

**Central PTO Board Minutes**  
**Friday, October 2, 2015**  
**Skokie School Community Room**

In attendance: Heather Smith (President), Amy Polachek (Treasurer), Lynn Wellehan (VP Communications), Sara Ridder (Secretary), Trisha Kocanda (Superintendent) Dana Crumley (School Board) Beth Kauffman (President, Crow Island PTO), Kim Ronan (President, Greeley PTO), Jen Hayes (President, Hubbard Woods PTO), Karen Palasz (Co-chair Skokie-Washburne PTO), Heather Pigott (Co-chair Skokie-Washburne PTO), Dana Crumley (School Board President), Greg Kerr (District 36 CFO)

The meeting was called to order at 9:15 a.m.

**Welcome – Heather Smith**

Heather S. welcomed the Board to the meeting. Meetings will begin promptly at 9:15 so we don't run late.

**Superintendent's Report – Trisha Kocanda**

Trisha reported that a community survey for the Kindergarten study will be sent out soon. At the last school board meeting, district kindergarten teachers presented to the board about the school day. The intent of this presentation was to look at where we are now before decisions are made.

Trisha thanked PTO Presidents for finding school representatives to work on the Bullying Prevention Plan. Beth Martin is leading this effort and the group will be meeting at the end of the month.

The annual communications plan was presented to the board recently. A focus this year will be connecting with District alumni to highlight their stories. Everyone is encouraged to reach out and spread the word to help identify these subjects.

On Monday, Dr. Jim Knight from Kansas will be presenting to the staff on professional learning and the power of the coaching model as part of the Winnetka University initiative. The goal of this is to make sure teachers have a voice in the project and feel comfortable reaching out to their coaches.

Trisha reported that they are very close to finalizing the District's Shared Vision Plan. This will be presented to the community in two sessions: one during the day and one in the evening. Help communicating these meetings will be needed.

The School Board is interested in doing more official outreach among community groups in order to ensure they are reaching everyone. This will help the Board broaden its understanding of what is/is not working. It was suggested we extend a Central PTO Board meeting to have this type of discussion with Board Members.

Everyone should be assured that safety is of the utmost importance to our administrators. They are working closely with the police and fire department to review plans and procedures.

Trisha introduced the new District CFO, Greg Kerr. Greg has 11 years of experience in school finance, has served on a school board, and had a career in accounting. He has come out of retirement for this job and we are fortunate to have him in this role.

Greg aims to ensure there is good coordination across the District and that we are mindful of where our money is spent.

Trisha mentioned that there will be a conduit from Green Team with this group. Details to come.

The lice message is going out in the newsletters Friday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> and Monday, October 5<sup>th</sup>. So far, the changes in practice have gone fine. Greeley and Crow Island reported that there was some push back from parents about cancelling the parent-run lice check. Communication will be key to reassure parents that the District is on top of this and the District will need to be proactive on this topic. It was mentioned that perhaps we should be notifying the entire grade level so that the infected individual is not easily targeted. The District will continue to work with school nurses and principals to confirm lice issues are being communicated effectively.

#### **School Board Report – Dana Crumley**

STAR testing data was presented at the last school board meeting. The Board pays attention to these results but also understands these results are not the final word. Overall, the board was pleased with the results. Deficient areas were identified and steps will be taken to address these.

The board is going out to the community to understand the points of view across the district. While some community members are very vocal, the majority is not. Therefore, the Board is making an effort to collect input from the broader spectrum.

Lower enrollment is an issue the board continues to follow. The School Board plans to work with the Village to address how the community can attract more families. District members and PTO Presidents have been invited to join a Winnetka Master Plan Committee as the village looks to include community members and school leaders in the process of improving our village.

Recently, school principals have started attending the all-grade meetings at the grade schools, and the department meetings for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. This has been an effective way to connect issues across grades.

#### **Secretary's Report – Sara Ridder**

Sara noted that the minutes had been updated to reflect a correction from Amy. Amy motioned for the minutes to be approved, Kim Ronan seconded. The minutes were approved.

