

Minutes of the Meeting October 2, 2013
Winchester High School Parent Faculty Association

Attending: Audrey Loria, Malini Dutta, Cindy Bohne, Kathy Czeck, Ingrid Geis, Carrie Ehrbar, Julie Piantedosi, Paula Michienzi, Karin Sangster, Loren Schipani, Yen Ngo, Si Nguyen, Lynn Phillips, Sam Kunes, Susan Wolf, Elena Langlois, Susan Verdicchio, Leah Holber, Anita Colasante, Cheryl Myers.

Audrey Loria called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm.

Audrey introduced herself as Co-President of PFA, in her second year of a 2-year term. She introduced Malini Dutta as her Co-President. Malini is in her first year of a 2-year term. Audrey introduced the other members of the PFA Board and the Committee Chairs. The only Committee Chair position that has not been filled yet is Publicity. A motion was made and seconded to approve the 2013-14 PFA Board. Approved.

Newly elected members of the High School Improvement Council are: Sam Kunes, Laura Krotky. Kathy Czeck and Roger Hain have returned for the 2nd year of their respective terms.

The 2nd Annual Community Lantern Walk will be Sunday November 10.

The PFA would like to begin the process of becoming a 501c3 non-profit organization. This may help bring in more Direct Appeal money. Without the non-profit status, there are no company matches for contributions, and PayPal takes a larger percentage for transactions. All of the other schools in town are 501c3 organizations. It was noted that the services of an accountant would be needed in order to ensure that timely annual filings are prepared. Audrey will look into finding an accountant. All in attendance supported the PFA's interest in pursuing the non-profit designation.

Secretary's Report

The minutes from the last PFA meeting on May 2, 2013 were reviewed. There were no comments. Minutes approved.

Treasurer's Report

We will hold off on approving a budget until we know the final amount of the Direct Appeal and the number of grant requests.

Principal's Report

The MSBA approved the grant for the High School Rebuilding project today. The maximum grant is \$44.5M. The estimated total project budget is \$129.9M.

The search for a new Athletic Director is almost complete. There were 43 applicants. A comprehensive interviewing process was undertaken for the 5 final candidates. The announcement of the new AD should be in about a week.

A new Library Media Specialist has been hired. Welcome to Andrea Zampitella who is a WHS 2004 graduate.

There is no school one week from Friday (10/11/13). It is a 4 day weekend with Columbus Day on Monday.

WHS was named a National Blue Ribbon School. Only 52 high schools in US received this honor. WHS is the only HS in Mass to receive honor. This is a one-year award.

Committee Reports:

Direct Appeal- \$17,020 has been raised so far- about 9.5% ahead of last year. Budget is still \$30k.

Grants – We are currently receiving grant requests from faculty.

Social - Social committee sponsors three staff events during the year. The first is a Holiday Breakfast on Wednesday, Dec 11.

Newsletter - Working on how to go forward with email blasts and monthly newsletter. Don't want to burden parents with too many emails. Plan to keep things pretty much the same.

Parent Class Advisors - No report, as no class advisors were in attendance.

HOT TOPIC: WHS Renovation - Rep. Jason Lewis spoke about the HS Renovation project. He introduced himself also as a parent of a 9th grader. He thanked all of the old and new PFA members and recognized the two School Board members present (Susan Verdicchio and Cindy Bohne) as well as Town Selectman Jennifer Wilson.

Jason explained that The Blue Ribbon Award recognizes the performance of the students and the faculty, NOT the facility. The HS is the largest user of energy in the town. All main systems in the HS are at, or nearing the end of their useful lives. Overcrowding is also a significant issue. Winchester has seen a 25% increase in enrollment in the past 3 years, and our increase in enrollment is one of the top 10 towns in the state.

MSBA has approved a grant of \$44M and now the Town needs to pay the remaining \$85M. The Town has 120 days to secure the local funding. This will likely happen in December, thru a town-wide ballot for a Debt Exclusion Override. The ballot must be approved by Town Meeting in November. Selectman Wilson indicated that if ballot does not pass, there will need to be repairs done to the HS just to keep it going. If more than 30% of the school is touched by doing renovations, ADA compliance issues are triggered, and then the entire school must be brought up to code. It has been estimated that it might be \$28M to bring the school up to code. Please visit www.WinchesterHSproject.com to become informed about the project. There are tours of the HS almost every Saturday morning thru December. Sign up thru website.

SMMA Architect, Ed Frenette gave a presentation of the highlights of the HS project to date. He explained site selection, site design, space planning, construction phases, and interior and exterior architectural character. All main systems for the proposed new building will be taken out of the basement. There are additional flood mitigation programs coming in the next few years that will lower the flood plain around the HS, thus will decrease the likelihood of serious flooding in the HS as in the past. If the Town votes in favor of the override, construction would begin in the summer of 2014, and will be phased. Each phase will take about 1.5 years, and will allow portions of the building to go "online" as they are completed. This will allow students to take advantage of each new space as it is completed, versus waiting for the entire building to be completed. The entire project is anticipated to be completed in the fall of 2017. Modular classrooms will be used onsite as "swing space". They will be state-of-the-art and will likely be nicer than many existing HS classrooms. The new building will have an "Innovation Lab" that will have space for classes like robotics, wood shop, etc. WinCAM will still be housed at the HS, but will be in a more central location that it is currently.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elena Langlois
Recording Secretary