

Lamar PTO Board Meeting Minutes

14 September 2015

Location: Ms. Stone's Classroom

Position	Name	Attendance
President	Jennifer Dawson	Present
1st VP of Programs	Ariel Dawson	Present
2nd VP of Membership	Andrea Hayes	absent
3rd VP of Fundraising	Jenny Tessman	Present
Treasurer	Stephen Kelling	Present
Secretary	Cathleen Akers	Present
Devotional	Angie Garner	absent
Volunteer Chairman	Kaara Baca	Present
Pictures	Christina Blackwell	Present
Parliamentarian	Amanda Davis	Present
Christmas Store	(Jennifer Dawson)	(Present)
Hospitality	Lindy Meiser	Present
Reporter	Heather Pannell	Present
Activities Chair	(open at start of meeting)	
Teacher Rep	Amanda Gunter	Present
Principal	Janet Mobley	Present

J. Dawson called the meeting to order at 5:31pm

Norms

J. Dawson read the norms:

- Abide by the by-laws
- One person speaking at a time
- Stay focused
- Stay positive
- Be open to ideas
- Attack the problem not the person
- Smile & have fun!

Devotional

J. Dawson read the devotional:

*Today will never come again: be a blessing, be a friend, encourage someone. Take time to care.
Let your words heal and not wound.*

Treasurer's Report

Mrs. Mobley stated that as of 14 September, the PTO account held \$10,906.48.

Approval of Last Meeting's Minutes

J. Dawson asked attendees to review the minutes and called for approval. Davis & Pannell simultaneously moved to approve the minutes as written, Gunter seconded. Approval was unanimous.

Old Business

Open Positions. J. Dawson noted that Stephen Kelling confirmed his willingness to serve as PTO Treasurer. She also stated that Casey Gray volunteered to serve as Activities Chair. J. Dawson called for a vote to confirm Kelling as Treasurer and approve Gray as Activities Chair. Approval was unanimous.

Budget. Mobley guided discussion of budget development for the 2015-2016 year. She projected last year's PTO budget on the screen and edited it over the course of discussion. At the end of discussion, Mobley sought approval of the budget as reflected on the screen. Approval was unanimous. Mobley then printed, photocopied, and distributed the new budget to attendees.

Noted changes from last year's to this year's budget include:

- Decreasing Fundraiser income from \$9,000 to \$5,000
- Changing T-Shirt Sales to cafepress.com and estimating income at \$1,000
- Increasing income from Pictures from \$1,200 to \$1,500
- Increasing Hospitality budget from \$525 to \$1,000
- Adding "Fall/Spring Festival" under Expenses with budget of \$200
- Changing "Science Expenses" to "Classroom Expenses"
 - decreasing that budget from \$500 to \$150
- Redistributing same total budget for Perfect Attendance acknowledgements
 - Increasing scooter/helmet budget from \$450 to \$500
 - Decreasing T-shirt budget from \$250 to \$200
- Increasing 4th grade party from \$225 to \$300
- Adding "Emergency Fund" under Programs & Field Trips (Detailed) with budget of \$200
- Increasing Denison Performing Arts from \$200 to \$525
- Increasing Zoo Trip for K from \$300 to \$500
- Adding "Family Activities" under Programs & Field Trips (Detailed) with budget of \$300
- Adding "T-Shirts for HeadStart" under Programs & Field Trips (Detailed) with budget of \$300

Items that engendered some discussion:

- Last year's fundraisers' income was only \$4,500 so we decided on a more realistic goal this year.
- Hospitality includes monthly acknowledgement of faculty/staff birthdays, which will take form of cake or cupcakes once each month of school year. Meiser noted that she spent \$186.05 for the Teacher Breakfast in August and still has enough paper goods and disposable cutlery for the Christmas Teacher Luncheon.
- Increasing budgets for grade-specific requests (e.g., Denison Performing Arts supplement) tend to reflect the basic fact of increased enrollment at the school.
- Pannell announced that through her new (promoted) role at her work at the mall in Sherman, she can arrange a deal for the 4th grade to attend a movie and have snacks for less per student than Cinemark offered last year's 4th grade for a movie alone.

