



General Meeting Proposed Agenda
May 6, 2024 at 7:30pm | Walt Whitman Elementary School

Our meeting was called to order at 7:34 pm with a quorum present. (majority of the board - 16 members - Section 5 of Article 11) Attendance was taken by sign in sheet.

I. Board of Education and SCSD Administration Visits

Dr. Rogers, Carol Chang, Jack Ostrick and Lisa Coscia discussed the 2024-25 budget and important election information.

Carol Chang - visit the district website for important budget information. This will be the 12th year in a row we have had tax increases.

Lisa Cosia - the current focus is to maintain current programs as well as provide universal pre-k for all interested and add new programs such as pre-med and anatomy courses and challenger bowling track and field at the high school.

Jack Ostrick - concerning facilities, the focus of the budget is for maintenance on existing structures. Requested improvements and additions to WW facilities is not included in this years budget. The board is currently reviewing feedback from the public. A final proposal is expected no earlier than the fall of 2024. Given the presidential elections, it may not be possible to rent voting machines at that time.

Please vote on May 21st at the high school!

II. Approve minutes - April 2024

Minutes were posted on the website from our last PTA meeting for review and there were some copies on the table. No one had any comments, changes, or questions. The minutes stand as approved.

III. Treasurer’s Report – Sunita Hansraj

Opening Balance as of	3/23/2024	\$ 87,113.39
Income/Deposits		\$ 8,620.29
Expense/Cash Disbursements		\$ 10,591.73
Checking Balance:		\$ 85,141.95
6mth CD Balance @4.4430%		\$ 35,000.00
Total Cash on Hand as of	4/22/2024	\$ 114,976.78

“All balances were reconciled to the bank statements. The books were reviewed and found to be in order by Jacqueline Braunstein. Thank you Jacqueline.”



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IV. Correspondence Secretary – read by Niki Gionis - NONE

V. Principals Report - Mr. Snyder

Jump rope for heart

VI. President's Report - read by Inna Choi and Karen Ostrick

Thank you Mr Snyder. Thank you to the Administration and Board of Education Trustees for visiting. They have a tough job and we appreciate all that they do. We had an amazing Fun Fair last Friday, really one of the best events we've had at Whitman. Thank you to our extraordinary chairs Tara Benschol, Niki Gionis, Cara Kaplan, Cindy Ho, and VP Pam Bahiri for your nonstop hard work and creativity putting this tremendous event together. 5th Grade Committee has been selected - Pamela Bahiri, Inna Choi, Gabby Mohammadi, Melissa Wallentin, Courtney Schlow, Marina Meyerowitz, Danielle Sandjaby, Erica Roseman, Melanie Eisenberg, Tracy Brown, Joanne Fang, Livia Kogan, Cara Kaplan, and Elana Gofman. Congratulations to those who made the committee; they earned it through their PTA work over the years they have been at Whitman. We are very excited for all that the committee will do next year. Speaking of committees - our 2024 -25 committee sign up is coming out tonight. Be sure to check your emails! Spring brings a lot of renewed events. Plant Sale, Planting Day, as well as Staff Recognition week. End of the school year is coming so be sure to listen up for info for ordering school supplies. Class parents - please make sure to send out your food form ASAP to parents for your upcoming end of year class parties. Our next meeting is our last meeting of the year. It is a special meeting for our Whitman community with our annual PTA awards. Please make every effort to attend.

VII. Standing Committee Reports

A. Carly Laffie or Tara Ginsburg, our **Board of Education reporters**, will update us now.

3rd Budget Presentation – Dr Rufo

- 1st presentation was on Capital & Admin; 2nd was on State Aid (Gov's proposal)
- Tonight – Revenue (Estimated State aid, local revenue including PILOTS & LIPA PILOT, appropriated fund balance, and planned use of restricted reserves). This revenue plus the estimated tax levy funds our Budget.
 - Draft Budget 285,744,550
 - Revenue 59,128,342
 - Estimated tax levy 226,616,208
- 3.21% tax levy increase. Calculated tax cap is 3.23% so we are approx \$40K under the cap.
- Budget vote is May 21



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K-12 World Language Program – Dr Balsamo - Hope for language learners – biliteracy, cultural understanding, and connections in social studies in a global perspective.

- Syosset is one of few Districts that offer foreign language from Kindergarten.
- Revision to FLEX program starting in Sept 2024: Grades K & 1: American Sign Language, Grades 2 & 3: Asian languages & cultures, Grades 4 & 5: Romance languages & cultures
- Middle school language choices: Chinese, French, Italian, Korean & Spanish
- Checkpoint A exam in June of 8th grade; 1 high school credit granted for successful completion

Superintendent’s Report - Budget – our District is different from others in that we have increased enrollment. Other Districts are at most at risk of decreased State aid because the Gov does not want to pay for empty seats due to decreasing enrollment; we are not in that position. If our State aid does go down, it will primarily be due to a difference of the State’s calculation of inflation vs real life.

