**Skokie Washburne PTO Meeting Minutes**

**October 28, 2019**

**Present:** Larry Joynt, Betty Weir, Andrew Fenton, Ben Horwitz, Megan Riley, Victoria Willer, Kymm Junker, Brie Root, April Potterfield, Meg Moudy, Amy Kay and Libby Elliott

# Minutes approved from last session

# Principal Report: Betty Weir/Larry Joynt

# Betty Weir expressed her excitement at being back from maternity leave; said it “feels like coming home.”

1. Weir thanked families for making time to come in for parent –teacher conferences. These meetings help strengthen Skokie School’s home-school partnership.
2. Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) continues to be a priority for D36 and Skokie School. The school now holds Advisory for the first 20 minutes of every day aimed at teaching the students to use new language to communicate with one another. Skokie is fortunate to be partnering directly with CASEL, an organization that focuses on SEL. The district had its first SEL Committee meeting two weeks ago, which included parents from all five D36 schools plus teachers and administrators. Two additional full-day meetings are scheduled for later in the school year.
3. There will be no school on 11/1 for an Institute Day, whereby the entire district participates in professional learning together. The format of these training days includes district-wide committee meetings in the morning, followed by SEL work in the afternoon consisting of self-awareness, self-management and mindfulness training aimed at helping teachers model these practices for students.
4. Halloween Day –Skokie School will run a Monday schedule with parties in the afternoon for advisories. Costumes are permitted in accordance with guidelines. Mrs. Antman’s class will host a haunted house.
5. Skokie-Washburne report cards will be exclusively available online this year via Power School. A reminder will be sent out to parents.
6. Skokie and Washburne administrators are engaged in yearlong discussions regarding the possible merger of the two building facilities.

#  Principal Report: Andrew Fenton/Ben Horwitz

1. Thank you to members of the PTO for suggestions regarding topics for the Advisory Coffee. Ben Horwitz reported that attendance increased to 20, making the event a success.

These coffees will take place once every trimester. In the future, the Friday all-school newsletter will include any handouts from the coffees. The next gathering will address the topic of managing social media.

1. Administrators are still in the process of redecorating The Burne by identifying exactly what items to order (to include U-shaped furniture). Actual receipts for these purchases will be available at November’s PTO meeting.
2. April Potterfield offered the PTO’s congratulations to Andrew Fenton on the completion of his PhD.

**IV. Central PTO Update**

1. Central PTO Update – April Potterfield reports that Tricia Kocanda attended a recent conference with other local area superintendents, and many were impressed to learn that D36 has a close partnership with CASEL to oversee the district’s recent SEL initiative.
2. D36 is in ongoing discussions with the Winnetka Park District to help the schools form an easier, more streamlined partnership.
3. The district is still weighing the possibility of switching to single provider for food service. The Central PTO is considering the option of taking a parent poll to determine if parents are willing to change lunch providers. Skokie PTO recently renegotiated the school’s Sproutsville contract after making the decision to stay with the food service provider for another year.
4. Safety around school pick up/drop off was a big topic at this month’s Central PTO Meeting. Schools are taking steps to enforce traffic patterns that are often not being followed by parents. There are have been reports of parents being “mean and nasty” with teaching associates at crosswalks. Staffing the crosswalks is a persistent problem.
5. Redistricting was voted on at the October school board meeting.

# Recent Events

1. Social Dance is now over. The pizza parties were successful.
2. Parent Party event co-chairs Courtney Kafis and Katie Flanigan turned the Community House into Las Vegas. Attention was given to every detail. PTO has requested that those decorations be saved for future parties.

# Treasurer Report—Amy Kay

1. The Parent Party did not collect its full budgeted amount; only $9100 as of today versus $12,000 budgeted. $2000 was already allocated from PTO funds. The budget for next year will need to lowered based on this year’s attendance rate. (75 people total attended/185 tickets were sold/200 ticket sales were needed to break even).

Last year’s party coincided with New Trier Freshman orientation night, and attendance was also low. For the last couple of years, parent parties have been held at Skokie Country Club. In the future, someone may agree to offer up a home. The CH gave a significant discount, -half their usual fee. Total costs were lower than at Skokie Country Club.

1. Social Dance – very well attended. The event made more than budgeted.
2. Composting –total the amount budgeted through to September 2020 is $1,500 through next September. Expenses are already at $470 dollars meaning costs are likely to go over budget. While the PTO determined last year that composting is a priority, it’s proven to be expensive. Currently $1500 is coming out of PTO distributions of $10,000 to both Skokie and Washburne. Composting may need to be a district-wide question. As a long term solution, Amy Kay suggests starting a discussion with the district to determine whether this should come out of a district-wide budget, rather than individual school PTO budgets.
3. Appeal and Teacher Gifts –Teacher Gift income still $4,000 below what was collected last year and what was budgeted. The Appeal is just below budget at approximately $16,800 versus $17,000. Appeal levels are fine but it’s critical that the PTO give the Teacher Gift fund another push. April Potterfield said that around this time of year, parents often start asking room parents if they need to contribute to teacher gifts. It was suggested that additional communication should come from room parents.

1. **Communications Report—Laura Roney & Meg Moudy**
2. Room parents to send a personal note about Teacher Gifts to class copying PTO on all emails.
3. Vice Chairs and Assistant Treasurer will get together to decide how much to disperse to teachers based on funds available and what percentage of time each teacher works (full vs. part-time). Andrew Fenton to send to April Potterfield a full teacher list. Gift amounts to be approved at the next PTO meeting. Any money contributed after the deadline will be used for catered teacher breakfasts in the spring. All teacher funds get spent on the teachers by the end of the year.
4. November 4- PTO letter goes out to parents. November 11 – room parent letter goes out to classrooms. Final deadline for contributions will be on November 13. Victoria Willer to handle communication with room parents.
5. Teacher Gift payment page is on website.
6. PTO Committee Lists need to be updated on the website.
7. Communications Co-Chairs to send out a reminder that Skokie Washburne will be accepting post-Halloween candy donations.

# VP Co-Chair Report—Megan Riley and Victoria Willer

No new business to report.

# Upcoming dates

* 1. Card Party – a designated day to get together as an executive committee to sign cards and checks, and stuff envelopes for teachers. This will be planned for the first week of December.
	2. Holiday Lunch - December 16, at Brie Root’s Home, 1332 Sunview Lane, 12:30. PTO meeting followed by lunch.
	3. Wish lists requests were submitted from Skokie Washburne teachers. PTO co-hairs will look at the individual requests, discuss them via email, and be prepared to vote on those disbursements at PTO’s November meeting. Criteria for wish list awards remains the same, with priority going to requests that: 1) touch the most kids and 2) make the biggest impact. PTO may also be looking to combine projects. Donations of used furniture cannot be accepted because they often do not meet the fire code.