

Minutes of the Meeting January 13, 2013
Winchester High School Parent Faculty Association

Attending: Audrey Loria, Malini Dutta, Julie Piantedosi, Kathy Czeck, Leah Holber, Lisa Vahey, Paula Michienzi, Sam Kunes, Susan Verdicchio, Susan Wolf, Cinzia Liambo Chansky, Barbara Bellotti, Michele Nathan, Carol Cashion, Jody Collins Skinner, Anne Hoeniche, Elena Langlois, Marc Arria, Tom Gwin.

Audrey Loria called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.
Co-President's Report:

At the last PFA meeting in November, we were approaching the December 10 town -wide vote for the override to rebuild WHS. The vote passed and the WHS will be renovated/rebuild. The Faculty Breakfast was held the day after the vote and the teachers were all very excited and happy that the town supported the renovation.

Audrey passed around two Thank You notes for flowers sent from the PFA, one from Janet Daniels who retired, and the other from Tom Gwin.

The PFA is moving forward with the 501c3 process. Jean Colling is filing the paperwork. An \$850 check was sent to the government for filing and registration. We need a motion to approve (retroactively) the \$850 check sent. Motion was made and approved.

Tomorrow evening there is a program at McCall—a movie for Mothers and Daughters called “Finding Kind”.

The WFEE Trivia Bee is Wed Feb 5 and we need 3 volunteers to represent PFA.

Secretary's Report

The minutes from the last PFA meeting on November 6, 2013 were reviewed. There were no comments. Minutes approved.

Treasurer's Report

The Direct Appeal has raised \$25,000 to date. We have spent \$2200 in PTO expenses (social. \$2800 in grant money has been dispersed, out of the \$18,000 allotted. The balance is \$25,898.

A motion was made to accept the Treasurers report. Report accepted.

Committee Reports:

Direct Appeal- we are at 84% of goal. 223 of 923 families have donated. Another email appeal went out today to all families.

Grants – Kathy Czeck reported we have approved more than \$17,000 in grants to faculty. We are holding off on funding a few grants until we have all of the Direct Appeal funds. These grants are in a “provisional” stage, but will likely be funded.

Principal's Report

The principal search committee met last week. (Principal Gwin announced his retirement to the school community in late November). There are 50 candidates who will be narrowed down shortly.

The EFPBC is in the process of hiring a Construction Manager for the HS project. Three firms have been shortlisted—selection will be very soon. We are now in the Design/Development phase of the project—discussing interior design/finishes/site plan/entryway design.

Q: Will there be student parking next year? Probably not. There will be 30 portable trailers on the site and no room for much more. A parent asked how/where to express our concern about that issue. Concerns should be expressed at the

EFPBC website.

We are getting 70 additional students next year, so we are asking for additional sections and staff.

The Class of 2015 is offering a practice SAT on Saturday Feb 8th.

Delores Alonzo was hired to take Karen Branley's place as office secretary.

HOT TOPIC: WHS Athletics

Audrey introduced our guest this evening—Marc Arria, new WHS Athletic Director

Marc has been on board since November 1, 2013, and is very happy to be here. He thanked Jack Squeglia, the interim AD, for all his help in keeping the department afloat since the change in AD occurred in the summer.

Marc's focus will be on Commitment, Organization, Accountability, Communication and Consistency, across the board. Right now he is still getting up to speed, on the Fall sports, since he arrived in the middle of the season. But he keeps detailed records on the budgets of each sport and will be reviewing those each season.

The Fall Sport Participation numbers for 10 sports: there were 483 Athletes. This included 233 Varsity athletes, 149 Junior Varsity athletes, and 101 athletes who played on freshman teams. We had 3 teams go to the State Tournament: Girls' and Boys' Soccer and Volleyball. Both soccer teams lost in the first round and volleyball lost in the second round. We had 16 athletes selected for Middlesex League All Stars, and one boy selected for Eastern Mass All-Stars.

Q: Status of Snowboard Club and Crew team?

Crew-- WHS kids have been going to CRI on the Charles or Gentle Giant in Somerville on the Mystic River. There is no plan to incorporate crew into our Athletic Department.

