

# Westbrook Elementary School PTA Meeting Minutes

**September 6, 2011**

Co-President, Cathy Stocker, called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

## **Welcome**

Co-President, Cathy Stocker welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the new slate of officers. Cathy Stocker and Karen Thornton, Co-Presidents, Julie Crain and Beth Marans, Co-Vice Presidents, Lee Ives-Assistant Treasurer, Diana Sherbacow-Secretary, Karen Lambert-Treasurer.

## **Swearing in of Co-President and Secretary**

Karen Thornton, Co-President and Diana Sherbacow, Secretary, were given the oath of office by PTA Trustee, Julie Hoffman.

## **Approval of Minutes**

Diana Sherbacow, PTA Secretary, distributed the June minutes, and asked if there were any corrections to the minutes. As they were no corrections, the June 2011 PTA meeting minutes were approved by affirmation.

## **Treasurer's Report**

Treasurer, Karen Lambert, reported a quiet summer with a few large checks written for Elmo Projectors and landscaping. She informed everyone that reimbursement forms are located in the main office in the treasurer box near the teacher mailboxes.

## **Co-President's Report**

Cathy Stocker and Karen Thornton thanked everyone who helped with all the end of the year activities:

- **Kristin McNavage** and **Kari Swenson**, Spirit Committee co-chairs, for planning the end of the year picnic last year. The Italian ices were a big hit!
- **Kristin Wardour**, **Tiffany Rowan** and **Wendy Bailey**, Hospitality Committee co-chairs, for providing refreshments at Open House and for providing the teachers and staff with a beautiful breakfast despite Hurricane Irene.
- **Maureen McNamara** and **Brian Herberger** for compiling the feedback from the *Race to Nowhere* presentation in June.
- Everyone who donated money to the new outdoor classroom in Mrs. Geddes' honor.

Cathy Stocker reported on fundraising for 2011-2012 and how it will be different from previous years. The PTA will be "breaking up" with Sally Foster and instead will ask everyone to write one check. After tallying up the costs for the activities that the PTA puts on, ex. Science Assemblies (\$4,000), Artist in Residence (\$17,000), etc, the PTA needs to raise \$39,500 – which amounts to \$140 per family. The PTA will ask everyone to pitch in what they can and if the goal is reached, further Sally Foster type fundraising will not be necessary. Cathy assured everyone that PTA funding transparency is of the utmost importance. To help aid and accelerate this new system, a form has been set-up on-line to pay all PTA and class dues and thanks to Miss Jones, any class that achieves 75% PTA participation will receive an extra recess. Cathy and Karen are open to hear any thoughts or comments on this new approach.

Another big change this year is that the PTA will not be hosting the winter bowling fundraiser. This fundraiser helped a great deal to offset PTA costs. This year the "Friends of Westbrook School" (FOWS) will host the fundraiser to help meet their monetary goal for capital funds for the new construction, which are funds the PTA is prohibited from raising. The PTA is committed to doing the Carnival, however, how it is going to look and where exactly it will be held given the impending construction has not been determined.

A new project the PTA is spearheading this year is to match new families at Westbrook with veteran families to help maintain some of our small town feel as our Westbrook community grows. Anyone who would like to participate and serve as a mentor to a new family is invited to sign up as well as any family who would like to be matched with a veteran family.

### **Principal's Report**

Ms. Jones reported the following:

