

Willard PTG Meeting
April 1, 2019

Attendance

Denise Carleton, Jennie Garofalo, Marieke Herrero, Samantha Jaddou, Peony Keve, Janet King, Matthew Lucey, Meagan MacNutt, Kristin Martines, Candace Root, Alex Ruhmann, Peter Smulowitz, Susan Wagner, Kathryn Watson

- Approved minutes from February 4th meeting.

Treasurer's Report (Kristin Martines)

- Spoke to Sherry in the front office — she just put in the last coffee order so Kristin estimates the total will be \$2,100 for the year, which is lower than budgeted.
- Everything else is on track or has been discussed.

Principal's Report (Matt Lucey)

- Regarding the middle school principal presentation, the feedback was that it was very productive and informative. There will be several additional information sessions, specifically re: special education, coming in May.
- Thank you to the PTG and Staff Appreciation Committee – the Italian lunch was spectacular.
- Grade 2 went to the STEAM lab.
- Turtle scientists visited with an update; they were exceptional as always.
- Math Night went well. There were 45-50 people in attendance. It's nice to provide opportunities for students to dip into their individual passions.
- Talent Show was a tremendous success.
- Coffee re: SEL (Social Emotional Learning) is this Friday.
- Dr. Hunter came for a round table talk with the Willard staff last week.
- Last Friday the Rivers & Revolution classrooms visited Old North Bridge.
- Discussed the statistics regarding online links and the decline in participation, as well as the decline in volunteerism. One question raised was whether this could have something to do with the school's effort to go green and eliminating backpack flyers, which has resulted in communication with the parents only and not the students. Communication is now confined to the Weekly, and how many parents are reading that? Matt suggested he could send out important dates through his update.
- Placement Process letters went out (70% read the email and 43% clicked through to the form).
- MCAS testing is this month — one change is that there will not be an over-abundance of adults in the classroom (just classroom teacher, plus some adult support in the hallway), which will allow other classroom teaching to proceed without interruption.
- Spelling Bee is this Friday — there has been a tremendous amount of interest this year.
- Family Reading Night is April 23 — approximately 15 members of the staff will participate.
- A new Willard sign will be placed in front of the school this spring.
- This summer some signage in the parking lot will change.
- The first 5 spots in the middle row will be designated to student drop-off/pickup (instead of reserved for electric vehicles as they are currently.)
- Irrigation work will continue this summer.
- Additional external security cameras will be installed this summer, plus the footage will be archived going forward.

Social Committee (Meagan MacNutt)

- Kindergarten Popsicle Party — looking at Wednesday, June 5th, 1-2:30pm. The Heintz-Perkins family has offered to host.
- Volunteer Appreciation Party is at the Ruhmanns' on June 6th at 7pm.
- In looking ahead to next year, Meagan is planning to meet with Bedford Farms as a new provider for the Ice Cream Social instead of Reasons to be Cheerful. The event will be the first Sunday of the 2019-2020 school year – September 8th.
- Discussed spacing out some of the other early-fall events, i.e. maybe we schedule the coffee after Back-to-School Night next year?
- Back-to-School Night will have a new format. Kindergarten & 1st grade will go first, followed by a general session to address school-wide topics, then Grades 2 & 3 will go, followed by Grades 4 & 5 assuming most parents of older students are pretty comfortable with the other information.
- Parent Social — discussed changing the timing to the first week of October instead of the last week in September.
- Meagan is planning to submit in the Weekly an invitation for other parents to host the event. The Brusos have offered to host again if no one else offers.

Communications (Kathryn Watson/Samantha Jaddou)

- Kindergarten registration is at the end of the month; in the past we have put out a little flyer to incoming parents about signing up for the Willard Weekly.
- Samantha and Kathryn met last month to talk about the hand-off of the website given Kathryn's graduation; they discussed moving the website to another platform for \$12/month. The proposed service is much more user-friendly.
- Samantha's plan is to evaluate content inventory and do some user research since she has received some feedback is that it's hard to find things and maybe things need to be labeled a bit differently for the user experience.
- Discussed the location of our new digital signage; the cafeteria may be ideal for maximum attention from the students.
- The ongoing strategy should be figuring out how to recapture the 70% of parents who aren't reading the Weekly.