Snowboarding will be a Club and not a Team, so they will not be a part of the Athletic Department. Dr. Gwin explained that a coach has been hired—Peter DeCarlo (WHS '04) will be the coach. The Club will not have competitions, but they have 5 trips to Nashoba Valley Ski area planned which will begin next week. Unfortunately, the Ski Team and the Snowboard Club cannot share buses to Nashoba because there are just too many kids. The Ski team has a full bus already.

Q: How will coaches be evaluated? First off, parents are always welcome to email the AD with any comments about coaches. The AD will meet with every coach before, during and after each season. He also goes to practices unannounced. He also tries to attend as many games/meets as possible.

A Varsity coach is in charge of their own program. The Varsity coach evaluates the JV and Freshmen coaches for their sport. Overall we have a great group of coaches. The biggest priority is to make sure that we have the right person in a coaching position. Coaches spend as much as 2 hours each day X 6 days each week with our student athletes, and it is important to have to an appropriate role model for the athletes.

Q: Does the Athletic Department track injuries? Concussions are kept track of, but not all other injuries. Sometimes in athletics, we can notice groups of injuries in a particular sport, but there is no evidence of that here, nor are there a large number of injuries here at WHS.

Q: What do you mean by "Consistency"? (Marc mentioned consistency as a focus of his for the Department).

This is how we hold kids accountable. For example, the wrestling team is treated the same as the ski team in how they are held accountable for behavior as student athletes. It also extends to consistency across coaching, where feasible. In some instances, complete consistency is not possible—for example, there are different criteria for who can play on a JV team among different sports. In some sports, if you are a senior, you are automatically on Varsity, while in other sports, that is not the case. Each coach (or each sport) can decide these criteria, as long as they are consistent across their sport.

Q: What about the status of the Ultimate Frisbee team? The Captains came and spoke to Marc, and they felt heard by Marc. There are huge numbers of kids interested (60 kids total), so there may be 2 teams—Boys and Girls?? Still working that out. Marc is interviewing coaches this week, but he only has enough funding for one coach. He hopes that the one coach will bring in assistant helpers. Ginn Field will be the team's home field and the team will have a full slate of contests, uniforms and transportation.

Concern was voiced by a parent that with 60 kids paying the User Fee, and having very little equipment expenses, does it seem like more money could be spent on the Ultimate team? They also fundraise to get additional money for the team.

This question led to a discussion on fundraising and ‘Booster Clubs’. Marc’s experience has been with schools that have one Booster Club for all sports, vs. individual fundraising by team like has been done at WHS for a long time. He feels that Booster Clubs should be for “extras”, not what it takes to play. His experience is that the Booster Club raises money for an “end of season awards night” for all athletes, not by team. So there would be three banquets each year—Fall, Winter and Spring. Marc would like to eventually see WHS move in that direction—then all Fall athletes get peer recognition, not just by their sport alone. There is currently a wide variety of the team end-of-season banquets—some very elaborate. Booster money must be handled by parents and not by coaches.

Last year the Athletic Department put in a new fundraising policy. Teams have to fill out a form that the AD and the Principal must sign off on to approve what the fundraising effort is. How that money is being used is not really known right now—it is likely different for every team. Marc would like to understand that better. It should not be for uniforms. There is a 4-6 year cycle for uniforms—Varsity hands down to JV, and then to Freshman teams.

Comment by parent: We have systems in place to have scholarships for the User Fee, but we don’t have a system for when an athlete cannot raise the “fundraising” requirement. This is concerning.

Q: Last year we had huge problems with buses. How is it this year? Much better.

Q: Which sports are “cut” sports? The only “non-cut” sports are football, cross country and swimming. All the rest are cut sports.

Comment by parent: Basketball is a cut sport, but there are lots of freshman and sophomore boys who want to just play basketball, but did not make the team. Can there be intramurals for them?? There is not gym space/time at WHS. Parents should possibly look at McCall or Lincoln for gym time.

The Sailing team is looking for a new Coach. It has been very difficult to find one, but continuing to look.

The AD now has a Twitter account to get up to the minute scores or changes in schedule. Marc has “sources” that email him and he will not be “following” any other accounts so there will not be any extra tweets except for his. Account is @WHSachemsSports.

The next PFA meeting is scheduled for Feb 12th, 2014. Hot Topic: STEM.
The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elena Langlois
Recording Secretary