



## Meeting Minutes

September 7, 2023, at 7:30pm | Walt Whitman Elementary School Library

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm with a quorum present. Attendance was taken by sign in sheet. Please make sure you sign the sheet on the tables.

- I. Approve minutes - June 2023 We sent out the minutes from our last June PTA meeting for review via email and have some copies on the tables today. Does anyone have comments, changes, or questions? If not, the minutes stand as approved. Thank you.

- II. Treasurer's Report – Sunita Hansraj

Opening Balance, 6/22/23	\$ 99,422.83
Income/Deposits	\$ 1,565.39
Expense/Cash Disbursements	\$ 9,902.50
<u>Checking Balance</u>	<u>\$ 91,085.72</u>
Saving Balance as of 8/22/23	\$
<u>TOTAL Cash on Hand as of 8/21/23</u>	<u>\$ 96,690.04</u>

All balances were reconciled to the bank statements. The books were reviewed and found to be in order by Theresa Seedorf, Pam Bahiri, and Lauren Grams. Thank you to all three.”

- III. Correspondence Secretary – read by Niki Gionis

Thank you from the staff for the great breakfast. Thank you from Karen and Bridgette from the office for the gifts. Thank you from the custodial staff for the gifts.

- IV. Principal's Report – Mr. Snyder

- Welcome back especially to new parents. A lot of information can be found on the WW website. Remember to sign up for Remind to receive all important notifications.
- Be patient with the buses. The first week of the year is always a work in progress.
- There is a new 6 day schedule for specials. A color coordinated schedule can be found on the WW website. This will also impact before school (music, extra help).
- This years open house schedule can be found on the WW website/<https://sites.google.com/syosset.k12.ny.us/welcometokindergartenww/home?authuser=0>
- Information on Cogats, NY state and NWEA testing can also be found on the website. Schedules for the NWEA will be posted shortly. Please send kids in with headphones for all testing as they are performed on the computer.
- Welcome new teachers.

- V. President's Report - read by Inna Choi

Welcome to our first PTA meeting of the 2023-24 school year - with a special welcome to all our new Whitman families. I'm Inna Choi, co-President of the PTA and our new co-President Karen Ostrick was unfortunately unable to make it tonight. Up here also are Sunita Hansraj our Treasurer, Theresa Seedorf our Recording Secretary, Niki Gionis our Corresponding Secretary, and our wonderful Principal, Mr Snyder.



## Meeting Minutes

September 7, 2023, at 7:30pm | Walt Whitman Elementary School Library

Before we move on to any new business, we would like to thank last year's Fifth Grade Committee. It's a committee that takes a lot of time and effort and they did an amazing job bringing back some events we had not seen since before the pandemic. Thank you for giving last year's 5th graders an incredible send-off. We'd also like to give thanks to our outgoing President, Melissa Forman. We are grateful for her service and fortunate to have her at Whitman another year, still serving hard for our students and to make for fabulous events. And last but not most of all, we need to give a tremendous thank you to Mr Snyder and the Walt Whitman staff. It always takes extraordinary effort getting ready for a new school year. Thank you for giving all our kids a wonderful first 3 days of school. You always have the students' best interests at heart and work through all sorts of difficult situations. Thank you for telling the PTA yes as much as you can. Your above and beyond hard work, optimism, and patience cannot be overlooked and we appreciate all of it.

Later tonight, we will be voting to adopt our new school year Budget. Feel free to look at the copies printed out on the tables. The NYS PTA recently made changes to all PTA unit bylaws. These changes will be incorporated into all unit and council bylaws moving forward. Please see print outs on the table.

We have a lot of parents in attendance tonight. Please try to attend as many PTA meetings as possible. Your attendance is important and needed. Each month, the meeting Agenda and Minutes will be posted on our website for your convenience.

\* Please become a PTA Member – the link to join can be found on our website. Sign up your spouses and encourage your friends. You need to be a paid member for the new school year to access Directory Spot, volunteer at PTA events, and join committees. For our new families – sign up for our weekly newsletter! It is emailed out every Monday morning and contains 100% of all our information. It has valuable links to sign up for in-school events, join committees, important dates and reminders, everything you will want to know. If you have not already, sign up for the PTA Remind App, in addition to Mr Snyder's. Instructions are on our PTA website.

