

Meriwether Lewis Elementary School  
PTO Meeting Minutes  
November 9, 2011 – 6:00 p.m.

Board Members Present: Kim Cousins, Brandi Piccirilli, Skye O'Donnell, Clark Smith, Debbie Parmelee, Nancy Paulson, and Jerilyn Teahan.

Committee Chairs Present: Becky Allison

I. **Approval of September and October 2011 Meeting Minutes**

**Approval of the Minutes.** The approval of the minutes from September and October was tabled until December since a quorum was not present.

II. **Principals Report**

**A. Hospitality Committee Thanks!** Principal Cousins expressed thanks on behalf of the staff to the Hospitality Committee and specifically to Kenna Boyd (chair) for the food that was brought in for the teachers on Monday, November 7.

**B. Rain Garden Grant.** Ms. Cousins reported that the school was reinitiating the allocation of the original \$5000.00 grant. While some of the money was spent on plan for a rain garden, not all of the money had been allocated and the scope and implementation of the plan had changed and/or stagnated. In order to identify interested parents to serve on the project team, Jerilyn volunteered to contact Holly Bittle (a parent who was on the original Rain Garden Project Team) to create a description of the project and what potential volunteers would be doing as members of the project team. Then, Jerilyn will work with Mary Chinn to advertise the opportunity to parent volunteers. Additionally, Ms. Cousins, Ms. Piccirilli, and Debbie Parmelee will work to assemble any historical information on the project and identify what the school wants to do to move forward in utilizing the grant funds.

**C. Report Cards** – First quarter report cards are due go home on Tuesday, 11/15/11. They are in a slightly new format.

**D. School Board Meeting** – Ms. Cousins noted that School Board would be considering teacher workload and the WAHS schedule at their upcoming meeting. She encouraged all Board members to be involved in the process and to support all teachers (regardless of the level of school) as workload differentials are discussed.

**E. Thanks for Professional Development Support.** Ms. Cousins noted her thanks for the PTO's support of professional development that falls outside the scope that she can pay for within her MLS budget for teachers.

III. **Presidents' Report**

No report.

IV. **Vice Presidents Report**

**A. Volunteers of the Month.** Jerilyn noted per the request from the previous meeting, she could not find an indication that Laurie Strucko had ever received the award in prior years. So,

in accordance with the Vice Presidents' recommendation at the October meeting, the Board members agreed Laurie should receive the nomination for October (formal Board vote to be taken at next meeting). The November nominees will be presented by the Vice Presidents at the next meeting.

**V. Volunteer Coordinator's Report**

No report

**VI. Secretary's Report**

**A. Correspondence Report** – no report

**VII. Treasurer's Report**

**A. Monthly Report of Income/Expenses.** There was a cursory review of the budget information submitted in absentia. However, it was moved that discussion be tabled until Rick Emery was present at the next meeting.

**B. Funding Requests**

1.) \$6,000.00 for Book Room Texts – Submitted by Book Room Committee

Erica Payne, MLS Librarian, explained the make-up of the Book Room Committee (teachers and staff) and the use of "book sets" by classroom teachers as part of their curriculum. There are two book rooms, one for grades K-2 and one for grades 3-5. Teachers can check out classroom collections of multiple copies of the same book for their classroom, or mini-collections of books on the same topic that are differentiated by reading ability (enabling the entire class to study a topic but on read on differentiated levels). In 2010, the Book room Committee did an assessment of the "Book Rooms" and started a process to revamp the checkout system and upgrade the collection. The committee found a great need to expand the collections available in the Book Rooms. Ms. Cousins explained that these books are not considered formal "textbooks" – since textbook titles need to be funded and approved through the School Board and ACPS budget. Erica showed Board members a catalog from National Geographic which contained multiple set options. One such title was "Travel Across America's Past" (6-pack = cost of \$88.00). Board members were, in general, interested in supporting the Book Rooms and noted that \$1000.00 has already been allocated in the existing budget. Board members wanted to check with the Board Treasurer to see when this allocated money could be spent by the Book Room committee and the Board would like Ms. Payne/Book Committee to provide the titles and associated expense for this allocated \$1000.00. The Board then asked for clarification as to how the Book Fair money was used. Erica clarified that traditionally, Book Fair money has been used for items in the library (i.e. titles and resources that can be checked out and used by the students). Although, last year she used some of the Book Fair money to add titles to the Book Room collections because of the need in that area. Since a vote could not be taken (no quorum), the Board will consider this issue again at the December meeting.

2.) \$9,180.42 for U-Shaped Book Shelf Unit – Submitted by Erica Payne.

Ms. Payne presented the Board with a proposal to fund a new u-shaped bookcase for the library. Ms. Payne explained the process she went through to solicit interest and feedback from a student committee and engage these students in a process of visualizing what they would like for their library. A local architect and parent worked with the group of students to help them sketch an initial plan for how the space could be more welcoming, visually appealing and accessible to students and available for multiple uses. Ms. Cousin noted that the library space is transitioning from a traditional library to more of a media center. It is becoming the hub for collaboration and for community meetings. While the Board was encouraging of the need to investigate the possibility of a redesign of space and renovation of the library, Board members were insistent that a more detailed planning and design process be undertaken. With such a large expenditure request, Board members felt that it would be prudent to see how the bookcase would fit in a broader upgrade plan. Jerilyn and Susan also noted the Board would want the revamping of the space to be coordinated with the ACPS system and that likely multiple bids would need to be entertained materials for student use approved, and the design embraced by the broader community. Debbie P. mentioned that the improvement of the library had not been presented to the overall faculty as a priority. This brought up the topic of the need for a Capitol Improvement Budget process for the PTO during which all major funding requests could be reviewed at one time. And, that these requests would come to the Board with some sort of prioritization from the principals/faculty PTO member/faculty. This prompted lengthy conversation. Ultimately, Ms. Payne was asked to view the potentiality of a new bookcase within a larger context of the potential overall future renovation of the library. Susan Park, PTO member and interior designer, volunteered to help Ms. Payne begin this process. Board members were excited about potentially engaging the larger MLS community in the design process and vision for the media center at MLS. The actual funding vote is tabled until a more professional and detailed plan is re-presented at a future date.

