

## **Larson Middle School PTO Zoom Meeting Minutes**

### **September 16, 2020, 7:00 p.m.**

**In Attendance:** Joe Duda, Stephan Henning, Anne Sackrison, Matt Sackrison, Janet Matichuk, Tari McGrane, Kate Fellin, Bindu Sundaram, Sam Fawaz, Sanjeev Kulkarni, Landon Gittins, Shannon Burt, Gretchen Mena, Jebu Matthew, Deana Derocha, Yelena Varenysia, Amanda Vizzini, Rajat Prakash, Veronica Pala, Nancy Davis, Michelle Tedder, and 8 others (names not stated or clearly identified in Zoom log-in)

Call to Order: 7:01 p.m.

Motion to approve PTO Minutes from May 20, 2020 meeting by: Tari McGrane Second: Kate Fellin. Motion passed.

#### REPORT OF OFFICERS

**Treasurer's Report:** Tari McGrane

Approximately \$16,000 is the current cash balance, reflects last year ending balance of \$13,626.87 and incoming checks and cash. Historically, we should be just over our target of \$19,300. Last year net income was \$5,000 that we try to spend. The rest of the classroom grants and teacher appreciation allocations weren't spent last year. We like to spend what comes in and keep approximately \$8,000 balance. Proposed budget has plenty of blank amounts; we will discuss and decide on allocations during open discussion for input from all to be in consideration.

**Teacher Representative:** Mark Hayes (in Mr. Hayes' absence, Mr. Duda presented with his Principal's message)

**Principal's Report:**

Thanks to the parents for being here even when there's a high school curriculum meeting going on. We can be very proud of the teachers and staff in what they gave in preparing to meet the needs of the students... it is commendable. A lot of positive feedback on virtual compared to the spring and general engagement. With a block schedule of 95 minutes per class, the teachers have met the challenge and then some.

The teachers encouraged to build relationships with the kids. They are now starting from scratch vs. in the spring they already had some familiarity and working relationship with the students. There's a knowledge you gain just from being around with the students and they don't have that with virtual. For the first few weeks the teachers are focusing on the basics with the start of the year, device communications, etc. Other than some issues with Schoology links not working correctly, it has been good.

In trying to make school a safe and caring place as much as we can in a virtual setting, Mr. Duda and Mr. Henning have so far completed home visits for 2/3 of the incoming 6<sup>th</sup> graders home visits to meet with the students and parents and see if there is anything Larson can do for them. He has also dropped into every zoom class for the first week.

Open house is Thursday, September 24<sup>th</sup>. Go into each of the student's class for the zoom link. It will give you introductions to the teacher and class but also connect a face with name.

Last night the school board met but did not take any action on a return date. Next week the special education programs are back into the building. Teachers are actually teaching in the building already and next week will be teaching specifically in the classrooms to help transition into hybrid. We might see kids in seat as early as October 5<sup>th</sup>, but the Board hasn't made a decision yet. A-K, L-Z will return a couple days a week in person and other days will be virtual. The schedule may need to be tweaked. High school will be drifting back to their 7:20a.m. start time. In another couple weeks Larson will switch to 10 minutes between class (vs. current 25) to prepare for hybrid. Board needs to approve schedules first.

Likely less than 50% of students will be in the building at one time. Traffic patterns, hallways, lunch, classroom layouts, are all addressed. Preparing the school to be safe for return has many layers of safety for the staff and students, and working on a plan how to proceed if and when there is a positive case in the building. Administration and staff asking for patience, grace and flexibility.

**PTO President's Report: Anne Sackrison**

This year is like building a plane while it is flying in the air. The PTO wants to help support the school and teachers as much as we can. Teachers can fill out a form to request grant money. It has to directly impact students in the classroom (prizes, activities, etc., that enhance the learning of the students).

**Co-Vice-President's Report: Kate Fellin & Bindu Sundaram**

Teachers will be asked to fill out grant requests and return by October 16<sup>th</sup>. The PTO will go through the requests so that they can be decided on at the next PTO meeting.