- Very smooth first week. Thank you for responding to my email to use the blacktop for line-up.
- New discipline policy went home last week. We really put a lot of work into it and it will be revisited in the spring or even mid-year. Please make sure to go over the policy with your child and the first page is displayed in all classrooms.
- I have been reading a book about manners this week to all the classes.
- A note will go home if a child meets with me.
- A new homework policy is being evaluated coming out of the "Race to Nowhere" discussions. Homework will continue, however we are looking to make it as meaningful and reasonable as possible. The new policy will be presented at Back to School night.
- Postcards sent from many of the students' vacations this summer are on the bulletin board outside the Main office. This was a terrific project and something we will continue in the future.
- In October the postcard bulletin board will change to a Giving Tree. The tree will provide ways to support the teachers. Every grade level will have a different color apple or leaf with a suggestion of what is needed. Parents may take the leaf or apple and purchase the necessary item(s).
- We have a brand new building administration team that have been doing a wonderful job getting the school ready for the new year.
- Please keep moving at "kiss and ride." If you can drop off and keep going it is very helpful for the morning rush. At dismissal, please stay in your vehicle so the traffic can keep moving.
- The buses are really packed. Dexter, from bus 1119, has left the system and we hope to get someone regular very soon.
- The 4<sup>th</sup> grade field trip was canceled because one of the ships did not make it up the Chesapeake Bay due to the hurricane. The trip will take place in November and there is no need to send new money but we everyone will need to sign a new permission slip.
- Lost and Found will be cleaned out every marking period. We really don't want it to accumulate till June.
- Back to School Night – Tuesday, September 13<sup>th</sup> for K-2<sup>nd</sup> grades. Wednesday, September 14<sup>th</sup> for 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grades. We will be changing things a little. I will start by introducing the whole staff and go over a few things in the APR room. Then each grade will do a presentation as a team. Those presentations will last half an hour upon which everyone will then visit their child(s) individual classroom(s) for 20 minutes. Afterwards, everyone will come back to the APR to pay dues, sign up for conferences etc. Please join us – there is a new teacher in every grade level this year.

- A Construction meeting will be held in the next couple of weeks. January 2012 is the start date for the classrooms and gym construction. We have hired a construction manager because our site is rather complicated and the architect, MUSE Architects, and county felt a manager was necessary. Phasing of construction will be discussed at the meeting. The phasing plan is critical for determining what will and will not be accessible and to assure our students safety.
- A voluntary contribution for classes using the “Handwriting without Tears” handbook is most appreciated.
- By-law, our curriculum has to be revised every 10 years. I will be getting information about the new curriculum updates and will be doing a principal coffee in addition to emailing an informational portal from MCPS about the new curriculum. In addition, each grade level will discuss it at back to school night. The new curriculum will just affect the Kindergarten through 2<sup>nd</sup> grades.

#### **Teacher Report: Natalie Atkinson**

Ms. Atkinson gave a brief report on each grade level.

- Kindergarten: Teaching collaboration and how to get through the day. Learning rules and working with the new curriculum to integrate different skills. Reading aloud, math – talking about weather and calendar activities.
- 1<sup>st</sup>: Teaching collaboration. Math - developing number sense, Reading - discussing the story before and after and looking at-verbal and non-verbal communication.
- 2<sup>nd</sup>: Working with new curriculum – a lot of group work - collaborating - Science - collecting rocks - beginning Reading Initiative.
- 3<sup>rd</sup>: Planted seeds - learning typing in Computer Lab.
- 4<sup>th</sup>: Discussing Chesapeake Bay in collaboration with the Department of Natural Resources grant – this grant will pay for half the cost of 3 trips this year.
- 5<sup>th</sup>: Preparing for field trip to Williamsburg, VA.

#### **Committee Reports**

- Claire Slaubaugh: Long Range Planning  
A short handout meant for new families was distributed to inform them about the upcoming construction.
- Wendy Cohen: Membership Chair  
Please pay your PTA dues on-line. It is very helpful. You may pay also for the Membership Directory (\$20), additional directories (\$10), and class dues (\$12) and make your contribution to the operating budget all on-line. These dues have not gone up from last year.
- Erica Wileman: Directory  
The Directory is invaluable to your child’s social life. When you join the PTA you get a Directory. Shortly, I will be sending out an email with instructions to verify your family’s information. We will give you lots of opportunities because it is really important to get it correct. New this year is an app that you may download to your phone or desktop. It is secure, no one is able to change anything and a password is necessary to get in. It will be free this year for a limited time and if you haven’t paid your dues it will be disconnected.
- Ellen Crupi: the Westbrook listserv  
Any questions about the listserv please email John or Ellen Crupi, ([john.crupi@jackbe.com](mailto:john.crupi@jackbe.com) or [ellen.crupi@hmail.com](mailto:ellen.crupi@hmail.com)).
- Kari Swenson: Spirit Committee  
This Friday is the Back to School picnic - weather permitting.

