

Freedom Elementary School PTA

Meeting Minutes, November 3, 2022

I. Call to Order

Virtual meeting. Lori Coon, President, called to order the virtual meeting of the Freedom PTA at 6:30 p.m. on November 3, 2022. Ms. Coon requested a motion to approve the meeting minutes for the last PTA meeting on October 6, 2022. Rahul Chaudhary, who was present at the October meeting and is a member of the PTA in good standing, made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from October 6, 2022. Allison Steele, also present at the October meeting and a member of the PTA in good standing, seconded the motion. The motion was carried and the meeting minutes were approved.

II. Attendance

The following individuals were present at the meeting: Lori Coon, Allison Steele, Rahul Chaudhary, Jane Castner, Jessica Smith, Stephanie Otterson Ferenc, Justin Steele, Brandi Blevins, Cindy Taylor, Dan Nevitt, Beth Currence, Tammy Coon, Julie Bloom, Kara Copley, Katie Farrar, Lauren Taylor, Sherry Hanson, Rebecca Keyser, Rene Hanson, Diana White, Heather Haffey, Rene Good, Julie Gilbert.

III. Old Business Review

- A. **Spirit Nights** - On behalf of Lauren DeWitt, Lori Coon presented the earnings from October 2022 Spirit Nights. Freedom PTA earned \$383.85 from Chick-Fil-A and \$139.24 from MOD Pizza. Buppert's Fall Fundraiser earned \$255.58 and J&P earned \$300.

IV. Board Reports

A. **Lori Coon, President**

- a. Ms. Coon deferred her discussion until the new business section of the meeting.

B. **Allison Steele, Vice President**

- a. Update on Assemblies - Ms. Steele identified a potential issue with the current assembly format. In previous years, Freedom PTA has hired the same or similar assemblies from one year to the next. Although the students greatly enjoy these assemblies, the PTA is missing an opportunity to enrich the learning experience with new ideas. Ms. Steele proposes that the PTA adopt a rotating schedule for assemblies every two or three years. This would allow all the students to experience the assembly at different grade levels, while also freeing up resources for further enrichment. Ms. Steele mentioned she has been reviewing the Social Studies, Science, and Language Arts curriculums for each of the grades so that assembly topics directly support the school curriculum. Ms. Steele reached out to Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Taylor, and Mrs. Castner to receive their input on behalf of the teachers as to what topics they think would be

most beneficial to the student body. Another option presented would be to have field trips brought to the school rather than put forth the money to travel outside of the school. Mrs. Smith mentioned that overall the school would benefit from an assembly about bullying and other social topics while it might be expensive to have in school field trips because the content is often specific for one grade level.

C. Rahul Chaudhary, Treasurer

- a. Mr. Chaudhary reported that he is in the process of reviewing teacher reimbursements and has begun issuing checks. The rest of the checks will be sent out over the course of the next week. Mrs. Castner will let the teachers know to expect reimbursements soon.

V. Principal Report

A. Jessica Smith, Principal

- a. Fun Run - Ms. Smith noted it was very successful with a beautiful day and the students had a great time.
- b. Ms. Smith noted that the time has gone by so quickly that the first quarter is almost over and report cards will go home on November 18, 2022.
- c. American Education Week will be celebrated in person during the week of November 14 - 18. There will not be any restrictions on which day parents can visit the classroom, but Ms. Smith asked that parents refrain from bringing siblings to the school because they can be very distracting in the classroom. Also, Ms. Smith reiterated that lunch visitors will not be allowed during American Education Week since there will be so many additional parents in the building.

B. Cindy Taylor, Vice Principal

- a. Fun Run - Ms. Taylor commented that the event was a blast.
- b. Veteran's Day - Ms. Taylor is looking forward to celebrating on November 14, 2022. Ms. Coon mentioned that the feedback on the hall decorations and the bulletin boards has been very positive.

VI. Teacher's Report

A. Mrs. Castner, Teachers' Representative

- a. Supplies - Ms. Castner thanked the PTA for its assistance in stocking the teacher's supply cabinet and noted that the teachers have received the items they need. Ms. Coon mentioned that the Amazon Wish List still has many outstanding items, but that could be due to donations coming from other stores. Ms. Castner will double check the supplies and notify Ms. Coon if there are any supplies that still need to be restocked. The PTA will provide those items.

VII. New Business

A. Membership Drive - Kara Copley, Membership Chairperson

- a. Ms. Coon introduced Ms. Copley as the Membership Chairperson. The membership drive ended on October 31, 2022. Over 100 parents and teachers joined the PTA in the first two months of the school year and Mrs. Henderson's class will receive a prize for having the most participation in the school.

B. Playground Brick Patio Designs

- a. Ms. Coon presented two potential designs for the new brick patio to be installed by the new playground. During the 2020-2021 school year, personalized bricks were sold to raise funds for the playground. These bricks will be incorporated into the patio design. The two designs, labeled simply "Design A" and "Design B", and the companies that provided the designs, Rhine Landscaping and Chesapeake Landscape Group, have been approved by Carroll County Public Schools. Although the two designs differ in price, both designs are within the budget of \$10,000 allotted to the project. Questions concerning the cost were raised but the exact cost of each project was not disclosed since they are comparable and within budgetary constraints.
- b. After fielding questions, Ms. Coon reviewed the voting procedures (only PTA members can vote, voting must be done during the meeting, voting is being conducted via link on the PTA website) and paused to allow PTA members to vote. Justin Steele, IT representative, included a link to the voting form in the comments section of the call and noted that pictures of the designs were shown on the voting form.

