

PTA meeting notes for 9-14-10

Meeting brought to order at 7:03pm.

Meeting notes from 5-11-10 were approved. Jen Sardeson made the motion to approve, Scott Sardeson seconded the motion. Motion carried uncontested.

Tessa went over the Treasurer's report. Jen Sardeson made the motion to approve the report, Raquel Berg seconded the motion. Motion carried uncontested.

There was no unfinished business.

Toolboxes- Raquel mentioned for those who did not know what toolboxes are, that they are put together class items that the teachers choose for each year. These tool boxes save parents time and money. Her question was whether we should continue with the toolboxes for next year. Raquel made a motion to do toolboxes for the next school year. Christopher Wert seconded the motion. Motion carried. We will get additional discounts of 7% next year for signing up to offer this program now. Raquel asked what to do with the backpack that was ordered in the wrong color. The suggestion was to keep it and use it for a prize for Turkey Bingo or the carnival. If we send it back we have to pay shipping and restocking.

Family Fun Night 9-24-10 will be DDR. Tessa and Jody will run this night at school. We will have the student's vote for the 10-20 family fun nights with the most popular idea being chosen.

Book Fair: The book fair is going well. All chair people went for training and will be using an electronic checkout this year which will speed up the process and help with inventory. The book fair's hours will be different than last year and will be posted shortly.

Turkey Bingo: Will be on a Thursday night. Like last year, we will hold it in the gym and in the cafeteria. It will be 5-8. We will need to start hitting up businesses for donations. Girl Scouts want to do the bake sale this year in the hallway again. Mr. Martin suggested that we have disposable bingo sheets this year and use recycled crayons from the classrooms.

Redemption box tops: Jen Sardeson has done this for many years for the PTA. This includes box tops, milk moola caps, land o lakes, Campbell's and Kemps. The PTA typically earns \$1300 for the box top program and \$300-\$400 for the milk caps. The question was asked as to what the funds go towards at school. Jen mentioned that the Campbell's points go towards phy ed and outdoor recess equipment. Carrina asked about the pop tops we were collecting last year for Ronald Mc Donald house. Jen said that is continuing this year and that these should be brought in, but kept separate from the other labels and milk tops.

New Business:

Deputy Chris came in to present a program on bike safety that he would like to do with the kids at Linwood. Laura Landes with the Anoka County Sheriff's department hosts safety camps every year. Deputy Chris saw a stunt rider at this camp, who not only performed tricks for the kids while wearing his helmet, but also talked to the kids about being safe while biking. He gets the safety message across in a really great way. The program takes about 45 minutes and can be done inside or outside. Time is of the essence as Deputy Chris is not sure how long he will be at Linwood Elementary. There are no issues from the district as far as having a presentation of this kind. Cheri Stockinger said that Forest Lake Police also had this guy at their bike safety and that he was great. He did his presentation inside and it was really well received. Carrie made a motion to provide Deputy Chris with the funds

to host this program at Linwood. He believes it will cost no more than \$300. Jen Sardeson seconded the motion. The motion carried uncontested.

Cheri Stockinger provided us with information on the school forest fundraiser. It is Mr. Z's this year instead of Sally Foster. This fundraiser is much like Sally Foster in that it has a lot of wrapping paper and small food items. The DNR helps us manage and maintain the school forest. This property was tax 4 fitted. The local township had first rights to the property when it became available. Linwood township bought it and registered it as a school forest. There are 4 representatives from the school on the board, 4 from the township, who have voting rights. Mr. Martin and one other township member are also on the board, but do not have voting rights. In 1990 we put in trails. In the 2000's Wargo Nature Center increased land donated and now there are over 210 acres in the school forest. Community Ed hosts classes there, Mr. Martin runs the Medallion hunt there, and wildlife photo contests are held, among a variety of other things. Cheri suggested a moonlight walk as part of a family fun night.

Yes for Schools presentation: Ron Spies, Kathy Bystrom and Julie Concoran.