3.) Policy for Returned Checks for Kids Night Out, Silent Auction and other PTO events. Discussion tabled until November meeting.

## VIII. Director's Reports

### A. Fundraising Committee

1.) Fun Fair – No final report yet. Will submit at December meeting

2.) Original Works – No report

3.) Innisbrook Wrapping Paper – Skye O'Donnell reported that Innisbrook had grossed \$6832.00 thus far.

4.) Silent Auction – A detailed report was sent to Board member from the Silent Auction chairs. Highlights of the report include 1.) Theme – Family Games, 2.) Tentative Title: "Game On!" or "Got Game", 3.) Music – looking at DJ vs. Band, 4.) Sales – Roseanne and Mindy ream are "soft selling" – flyer underway, 5.) Food – reviewing options and 6.) revamping the process of presenting and distributing gift certificates.

- 5.) Enrichment Zone – No report
- 6.) Box Tops – No report
- 7.) Grocery Receipts – Harris Teeter has already made \$113.00 with only 69 families registered. Becky is working hard on registering more families.
- 8.) Kroger Gift Cards – Becky Allison (chair) reported that Kroger cards had already made \$1,044.00 in only two months!
- 9.) MLS Sportswear – No report.

## **B. Community Events**

- 1.) Bingo Night – No report
- 2.) Skate Night – Skate Night is scheduled for November 11.
- 3.) Fun Run – No report
- 4.) Kids Market – The Kids Market is scheduled for December 2. Flyers are going home in the backpacks on Thursday.
- 5.) Kids Night Out – The next KNO is scheduled for December 9. Volunteers are to contact Betsy Bell directly. Visitor Christina Parker noted that when she was a Cale Elementary parent they used KNO as a serious fundraiser (making \$1000 per KNO event). They used parent volunteers instead of paid teachers. The Board members noted this could be brought up with the committee for consideration if committee members were interested.
- 6.) Newcomer's Network – No report.

## **C. Staff/School Support**

- 1.) Birthday Book Club – No report
- 2.) Art Print – No report.
- 3.) Copy Center – No report
- 4.) Fifth Grade Coordinators – No report
- 5.) Book Fair – No report
- 6.) Hospitality/ Staff Appreciation – No report
- 7.) Landscaping – No report
- 8.) Marquee – No report

## **D. Communications**

- 1.) Bulletin Board – No report
- 2.) Wethervane Newsletter – No report
- 3.) MLS Matters - No report
- 4.) School Directory – No report
- 5.) Yearbook – No report
- 6.) Parent Council – No report
- 7.) Website – No report

## **IX. Unfinished Business/Follow-up:**

- A. Lousia County School (Jenny Commins) - no report

- B. Ms. Tichner's catering prices/funding (Debbie Parmelee) - no report
- C. Update on coordinating middle school volunteers through Betsy Bell (Nancy Paulson) – as noted in KNO, volunteers will be coordinated directly with Betsy Bell.
- D. Update on the gifting of Fun Fair t-shirts to students in need. Nancy Paulson noted that contrary to the conversation at the last Board meeting, shirts had been appropriately held for students in need and that would continue to be the practice of the PTO Board when a request is made by the school counselor.

**X. New Business**

**A. Funding Guidelines** -- discussion (Nancy Paulson) – Nancy shared an initial document to spur conversation about having funding guidelines. Because a number of Board members were not present, this discussion was tabled. Nancy volunteered to work out some more details on a potential budgeting calendar for the PTO (including deadlines & handouts for teachers) and will bring back for discussion at a later meeting.

**B. Rain Garden Grant** – discussion (Clark Smith) -- Please see discussion under Principals Report.

**C. Gym Floor** – update/discussion (Clark Smith) – Clark reported he had spoken to an individual involved in replacing the gym floor at the Catholic School (total cost was approximately \$50,000). The cost of a “poured floor” would likely be in the same ballpark. Susan Park discussed the possibility of a temporary fix (recommending the possibility of a rubber flooring product that would be poured directly on the existing surface). While potential products were discussed, the Board mostly talked about whether the gym floor replacement would remain in the ACPS CIP budget for the 2014-15 year. And, if so, would it make sense to raise money for the floor, or direct our fundraising in other areas. Nancy Paulson expressed concerns with having any major fundraising efforts for MLS outside of the PTO umbrella and approval process. She felt that the gym floor needed to be considered within the overall priorities of the school and that those priorities needed to come with some prioritization (and ample support) from the faculty and staff at MLS. Since the gym floor was not a specific request of the gym teachers, the PTO faculty representative, or the principals it seemed difficult to support. It was agreed that this all tied back to the concept of discussing major CIP expenditures at on-time and the Board would need to consider this process at a later meeting.

**XI. Next Meeting – Wednesday, December 14, 6:30 p.m. in the MLS Library**