

**Walt Whitman High School
PTSA Meeting Minutes
May 19, 2009**

Welcome

PTSA Co-President, Sue Kanter, welcomed everyone.

Approval of April Minutes

April Minutes were approved.

Student Government Report

Doug Acker, SGA President, introduced Aaron Schifrin, SGA President-Elect to the group. Doug announced that Luke Rozansky is SGA Vice President-Elect. The SGA sponsored Spring Fair is Thursday, May 21, 2009 from 4:30-8:30pm. There is a \$5 entry fee and rides are \$.50. The proceeds will go to the SGA which helps fund clubs within the school. They are trying to get a posting to the elementary school list serves.

Principal's Report

Protest. Alan complimented the work of the Montgomery County Police Department in helping prepare for the Westboro Baptist Church protest. Principals for BCC and Walter Johnson High Schools were present to show support to the school. The well coordinated efforts of the Staff, County Police and MCPS security made it possible for Westboro protesters and Whitman students to present their points of view in a safe way. He was extremely proud of the students.

Backpack Detonated. A police officer saw a backpack by a tree in the parking lot the day after the protest. It was deemed suspicious, the school was evacuated, and the backpack was detonated. It turned out to be harmless, left by a student on Friday afterschool.

Website Threats. On Monday evening, May 11th, Dr. Goodwin was made aware that threats had been made to students and staff at the school on the website, peoplesdirt.com. While travelling back from the West Coast, he was in contact with AP Jennifer Webster who called the appropriate authorities to have the matter immediately addressed. The Police moved quickly and were able to identify the IPS address and then the person posting the threats. The former Whitman student was arrested and being held in Tennessee where he currently resides. The owner of the site when asked removed the threatening notes but the site continues to run and Dr. Goodwin described it as vile. The profile of the site has been raised and some Whitman students have since gone on and hurt others with words that don't rise to the level of threats but show extremely bad judgment. . Whitman has no power to discipline a student if using bad judgment on the internet because it is technically not happening on school grounds. He feels strongly that Freedom of Speech used anonymously is very dangerous.

Enrollment/Staffing. Current student enrollment is 1855. The expected enrollment for '09-10 is set at 1876. Alan expects that is realistic. They were able to hire 3 part-time teachers on for full time next year in Chemistry, Math and English.

Financial Audit. The School's Financial Audit had some problems attributed to sloppy paperwork, field trip records, checks approval process, and the establishment of a new

bank account. Dr. Goodwin is required to submit an Audit Response which he has done. He hopes that the new procedures which have been outlined for the Business Manager and Assistant Manager will quickly clear up any issues. Dr. Goodwin does not believe these issues result from any malfeasance. Question was raised about reading the Response to the Audit. Dr. Goodwin made it clear that all materials are considered public and available for reading.

Student or Class Fees. Fees for '09-10 will be reduced and the impact will be felt in many classes. This means that some materials previously used in classrooms will no longer be available. Currently MCPS allows for \$22 for instructional materials for each child. Up until now, Whitman students have been allowed to pay the difference between \$22 and the cost that the staff feels is really what they need for each class. Alan is concerned about a Research Manual that has traditionally been purchased by every student as a freshman. Since it has been treated as part of the curriculum no fee can be charged for it. The rationale being that if a book or workbook is considered required for a course the school system must provide it under the notion of free and public education. There will be an impact on summer reading materials as well. Teachers may have to prepare a list of books that are not required but recommended. If teachers do require a book it will need to be widely available for all students to either borrow from the library or read as an ebook on line at the library. Suggestions were made to recycle summer reading books the way the CIC asks for used copies of College Board materials and SAT prep materials. The lack of fees will further exacerbate the \$79 million cut made to the MCPS Budget by the State.

Presidents' Report

Vicky Strella gave the report. Festival of the Arts was a huge success in large part thanks to the efforts of Melinda Robbins, PTSA Chairman, and Robert Burgess, Staff Coordinator. The PTSA hope to have automated membership for fees for the '09-10 membership drive. Three proposals are being considered. With the convenience of online registration and payment, the PTSA board is hopeful that membership will increase. Checks and cash payment will still be accepted. Automated membership raised the issue of an online directory. Don Libes will get to the Presidents the names of schools who no longer print their directories. PTSA meetings this year included a specific presentation of relevant high school topic. The PTSA is always looking for good ideas that have not been the subject of either GAC or Parent Networking Meetings. Presidents wanted to stress that Whitman is an incredible high school where wonderful things are happening everyday: Festival of the Arts. Debate Team success sending in sending kids to Nationals, Tennis Team success in sending kids to States, and Cappie nominations to name a few.

Treasurer's Report

Janice Mehler presented the report. Notwithstanding that revenue was down due to a mailing glitch over the summer, we have been able to manage on a reduced budget in part attributed to savings from reduced printing cost of the Viking Voice and less state/local dues as result of lowered membership. Expected expenses yet to be paid out will result in a \$5,000 cushion for start-up costs for the '09-'10 school year. A motion was made to spend down \$5000 from One Time Grants and \$1000 from Classroom Grants. Alan

Goodwin had asked that any available money be dedicated to Promethean Boards. The suggestion was made that competitors make a comparable product at a lesser price. The Co-Presidents said they would look into it. A motion was made to earmark the \$6000 form One Time Grants and Classroom Grants for the purchase of Promethean Boards or a facsimile. The motion was seconded and approved.

Election of Officers

The slate of officers for '09-10 was presented at the April meeting and posted on the website. The names were read and a motion to approve the slate as presented was passed.

President Vicky Strella

Executive Vice President: Sue Kanter

Vice-Presidents for Volunteers: Karen Finucan Clarkson & Susan Scholl

Vice-Presidents for Membership: Sharron Brossi & Debbie Flack

Treasurer: Sheila Duncan-Peters

Corresponding Secretary: Peter Hobby

Recording Secretary: Rebecca Kahlenberg & Catherine McMullen

The motion was seconded and the slate was approved. Officers- elect, Sheila Duncan-Peters and Rebecca Kahlenberg, were introduced.

There was no new business and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by,
Noelle McHugh, Recording Secretary