Over the summer, the PTA purchased some new playground structures and recess items. This includes 2 Gym-I-Nees which are wacky basketball hoops that multiple kids can play on together. We also purchased some new balls, jump ropes, and the like - to add on to what the school has so our students will have more than enough. We also had a big shed delivered to the school. It's not set up yet but once it is, the PTA will be able to store all our good stuff in it.

Class Parent applications are live and available on our website and via the link in the newsletter. The deadline to apply is Monday, September 18th. There will be a maximum of three Class Parents selected per class.

During the year as issues may arise, you will find many can be resolved following the chain of command procedures which can be found in the District calendar. It's online and you should also have received a copy in the mail. For anything PTA related, use Karen and me to address your concerns. We are all here to enrich our children's lives and have a wonderful school community. If anyone has any further questions or concerns, always feel free to contact us. We wish you and your kids all the best this upcoming school year and we look forward to working with all of you. Thank you. Inna and Karen



## Meeting Minutes

September 7, 2023, at 7:30pm | Walt Whitman Elementary School Library

- VI. Special Guests – Board of Education and Administration welcoming visit. Dr. Rogers, Lisa Coscia, and Carol Cheng.
- Welcome back to a new school year. Encourage parents to use the school calendar for following the new 6 day schedule as well as other important communication information such as contacts for the facilities flow.
  - Please attend and participate in our monthly board meetings. In order to get state \$ support for building improvements/projects, certain steps need to be followed such as completing an enrollment study and building surveys. At the next board meeting (Sept 11th, 8:00pm) the board will be discussing which projects will be prioritized across the district. Enrollment needs to be evaluated across the district especially when determining space at the middle schools and high school. For example there is space in SW used for offices that can be moved off campus to facilitate an increase in enrollment. Oftentimes class sizes balance out between grades (ie at HBT a large incoming class will be balanced out by a smaller graduating class resulting in a shifting of classrooms rather than the need for additional space). Before any construction can begin there needs to be a budget vote. Drawings need to be obtained (~ 6 months) and submitted to the state for approval. The turnaround time is currently about 42 weeks to obtain permits if the plans are approved. A public bid then needs to go out to engage contractors for the project. If the process were to start today, summer of 2025 is a realistic goal to start construction.
  - Recent changes made by the district's insurance carrier have resulted in re-evaluation of vendors permitted to be engaged by the PTA. The district uses a third party (NYCER). In an effort to lower premium costs, there are increased requirements for vendor information in order for them to be approved. We recognize this may be a burden on vendors and will work with recurring vendors to communicate the new requirements so they are up to code and can be approved.
  - The district uses the company Wisdom to provide a majority of the security guards. There are no armed guards on any campus.

VII. Standing Committee Reports

- A. We will hear the report of the **Arts in Education / Curriculum Enrichment** committee given by Jacqueline Braunstein

Our Arts in Ed programming for this year is being finalized!! Up first will be the Ultimate Human Board game, a life size board game based on character building, teamwork, sportsmanship and total participation. This program will be at Walt Whitman on sept (20 or 29th)(waiting for Snyder to confirm the date).

Fifth grade parents please save the date for the circus - week of Dec 11 with performance on Dec 15!

- B. Now we will hear the report of the **Bookfair Committee** given by Jacqueline Braunstein, Cindy Ho, Rachel Levenson or Samantha Lebenhart.

The purpose of this committee is to raise funds for the PTA through the sale of books. It is also a great opportunity for parents to volunteer in the school! The fall book fair will be held on Thursday, October 12 and Friday, October 13th. During the book fair, parents are needed to help the students choose age and subject appropriate books, as well as to make sure that the students have enough



Meeting Minutes

September 7, 2023, at 7:30pm | Walt Whitman Elementary School Library

money to purchase the items they want. A portion of the proceeds goes directly to our PTA. We will post an online sign up sheet for volunteers a week or so before the fair. Many thanks in advance to everyone who volunteers to help with the fall fair. If you are interested in joining the committee please let us know! More information and a flyer will be available in October.