To avoid confusion, it was suggested that the minutes include a last name initial when board members share a first name.

### **FAN Report – Heather Smith for Jenn Weiler/Gina Mathews**

Heather S. reported that FAN is going strong and continues to be a center point of the community. Upcoming events include Shari Turkl at Skokie and a presentation on “How to Raise Adults” at Glenbrook North.

### **President’s Report – Heather Smith**

Heather reminded the Board that our goal is to communicate, problem solve, share best practices across the schools.

Trisha K. has contacted the School Board attorney regarding the picture consent. There was some push back from the Foundation about this because it is long. Two items can be omitted to shorten this including the sentence that reads: “I have seen and received a copy of the proposed publication prior to signing...” and the need for a witness to sign.

It was recommended that the photo permission be included each year and information be stored electronically on InfoSnap. Greeley and Crow Island do not need this form for PTO communications this year. However, as Hubbard Woods does they will determine the best way to proceed for the current year. It was suggested that we revisit this subject towards the end of the year when we are planning registration for the following year.

The question was also raised about whether or not the schools need photo permission to include student photos in the yearbook. It was recommended that the schools make calls to those families who limit permission to check on this.

### **Treasurer’s Report – Amy Polachek**

Amy has the documentation from the 2014-15 school year ready to be audited.

Amy distributed the InfoSnap reports from Georgia at the District. The only recent disbursement was \$225 for web hosting. The amount we brought in was very close to our budget.

There was discussion about how PTOs should ask for donations and whether or not InfoSnap is effective for this. Since the schools approach PTO contributions differently, the optimal approach varies by school. It was suggested that we discuss this at our next meeting.

### **VP Communications Report – Lynn Wellehan**

Our web hosting has been renewed through the winter of 2016-17.

### **Skokie-Washburne Report – Karen Palasz & Heather Pigott**

Social Dance has been a huge success and the pizza party a big hit with parents and kids.

The Skokie/Washburne party went well. Everyone who attended the fiesta-themed event enjoyed it, but it would be great to draw a bigger crowd

### **Crow Island Report – Beth Kauffmann**

Crow Island's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary is this weekend, October 2-4. The school's 4<sup>th</sup> graders are conducting tours for the alums. 80-90% of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students are participating in this, with special training with the principal to prepare. The school will be open all day Saturday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, and there will be a party in the Crow Island Woods that evening. Over 100 alums are expected as well as 200 from the current Crow Island community.

The PTO has been conducting short surveys on new programs, including a recent survey on hot lunch. There has been good feedback about the new lunch program and ability to change orders up to a week ahead.

### **Greeley Report – Kim Ronan**

Greeley also has a new lunch program and has received positive feedback as well.

Greeley's Annual Halloween party will be on Friday, October 30<sup>th</sup>. Kids love this party but it can be chaotic. They are planning activities to keep kids busy. There will also be a Ghost Walk on the 30<sup>th</sup>.

### **Hubbard Woods Report – Jen Hayes**

Hubbard Woods' first Cardboard Challenges will be tomorrow (October 3<sup>rd</sup>) from 3-5 pm. Everyone is welcome to attend. The school will also have a Halloween Ghost Walk.

The students have started on the Decade Project in honor of the school's anniversary.

### **Other Central PTO Business – Heather Smith**

Issues that have been identified as good topics to discuss include: Teacher Appreciation Week, holiday gifts, wish lists and use of PTO funds. Heather S. recommended that we prioritize these and plan to tackle teacher appreciation and holiday gifts at our next meeting since these will be approaching soon. She asked the Board to come prepared to discuss these topics at the next meeting.

Greg Kerr brought up the issue of insurance for PTO-sponsored events. It is important that we obtain required riders and addendums, especially when alcohol is served

Meeting concluded at 10:40.

Next Meeting November 13 @ 9:15am. (No School 11/6)

Respectfully Submitted,  
Sara Ridder, Secretary