

## Van Hise Elementary PTO Board Meeting Minutes June 3, 2014

Present: Board members (Carousel Bayrd, Dana McClosky, Kristin Ruedi-Krause, Shelby Connell, Jolynne Roorda, Eileen Snyder) + 4 parents.

### **Approve By-Law Changes and Sign:**

The following changes were proposed to the by-laws:

Article VI, Section C - Add the following language "and/or an email will be sent to parents via the PTO Listserv."

Article VI, Section B - Change to read "Officers shall assume their official duties on June 1; and shall serve for terms of one (1) year and/or until their successors are elected or upon their resignation."

Article VI, Section D - Change to read "The outgoing treasurer shall have until July 31 to complete the financial transactions for the recently ended fiscal year. The organization's fiscal year is July 1-June 30."

Article IX, Section D - Add a note indicating that the fiscal year is July 1-June 30.

There was some discussion about board member terms. The old language stated that officers served one-year terms. There was some concern that taking out the length of term might cause people to be stuck as officers; it was pointed out that the language provides for resignation. The reason for proposing the length of term be removed is that many officers end up serving more than on year. Carousel Bayrd moved to approve, adding back the language providing for a one-year term. Dana McClosky seconded. The by-law changes were approved according to the motion.

### **Financial/Funding:**

We have had 2 requests since early May: 1) PTO has helped purchase Time For Kids (TFK), splitting the cost with Mrs. Keeler. We can now get National Geographic for Kids for an additional \$1 (correction: ~\$5) per child with the purchase of TFK. We can get both for \$3,000 total; Mrs. Keeler requests \$1,500 from the PTO. [NOTE: These numbers have been revised since the meeting.] A question was raised about National Geographic; one parent has received it at home and notes that the home version has a lot of advertising content, and wonders if the school version has the same content. Shelby will email Mrs. Keeler and send out an email requesting a vote from everyone present at tonight's meeting.

2) Theresa Hyman, VHE's reading interventionist, requests that the PTO provide \$414 for the purchase of sets of black and white books that her students can take home. The books will provide the students with texts they can read and re-read that are at an appropriate level. For some of the students, these may be some of the only books in their homes. There was discussion about whether the students would keep these books forever or return them to the school, and whether allowing the students to keep the books would require an annual purchase of books. There was also a question about how many total books would be purchased. Shelby will follow up with Ms. Hyman and get back to the PTO board by email.

**Fundraising strategy:**

The letter that goes out with the direct appeal states that it's the only fundraiser of the year, but really it's one of many opportunities. The language is there because it took the place of most sales-based fundraising, but there are other fundraisers that come up, so we need to look at the language. One suggestion: "this is one of many opportunities..." There was discussion about how to communicate with parents what the direct appeal is. Some raised the concern that if the direct appeal seems like one opportunity of many, people will be less inclined to contribute. Also, this coming school year, we will start fundraising for the playground. [Aside: Mrs. Koval washed all the leftover lost and found items, and sold them at the ice cream social for \$1 per item, raising \$40 for the playground.] The amount we need to raise for the playground may be as high as \$200,000, to be raised over 2 years. People may not want to write 2 big checks. There will be a big fundraising event for the playground, but with the direct appeal, we might not get as much for the playground. There was general agreement that we need to be clear in the letter what the direct appeal is, what it's replacing (most sales-based fund raising, except REAP), and what the money is used for.

It was pointed out that there will be a letter to the larger community raising funds for the playground; there will be grants written; we will go to Hamilton (Hamilton does use the playground). Shelby will find someone to work with Tara on the wording of the letter. We generally raise between \$10,000 and \$12,000 through the direct appeal (and we generally raise around \$50,000 through all fundraising efforts during the year). Dana provided a breakdown of approximately how that money is allocated: Fundraising events: 19%; Community building events: 4%; Sales: 13%; School programs (healthy snack and safety patrol): 1%; General expenses: 13%; Approved grant requests: 38%. The PTO will contribute some money to the playground, possibly \$10,000-15,000. There was some discussion of how (or whether) to talk about that in the playground fundraising efforts. Generally what happens is that there is some money left at the end of each year, and that (or part of that) then goes to a big project, like the clay stomp in 2010 or the visiting artist for next year. We'll bring the classroom reps in on the discussion, too. The question was raised whether we need to spend money on technology. The district has released its list of G-1 schools (the first tier of schools to get the new technology in the Districts Technology Plan). VHE is not in tier 1. We are at least 2 years out from getting technology through the plan.