C. Now we will hear the report of the **Board of Education Reporter** given by Carly Laffie.

A link for the minutes and video of all board meetings can be found on the WW website.

BOE 8/28/23

Superintendent's report:

- The elementary schools will be moving to a 6 day rotation because a lot of holidays fall on a Monday so this will prevent the loss of specials
- They will have better structured time for specials, interventions for students (therapies), school wide enrichment, ESL, they discussed more efficiency in staffing (as some are shared), social workers can do more intentional work with younger students
- Dr Rogers was following up on a previous issue that was relayed to the school district in regards to the truck development on Jericho Tpke and traffic concerns and what implications the Syosset school district would face. Dr. Rogers followed up with a letter to the TOB voicing our concerns as a district and we feel that they heard us since they turned down the approval of the truck development.
- High School day was shortened during COVID for a total of 9 minutes a day so there was better traffic flow between school dismissals - but are now returning to pre pandemic schedule. They are asking for patience as we go through the transition.
- Additionally. following up on a request that was made to the public portion of one of our board meetings last school year for Kosher, Halal and Vegan options for the students. They did implement this at the end of the school year; however, most students did not take advantage of the food options so they are going to meet with students/parents to come up with different options and potentially better food.
- This year we are rebidding our food proposal which comes up every few years. Might be exciting for some people here LOL.
- Following up on the First and Second grade classes for Mandarin classes since it met the State level to offer this. There was not a lot of interest to have a separate Mandarin speaking class for the 1st and 2nd grade students so they are not moving forward this year but they will be putting together a program to support students Heritage language so their needs will be met in a different way.

Facilities update:

- Ventilation upgrades for pool facilities - just waiting on assembly. All materials are set and ready to go.
- Construction is almost all completed on the old tennis courts – they were completely refurbished.
- The Southwoods library was refurbished and it looks great!
- Middle school gyms removed the motorized partitions and replaced with curtains for safety.

Following up on the facilities update from the last special meeting that was at the end of July

- A board member suggested investigating the potential of splitting the high school into 2 schools
  - o Dr Rogers illustrated the benefits of having smaller schools
  - o Some Pros:
    - § Graduation rates increased in NYC when school size was smaller
    - § More kids would be able participate in classroom and in sports teams
  - o Cons:
    - § Some electives might have to go away
    - § Difficult to have the same breadth of academic programing
    - § Smaller less competitive teams of athletics with less success
    - § More transportation costs



## Meeting Minutes

September 7, 2023, at 7:30pm | Walt Whitman Elementary School Library

- § Not as competitive per Dr Rogers
- § Duplicate clubs which dilutes the clubs in terms of talent
- § For more additional details please reference back to the meeting on the livestream
- H2M (architect) came up with a proposal from their visual inspection to prioritize which work needs to be done / health and safety issues and this presentation can be found on the district website for more details
  - o Board wants to understand timing on when this will happen
    - § 7/8 years
    - § Do certain projects need to happen before others?
    - § We will need to have a public vote and then will need 40 weeks for state approval (year and a half before we have approval for construction)
    - § H2M wants to start earlier than later to ensure all approvals and construction are done in 4-6 years, so basically they need to know yesterday LOL
    - § Administration is looking into rental space so they can move out of South Woods
    - § 1 board member mentioned existing properties such as The Woodbury School and the use of the property
  - Public portion:
    - o Parent 1: 3 students at Walt Whitman
      - § What is the student per class size that we see in our district?
      - § Will we have more dedicated space for OT, speech etc with no distraction?
      - § Space maker or other programs during recess to give more structured activity for those students who don't know what to do so there is structure.
        - Parent mentioning this is already being done in other districts
    - o Parent 2: HBT and Syosset HS
      - § Graduation gowns: different colored caps for genders
        - Currently the women wear white and males wear red
        - Few ideas for inclusion – can choose the color they want or just choose one color for everyone (they should not have the color they were given at birth but choose the color they identify by)
    - o Parent 3: Boys hockey club team
      - § Hoping to get funding from school – they pay for their own ice, equipment, etc
      - § Crew team got funding for their sport. Are they eligible too?
    - o Dr. Rogers response to the public:
      - § Walt Whitman space: Dr Curry responding to space planning at WW
        - Happy to report that OT, PT and speech can secure new spaces for these services at WW
        - Class sizes for elementary – no more than 22 in Kindergarten
        - 1<sup>st</sup> through 3<sup>rd</sup> - class sizes don't go more than 25
        - 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> -max out at 27 in a class
        - Consistent across all 7 elementary schools
        - Recess: teachers and aids can put together programs for indoor activities – didn't fully answer the question
      - § Color gowns: going to have conversation with High School staff (first time he has heard concern about it)
      - § Hockey response: needs more information and Dr Rogers will come back with more information for the board to discuss



