

Meeting called to order at 10:05am with a quorum present. April meeting minutes were approved.

**Treasurer's Report – Sunita Hansraj**

All cash received from events has been deposited resulting in a balance of \$109,272.04.

**Correspondence – Courtney Schlow** - Nothing to report.

**Board of Education & Central Administration – Dr. Rogers, Dr. Loverso, Susan Falkove, Jack Ostrick and Lisa Coscia.**

- Discussed 2023/24 budget and asked all members to vote – preservation of programs.
- 3% increase in tax levy but still under the state required cap. 6.5% increase to budget year over year. The increase was mostly inflation related, getting us to the \$274M budget. The district website has all the presentations.
- Specific for elementary schools – ICT added to the elementary schools (as needed), adding 1 social worker for each building (2 additional social workers added to district).
- Parents - asked about where Whitman was listed as a priority and when/where our building issues will be addressed. Parents asked for updates on building space issues and Dr. Rogers explained what had happened thus far and said he would follow up with us. He explained that the architects have been engaged and a construction management firm had been retained.

**Presidents Report – Melissa Foreman & Inna Choi**

Happy May! We can't believe this year is almost over!

We can't start this meeting without talking about how amazing our Fun Fair was last week. It was one of the best events I've ever been a part of at Whitman and everyone had the best time. A huge thank you to party planner extraordinaries Cara Kaplan, Tara Benschol and Niki Gionis. I would also like to thank the rest of the committee for their help with the planning and the set up and clean-up, as well as to the entire Whitman community for generously donating to our raffle baskets. We have a ton of year end events being planned - Staff Recognition, Plant Sale, Planting Day, Field Day and of course all of our fifth-grade graduation programming. Today, several members of the Board of Education will be stopping by our meeting. Please use this opportunity to ask any questions you may have. Our next and final meeting is June 7th, and it will be our annual PTA awards presentation. It is the best meeting of the year, and we have some truly incredible people to honor. Please make every effort to attend. As always, thank you for your support and contributions. You're the reason our PTA is as strong as it is. Should you have any questions or concerns about anything, please reach out to us at any time.

**Mr. Snyder's Report**

- Math testing continued today for grades 3/4/5. 3<sup>rd</sup> graders will be taking a field test soon. You may opt out your child if you like. The test is a practice test from the state in which they are experimenting with different types of questions. The children will be part of the process for creating the test next year.
- May 11<sup>th</sup> is kindergarten parent orientation – we have about 48 students registered as of now. We expect about 60 total. Parents MUST register in order to attend the Parent Orientation.
- Whitman has the largest kindergarten class coming between all the elementary schools in Syosset.
- May 23<sup>rd</sup> concert – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade learning concert.
- Student Placement – Mr. Snyder discussed the process of class placement for the students and how the attached cards are utilized. These cards are completed by the

teachers only. The cards are limited in information to prevent any teacher preferences or bias. They are used to balance the students between teachers in the grade. This process takes about two months. If you have any questions about this topic, please reach out to Mr. Snyder for more information.

## **Standing Committee Reports:**

### **Curriculum Enrichment – Karen Ostrick**

We are finished for the year with our “in school” assemblies. Our kindergarteners and first graders will be going off site to a show called the Frog and the Toad in June which will finish off the school year for arts in education. We hope your children enjoyed all the programming this year. If there were any standout programs, please let me know!!

### **Field Day – Jacqueline Braunstein, Pam Bahiri, Dana Kuropatkin, Melanie Eisenberg**

Field Day will be held on **June 2nd**. It will be a really fun day for the kids. All children will receive a field day T-shirt which will be the color of their team. T shirts are free but an order form for sizing will be going out soon so please make sure you submit your child's size. We are working on lunch for the kids. Please feel free to reach out with any questions. Thanks!

### **Fifth Grade Committee - Dana Kuropatkin, Courtney Schlow, Leslie Won**

Thank you to everyone for purchasing lawn signs. We will be in touch when we receive them. We are excited about all of our upcoming events. Permission slips will be coming home for the trips to driftwood and the Adventure Park. Please RSVP to the dance if you have not yet done so. Thanks so much.

### **Plant Sale – Michelle Kim**

Spring Plant Sale is taking place at WW on **May 12**. Please send cash or a blank check with your children on the day of the sale. Prices range from \$3 to \$20.

Last year's plant sale was a huge success, and we are looking forward to another successful plant sale this year. We will need volunteers. A sign-up sheet was sent around during the meeting for parents to sign up for a shift.

