

Van Hise Elementary PTO Board Meeting Minutes March 3, 2015

Present: Peg Keeler, Shelby Connell, Dana McCloskey, Eileen Snyder, Jodi Beck, Carousel Bayrd, Jolynne Roorda, LèAndrea Vernon, Chris Frakes.

Teacher grants:

Shelby reported that she contacted teachers with approved grants.

Technology request. Peg explained her technology grant request. She noted she's not necessarily making the request for this round of grants, she just wanted to put it out there. Right now, we have one mobile cart for Chrome books. It is used all the time, classrooms fight over it. The school is starting to look beyond the computer lab; Chrome books are used for assessments, but also instruction, blogging, etc. Kids need to have computing. With the district technology plan, we did not apply for G2 (the second year of the technology plan), instead focusing on the outdoor classroom. It's possible the technology plan will be disbanded because of budget cuts. So, Peg's thinking is that a Chrome cart would be something that we could use.

Shelby talked to the librarian and looked at the schedule for checking the Chrome cart out. It is essentially permanently checked out between the 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades. The technology plan is for tablet, which the Chrome book is, not necessarily an iPad, etc. People asked, what about what's already in the classrooms? One example of technology use in a classroom: there might be 12 pairs of 2 working on typing, or researching, and having to run around the classroom to different machines, because there's not enough technology.

We've been cautious about buying technology because of the technology plan, but now we're looking at possibly not having that anymore. Another Chrome cart is not a huge project, but would still get tech in hands of the kids. Peg was thinking maybe of ordering it this summer so we'd have it for the fall.

The grant process for the district technology plan is onerous, and is meant to build ownership and promote innovation. Cuts are going to be big.

Is Donors Choose an option? Amounts over \$400 are harder to get through Donors Choose. Also, the district has a specific process for ordering technology; a tablet from Donor's choose is not guaranteed to be allowed to be hooked up to the system. Donors Choose works well for an individual classroom, and especially for fun, flashy things. It is great for things that are a niche and have a quick turnaround. Maybe something classroom reps can work with teachers on.

The Chrome cart is a good idea instead of providing more Chrome books to each classroom, but space is an issue, also classrooms don't need it all the time.

Pavilion. When the Green Team originally got an \$8,000 Grow Grant, there was a process for developing how you're going to use it. The first step was to survey teachers to find out, if they had a choice, what would they want? The top rated thing was pavilion, so there's actually a defined outdoor classroom space. The Green Team was going to use the Grow Grant money for the pavilion, but saw they cost about \$25,000. Then the referendum came up, which changed the garden. It would be good to use the outdoor space more effectively. The playground doesn't have much shaded space, so it would be nice to have a covered area. The Green Team is working on various plans to get matching funds; if they could say they have x amount for materials, they'd have better shot of getting more grants.

Shelby: One discussion was things that PTO could potentially do in reference to the referendum, so what if we wait until we know if the referendum will pass.

The Grow Grant money has to be spent by the end of June, so the Green Team can't hold it for the pavilion; it will be used for the new garden site, and the pavilion will be like phase II. The garden and pavilion will be at the Kindergarten end of the building.

Pavilion will be used year-round for science experiments, garden stuff, etc. It would be open-sided; maybe one side would be closed so there could be a white board; maybe with some kitchen features for harvesting/cleaning produce.

The garden does have its own fund; if the money for the pavilion is approved, it could potentially come from there.

The board will table both of these discussions and take it up after the referendum at a business meeting in May.

Food for conferences:

Shelby asked Peg whether the PTO should provide food for the teachers during conferences. Peg responded that the teachers would love it. Right now, we have \$200 allocated. What should we do? Maybe Jason's Deli. Jodi will work with him; we have 40 staff, \$200. They give schools a special deal. Dana will get Jodi the brochures; Shelby will get Jodi his contact info. They should drop off the food at 11:00, so it's all set up by 11:30.

April meeting:

It was decided that a discussion about assessments would be a better fit for a Fall meeting. April will be a generic meeting. Peg will put a description of assessments in the newsletter, and will run it by Carousel and Dana for clarification. Shelby mentioned that REAP has a farm-to-school event that they are reaching out to everyone on. They would like to come and talk for 10-15 minutes at our next meeting. The board agreed this would be a good idea.

Teacher Grants, II:

Back to iPad request from Chinese BRT. So, do we want to vote again? Shelby negotiated with her on type of iPad. We might be able to get a discount through the district. Will anyone else come back and ask for an iPad? If we do it for one, we'll have to do it for others. Vote: passed unanimously, we'll fund an iPad for the Chinese BRT.

Fundraising possibilities:

Shelby got some information about a fundraising opportunity. It may be something like selling pizza; there's a meeting. The company is Hansen Foods. Shelby told them not this year, but maybe next? LèAndrea will go to the informational program and bring back the information to the April meeting.

A couple years ago VHE did a Mallards event. Should we do it again? Yes. Kristina will set it up. We made about \$150-\$200 last time.

There is an online read-a-thon fundraiser. They are raising their fees in March. Kids get pledges for reading so many minutes, etc. No. We can do that on our own, then we don't have to give them a cut.

Board Recruitment: Dana hasn't talked to her people. Jodi's person said no; Shelley and Jeff would like to come to the next discussion meeting - they're really interested in the vendor fair, but want other information, too. LèAndrea's people are both yes to come to the next info meeting. Her third person just had a baby. Eileen has not contacted her people. Jolynne talked to some people and got some interest.

There was some discussion about after school classes and food; grocery stores will donate food if it's educational.

What are we doing moving forward? There are only 2 more meetings that Shelby will be running. There was some discussion about what the next step should be. The board decided to have another meeting, inviting people who are interested in joining the board or contributing in some other way. Hopefully we'll be able to identify holes and then also fill them. Dana will re-send the list of things we're each doing so we can solidify what our needs are, so at the meeting it will be clear what needs to be done. We'll Meet March 22, announce at the April 7 PTO meeting that we're looking for board members, then we may need to do an event in April.

The Carnival made a bigger profit, but also spent more money, so we only netted about \$43 additional dollars.