## Meeting Minutes

September 7, 2023, at 7:30pm | Walt Whitman Elementary School Library

The next board meeting is September 11 at 8pm

D. We will now hear the report of the **BoxTops** given by Carly Orlansky.

It's a program to help earn cash back by purchasing products. Download the box top app. Then you can choose our school. Simply scan your receipt within 14 days of purchase. You can also scan digital receipts.

E. Now we will hear the report of the **Directory Spot and Membership** given by Michelle Kim

The online directory via the website or mobile device through the Directory Spot app is free, however, you must be a paid PTA member to gain access. Previous members who have not signed up this year will be locked out this week.

If you have signed up, please look out for an email from the Directory Spot when your account is reactivated. The same login from last year should still work. If you have changes or updates that need to be made, please fill out the form online or email me directly and I will get your information updated.

All the information that is available up to this point is in the directory as of today (9/7), however, we do not have class information and we will not be receiving it this year. That being said, we will be depending on class parents to help us fill in the blanks for each student's information on the directory.

Feel free to send any questions or requests to her email ([michki21@gmail.com](mailto:michki21@gmail.com)).

F. Now we will hear the report of the **Discount Card Fundraiser Committee** given by Cindy Ho

The discount card is back by popular demand! Support our PTA and save money locally with our wallet sized discount card. This program features 22 local vendors offering discounts to any cardholder! Cards are \$25 each and valid for one year. You do not need to be a Whitman family to purchase a card so feel free to share with local family and friends! Many vendors from last year such as Sugar crazy, Victoria's market, Dirty Taco and Dennys - new additions this year as well such as Danny's Chinese kitchen and Dakotah salon. Cards are available to purchase on the pta website!! If you have already placed an order, they will be delivered within the week or come stop by to see us wherever we are selling. Thanks so much for your continued support!

G. Now we will hear the report of the **Fall Festival committee** given by Tara Bensol, Cara Kaplan and or Marina Meyerowitz

Our Fall Festival will take place on October 31st! More details to come but if you would like to join the committee please let us know! This event takes place during the school day and all PTA paid members may volunteer to help out during the day! The volunteer sign up form will be distributed early October.



## Meeting Minutes

September 7, 2023, at 7:30pm | Walt Whitman Elementary School Library

- H. Now we will hear the report of the **Fifth Grade Committee** given by Melissa Forman and Jacqueline Braunstein.

Our first event of the year is the annual 5th grade car wash Saturday 9/23 with a rain date of 9/24 from 10-12. Support our 5th graders and come to Whitman for a car wash — it is open to non Whitman families as well. All proceeds support our 5th grade programming. Any questions, reach out to Tracey Meyer, Amy Kern or Lauren Marwil.

- I. Now we will hear the report of the **Newcomer's Social** given by Vaishali Sondhi

The Sondhis are hosting the Newcomer Social on Saturday September 9th from 7:00PM-9:00PM at their house. This is for Kindergarten parents. Please come and meet the other Kindergarten parents.

The rain date is tentatively set for Friday, September 29th.