Anti-Bias Task Force Report - A diverse task force representing the community brought recommendations to the Board

5 subgroups:

- Best Practices & Existing Initiatives – mitigating unconscious biases and fostering cultural competency, curriculum evaluation, hiring practices of teacher/administrators/staff, and social media
- Student Experience – more accessible, townhall for students
- Family Partnerships – create opportunities for families to share good from the community before school events
- Code of Conduct and DASA Reporting – more accessible, create a Student Handbook that is written for different age levels
- Data Collection – exit surveys at 5th, 8th & 12th grades

New Business - Lunch food service – trustee Ostrick recommended revisiting the vendor and program in general.



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B. We will now hear the report of the **BoxTops** given by Carly Orlansky. We are at \$79.50 for the year. As a reminder this is super quick and easy to do whether you shop in store or online you can simply scan your receipts or forward them to the box top email located on the app. This is the easiest way for our kids to get money! Covered products include Lysol!! If you have questions or need any help feel free to reach out.

C. Now we will hear the report of the **Directory Spot and Membership** given by Michelle Kim. You can sign up for 2024-25 now. Make sure you use the drop down section for the year before you complete the order.

D. **Earth Day / Planting Day** report will be given by Melissa Wallentin or Joanne Fang. The parent volunteer SignUpGenius was sent. Each class will have three volunteers except the kindergarten classes have four. If you would like to volunteer as a committee member and help for the full day, please let us know tonight! We also need volunteers for the education board and watering plants before and after planting day. The fifth grade dedication tree, stones, and plaque will be on planned on a later day. We will coordinate with the fifth grade committee and school.

E. **Family Engagement** will be reported by Jacqueline Braunstein, Gabby Platz, Trupti Bahl or Parisa Osmanovic We are planning a nature walk at Stillwell Woods Preserve on Friday, June 7th, at 5:30pm and hope to have everyone join us in getting outdoors and active together in June. Details to come!

F. Now we will hear the report of the **Fifth Grade Committee** given by Melissa Forman and Jacqueline Braunstein. The 5th grade has a lot of end of year events coming up. Candy Bouquet ordering is out for the Spring Concert at HBT on 5/28. Our car wash is rescheduled for May 18th weather permitting. If you prepaid in the fall you are all set (if you think you might have paid but aren't sure, please reach out to the webmaster at Webmaster@waltwhitmanpta.org to confirm) **Important dates** for June: 5th grade picnic at school June 10th (rain date June 14th) 5th grade dance is June 20th at 6:30pm at Muttontown Country Club 5th grade breakfast is June 21st at Walt Whitman. **Friendly reminder:** 5th grade parents - make sure your information is up to date in the directoryspot app so that when you move over to HBT the information is correct. Also, please check out the School Supplies fundraiser ordering link to get your 6th grade school supplies in advance.

G. The **Field Day Event** report will be given by Cindy Ho, Jacqueline Braunstein, Courtney Schlow, Melanie Eisenberg, Elana Gofman or Melissa Forman. Field Day will be on June 11th. Once again, we will be providing lunch, free of charge, for every student during our field day activities. We are working on the details but will be asking for parent volunteers to help with serving lunch. There will be a signup genius distributed closer to the event. If anyone wants to join the committee, please reach out to Melanie Eisenberg, Melissa Forman or Elana Gofman. Sandwich express is the vendor. A motion was made by Melissa Forman to increase the budget line for Field Day BBQ by \$500 to \$3500 and seconded by Tara Bensol. The motion passed.



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H. Our **Fundraising** report given by Tara Bensol and Michelle Bochner. Mixology was today from 2-6pm. Thank you to everyone who participated! Stay tuned for upcoming shopping events at Gold Coast Kids. A portion of all sales will be donated back to us. Our Syosset GOAT shirts are on sale now! If you are interested in assisting or have any questions please reach out to Michelle Bochner or Tara Bensol.

I. Michelle Kim, Allison Soren and Ashley Cohen will update us on the **Plant Sale Fundraiser**. The Plant Sale fundraising event date is set for Thurs, May 9, 2024. The Plant Sale committee will be placing the finalized order by April 19. In the meantime, please mark your calendar for the sale. There is no presale so send money with your children on the day of the sale. We will need volunteers on the day of the sale. Please sign up to volunteer on SignUp Genius when it is set up. The committee has ideas on incorporating learning for students who have completed purchasing flowers or is on standby. Tables with crayons or markers with a coloring sheet, i.e. lifecycle of a flower.

J. Pam Bahiri & Heather Egert will update us with the **School Supplies** for this coming year. We will be using 1st day school supplies again this year. Ordering is very easy and you have probably started receiving information from the company already. Ordering will be available until June 30th. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out. Thanks for your continued support!

K. Heather Egert will speak on behalf of the **School Store**. Thank you to all of those who had volunteered and I'm looking forward to meeting those who are signed up for the upcoming school store. Please be mindful to just walk to and from the stage when volunteering for School Store and to not wander the halls. If you are unable to attend a School Store that you have signed up for, please let me know ASAP. Also, if you need to switch with somebody, please let me know so that we can make the appropriate changes with Security. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions. 2 Sessions left on May 30th and June 13th.