Before and After (Denise Carleton)

- Chess, Yoga (there is room for 4 more students), Inline skating (which has been hugely popular — 2 sessions, 3 classes each), and Chorus are ongoing.
- The K-3 Chess students won the state primary school championship!
- Chorus performed in the Big Sing concert in Needham. David Piper reported that it was extraordinary, kids were singing on the bus on the way back, and it was great community building.
- Bobby Dyer reached out about introducing Legos again.
- Overall the Committee hasn't spent a ton of money – this year a lot of parents and teachers stepped forward.
- Thoreau has transitioned to using Concord Recreation entirely, so we will continue to keep an eye on that. One huge pro is that they can handle all students, including special needs; a con is that programs will be more expensive.

Fundraising (Peony Keve/Maricke Herrero)

- One more company match came in.
- Annual Appeal gross total is around \$33,400. We may not meet the goal of \$34,000. Peony and Marieke will consider including one more blast in the Weekly.

Nominating Committee (Janet King)

- Progress is looking pretty good.
- Still seeking an Auxiliary Member — so many board members are graduating this year, and historically that person has had board experience. However, it does not necessarily need to be a past board member, just someone who attends meetings and can jump in if and when needed.

By-Laws Update (Alex Ruhmann/Susan Wagner)

- One of the big things we have had to do this year is to go through the PTG By-Laws, which need to be reviewed every three years. The Executive Committee has been working on that. We had hoped to knock it out this morning, but the hope is that before the May meeting the Board will get the revised By-Laws, approved by the Executive Committee, so there can be an official Board vote in the next meeting.

Budget 2019-20 (Alex Ruhmann/Susan Wagner)

- Reviewed budget.
 - Chorus will have to remain a variable item. David Piper has opened it up to additional grades so if the participation numbers continue to increase, we may have to budget more for t-shirts, etc.
 - May be able to drop the Staff Appreciation line item by a couple hundred dollars.
 - May have to increase the website line item by \$50 to account for the transition.
 - Carnival is the big discussion — is this something that should continue to happen, and what would that look like if not? Discussed if there is a way to reinvent the event so it requires fewer rentals, fewer volunteers since it has become incredibly hard to staff. Discussed keeping the parts that make money, but they could be moved around, i.e. Spare Change at Thanksgiving instead. There are concerning optics with the event — parents are throwing money at their children, assuming it's all going to the school, when really Willard only gets maybe \$.20 on the dollar. One consideration is an ice cream social with a raffle.
- There will be a closed portion at the end of the May meeting to vote on the budget.

Carnival 2019 (Alex Ruhmann/Susan Wagner)

- Erika Woodhouse has been scrambling to staff the Carnival; she has lost several of her Committee Chairs in the last month.
- It has become more and more challenging to run this event, and it doesn't make as much money as one might think.
- Alex and Susan asked that the Board make an effort to show Erika their support.

Other (Alex Ruhmann/Susan Wagner)

- Volunteers are helping to figure out whether or not Willard should use a company to get school supplies next year. We will share our recommendation with Thoreau and Alcott. A survey was included in the Weekly, which parents should fill out.
- Discussed the middle school vote and the PTG's role. To clarify, as individuals we can promote anything we want; the PTG as an organization cannot officially support politics. The reason being that we could lose our 501(c)(3) status if we get involved in politics.

- A 4th grade dad, who is deeply involved in biking in the area, recently approached Matt about putting together a bike event. Willard may host something after school — 6 different experiences kids could have, i.e. safety, bike repair. May 8th is a possible date.
- Alex is starting to work on committee guidelines; hopefully it can include the vendor list.