### **Planting Day – Melissa Wallentin & Karen Ostrick**

Tuesday May 16<sup>th</sup> – A sign-up sheet was sent around during the meeting for parents to sign up for a shift. Children will be planting the left-over plants that were not sold at the plant sale. This is beautifying the school and teaching the kids about keeping the earth green in honor of Earth Day.

### **Mixology Fundraiser – Tara Bensch**

Please join us anytime from **10a-6p on May 4th** to shop at **Mixology of Woodbury** where 10% off all sales will be donated to the PTA. A special guest and a Walt Whitman mom, Carly Orlansky of *The Gifting Co* will also be there to showcase her custom designs. Don't forget to mention Walt Whitman when checking out - we will also provide an online shopping link day of.

Don't forget to order your clothing and accessory name labels using our Walt Whitman link on label daddy. 25% of sales are donated to the PTA!

### **SEPTA – Danielle Sandjaby**

What is SEPTA? Special Education Parent Teacher Association

SEPTA is a district wide PTA whose primary role is to promote acceptance and inclusion of all by providing resources and support to parents, teachers and children who receive special education services through an **IEP, 504 Plan, related support services** such as resource room, counseling, speech, occupational or physical therapy and students who are twice exceptional or gifted.

We had 2 presentations from the last meeting that were excellent.

Come to our meetings and our parent resource zoom meetings, they are so informative.

The presentations were: Dr. Ann Winter OT and Instructor, certified in Pilates for Neurological Conditions - talked about Therapeutic Pilates.

The second presentation was about - By Will McCabe, Behavior Analyst, who is amazing and has firsthand knowledge of Understanding Students with Autism and How to Support all Students Behaviorally - it was an amazing presentation that should be given to all parents and students alike to really understand how students differ in learning. I did take notes at this meeting if you like I can have the slide show that was presented that day.

We need people to join our district SE PTA & volunteer. We have a lot of committees that still need people to chair. Please come up to me, email me, call me, text me, find me if you have any interest in being part of the septa family. Our last SEPTA Meeting will be on 14th June at SHS at 7:45pm. [daniellesandjaby@gmail.com](mailto:daniellesandjaby@gmail.com)

### **School Board Reporter - Tara Ginsburg & Carly Laffie**

Superintendents Report:

Dr. Rogers discusses the community response based on the time change survey that was sent out. Summary: 2,600 participants, 54,000 thoughts were rated, overall support for changing start time, Staff not strong support, parents and students more supportive in favor, scenario 4 was the most popular proposed, HS start 9am, Middle School 8am, Elementary 8:45am, challenge behind it was to rearrange the busing and not have overlap in schools for busing, challenge also with dismissal process, this will not occur for fall 2023, earliest if this were to occur would be fall 2024

- BOE feedback
  - Not understanding the cost implications to the district.
  - Extend 15-20 min to elementary so no dismissal overlap.
- No determination made more questions need to be answered.

NYS Regents summary

Regents adopted new regulation forbidding indigenous mascots in NYS Schools, BOE must adopt resolution by June 30, 2023, Must eliminate the use no later than June 30, 2025, Penalties for being non-compliant include removal of school officers and withholding state aid, anyone employed by the district may not wear indigenous logos or mascots, example Atlanta Braves Baseball Jersey, this adopted resolution was narrowed down to just those employed by the district, Additional guidance anticipated

#### Audience to the Public

- Parent- Start time question-against 9am start time- survey flawed didn't consider a lot of aspects- sports- clubs- fields ready after hours later in the day. Asking students do you want to sleep late- but now prefacing the impacts to the student that they still might be coming in early for practice/clubs. What are the tax implications? The survey was flawed; parents were able to answer it three times.
- Parent- School start- discussion based on busing- consider where we are already lacking. Middle schools JV and varsity golf have no transportation. Parents must drive to and from facilities. Even one way to help.
- Community Member- Brought to his attention about the proposed mascot change- changing of the end zone- wants to know why this is being discussed, not happy about what the board of regents- did. Massapequa school district is going to fight this. Wants this to be looked into this more so.
- Parent- Reiterating what was done today from the NYS board of regents- he agrees brave head should be removed, the words Braves, stating the word "the braves" should not be determined by the NYS state of regents. other communities to ask their legal counsel.