- J. Now we will hear the report of the **PARP Committee** given by Mollie Newman, Heather Egert, Rachel Levenson

PARP stands for Pick a Reading Partner. It is a program designed to foster the love of reading in children by asking adults to set aside at least 15 minutes a day to read with children. This year, PARP is early in the year! We proudly invite you to join us for two weeks of fun with “A PARP reading adventure” We will read and participate in activities and projects around a fun, global theme of travel, exploration and adventure. This year’s PARP will start off with an exciting school-wide “opening ceremony” event on **Monday, October 16th**. Kids will be encouraged to Dress Up on that day in their adventure friendly best... Think: travel, international, adventurer. Prior to opening ceremonies, you will find a fun “passport to PARP” project that will come home with your child Friday, October 6th. We encourage you to have your child complete the project so they can be represented as part of our school-wide decorations. There will be many other fun events throughout the weeks of PARP, including a cozy day of reading with PAJAMA DAY, outdoor celebrations, and much more. A calendar including all of the other fun events for the month will come out before the start of the event! As for the most important part of PARP... Please be sure to have your child log their reading each night on the Google form to be entered to earn prizes for the most amount of minutes read! Prizes will be announced on Fridays!

We can't wait! Questions? Contact the PARP Committee - Mollie Newman, Heather Egert, Rachel Levenson, Pam Bahiri, Karen Ostrick, Jacqueline Braunstein, and Inna Choi.

- K. Now we will hear the report of the **School Store committee** given by Heather Egert

We are so excited for another fun year at the school store. For those new to the school, the school store is a PTA run fundraising store that sells fun school related supplies that your child can buy during their lunch period on select Thursdays this year. Parents can volunteer to work a shift on the PTA website. The shifts will be by grade. The first school store will be held on Thursday, September 14th. Kindergarten parents can begin volunteering in October.

The School store teaches your children to count money and understand its value with inexpensive, fun supplies to choose from. There are fun pencils and pens, keychains, pencil cases, erasers, notebooks and so much more. The cost of these items range from \$.25 to \$5.. Prices for those items



## Meeting Minutes

September 7, 2023, at 7:30pm | Walt Whitman Elementary School Library

will be sent out via email. We only accept cash. So please send your child to school with some the morning of the school store. Don't forget to volunteer on the PTA website but please limit your sign up to 3 sessions per child so there is space for other parents. It's a fun way to see your kids and help raise some money for the PTA!! Always feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions!

- L. We will now hear the report from the **Spirit Wear Committee** given by Samantha Lebenhart and/or Niki Gionis

Thank you to all the families who have already purchased Spiritwear. Friday students are encouraged to show their school spirit. If you placed an order and haven't picked it up they are here this evening. Jerseys socks and arm sleeves are not in yet we will contact you when they arrive. Anyone who had an issue with paying through PayPal sunita will be sending you an invoice or you can pay tonight with credit card, check or cash. WE WILL BE TAKING ORDERS FOR THE NEXT 2 WEEKS CUT OFF DATE TO PLACE AN ORDER IS WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 20.

- M. We will now hear a report from **SEPTA** given by Danielle Sandjaby and/or Erica Shulman

What is SEPTA? 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. Please join below! First Meeting is on September 19 at Village Elementary School at 7:45pm. They will be discussing...

Find out more by signing up at <https://syossetsepta.memberhub.com/store>.

- N. And now we will now hear a report from our **Social Media Committee** given by Anna Karotkin

Join our Facebook and Instagram pages! Keep in mind, both pages are private and all members must have children currently enrolled in Whitman. These pages may not be used to promote businesses or for any political purposes.

- O. For our final report we will hear from the **Welcome Back Picnic Committee** given by Tara Bensol, Michelle Bochner, and/or Cara Kaplan

The Welcome Back Picnic will be held this Friday, September 8th from 5:00-7:00 PM and will be a really fun event. We are looking forward to seeing everyone at the picnic:

- Admission is free but you must be a Walt Whitman family to attend.
- Food will be provided by Frantonis but must be pre-ordered by tomorrow through the link that went out with the flyer; there will also be an ice cream truck with ice cream for purchase.
- This is not a drop off event. Please supervise your children and help us to keep all the children safe and away from the parking lot.
- Children who need to go inside to use the bathroom must be attended by an adult.
- Please bring a blanket or towel to sit on.
- Members of the Syosset varsity kickline/cheer will be attending to show off some of their skills!
- We need parent volunteers at the event so please contact us if you would like to help out!

