



General Meeting Minutes
February 12, 2025, at 7:30pm | Walt Whitman Elementary School

Our meeting was called to order at 7:36pm with a quorum present. Attendance was taken by sign in sheet.

I. Approve minutes - January 2025

No questions or changes. Minutes stand as approved. Thank you.

II. Treasurer’s Report – Allison Soren

Opening Balance, 12/22/24	\$ 79,038.46
Income/Deposits	\$ 74,193.82
Expense/Cash Disbursements	\$ 77,120.40
<u>Checking Balance 1/31/25</u>	<u>\$ 76,111.88</u>
<u>CD Balance as of 1/31/25</u>	<u>\$ 40,000.00</u>
<u>TOTAL Cash on Hand as of 12/22/24</u>	<u>\$116,111.88</u>

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

III. Correspondence Secretary – Niki Gionis - none

IV. Principal’s Report – Mr. Snyder - absent.

V. President’s Report - read by Karen Ostrick & Cindy Ho

Good evening everyone. We are so happy to see so many of you here tonight—whether you came willingly or got roped in by a PTA friend who promised, *“It’ll be quick!”*. And especially with the inclement weather scheduled for later tonight we will actually be pretty quick! We have so much to celebrate, and we want to take a moment to recognize the incredible work of our PTA volunteers, who continue to make our school such a special place.

We were supposed to host our Reflections ceremony this evening. But as you can see Mr. Snyder is out tonight. We wish him a speedy recovery and we look forward to hosting our Reflections ceremony next month. Some of the District winners were awarded on Monday night at the Council event. For those who are unaware, this program gives our students an opportunity to express themselves through fine arts, literature, photography, music, film and dance, and their work is absolutely inspiring. A huge thank you to Erica Schulman for all her dedication and effort in making this program such a success. We appreciate everything you’ve done to bring this opportunity to our students!

Now, let’s give a huge round of applause to our Parents’ Night Out Fundraiser chairs! Jaclyn Avellino, Ioana Calka, and Niki Gionis. Their dedication, flexibility, creativity, and tireless efforts made this event not only a fantastic night out but also a tremendous success in raising money to support our students. To all the volunteers, donors, and attendees—thank you! Your generosity and enthusiasm allow us to continue providing enriching programs and experiences for our kids.

We also want to extend a heartfelt thank you to the chairs of our International Day and Multicultural Expo: Gabby Mohammadi, Trupti Bahl, Brooke Kneller and Jenn Crecco. Every year, these events are



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examples of the diversity and unity within our school, and this year was even more spectacular than ever! From the beautiful cultural displays to the incredible performances and delicious food, it was a true celebration of the many traditions that make our community so special. Your hard work and dedication to making this event so meaningful are deeply appreciated.

Today we had a huge turnout during the Someone Special Craft during recess. Thank you Melanie Eisenberg and Livia Kogan for providing a fun option during this snowy indoor recess day! It's moments like these that remind us of the power of community and what we can accomplish when we come together. We still have plenty more exciting things ahead, and we can't wait to continue working alongside all of you to make this a fantastic year.

Our PTA is only as strong as the people in this room, and we are grateful for each and every one of you. Including our teachers and staff. Once again we will provide them with a Valentine's Day treat! Now, let's get started with tonight's agenda!

VI. Standing Committee Reports

- A. We will hear the report of the Arts in Education / Curriculum Enrichment committee given by Erica Schulman or Heather Egert.

Last Week our students experienced "Supermarket Science," an assembly that takes everyday items and shows students how to do fun and exciting experiments with them! The students loved participating in this show! Next month we have "Corey the Dribbler" coming, a Guinness world record holding basketball player that shares motivating messages to our students.

- B. Now we will hear the report of the Book Fair Committee given by Samantha Lebenhart, Erika Schulman and Patrice Gooden. -

The spring book fair will be held on **Thursday, March 27 & Friday, March 28**. We will also be open during parent teacher conferences on the **evening of March 27, 5-8pm**. The evening fair is a great opportunity to come and shop with your child if you are not able to do so during the day. There will also be teacher wish list books for purchase. **Please note: no children will be allowed in the library without their parents during the evening portion.** A catalog with the books for sale will be going home with students in the next few weeks. The preferred way of payment will be eWallet. Please check your email for information on how to use any remaining balances from the fall book fair. In addition, if your child participated in Reflections this year, a \$5 credit will be applied to his/her eWallet account. We will also be accepting cash and checks payable to Walt Whitman PTA. A volunteer signup will be sent out soon. We are looking forward to an amazing sale. Please reach out if you have any questions.