- Mobley noted that in prior years the school has received \$3,000 from the Smith Foundation at the beginning of the school year to use for families in need or experiencing emergencies. She explained how she and school Counselor Ms. Birdsong annually identify families in need at least at Christmas-time and use a good portion of this money, as well as additional Smith Foundation Christmas grant money, to take parents shopping at Christmas to buy children's clothing and a token amount of non-essential items (e.g., toys). However, this year the Smith Foundation did not grant this fund. Mobley added that she has other smaller contributions, as well as remaining Smith Foundation money from last year, to put toward this purpose this year. It is clear, however, that the total does not promise to be even nearly the same. When discussion of assigning a budget to the new Emergency Fund resumed and attendees were uncomfortably silent, Mobley indicated that she did not regard the PTO's new Emergency Fund in any way as a substitute. She commended PTO for establishing the fund, providing examples of how even small amounts can make a big difference to families experiencing some crisis. Her encouragement was echoed by J. Dawson as well.
- Mobley noted that PTO has benefited for several years from Meiser donating the Perfect Attendance T-shirts.
- "Family Activities" covers the Father-Daughter Dance and the Mother-Son Activity.

T-shirt Logos, cafepress.com. J. Dawson opened discussion regarding logos for use on cafepress.com. Meiser said she could produce just about anything for a logo, but she warned attendees about copyright infringement. Baca noted that in her logo search, she encountered many copyrighted images. Tessman fielded questions about products and prices at cafepress.com from Meiser. J. Dawson announced that logo discussion would be tabled. She suggested that Fundraising work in committee to narrow down appropriate logos for the Board to vote on.

Bylaws Revision. Akers reintroduced the approach about revising the PTO Bylaws and gave an overview of the specific proposed changes to Articles I-III (handout at meeting). Mobley noted that the revised language serves another purpose for her with a Title I requirement for the school to include a parent involvement policy. Gunter noted that she likes how the revised objectives better reflect what PTO does. Tessman stated that she likes the idea that PTO has a mission statement. No objections were voiced to draft. J. Dawson called for a vote to approve the changes to Bylaws Articles I-III as written in the handout. Approval was unanimous.

HeadStart T-shirts. Blackwell explained that the T-shirts are basically a classroom set that HeadStart uses for field trips. After each use, the T-shirts are washed and kept in the HeadStart building. Questions and comments centered on: color and printing on the shirts, vendor selection, and when the new T-shirts would be needed. Mobley closed discussion by stating that she would speak with the HeadStart teachers about their needs and convey the information to Meiser, who agreed to produce the T-shirts at an estimated \$5 per shirt.

New Business

Fundraiser. Tessman noted that although PTO targeted the start of the fall fundraiser with Fit & Fresh to be 6 October, the day of Open House, an end date needed to be determined. Discussion centered on trying to cover a couple of pay days for those who are paid bi-monthly. An official end date of 23 October was settled on, while Tessman and Meiser both noted that they anticipate that orders would and should be accepted through 27 October. Some discussion ensued about what reward/prize to offer students or classes as sales incentive for the fundraiser, as Fit & Fresh does not offer an incentive.

Mobley cited the incentive that Hayes had arranged with Mobley herself for the membership drive (see handout of membership letter) and encouraged attendees to generate ideas along those lines, rather than toys that too often become junk in parents' eyes. Although discussion was lively, no decisions were made. J. Dawson and Mobley asked attendees to brainstorm ideas and bring them to the next PTO meeting on 5 October. Tessman stated that we must decide at that meeting because the fundraiser will begin the next day (6 October).

Events "calendar". J. Dawson called attention to the handout entitled "Lamar PTO School Year." She noted that in the course of her and Akers' review of fifteen years' worth of PTO minutes and other records, she thought it would be a useful planning tool to have a calendar of sorts to provide a sense of the activities and events that PTO usually coordinates over the course of a school year. She encouraged Board members to review the handout to identify activities that pertain to their roles and think about how best to plan ahead.