Amy Kurka will put out a survey to teachers re what they need. We didn't get \_\_\_\_ grant. We'll have a better idea by end of year what the thought is. Some money we had thought about for playground may end up going to tech instead. The schools other needs come first for the PTO. We should be able to know by the start of the school year what the technology needs are. Shelby will keep everyone updated.

**Schedule update:**

Shelby heard from Ann that the calendar for 2014/2015 is a go. There are a few outstanding issues, though. The vendor/activity fair (vendors representing various activities and/or summer camps would pay to host a booth at Van Hise; families would be invited to come and learn about the options available for kids' activities). The date we were looking at originally was January 10, but the gymnastics equipment will be set up in the gym on that date, so if we want to use the

entire gym (instead of part of the gym and the school hallways), we can't do it on 1/10. January 31 could work, but we would need volunteers to help dismantle the gymnastics equipment on Friday, Jan. 30. There was some discussion about how long the fair should run. Someone from the school/PTO will have to be present for the whole event. It was decided that 10:00 am-2:00 pm is a good amount of time, and a good time of day. There was some discussion about offering food, but it was decided that having food would cost too much and be too much work to be worth the effort. The Activity Fair is tentatively on the calendar for January 31, 2015, 10: am-2:00 pm.

**Benefit Nights.** There has been no confirmation from either SERVV or the Great Dane about whether they'll do a benefit next year. Noodles is no longer doing any benefits at all, but would consider a donation – they're providing the food for the K/1 babysitting night. Other places that do benefits: Chipotle (on University), Pasquales (Jolynne (?) has asked them but has not yet heard back). Panera does not do benefits. Other possibilities to check are Vintage, Bluephies, La Brioche. Further suggestions: Orange Leaf frozen yogurt, Chocolate Shoppe – maybe a Sunday afternoon coffee/ice cream event at EVP and Chocolate Shoppe in Sequoia Commons? Luigi's is too small for a benefit, but Food Fight might not be opposed. October 7 is back to school night; it might be worth trying to do something October 13 or 14. Jolynne will check. Fall weekends are hard because of soccer time, but something in the afternoon might work.

**Fun Run.** The original idea was to pair a fun run with the ice cream social, something like what Mrs. Koval did in 2013 with the benefit run for Juvenile Diabetes. There was discussion about connecting it with fundraising, pledges, or a color dash, possibly hooking it up with the Tri-for Kids, thus opening it for the community. But if it's open to the community, we can't couple it with the ice cream social (we can't feed everyone in the community ice cream). Other thoughts were to pair it with the activities fair, or work with Girls on the Run (would cost money) or try to get parents from Girls on the Run to help organize something. It was pointed out that a fun run with pledges would be an opportunity for kids to directly help raise money for the playground, even if it was only a little bit. Pledge forms can be off-putting; some would rather write a check; if we keep asking the same base of people for money over and over, we'll have diminishing returns. How many event should we have? Carousel will take the lead on the fun run, with the idea that it's a way for kids to be involved, even if it ends up being only in a small way. Perhaps Mrs. Koval will help, and it can be a legitimate 5k run/walk It was pointed out that there are a ton of fun runs in the spring, so fall might be a better time. Fall 2014 might be too soon for planning. Table for now and do it in fall 2015? Just not advertise, but leave the possibility open? Dana motions for a vote, Tara seconds. The fun run is tabled for the rest of the meeting and will be taken up at another time.\*