- C. Now we will hear the report of the Board of Education Reporter given by Daneille Sandjaby or Heather Egert. -

The February BOE meeting & budget information session had a lot of budget discussion. The budget factors for 25'-26' school year are health insurance, NYS pension cost, inflation, liability insurance, transportation contract (we get a new contract annually) and enrollment shifts. Unfortunately there are



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very few options for our transportation provider. The 25'- 26' school year budget goals include continuing to find efficiencies to preserve existing programs and services for students despite inflation, continue to support the social and emotional well being of students, the complement of capital bond work with smaller scale facilities projects, and to continue to provide fiscal stability to optimize our response to changing circumstances. This will preserve those goals under the tax cap. The Board does not adopt the budget until April but they propose the budget by March. We are more than 11 million under the cap. Dr. Rogers expressed concerns in past meetings about foundation aid - that was basically put to rest with the Governor's proposal to maintain the current law. Overall there were no policy changes that impacted other aid categories. UPK is again fully funded plus a grant was received this year for the allocation for all students who are interested will be able to take advantage of this program. There was talk about possible future software and an app so parents can see where their children are on the bus. **Superintendent's report** Dr. Rogers spoke about the board of regents making changes to graduation requirements, evolving more towards skill than content acquisition. Possible difficulties that skills are harder to access than content. We have already started positioning to shift in the direction to be similar to where the state is going. In November we saw the state's timeline. 1) New NYS Portrait of a graduate, has 7 components. The state has not released any definition of these components. 2) State moving to one high school diploma vs three. 3) Redefinition of credits. Currently to graduate: - 22 credits earned through units of study. 180 hrs a year, 180 minutes per week. - Regents or local diploma at least 4 + 1 pathway regents exams most cases 5 regents exam. Early stages of the new proposed model of requirements: One high school diploma. Regents are no longer mandatory for graduation. They must take the Regents but don't need to pass for graduation. Regents will remain on transcript for colleges to see. Students still need to take the exams. Students can show accomplishments by seals, work based learning & internship programs. Fall 2027 year we will get the rubrics, guidance and learning standards. There will be lots of future conversations by the Board and Administration about this as it develops.

D. We will now hear the report of the **BoxTops** given by Erika Auerbach.

Thanks for all your support - Whoo Hooo! 🎉 We are at **\$142** with the goal of \$100. It's basically free money for our children and the PTA. Lets try to reach \$200. Questions? Contact Erika Auerbach.

E. Now we will hear the report of the **Discount Card Fundraiser Committee** given by Michelle Bochner

The Sale is still on!!! for 40% off - get yours today. Use the code BLKFRI. Don't miss out on great savings at Miko and Victoria's Market and Frantoni's.

F. We will now here from our **Family Fun Night Committee** by Jaclyn Avellino, Jessica Lischin, and Katherine Lee

We're excited to be holding a family fun night for the spring! Please save the date 5/19 location is to be determined. Can't wait to see you there!



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- G. Now we will hear the report of the **Fifth Grade Committee** given by Pam Bahiri and Inna Choi

Thank you to everyone who submitted a booster for the yearbook. Your support is greatly appreciated! Our next upcoming event is 5th grade movie night so save the date - March 26th!!

Please mark your calendars for the following dates:

March 26 - 5th Grade Movie Night	(June 17 - Picnic Rain Date)
June 10 - Dance at Muttontown Country Club	June 23 - Breakfast & Yearbook Signing at WW
June 13 - Picnic - Syosset Woodbury Park	June 24 - Moving Up Ceremony

Please make sure you check your emails, sign up for 5th grade Remind texts and always feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

- H. **Fun Fair Carnival** will be discussed by - Carly Orlansky, Niki Gionis & Michelle Bochner
Save the date for Fun Fair Carnival - April 9th rain or shine because it will be held indoors!

- I. We will now here from the **Maker Space Recess committee** which will be provided by Sunita Hansraj, Valerie Kesten and Stella Wei

We are so excited to have the Maker Space program up and running during the cold weather. This month, Maker Space is being led by Krafty Hands. Students have been creating fun and engaging projects. We have had some parents come forth with wonderful ideas. We are always on the lookout for new ideas and volunteers! Please reach out to us with any questions or ideas and look for the signup in the weekly newsletter. **We are looking for a few more volunteers for tomorrow's Maker Space with Kraft Hands - please join us in providing your children a fun indoor recess option!**

- J. **Movie Night** will be presented by Heather Egert and Jenn Crecco

The movie nights will begin soon in March - we will have 3 sessions. March 5th for Gr K-2 , March 10th for Gr 3-4 and March 26th for Gr 5. The movies will be selected and announced at our next meeting.

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

Next School Store will be **Thursday, February 27th**. Parents are NOW able to sign up more than 1x for their students. Please visit the sign up form to see what is available.

- L. Another important report from **SEPTA** given by Danielle Sandjaby or Erica Schulman

Parent Support Group Virtual meeting - We had our first parent support group meeting last night and it was a great success. Lasting almost 2 hours, parents were able to ask questions and share experiences between each other, all the while making great connections. Stay tuned for our next one.
Nominating Committee - We are collecting nominations for our executive board for the 2024-2025 school year. The form and new google link will be distributed to all via memberhub tomorrow. Feel free to nominate anyone you think would be a great fit!
College Workshop - March 5th - Please join us for a



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College Workshop focusing on student support services for those students with IEP's and 504 accommodation plans. This workshop will be located in the Syosset High School Library and led by our own Syosset School District Staff! Please see the flyer in the newsletter. **Next Meeting** - Feb 26th at AP Willits - Come hear about some additional adaptive sport offerings (softball and tennis) which are both back by popular demand! Although not necessary to attend, please support SEPTA by becoming a member for only \$15.