- Erin Harcourt: Volunteer Chair  
We have a strong history of volunteering at Westbrook. Our volunteers conducted over 5,500 hours of volunteering last year - it is very valuable. If you have the time, please consider volunteering. You can send me an email or drop the form off at the main office or in your child's backpack. Friends of Westbrook School or FOWS is new on the form this year if you would like to help with that fundraising effort. A training is offered for those new to volunteering. It is really important to track your hours of volunteering because we report the hours to the state. You may report your hours each month by responding to Erin's monthly email.
- Maureen Kramer: Box tops!  
Please register your Giant and Safeway cards online. Everytime you shop money comes back to Westbrook. Last year we made over \$7,000. If you were registered for Safeway last year you are still registered. However, for Giant it is necessary to sign up again. If you have a Target credit card - please register your card. Box tops – please send them in your child's backpacks – they will say "Tops for Education" on cereal, cookies, etc.
- Jacquie Moen and Karen Baratz: Arts Integration  
The Artist in residence program was first brought 4 years ago to Westbrook. The PTA exclusively funds this program. Performing and Visual Arts are worked into the curriculum providing the opportunity for more intense art learning and helping teachers on how to integrate art into their curriculum. All grades will be part of the program this year. We will be recruiting by grade for volunteers.
- Julie Reiley: Special Needs Liaison  
Our main goal is to support special needs families. We have our own listserv and we are available to answer any questions on special education, IEPs, 504 plans, or other aspects of your child's special education needs. We host a coffee a few times during the year. We strive to promote awareness and understanding through seminars, assemblies for parents, staff and children. Outside the Media Center is a bookcase with a parent resource shelf.
- Karen Kalat: Book Fair  
The Scholastic Book Fair will be held November 9 –11, 2011 in the library and is held during parent teacher conferences. We will need a lot of volunteers. Last year we had \$19,000 in sales, of course our net is much lower but we receive a lot of great books for the media center based on the teachers' wish lists.
- Mikel Moore: Science Committee and Eco-Defending at Westbrook  
The committee is made up of one teacher from each grade and parents. The teachers can make requests for books, curriculum. We help to support the 2 science assemblies, usually hosting an author assembly in the fall and another type of science assembly in the spring. Last year Westbrook was certified as one of Maryland's green schools. We have an Eco-Defending after school club. Trash free lunch is held once a month as an incentive program.
- Greg Wang: Carnival  
There will be a Carnival in May however the exact date and location have not yet been determined. Later this fall, we will begin asking for event chair volunteers.
- Deborah Eichhorn: Spirit Wear  
Changing things up a little this year. We will offer sample sizes and we are thinking of selling more than once a year and providing for purchases on the spot.

**WINS Chart** - Co-Presidents, Cathy Stocker and Karen Thornton

W-Willing Parents  
I-Ideas and Issues  
N-Necessitates PTA Action  
S-Successful and Measurable Outcomes

This mechanism was created over the last few years to improve the schools' general upkeep and safety. Parents raise the issue as a willing and interested party and Karen and Cathy will track of the progress of each issue and give an update at our monthly PTA Meeting. This year we will begin with a fresh chart.

**Activities/Dates to Remember**

Friday, September 9<sup>th</sup>: Back to School Picnic on the Westbrook Field: 6:00 PM

Tuesday, September 13<sup>th</sup>: Back to School Night for Grades K-2: 7:00 PM

Wednesday, September 14<sup>th</sup>: Back to School Night for Grades 3-5: 7:00 PM

Tuesday, September 20<sup>th</sup>: Parent workshop by NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness): 7:00 in the Media Center

Tuesday, October 4<sup>th</sup>: Next PTA Meeting, 7:00 in the Media Center

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM.