**WINNETKA 36 CENTRAL PTO**

**April 8, 2016**

**Minutes**

In attendance: Heather Smith (President), Lynn Wellehan (VP Communications), Amy Polachek (Treasurer), Sara Ridder (Secretary), Trisha Kocanda (Superintendant), Beth Kauffman (President, Crow Island PTO), Kim Ronan (President, Greeley PTO), Jen Hayes (President, Hubbard Woods PTO), Karin Palasz (Co-chair Skokie-Washburne PTO), Heather Pigott (Co-chair Skokie-Washburne PTO)

The meeting was called to order at 9:22

**Secretary’s report – Sara Ridder**

There were no changes or corrections to the minutes. There was a move to approve; this was seconded, and approved by all.

**Nominating – Heather Smith**

Cynthia Cata could not attend so Heather Smith distributed the nomination slate. The committee cast their votes. Results were tallied and announced: the slate was passed unanimously. Heather thanked those who served on the Nominating Committee for their time and assistance with this process. Next year’s committee includes:

**- President:** **Jenny Keller** (HW/SW)

**- VP Communications**: **Brie Root** (HW/SW)

**- Treasurer:** **Julie Eldring** (G/SW)

**- Secretary: Shannon Preda** (CI/SW)

**Treasurer’s Report/Budget Vote – Amy Polachek**

Amy distributed copies of the proposed budget for next year.

Amy reported that we have a buffer of $3,200 to 3,600 in our account. Dues revenue for next year has been forecast at $10,000. Fees will stay the same. Funds we receive in excess of $10,000 will be donated to the Winnetka Public Schools Foundation. This is an appropriate place for the monies because it is a direct link to our schools and touches all children.

It was proposed that we continue to donate to the same four organizations that we have in the past few years: Erica’s Lighthouse, Haven, FAN, and the Alliance for Early Childhood as these four organization tie in across all of the schools. This list was carefully reviewed a couple of years ago. At that time, it was decided to reduce our contribution to FAN to $500 (from $1,000), the same amount we give the others, as they are a parent organization and are also well-funded so do not rely on our contribution as much as the others do.

Amy moved to approve the budget. Heather seconded this. It was unanimously approved.

As a follow up to this conversation, it was recommended that the donation levels for each of the four set charitable organizations be specified on the budget at $500.

Heather made a motion to donate $5,000 to the WPSF. This would leave us with a $3,000 cushion in the bank. Jen seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously.

Next was the bylaws amendment to change the multiple signature requirement on checks, raising it from $500 to $1,000. Amy checked with our accountant to confirm that this is fine. All were in agreement and this was approved.

**Superintendent Report – Trisha Kocanda**

Trisha expressed her appreciation for this group and she is also excited for next year’s slate.

At a recent event for the Northfield-Winnetka Chamber of Commerce there was a special acknowledgement of Hubbard Woods and Crow Island for their milestone anniversaries. The schools are beloved by the community.

The last School Board meeting was a busy one. Major decisions were made:

* Approved STEAM expansion. This will give Greeley and Crow Island funds to invest in STEAM environments, and continue the investment at the other schools
* Approved a $1.1M tax abatement, which means we will collect only what we need from taxpayers. Greg Kerr has refined the forecasting process the District feels comfortable with this.
* Approved the Phase 1 temporary classrooms at Crow Island. This will go before the Village for approval on April 19th. However, the school district has been working closely with the neighbors and Village throughout this process so expecting this to go smoothly.
* Abolished the lunch supervision fee. The District will absorb this cost, which is approximately $150,000. This decision was based on principal.

The board has made a significant effort to connect with the community and stakeholders. Outreach and engagement have been a big priority for them.

PARCC has been smoother this year. The rollout was much improved and communications have been good. While there have been some refusals, this level is lower than last year.

The annual satisfaction survey is coming out on April 18th and will be open until April 28th. The board and administration use this data to inform decisions. It will be included in the mailing of The Learners newsletter.

There is good news on the Hubbard Woods principal search. Overall, there have been about 150 applicants for this position. Interviews with the two finalists took place this last week—and we think we have found the right individual for this role. Currently, they are in the process of contract negotiations. More news will be shared soon.

The next board meeting is on April 19th, and there will be a work session about Kindergarten prior to the meeting itself. This will give the Board time to openly discuss this issue. They need to determine if the benefits of extended day kindergarten justify the costs, and understand the logistics and resources to implement this. It is understood that this is a sensitive issue. Some issues/facts:

* IL state code does mandate that you have to have a ½ day option so you couldn’t introduce new academic content in the afternoon if it is a class with kids that are attending ½ day only.
* If we move forward with full-day kindergarten it needs to be because we believe in it, not just because we are pleasing the parents.
* Environment will remain play based. Kindergarten teachers will probably add more time for art, music, and access to nature.

The Board is being very thoughtful about this and it is important for the community to understand the careful process behind the decision. Ideally, we will have this decided in May or, at the latest, June.

All of the kindergarten playground equipment that was taken out is being replaced. Kim noted this a big topic at Greeley where the neighbors are very interested in what will go in.

MAP testing has emerged as the preferred assessment for students. We are recommending to sample students this May in grades 3-8, with full implementation next year. We also recommend administering the test two times a year, as this longer period of time between sessions to better gauge growth progress will yield more valid data. So, this would probably include testing in September and again in Feb/March. Then if there were areas or students of specific concern, we would then have the opportunity to test them in May as well.

We still do not know how results from PARCC will impact the schools and funding. This information is not yet available to us.

In April there will be a presentation on Science Next Generation Science Standards. 60-80% of science curriculum content is going to be new and will be phased in over two years.

Trisha is focused on creating a coordinated Parent Education effort. A course catalog will be put together next year and Susan Hugebeck has stepped forward to organized this, with help from Julie. Topic deas from this group are appreciated. Upcoming Parent Education programs include:

* Teacher’s College talk for K/1/2 parents
* Discussion on How to Raise an Adult on April 12th and 29th.

The study of our Match Curriculum is underway by the Northwestern and UIC researchers. Feedback is expected in early June, with a full report in the fall.

Board Appreciation month is in November. It would be great to send an email or correspondence from your school to thank them. It was also suggested that the Central PTO organize something in the spring to acknowledge their work. The consensus was to provide treats for the next working/board meeting from the Floured Apron, a non-profit based in Winnetka that trains women in the Chicago area on food service.

The Caucus has reached out for names for School Board. Erica Chesney is the point of contact for this.

**VP Communications – Lynn Wellehan**

Lynn is meeting with Linda Wertheim to put together a calendar of deadlines and expectations for the year ahead.

There was discussion about the price for the online directory next year. It was decided it should be consistent across the four lower schools, and that $5 per family is fair. Greeley will continue doing some type of printed format and will charge separately for that.

**Skokie/Washburne – Heather Pigott & Karin Palasz**

The slate for next year’s board is being voted on soon.

Plans are underway for Earth Week, April 25-29. It has been difficult to find volunteers to get involved in green initiatives, but they are hoping to get a committee together next week. They received a good deal from Contigo on water bottles and will be selling these for Earth Week. Other plans include “Walk to School” Wednesday, a crafting class and, possibly, an activity by the Garden Club.

Teacher Appreciation Week is the second full week in May, the week after the national week. The PTO is bringing in something for the staff every day of the week. There will also be a PTO appreciation coffee that week.

Skokie is organizing the 2nd annual Skokie Shuffle 5K for Saturday, May 14th. It will be in Erickson Woods this year with a pancake breakfast organized by the Boy Scouts at Skokie afterwards. Volunteer signup for that is underway.

Heather P. and Karin connected with Greg Kerr about the Angel Fund. The PTO will put a certain amount of money aside for this each year, which will be then be handed out to Skokie/Washburne families by the District. The question was raised whether other schools should also be doing this. Beth shared that Crow Island had looked into this and it was determined that there were not a need for a formal fund. It was also suggested that the Central PTO look into funding this need across the schools as needed.

Heather P. also mentioned that Mrs. Greens hoping to work with the schools on a gardening program. If anyone is interested in this type of thing at their school she can share the contact information.

**Crow Island – Beth Kauffman**

Crow Island is looking at the budget for next year. Currently, there don’t seem to be any big items needing funding. They are working on a spring wish list and also talking to Julie about what is needed.

**Greeley – Kim Ronan**

Staff appreciation week will be the first week in May to coincide with national event. The PTO will be organizing something for the staff every day. This year they are going to do their raffle over the PA.

Greeley is also looking at the budget for next year. It is a transition year for Greeley as the focus moved from the playground. This year a large part of the budget was spent on the Artists in Residence programs and other smaller things. It is probably time to start looking at bigger projects and investments.

The PTO is also busy working on the 4th grade graduation activities.

Trisha mentioned that the schools might want to help plan for MLK Day next year. This will be a day of service, although they are working on what, specifically, this will look like. Beth mentioned that Crow Island is trying to broaden their service efforts and will be including an Outreach Committee on the PTO. It was also suggested that schools might want to set aside funds for outreach efforts over the next year.

**Hubbard Woods – Jen Hayes**

Teacher Appreciation Week was the week before spring break. All went well.

Hubbard Woods’ Green Committee is planning Earth Week activities.

The vote on the new slate is next week.

Hubbard Woods’ 100-year anniversary celebration is May 3. There will be an open house at the school. Trisha mentioned they should be sure to invite the Winnetka fire and police chiefs to the event as well.

Jen reported that they were extremely happy with the dance group that worked with the kids on their recent performance. She highly recommends them if anyone is interested in this type of program.

Hubbard Woods was going to invite a Maker in Residence this spring. However, things are extremely busy so this has been moved to next fall.

Beth mentioned that Crow Island recently had a composer in residence at the school. This individual worked with the kids to write a song called Listen to Me. It was extremely moving.

**Other Central PTO Business – Heather Smith**

The May meeting will be at Heather’s house. This will be a transition meeting. Overall agenda will be short unless there are other items we need to address.

Thank you to everyone for their work this year.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:17.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Ridder,

Secretary