M. **Someone Special Dance** given by Neha Sharma or Ashley Cohen or Niki Gionis

The Someone Special Dance will take place on **March 18th** in the gym. This event is for K through 5th grade students who will bring a Special Someone adult/guardian with them to enjoy the evening. We will have a photo opportunity, crafts, a sensory table and of course, lots of music and dancing with your child's Someone Special run by our DJ. In order to accommodate everyone at the school we are offering two time slots and we ask everyone to please RSVP and select a time slot. The first time slot is 6-7pm and the second is 7-8 PM. We will also have snacks available at the event and will be pre-selling corsage and boutonnieres. As a reminder, this is **not** a drop off event and everyone will have to check in with a parent or guardian. Please reach out if you're interested in joining the committee. We can't wait for this fun night ahead!

N. We will now hear from our **Sunshine Committee** - Katerina Fradelakis and Gabby Mohammadi -

The monthly birthday celebrations in the lunchroom are in full swing and we are celebrating our students with February birthdays! Thank you to all the parents who submitted forms and if you haven't, please do ASAP. Students loved seeing their names on the white board and they will also get a birthday sticker & pencil! *As a reminder: The children are able to see that their names are not included on the board. Please make sure you sign up so that your children can participate in the fun. We are only asking for their Month of birth—no other details are shared.* Thank you for helping us make their birthday month extra special and memorable!

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

1. We will hear the report by the **Annual District Election and Budget Vote** given by Carly Laffie

Budget information sessions start next month:

- **Budget Information Session #2**, Monday, March 10, 8:00 pm at South Woods Middle School
- **Budget Information Session #3**, Wednesday, April 23, 8:00 pm at South Woods Middle School
- **Budget Hearing**, Monday, May 12, 8:00 pm at South Woods Middle School
- **Annual District Election & Budget Vote**, Tuesday, May 20, 6:00am – 9:00pm
 - Voting takes place at the High School



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- 2. 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 **March 11th**.

- 3. We will now hear a report from the **Reflections** given by Erica Shulman.

This week we got to celebrate all of our Reflections participants. We started the week at a ceremony at South Woods that recognized students from all of our schools who advanced to the county level. In March we will hold a ceremony for all students who participated this year. Students were beaming as Mr. Snyder presented them with an award and got to take pictures with their beautiful pieces. Thank you, Mr. Snyder, for making this so special for our students. We are so excited to announce that Whitman has 3 students advancing to the NY state level: Tyler Scher, Ciana Bahl & Rose Medvin. Congratulations and good luck to them all!

- 4. Now we will hear a report about the **PTA Scholarship** program shared by Carly Laffie. -

The Syosset High School Theatre Arts annual musical is just around the corner! **School of Rock** will be performed on **Thursday, March 20 at 7:00 pm, Friday, March 21 at 7:30 pm, Saturday, March 22 at 7:30 pm and Sunday, March 23 at 2:00 pm**. Over the four days, the musical is attended by an audience of up to 1,400 people. A printed Playbill will be created to generate revenue for the Syosset Scholarship Fund. [Click here for more details.](#)

- 5. The **Parent Resource Committee** report will be given by Jenn Crecco.

Thursday, February 27, 2025, an Executive Functioning workshop will be held virtually at 7:30 pm. It will be a workshop introduction for parents of K-12th graders. It is a virtual presentation. You will need to RSVP for this event. Questions? Please Contact: Jenn Crecco

VII. New Business - None

VIII. Old Business - None

IX. Dates to Remember - important dates till our next meeting.

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!**

Friendly reminder: you can download our google calendar to your device from our emails or from our website.

February

17-21 - No School

25 - PTA General Council Meeting 7:45pm

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26 - SEPTA Meeting 7:45pm Willits

27 - School Store

27 - PRG Exec Functioning Virtual Workshop, 7:30 pm

March

2- Syosset Public Library - Seussical the



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Musical

- 4 -WW Reflections Celebration, 6:30pm
- 4 - PTA Annual Business Meeting 7:30 pm**
- 5 - Movie Night Grades K-2
- 10 - Movie Night Grades 3-4

- 10 - Budget information session #2 & BOE mtg
- 11 - Communication Conference Deadline
- 12 - Parent Teacher Conf 5-7pm
- 13 - School Store
- 18 - Someone Special Dance 6-8pm @ WW

The meeting is adjourned at 8:26pm.

Recording Secretary / Theresa Seedorf

Attached

Sign in Sheet

[February Sign-In](#)