**8<sup>th</sup> Grade Party Committee Update**

They are looking for willing people to help plan but don't know what it will be like yet. When more information is known what can be done, an email will go out.

**Benefit Mobile Fundraising App: Matt Sackrison**

Benefit is a great way to raise money for the PTO without spending more money. Download the app, select Larson (under non-profits, not schools), and link it to your bank account or debit card (credit card doesn't give as much money). It's a different way to pay. Larson receives 2-20% of the purchase (Amazon is 2% plus Amazon Smiles 0.5%). In just one year the Sackrison family raised \$640. In the four years of using the app, they've had zero issues using it, and say it's safer than using your debit card at the checkout. Any retailer that is on the app you use it at the point of sale or online. No effort and the money keeps coming in. If even a few more families participate they can fund the PTO budget!

**Box Tops: Anne Sackrison**

Box Tops is moving toward a digital platform. Some are still on the products until 2023. We are currently collecting the box tops and will be working on submitting them in the next couple weeks. There is a box in the school vestibule on the left, or they can be dropped off on Anne's porch, to be included in the next submission.

**Restaurant Nights: Dawn Leonard (reported by Anne Sackrison)**

Dawn has started setting up nights. Currently scheduled for October is Noodles, Panda Express (50% of profits!) for November, and in January is Buffalo Wild Wings. Keep an eye out for further details.

Most fundraising is passive: stuff you would do anyway (i.e. Kroger, Benefit, restaurants, Amazon/Amazon Smiles). The only time the PTO asks for money is at the beginning of the year.

**Spirit Wear: Shannon Burt (reported by Anne Sackrison)**

We have three delivery options for spirit wear: pick up at Shannon's house (when orders are dropped off by B&R they include the buyer's contact information and Shannon will let you know when it's ready for pick up), you can pick up your purchase directly at B & R (located at the Troy Sports Center on Big Beaver & John R), or for a \$10 fee your purchase can be shipped directly to your home. There have already been a few orders that were dropped off this week. Face masks are popular. You can find the link to order spirit wear on the PTO website.

**Staff Appreciation: Dawn Leonard (reported by Anne Sackrison)**

Per Dawn, we aren't sure how this will look come May, but something will be done to show our appreciation to the staff.

**Old Business**

Tari McGrane (Treasurer): Box Tops will be reissuing a rebate to PTO of \$116.50. The original check appears to have been issued before the end of last school year but it hasn't been received. We need to know if there were any mini grants that still need to be paid out from last school year. For any others not purchased, teachers are requested to re-apply. Most of last year's grants were specific for that school year.

**New Business**

The proposed budget was reviewed line by line with PTO board, parents and Mr. Duda for discussion and input.

Income: Some items are pass through (collection goes directly to recipient such as flower sales, 8<sup>th</sup> grade party), some are fairly consistent (i.e. Kroger), and adjustments due to anticipated reduced participation (such as restaurant nights, box tops) were made.

Expenses: Administrative appreciation (usually gift cards) and staff appreciation kept the same, dance activities and ground water kits (previous science curriculum) zeroed out. Donations to events/activities outside Larson have been eliminated. The consensus is that PTO money raised should stay at Larson for the students vs. going to outside events such as high school senior all night parties. School supplies increased to help provide more cleaning and sanitizer items for when school returns. A very generous parent committed on the zoom meeting to donate \$500 specifically to help Larson purchase cleaning materials as needed.

Food pantry will remain the same. Even though the District is providing free (regardless of need) breakfast and lunches through the end of the calendar year (funded through Federal Stimulus package), we anticipate there will be still some needs when students return back. As the District has drastically reduced individual school discretionary budgets, the amount of \$750 was approved to be at Mr. Duda's disposal to use for staff morale boosters for when they return (i.e. donuts, bagels, snacks, small thoughtful steps).

A motion was made by Matt Sackrison to approve the budget as reviewed and discussed, seconded by Rajat Prakash. Motion passed.

Motion to adjourn: Janet Matichuk

Seconded by: Matt Sackrison

Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned 8:22 p.m.

