

Timekeeper: Amelie

Sean McMannon, WSD Superintendent

- ***Sean expressed thanks to the team for support provided during the pandemic.***
- ***Sean and some of the leadership team met with the PTO officers this summer to talk about the district's priorities.***
 - WSD focus areas:
 - "Literacy: specifically to support literacy-based events, our book collection and parent support -- ***WSD is embarking on a huge multi-year push to support teachers, augment book (hard copy and electronic) selection for kids, and host events for parents and students.***
 - Anti-racism: specifically parent & community education about Restorative Justice -- ***The school district is working with staff and students. For example, could PTO work with Kayla Loving to work with community members around the subject of restorative justice?***
 - Capital Project: specifically new playground equipment and staff appreciation to reduce organizational stress. -- ***School received \$25K grant yesterday in support of a \$100K project! Hoping to work with HOW and PTO to support that effort.***
 - Questions and discussion
- ***Jess A: Regarding literacy, what do the WSD's expectations look like for PTO?
Sean: Linking all events with literacy somehow (books, author reading, etc.),***

modeling behavior for parents. We could provide \$\$ for books to help rebuild supply lines.

- *Antiracism: Info events for parents around RJ. Work with Kayla Loving, maybe help to provide a welcoming environment, etc.*
- *Playground: total costs of \$100K. Looking for PTO to help with \$20-25K by late winter/early spring.*

Boosters

- Chris's proposal (see next to last page of agenda)
- Discussion (questions and answers) -- 15 minutes
- *Chris read a statement about his thoughts on Boosters. Read Boosters mission statement and PTO's mission statement [see WSD website]. Read July 29 email to officers that he didn't want to be on PTO anymore. Referenced phone call with officers and acknowledged that a group vote would be necessary.*
- *Sean thanked Chris and other members for their service over the years. From the school's perspective, it's challenging to have two separate groups with seemingly competing interests. It would be great to have folks be able to demonstrate unity for our kids. This also would help serve sustainability for the group as a whole in the future.*
- *Chris stated that Boosters plans to pursue its own 501(3)c.*
- *Kate C-S question: What are the plans for including more parents on the Boosters side? Chris says he has lots of folks to help out (parents with kids in sports). Currently the group consists of Chris, Sarah, and Lydia.*
- *Joy: Why this separation? Chris cites how the two groups were always separate in the past (up to a couple of years ago when PTO absorbed the group due to Boosters parents moving on). Could we vote to have Boosters have its own financial arrangement? Lydia also cited historical precedent. What happens if the group votes to keep Boosters in PTO?*
- *Sarah had thoughts on unity. Referenced that the groups had been separate before the recent shift.*
- *Lucy: Can we evolve as a group to move forward? If so, that takes time to figure out.*
- *Joe: Can they continue using their 501(3)c? Can we separate with their own line items and have them operate individually?*
- *Kate C-S: If we can streamline financials, that would be good. Also, this proposed separation seems to align with disagreements the group had last year.*
- *Amelie suggested we have another meeting to hash this out. Lucy suggested we call a special meeting.*
- *Kate S.: Since the decision couldn't be made at this meeting due to time and the fact that Boosters is already active this year, can they get reimbursed for costs incurred this year (pending approval of this year's budget)? The group agreed that this would be appropriate.*
- *A special meeting requires 48 hours written notice. The group agreed to postpone the vote until a special meeting can be called.*

Agreements (for group discussion, suggestions welcome):

- We agree that the PTO's work reflects the dynamic and changing needs of our school district (children, families, teachers, and staff).
- We agree to communicate with kindness and listen with the intent of understanding.
- We agree to respect each other's time.
- We agree that our voices and behavior as members of the PTO represent our school district.
- **Jess: Can we get agendas out sooner so that folks have time to review? Officers (and other members) need to be mindful of folks' time. The officers agreed to get agendas out on the Mondays before the monthly meetings to give everyone a chance to review. Note that last-minute items may get added between Monday and Wednesday due to the reality of the requests we get.**
- **In light of time, the group agreed that folks could think about these agreements and we can revisit at the next meeting.**

Goal Setting

- WSD focus areas
 - **Arica: Interested in the WSD's restorative justice focus, whatever shape that might take related to committees.**
- Ideas for this school year's committees (in light of COVID and construction)
 - Teacher and Staff Support
 - Fundraising (**Does it make sense to combine these? Pre-existing committees should start meeting now if they want**)
 - **Craft Fair -- Not happening this year due to the construction issues. (access for crafters and facilities staff limitations) and COVID. We researched an outdoor event in October but determined that we just didn't have the time or resources to pull it off.**
 - **Fun Dog Show -- Meeting 9/18 at Landry Park at 10AM**
 - **Golf Tournament**
 - Events/Talent Show
 - **PAC celebration?**
 - **Movies?**
 - **Dances?**
 - Inclusion and Outreach
 - **Could include school-parent communications**
 - **Logo/banner/t-shirts**
 - **Incentives to participate**
 - **Could restorative justice go there?**
 - Literacy
 - Boosters (**The group tabled this until a vote can take place on the issue.**)
 - Others