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- Community Member- Sad to see the mascot leave, seeing so much to consider and she feels it is worth the fight to keep it.
- Parent- Stating they understand why the NYS Board of Regents adopted their new regulation- as elected officials for BOE, we need to promote tolerance and inclusivity- also stating that cultures and races that may not be widely represented- they still matter- Advisory group rejects the premise that the name honors indigenous people. This has been ongoing and needs to get up to date.
- Parent- lifelong resident- once a brave always a brave- having difficulty removing the mascot.
- Parent- Addressing this complicated issue- guidelines are clear she stated. If we continue to use the name Braves, we will be in violation of the law. While she appreciates what it has meant to the community, these mascots and use of Braves is deemed offensive now. Why as a district we should spend legal bills and resources that is clear and decided. not what our district would want to further represent. Bring our community together and unite us on this important issue and do not leave us divided. Hope a vote is scheduled.
- Community Member- Lawyer- wants to know what law we are breaking- transparency what is this board going to do. Are they going to fight for our community. Massapequa/s BOE is going to fight this.
- Parent- Stating guidance has been out there for months and the fact that we have not moved forward is creating this issue. It is time to act and make a decision.

Dr. Rogers Response-

- Busing for all athletics- working with athletics director- golf issue- tee times and practice and events takes place- Steuber has been in contact with Huntington coach- availability is only for 2:15pm right now, they are working through this issue.
- With respect to the mascot question- Dr. Rogers wants to explain the authority level of NYS Board of Regents so the Audience knows their authority. Board of Regents are elected by all of the members by the NYS legislator...there are 17 members of the Board of Regents- they are a legislative branch agency; in the NYS constitution they are invested with the authority and power to make regulations in education and higher education and all the registered and state certified professions. they have the ability to Enact regulations through their process through their constitutional authority -they have force of law. They do have the ability to withhold state aid, Dr. Rogers states next year would be \$34 million, not sure all will be withheld but a tremendous amount can be if we do not adopt. Dr. Rogers can lose certification; ability remove an officer of a school district. The presentation is posted on the website.

**Annual District Election & Budget Vote Update – Tara Ginsburg**

- Please mark your calendars for the Know Your Candidate Forum which will take place on **Wednesday, May 3 at 7:30 pm** at South Woods Middle School. This event will be in person and streamed live. The candidates for the Board of Education and their ballot numbers are as follows:
  - #1 - Anna Levitan
  - #2 - Carol C. Cheng
  - #3 - Susan Falkove
  - #4- Jeevan George

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Annual District  
Election and Budget V



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voter registration  
form - not BOLD form

### **School Store – Pam Bahiri**

Thank you to all of our amazing volunteers. The School Store has been so successful this year and the kids seem to really enjoy shopping. A couple of reminders for parents that volunteer - please do not take pictures of any children except your own and please do not leave the school store area while volunteering. Thank you so much!

### **School Supplies – Pam Bahiri**

Many of you have already placed your school supplies order which is amazing! Ordering will be **available until June 30th**. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out. Thanks so much for your continued support!

### **Staff Rec – Jacqueline Braunstein, Carly Laffie, Karen Ostrick, Pam Bahiri**

We have an amazing staff here at Walt Whitman and we can't wait to say thank you at our staff recognition breakfast which will be held on **Friday, May 19th**. Please reach out if you are interested in volunteering that morning at 7am or helping to set up the night before if possible. Thanks so much!

### **Upcoming Dates:**

#### **May:**

- 5/2 - PTA Meeting 10:00am
- 5/8 - Board of Education Meeting 8:00pm @ Southwoods
- 5/11 - Kindergarten Orientation
- 5/12 - Plant Sale
- 5/16 - Planting Day
- 5/16 - Annual District Election and Budget Vote
- 5/18 - SCHOOL STORE
- 5/19 - Staff Recognition
- 5/23 - Spring Concert
- 5/25 - 5/29 - NO SCHOOL Memorial Day Break

#### **June:**

- 6/2 - Field Day
- 6/6 - Fifth Grade Picnic @ Driftwood
- 6/7 - Field Day (rain date)
- 6/7 - PTA Meeting (Awards) 7:30pm**
- 6/12 - Fifth Grade Picnic @ Driftwood (rain date)
- 6/12 - Board of Education Meeting 8:00pm @ Southwoods
- 6/14 - Fifth Grade Dance
- 6/14 - SEPTA General Meeting 7:45pm
- 6/15 - Fifth Grade Breakfast
- 6/15 - Fifth Grade Trip
- 6/16 - Fifth Grade Picnic (WW)
- 6/20 - Commencement
- 6/23 - Last Day of School

### **Spirit Dates:**

Every Friday

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Meeting was adjourned at 11:39am

Minutes recorded by: Karen Ostrick on behalf of Lauren Grams