**Classroom Reps.** The Carnival basket was the biggest thing this year; there wasn't much else to do this year. But it did bring more voices to the PTO, for example, in the computer discussion more people chimed in with what their kids' classrooms would use or not. For next year, there will be the playground stuff, carnival baskets, and possibly big ticket purchases. Carousel will provide a written job description. Shelby explained that one part of the School Improvement Plan (SIP) is FACE standards: Family and Community Engagement. Shahanna Baldon, who is a VHE parent and the Community Engagement person for the district, took the classroom rep idea to the district, and the district uses it as an example of what a distinguished school would look like, in terms of FACE standards. The districts description is a little different, though. Their ideas

coincide more with the idea of a classroom parent, who helps the teacher to figure out volunteer requirements, etc. Can we ask reps to do both, or is it too much? The needs depend on the teachers. Maybe if we can get the word out, teachers would use it. Maybe if we pitch it to the teachers better, explain that the goal is to streamline communication, they'd be more apt to use it. Would parents be willing/able to make the effort? But, that closer relationship with the teacher might be something that parents would want. The PTO needs someone who can routinely communicate with the classroom reps about what needs to happen. Could be the outreach person? Next year, we're going down to 3 classes per grade (except K), so it will be harder to get teacher reps to come to meetings, so the reps may be more important next year. This year, we were supposed to have a weekly letter shared with teachers. Next year, Mrs. Keeler will distribute that information to teachers in her regular letters. We can probably find someone for the k/1 classes, but it may be harder to find volunteers in the older classrooms. It may end up being a grade rep instead of a classroom rep. Shelby will send everyone the information from Shahanna about the districts definition of a classroom rep.

**Meeting topics.** How many general PTO meetings should there be, and how many topical meetings? Meetings are scheduled every month of the 2014/2015 school year, except April. The dates are: 9/9, 10/14, 11/4, 12/2, 1/6, 2/3, 3/3, 4/7, 5/5, and 6/2. The September meeting will be Mrs. Keeler's introductory meeting. Should the business meetings on months with topical meetings be held on a different night, or should they be held after, for a long night (i.e., 7:30-8:15). It was agreed that holding the business meeting on the same night as the topical meeting makes the most sense.

Potential topics for meetings. In 2013/2014 topics were: Bullying, Internet Safety, PBS, the VHE Garden, TAG Services, Special Ed Services; in the past, we've done Math night. Shelby asked everyone to think about suggestions and send her an email over the next week or so. Some ideas mentioned at the meeting: VHE philosophy; more math; sample classes from the teachers; a presentation by the specials teachers.

During the meeting topics discussion, someone suggested setting up tables for the event coordinators at this first meeting (or the open house, or registration day) explaining what all the events are and how to sign up. Someone suggested that parents be asked to volunteer 2 hours/year at the school. It was pointed out this could be a way to hook people at the first PTO meeting. Shelby will talk to Peg about how much time she needs at the first meeting, and try to set something up if it will work. The first meeting is generally geared toward kindergarten parents, but oftentimes they're more willing to volunteer for things.

**After school classes.** Shelby asked for more ideas for after school classes, for parents, too. The classes will continue to be assigned using a lottery. There will also be a behavior clause added next year; something like 3 strikes, you're out. Sometimes kids don't want to be there, so it might be good if we could find a way to confirm the kids willingness. It seems like it's been a bit of a problem this year, though not huge (perhaps 5 out of 200 participating kids). Shelby will work on this policy.

Shelby requested that everyone email her their summer schedules by the end of the week – whether you're here or not. She will get volunteers for registration day, and will get information from Ann on that and pass along the specifics.

Do we want to do something social as a board, like with family, this summer? People generally like the idea. Shelby will circulate emails.

A Fundraiser idea: Pump it up! Good for the K/1's, would provide a chance for the parents to get to know each other. Laser tag might be a good one for older kids. Maybe the room parents could organize it. It could be for October 20.

Shelby adjourned the meeting.

\*Wording changed on 8/13/2014 from: "The fun run is tabled for now, will take it up again for fall 2015."