- ***As we did last year, Kate S. to send around a form to let people sign up for committees and/or suggest others. We can plan to circulate names on this before our next meeting in case folks want to get together before that.***
- ***Is there anything coming up that we are going to need to get ready for in the next month? Nothing.***

Secretary's Report

- Approval of May 2021 meeting minutes: ***The group approved the May meeting minutes.***

Treasurer's Report

- Review of reports from June, July, and August 2021

MAY

Program Expenses:

Interest from banks	\$ 0.05
Boosters	\$346.47
Gifts & appreciation	\$184.90
Teacher grants	\$99.95

JUNE

Revenue

Fundraisers (dog show)	\$300
Box tops	\$31.90

Program Expenses

8th grade graduation	\$859.24
Boosters	\$969.81
Family Support Fund	\$500
Gifts and appreciation	\$410.25
Misc. expenditures	\$100
Prom	\$779.25
Teacher grants	\$100

JULY

Revenue

Interest from banks	\$ 0.05
McKee's Ticket Donations	\$7,118.00

Expenses

Fundraising	\$21.39
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AUGUST

Revenue

Golf Tournament \$4566.70

Expenses

Fundraisers \$1316.00

Expenses

Gifts and appreciation \$368.07

CASH ON HAND 8/31/21: \$50,403.22

- 2021/2022 Budget approval
- *Lucy walked the group through the proposed budget.*
- *Jess asked if the \$\$ for the playground request Sean mentioned above. It is not (we only heard this request from Sean at the meeting).*
- *For groups with line items with \$\$ associated, no vote needed.*
- *“DJ Services” cover all events (separate from event costs). The group adjusted the budgeted amount to account for the potential number of dances that could take place at the end of the year.)*
- **ACTION:** *The group approved the 2021/2022 budget.*

New Business

- ECHO STEM program (spring 2022?) *Traveling STEM program. \$1500, conducted in person. Maybe spring? We can revisit this next month.*
- Bookmark competition -- *Can the PTO kick this off? Have kids design bookmarks (choose # of winners/school). These are pretty easy and cheap to print. Prizes for winner could include literacy-related (gift certificate to a bookstore). Could we print all the kids’ bookmarks? Some of the group expressed concern that we won’t be making much money this year and wondered if would we be stretching ourselves too thin. Can we keep spending money before we’ve raised anything? According to Sarah, McKee’s money will still go to PTO (and not Boosters).*
- Spartanwear -- *We’ve never sold anything. Can we get rid of it? ACTION: the group voted to discontinue this.*
- PTO logo/merchandise (see end of agenda) -- *Working with Imaj (group that worked with WSD for logo). The school made the introductions and sanctioned the creation of a logo for the PTO that is similar to that of the WSD. Note that the Spartan head is only supposed to be used for athletic purposes. Image offered to work with us on this for \$300 (would normally be \$1K). Money covers design and final product. Hoping for 2-part vote: 1) dollar amount; 2) which logo?*
 - *Joy: are those leaves in Option 1? Can they be rays of sun instead? She likes O1.*
 - **ACTION:** *The group voted to spend up to \$300 on this.*

- ***ACTION: Laura to ask Image if O1 can look more like rays of sunshine and whether we can get the same designs with a variety of color options/arrangements?***
- ***Mergen's Foundation grant -- This Milton-based group provides funds with a specific focus on literacy and outdoor physical activity. Laura is working on a grant, with the goal of perhaps helping with the playground.***
- ***By-laws Review (e.g., meeting times/dates) -- We need to do this at some point.***
- ***COVID surveillance testing -- Might start 10/6 at school. Emily H reached out to PTO to ask us to help encourage folks to sign up for this. Self-administered in classes. Suggestions requested for incentivizing classes to do this are welcome.***

Funds Requests

- N/A

Upcoming PTO Events/Support

- N/A

PTO Communications/guidelines (Laura reviewed these guidelines with the group.)

- Committee logistics:
 - Committee chairs provide monthly updates at PTO meetings.
 - Committee chairs send bullet point updates for monthly agenda a week prior to meetings.
 - Additional updates to officers may be required depending on circumstances.
 - Committee chairs to copy PTO president on all committee emails.
- Streamlined communications with WSD: All communications need to go through a PTO officer.
- Online facilities registration software (***Krista walked Laura and Kate S. through the software so we can reserve our own spaces at school once in-person events can take place.***)
- ***Jess: Referencing a recent Burlington School District meeting in which the officers explained thinking behind decisions made. Asked for more of this from the PTO officers. The officers noted that some decisions were made/meetings took place over the summer about the craft show and that they did mail the group about those so as to keep everyone in the loop. The group will continue to do this as things come up, noting that we'll be meeting at least monthly going forward.***
- ***Regarding the traditional December McKee's "meeting," Lucy mentioned that there is a "PTO Team Development" category.***

Items for PTO Voting: N/A

Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 20

PTO/Boosters Separation Proposal (Chrs Freije)

9/1: "My proposal for a financial agreement is PTO and Boosters split the proceeds from the golf tournament 50/50, including any money received from Walmart for the two grants we applied for. That would mean \$3,132 would be paid to Boosters after the PTO vote, and then half of any of the grant money we applied for from Walmart that is received would be paid to Boosters."

Logo Ideas

Option 1



Option 2

