

Burning Tree PTA Minutes – December 4, 2007 at 9:30 a.m.

The meeting was called to order by President Olivia Lai. The October 2, 2007 minutes were approved.

President's Report: To date, 319 out of 391 families have joined the PTA. Families who have not yet joined have received reminders. Karen van Loon was not present but asked Olivia to request that anyone chairing a school event needs to send their information to her so that she may post it on the PTA website. A Community Connections page will be added to the web site listing community resources such as children's programs and sports teams. To add something to Community Connections, email info to Karen who will forward to Exec. Board for approval. Also forward any interesting websites to Karen for use in the Resources page, which refers families to helpful educational web sites.

Report on Whitman Cluster Meeting: Dorene Rosenthal, Ex-Officio, reported on Whitman cluster meeting. The cluster works together to set priorities and then cluster coordinator testifies before the Board of Education and County Council on the proposed operating and capital budgets. They discussed issues to be presented for the Capital Improvement Plan as well as how to mobilize efforts in the cluster before presenting to County Council. Assessments were also discussed. How should they gather data on issues of testing? How much testing is going on? Does it take away from teaching time? Schools are gathering information on these issues. Bannockburn Elementary will host a talk on the math curriculum on Jan. 8 at 7:30 p.m.

Principal's Report: Mrs. Shapiro, 5th grade teacher, thanked everyone for the wonderful staff lunch. She also enjoyed the Book Fair at Barnes and Nobles. **Staffing update:** Dr. Chaset stated that there are 3 additional para educators. Reece Walsh has been hired on a part time temporary basis, Karen Seebolm has been hired as a 1-1 support for a learning center student, and a 3 and ½ hour position has been given to Joan Ishimoto for playground time and as a para educator.

The Burning Tree Educational Foundation wish list items all include upgrades in technology: 1st: a sound system for the all purpose room 2nd converting to wireless for the building 3rd: classroom LCDs and ELMO (a document camera) 4th: classroom laptops and 5th: a Prometheus Board for each grade level. The Foundation has also sent out letters of request for donations to various embassies, given that many of their children attend our school. **Superintendent's Budget** will be announced on December 13 at Rockville H.S. at 7:30 p.m. We have been made aware that there will be a hiring freeze. This will be a tough budget year.

Jay Kaufman, former PTA President of Burning Tree, and current Pyle and Whitman parent, made a request of the PTA to donate \$1000 for new acoustical shells for Whitman auditorium. Shells are \$2000 each and approximately 10 of them need to be replaced. He is hoping to raise \$12,000 from the Whitman cluster schools to go towards their acquisition. The Whitman music department has raised a third of the money needed to replace all the shells. He believes the Whitman cluster community benefits by showing support for the arts, providing a safer and acoustically appropriate environment for all activities that take place on the Whitman stage, and Burning Tree's 4th and 5th graders use the Whitman stage for instrumental performances and fifth grade farewell. A motion was approved to donate \$1000 towards acquisition of the shells.

Treasurer's Report: Lisa Norwalk reported that we are fine with cash balances. Each class will receive \$100 for rainy day activity equipment, such as games, cards, etc. **Ms. Loftus** was present and detailed how she would use Foundation funds and \$7,000 from PTA (funds allocated for gym enhancements end of last school year). She placed an order for audio/visual equipment in order to show instructional videos. Her biggest item on her wish list is a sports wall. Children hit balls at it, like in softball, or soccer, and it electronically keeps track of scores. In addition, a motion was approved to provide \$3000 to extend current climbing wall on back playground due to \$3000 savings from cost of digital TV studio.

Vice Presidents' Reports: **Fundraising:** Cindy Campbell thanked Ellie Abramowitz for helping raise money for Sally Foster by selling cookie dough. So far, sales through Sally Foster have helped raise \$6,392.20. Bingo night successfully raised over \$2,800 and the Dine-Out Fix-n-Feast raised \$530 in two hours. A second Fix-n-Feast will take place some time in March. Heidi Grunwald reported that the Book Fair at Barnes and Nobles went well. Many people were seen buying books, yet the money raised was less than usual. It is possible that at check out, not all sales were attributed to the event. Heidi asked that all people who bought books at the book fair please look at their receipts and see if it says "Book Fair" at the top. If not, she will collect receipts and bring them to Barnes and Nobles so that Burning Tree can be compensated. **Volunteers:** Brenda Conroy thanked Liza Fues and Dale Sorcher for working so hard on the school directory. Next year, a new team will be needed. There are now revised guidelines for parent volunteers helping on the playground. **Community Based programs:** Vicki Herson was not present, but her information was presented. The clothing drive for Broad Acres is taking place, as well as Adopt an Angel. Both programs were very successful in the past. Michele Greenberg and Katerina Papaioannou said that flyers will go out this Friday regarding the Science Fair, which will take place on Jan. 30. Lunch with a scientist will take place on Jan. 24.

No new business.

Respectfully submitted,
Michele Zweig Greenberg, Recording Secretary