Non sequitur: Akers noted that PTO records from 2007-2008 indicate that the PTO apparently used to survey parents/guardians for feedback about what PTO should spend fundraiser profits on. Akers expressed approval for such an endeavor and her hope that PTO might consider some effort along the same lines at some future point.

Membership letter approval. Although Hayes could not attend the Board meeting, she submitted a draft membership letter (handout) for approval. Discussion included teasing Mobley about being taped to a wall but no objections were raised to the letter itself. J. Dawson called for a vote to approve the membership letter as written. Approval was unanimous.

Parliamentary Procedure Guidelines. Akers displayed two handouts, "Roberts Rules of Order – Simplified" and "Parliamentary Motions Guide." She explained that she is still learning how organizations like PTO conduct business at meetings and that she came upon these handouts, found them helpful, and with J. Dawson's blessing, wanted to share them with other members to aid in PTO Board meeting participation. Akers noted that she found the "Robert's Rules" handout most beneficial at a quick introduction. The other handout she added might be more useful as quick reference during meetings.

Updates from Principal

Community-based Volunteers. Mobley stated that she had been offered volunteer help from two churches, Trinity Methodist and Calvary. She said that the school welcomes such offers, but noted that she personally cannot coordinate such an endeavor. Mobley asked generally if PTO might be willing to group these volunteers under PTO's own volunteer coordination and asked more specifically if Volunteer Coordinator Baca would be willing to meet with Mobley and the ministers or other representatives of the churches to discuss volunteering. Baca candidly stated that she could not commit at this time due to an already packed schedule. Mobley expressed appreciation for Baca's candor and indicated that she would take up the topic with school counselor Birdsong.

School Performances/General Membership Meetings. Mobley stated that with increased enrollment at the school, the cafeteria cannot accommodate evening performances by the different grades as the school has had in past years. Although there were performances in the cafeteria last year, Mobley said these cannot continue mainly due to fire marshal concerns. She said that performances could be held in the gym, but without a stage, the nature of the gym presents challenges as a viable option. Tessman

added that the acoustics in the gym would be problematic. Blackwell suggested dividing each grade in half and holding two nights of performances with only two of the four classes performing each night. Gunter and Mobley explained that the logistics of this idea would not work without causing burden for the teachers with preparation and stage management. Tessman suggested holding performances at the Eisenhower Auditorium at Scott Middle School and Kelling offered Calvary Church. Mobley explained that the logistics of busing students over to practice—which would be a necessity given the very different size differences with the Eisenhower Auditorium at least—requires too much time that should be spent teaching/learning. Mobley said she is open to other suggestions but noted that for now, there are no performances on the school calendar. J. Dawson encouraged attendees to brainstorm ideas and bring them to the next PTO Board meeting on 5 October.

Open Discussion

Pannell noted that with her promotion at work, she has realized that she cannot devote the time she had thought she could to serving as Reporter. She does not want to step down as Reporter but asked if other Board members could help her out. Attendees offered general assent to her request. Mobley specifically offered to reserve a PTO corner in her weekly newsletter.

Tessman said that if PTO really wants to avoid leaving things to the last minute, there needed to be a decision at least whether there was going to be a fall festival or not. Akers indicated a fall festival might be more desirable because it seemed like the spring festival was hard to schedule due to testing dates. New Activities Chair Gray said that she is both available and willing to take on a fall festival. Mobley stated that she does not want a festival that is Halloween-related, but she noted that a few years ago PTO held a fall festival in November that had a theme of gratitude. She added that the festival was held outdoors. Akers said she liked the November-gratitude idea. Baca advised scheduling early in the month so as to avoid any dates too close to Thanksgiving due to family and church commitments. Attendees settled on Thursday, 5 November, time to be determined. J. Dawson called for a vote to approve hosting a fall festival on 5 November. Approval was unanimous.

Dates to Remember

PTO Board meeting—5 October
Open House—6 October

Gunter moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:40pm. Meiser seconded. All signaled approval by gathering belongings and getting up from seat to leave.

MINUTES BY CATHLEEN AKERS