We can't wait to see everyone there!! Rain date will be Friday, September 22!

- I. **Now we will hear Syosset Council of PTAs Committee reports.**





## Meeting Minutes

September 7, 2023, at 7:30pm | Walt Whitman Elementary School Library

1. Now we will hear a report by the Communications Conference given by Danielle Sandjaby.

The Syosset Council of PTAs' Communication Conference Committee presents and discusses issues with Syosset administrators during each school year. The committee is composed of Council Delegates from every school in the district. If you have questions for the administration that are general in nature (i.e., not something specific to your child or your specific school), please email your unit rep, (Danielle Sandjaby-Daniellesandjaby@gmail.com) no later than September 18th.

2. We will now hear a report from the Reflections given by Erica Shulman.

Reflections is a national contest where students can submit various forms of artwork to express how they interpret an annual theme. This year's reflection program theme is "I am hopeful because...." There are several categories to enter such as dance, film and photography. . Please encourage your children to participate.

### VIII. New Business

1. **New Gluten Free Lunch Menu** - Staci Leibson

2. **Vote: Proposed Budget**

As many of you know, from time to time, we need to vote at our PTA meetings. In order to vote we will need a quorum of 15 members. Please remember that you may only vote if you have a PTA membership this year. When we conduct a vote, a motion will be made. If the motion is coming out of committee it will not need a second.

The budget committee chair (Treasurer) moved to put it to vote on the "*2023-24 Proposed Budget.*" Since it is coming out of the committee it does not need a second. Is there any discussion? No Discussion was had. We will proceed with a vote. We will vote by a show of hands. All those in favor of the Proposed budget raise your hands. All those opposed.

The motion passes, the Proposed Budget is adopted. Thank you everyone.

3. Other - A parent asked about improving the students' experiences during recess. Other districts have an activities coordinator to organize games/other activities during recess. Alternatively would it be possible to train the recess monitors to ensure no student is ever alone? Per Mr. Snyder, our goal is to work with the existing monitors to help organize activities and identify problems. EAch school has a designated social worker who can assist in monitoring recess activities to ensure no child is left alone. We are also working on a program to enable students to safely switch between classrooms when stuck inside. I am also actively working with the 3rd, 4th and 5th grades in the lunchroom to ensure no one is sitting alone. That should extend to recess as well.



## Meeting Minutes

September 7, 2023, at 7:30pm | Walt Whitman Elementary School Library

### IX. Old Business

None

### X. Dates to Remember

Finally, we are up to our dates to remember. Please keep an eye on our dates to remember in our weekly updates and our website. ***Also, every Friday is our Show your School Spirit Day!***

#### **September**

9/8 - Welcome Back Picnic 5- 7pm

9/9 - Newcomer Social at 7pm @ The Sondhi's

9/11 - Board of Education Mtg, SW 8pm

9/14 - School Store OPENS

9/18 - Class Parent signup deadline

9/19 - SEPTA Mtg, Village 7:45pm

9/19 - Picture Day

9/21 - Open House (TBD)

9/22 - Welcome Back Picnic (rain date)

9/23 - 5th Grade Car Wash Fundraiser

**9/25 - No School**

9/27 - Class Parent Intro Meeting -10am

#### **October**

10/3 - Board of Education Mtg, SW 8pm

10/4 - Syosset Council of PTAs newcomers reception (k-12)

**10/9 - No School**

**10/10 - NEXT PTA Meeting - 10am**

10/12-13 Book Fair

Thank you for everything once again. If there is no further business, the meeting will stand adjourned.  
The meeting is adjourned at 9:35pm.

Recording Secretary  
Theresa Seedorf