Kathy Bystrom is a current member of the school board. Julie Concoran is a former board member and chair for vote yes for schools. Julie passed out informational cards that list the website. She has kids in the district and was a PTO president for awhile. She was a board member for 5 years. The reason for the levy is that the state has decreased and delayed payments to schools in MN that have resulted in school cuts for the last 6 years. There is a \$1900 gap per student. We have roughly 6700 students in the district. We have a \$3.8 million dollar deficit. Last year 38 staff lost jobs. This included support staff and teachers. We need to invest in our schools. We need to take out loans because we still have bills to pay, even though the state is not sending the funding on time. We have to pay interest on these loans and this money is lost to us. In order to have a healthy reserve fund, we should have 10% in reserves. Currently we fall below 5%. We started a Spanish Immersion this year and that has added \$120,000 in revenue. In elementary, the class sizes are up to 36 students per class. Textbooks are outdated. Teachers use their own money for class supplies. Some sport fees have doubled. Buildings cannot be repaired and science and technology are outdated and new requirements cannot be met.

Next year we need to cut an additional \$4 million dollars from the budget. Going to a 4 day school week will save \$500,000, closing an elementary will save \$400,000 and closing the pool would save \$60,000. This is nowhere close to where we need to be. That is why we need to ask for a levy now. We have a current levy of \$6.2 million dollars. We want to add \$3.8 million by passing a levy. This will be a 10 year levy. We are also going to ask for \$24 million dollar bond. The bond will help pay to update the schools. We need to provide secure entrances and increase our science and technology departments. The last bond we had was in 1999 for the building of Century Middle school. Over 75 school districts in MN will be asking for a levy this year. That is the largest amount ever. On a \$120,000 property value, you are currently paying \$120 for the levy. By passing the levy this fall, your responsibility would increase by \$77. If we passed both the levy and the bond, it would go up \$107. You can find out exactly what your amount would be by going to keepforestlakeschoolsstrong.com and entering in your property value. This group is here to ask us for support. They are going to the PTA's and PTO's to ask for funding. Julie mentioned that most groups are giving about \$3000. She mentioned that 1 in 3 parents vote. There will be a rally on 9/28 at the American Legion in Forest Lake. She invited everyone to attend. The difference between a levy and a bond is that a levy is for education and a bond is for the building. We did a study and we have a need for over \$120 million dollars worth of improvements to our buildings. The surveys they did, however, showed that people's tolerances for bonds were closer to \$28 million, so they are asking for \$24. That same survey indicated that people would be more likely to accept a \$3.8 million dollar levy, so that is the amount they are looking for. A question was asked about informational forums and if there will be any. Julie said they were trying to identify groups now that would benefit more information. Some folks suggested the Linwood senior center. The school

cannot put anything in the newsletter about the levy. The district cannot use the children as messengers for this type of thing. A question was asked about businesses, if they were taxed too. The answer is yes, but at a different rate. Ron said we could not do an information table at conferences as the district cannot sponsor this. Donations are not tax deductible. Tami mentioned that we are not able to afford \$3000 in donations. We need to vote on it tonight if we choose to do something, as they need the funds by 9/30. Scott Sardeson did not want to donate money to this cause, as he was not sure if this was the proper venue for it. We talked about fundraising, but time is too tight. We discussed that this may be an individual choice on whether or not to support this group, not the function of the PTA. We decided not to vote, as no one wanted to take an action. We all will help spread the word and donate on our own if we feel it is necessary.

School Newsletter: Charlene is doing the school newsletter and could use information on things going on around school.

Principal's report: Mr. Martin mentioned that we have had positive academic growth in the last 5 years at Linwood. We are on the AYP this year for free and reduced lunch for reading. We made growth and got off AYP in SPED Reading and Math but did not hit the bar that the MCA's expected for Free and Reduced Priced Lunch Students. Mr. Martin reminded us that we have Constant Contact email registration online. This is on the Linwood School Website and he encouraged everyone to sign up to receive periodic updates from our office. The Ronald McDonald dental van will be back at school. This free service comes to any family, no matter the income, without dental insurance. NWEA tests start this week. This provides us with a true assessment of student's abilities and helps the teachers plan for MCA's in the Spring.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:50pm.

Those in attendance: Chris Wert, Cheri Stockinger, Charlene Jacobson, Linda Carlson, Mr. Martin, Ron Spies, Kathy Bystrom, Julie Concoran, Chris Oelkers Jen Sardeson, Carrina Eckvall, Jeff and Shari Melsa, Raquel Berg, Mark Olsen, Traci Riebe, Kristen Nixon, Jonn Olson, Robin Wood, David Dixon, Scott Sardeson, Tami Halliday, Jody Berg, Tessa Abrahamson and Molly Schoessow.