C. Incentives/T-Shirts

- a. Allison Steele, Vice President, introduced an issue that was brought to the attention of the PTA Executive Board during the preparation for the Fun Run. Traditionally, the PTA has created incentives to reward the students and the classes that have the highest participation and raise the most funds. Students who raise at least \$50 are awarded a free t-shirt, which is typically worn on the day of the Fun Run. Students who raise the most funds also get to "slime" a teacher or administrator at a special event following the Fun Run. In addition, the class that has the highest participation and the highest earnings receives a party. Although unintentional, these incentives exclude students and families that do not have the means or inclination to participate in the Fun Run. In the future, the PTA needs to ensure that all events are inclusive and that rewards/accomplishments are not based upon monetary incentives.
- b. Ms. Steele suggested that in the future, shirts are provided for all students and the cost is taken out of the Fun Run earnings. Ms. Coon offered the option of having a "buy one, donate one" option. Ms. Smith offered the possibility of seeking sponsors to pay for the shirts in exchange for having their logo on the back of the shirt. Ms. Coon mentioned that other schools are currently doing this in order to raise funds for new playground equipment so it would be considerate to hold off on this idea while the other local schools are in need of the sponsorship opportunities. Ms. Taylor suggested that there be a line for donations listed on the order form

to help offset the cost of shirts for those who cannot afford the expense and then any additional funds be donated by the PTA to cover the cost of shirts. Mr. Chaudhary suggested that the PTA pick one shirt design and use it every year so that the families would only have to pay for the shirt once and could reuse it or pass it down to younger siblings over time. Ms. Steele also mentioned that other schools have shirts for each grade level that are different colors and are worn for all the special events at the school. Ms. Smith and Ms. Coon commented that these were all good ideas and that we would revisit this concern later in the year when preparing for Play Day.

D. Ceiling Tiles

- a. Ms. Coon gave an update on the ceiling tile project that was requested by Mrs. Otto and other teachers earlier this school year. Ms. Smith has received the 20 ceiling tiles that are ready to be painted. Ms. Coon will create a flyer for the project to be posted on Facebook and included in the weekly Sway newsletter. Ms. Steele will add the ceiling tiles to the School Store site so that interested families can reserve a tile.

E. Voting Results

- a. Ms. Coon addressed a question made via the comment section for the brick installation. The playground has three benches. There is one bench near the old playground and two benches near the new playground. In one of the original plans, there was an option to put the patio by the lone bench. This cost was included in the proposal. Given the location of the existing benches, it was determined that the patio bricks should be installed in the open area by the new playground where two benches are located. The second patio was not necessary and only the bench will be replaced by the old playground. Ms. Coon addressed another question concerning the second patio. The cost of the second patio was included in the original design, but since both designs were within the original budget, this is not relevant to the vote. Mr. Steele noted that Design A received 14 votes, while Design B received 5 votes. Ms. Coon will notify the companies involved and will move forward with the installation.

V. Committee Reports

A. Fun Run

- a. On behalf of Trish Whitty, Ms. Coon reported that over \$32,500 was raised and the final fundraising day is tomorrow (November 4, 2022). Ms. Van Fossen's kindergarten class raised the most money (\$2,860) and Ms. Miller's second grade class had the most participation. Both classes will receive a party.
- b. Ms. Smith asked if there was a date selected for the "sliming". Ms. Coon agreed to discuss options offline and Ms. Smith confirmed that there were several teachers and administrators who were willing to participate.

B. Spirit Nights

- a. Chipotle - 11/15

- b. Chick-Fil-A - 12/6
- c. Mr. Jack's - 12/15
- d. Five Below - Lauren DeWitt is working on setting this up, need more information, possibly on Black Friday

C. Passive Fundraisers

- a. Box Tops - \$101.40
- b. Coke Caps - \$5.95 (Melissa McGuinness's daughter has agreed to enter the codes for service learning hours)
- c. Amazon Smile - \$294.73 was received by check in September

D. Trex Recycling Program

- a. Ms. McGuinness reported that 880 lbs of recycling has been collected so far this year and there have been several grocery stores and landscaping projects that have provided additional plastic.

E. Fall Food Drive

- a. Ms. Coon mentioned that the boxes at school are full and will be picked up soon for a local food bank.
- b. In addition to the food drive, the PTA will be providing a Thanksgiving dinner for a family of eight in our community. Donations of cash can be send to school or Bob Evans gift cards can be purchased to help defer the cost of the meal.

F. Veterans Day Celebration

- a. Ms. Coon has decorated the hallways for the Veterans Day celebration and there are three bulletin boards currently displaying photographs and information for veterans related to members of the school community. Any additional veteran information should be sent to school asap so they can be included in the celebration on November 14, 2022.
- b. In addition, the school is collecting Halloween candy to send to troops overseas. Any leftover candy can be bagged up and sent to school.
- c. The Veterans Day celebration will be in the school cafeteria from 9:15 am to 10:15 am and all veterans are welcome to join our celebration. Students who have family members who are veterans in attendance will be excused from class to join the celebration.

VI. Kids After Hours

- A. The feedback for KAH has been overwhelmingly positive. KAH hosted their first Parents Night Out and it was a huge success.

VII. Open Discussion

- A. Ms. Coon opened the floor for questions and comments from the general assembly but there were no issues raised for discussion.

VIII. Adjournment

- A. Ms. Coon noted the time to be 7:15 pm and asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Steele made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Chaudhary seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned.

Minutes submitted by Allison Steele