L. Another important report from **SEPTA** given by Erica Shulman & Danielle Sandjaby. Septa's last meeting will be an award ceremony on May 22nd at HBT at 7:45pm. The RISE program will be hosting a food and beverage cart in the beginning so please bring money to show your support!

M. Here is the update on our **Staff Recognition Event** from our chairs - Tara Bensol, Ashley Cohen, Amanda Fickler, and Carly Goodman. Staff Appreciation week is next week and we have an entire week of activities and fun planned for the teachers & staff. On Monday morning they will be welcomed into the school with Hollywood stars with their names on them lining the Whitman floors, and swag bags with a "ticket of events" to fill during the week! For treats Tuesday, as you know, thanks to all of your generous baking donations we will be hosting a "sweets Tuesday" where the staff will take home and/or enjoy your homemade treats - if anyone else wants to bake let us know! For Wellness Wednesday they will be given a donated lunch from Sweet Green and on Thursday we will have a popcorn bar generously donated by Hampton Popcorn and the Silberstein family. Which brings us to Friday, our annual Appreciation Breakfast and awards. We can't wait to show the staff how much we love and appreciate them!



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

1. Carly Laffie will provide information on the **Annual Election and Budget Vote Committee**. Some future dates to be aware of: **Monday, May 13 – Budget Hearing – 8 pm SW** and the **VOTE is on Tuesday, May 21** from 6:00 am -9:00 pm at the Syosset High School for all Walt Whitman Families. You can still register to vote if you need to, on Monday, May 13, 2024 4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. at South Woods Middle School. The voter registration form can be found on the district website. In addition, all School Board candidates will distribute their own biographical information to the community.

2. Alban Jeune will discuss the **Cultural Unity** program. The Cultural Unity Committee is accepting entries for the Celebration of Culture showcase which will take place on **May 30th at 7pm at SHS**. We invite students to submit a piece of literature, art, digital art, photography or dance/music composition that answers one or all of the following: What does culture mean to you? How is culture celebrated in your home? What has culture taught you? Or anything that defines culture to you! **Deadline to submit is May 17th!** Entries will be divided into the following categories: K-2, 3-5, Middle School, and High School. Each participant will be entered into a raffle for a chance to win a \$50 gift card. Multiple winners will be picked randomly from each category. The flyer is in the weekly newsletter.

3. The **Parent Resource Committee** report will be given by Allison Soren. In the last newsletter we sent out the link to provide feedback and ideas on parent presentations from the Syosset Council of PTAs. Please review that google form and submit your feedback as soon as possible.

VIII. Special Committees

Awards committee - Given by Pam Bahiri - None - Next meeting awards will be presented.
Audit committee - looking for volunteers

IX. New Business

X. Old Business

A. Whitman Facilities - As a reminder, Inna and Karen went to speak to the Board of Ed at their March meeting on behalf of our Walt Whitman PTA. We have printed out copies of our statements. Please take a look at it, there is good information in there. If you are moved to write to the Board members, the email address is allboardmembers@syossetschools.org.

One of the topics regarding facilities we discussed at the March meeting was about election day and why it was so important for Whitman to have a facility to host elections that results in a secure and safe building for our children. As you may be aware, Tuesday was the primary election. This resulted in our



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children being in a lockdown state all day long. They were unable to leave their classrooms for lunch, specials or recess, as Mr. Snyder has already told us. It is very important that we all make sure that the Board and Administration understands the risk our children deal with.

Please watch all upcoming Board of Education meetings as they are potentially discussing Whitman facilities and the budget. As you heard from the annual budget and election committee, there will be public hearings about the bond that the District is putting forth. Please review carefully and attend so that when it comes time to vote in May you are informed and understand the impact of the bond on your own personal taxes and the updates to our building.

XI. 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!* Our next **and final** meeting of the year will be **June 4th at 7:00pm.**

May

- 6 - PTA Meeting (BOE visits), 7:30pm
- 6-10 - Teacher Appreciation Week
- 8 - Fun Fair (rain date) 6-8 pm
- 9 - Plant Sale
- 14 - Planting Day
- 13-17 - Staff Appreciation Week
- 13 - Budget & Board of Education Meeting, SW 8pm
- 17 - Staff Recognition Event (Breakfast)
- 18 - Tentative 5th Grade Car Wash

- 20 - 5th Grade Trip - Driftwood
- 21 - Annual District Election and Budget Vote, 6am-9pm
- 22 - SEPTA Award Ceremony at HBT
- 23 - 27 - No School**
- 28 - WW Spring Concert, at HBT
- 30 - PTA Celebration of Culture Showcase, 7pm
- 30 - PTA Council General Meeting, SHS 7:45pm [Delegates]
- 30 - 2024-25 Committee Sign Up Deadline
- 30 - School Store

June

- 4 - PTA Meeting - PTA Awards/Officer Installation, 7:00p**

The meeting adjourned at 8:34 pm.

Recording Secretary
Theresa Seedorf

Attached
Sign in Sheet