

WATCHUNG PTO
Minutes of the Meeting Dated September 13, 2011
Bayberry APR

The meeting was called to order at 9:40 am by Michelle Hwang, President

Michelle began the meeting by asking the new Board members to introduce themselves:

Lauren Krouk – 1st VP
Christine Ead – 2nd VP
Tiffany Brigante – Corresponding Secretary
Susan Ober – Recording Secretary
Greta Santucci – Treasurer
Immediate Past President – Edie Belcastro

Michelle asked that the minutes of the June meeting be approved. There were no changes or discussion and the vote was to approve.

Board Reports

President - Michelle Hwang

Michelle said we had a good turnout for the **New Parent Breakfast**, held the first day of school. She thanked Cindy Huljack and Tiffany Brigante for coordinating the refreshments. She said that she had received positive feedback about the **bus chaperones**, and thanked Kristin Rizzi and Christine Listorti for chairing this effort. Several people commented that having parent chaperones ride the bus the first week or 2 of school provided a great deal of comfort when their kids were first starting school. Michelle asked people to sign up as **volunteers** for various committees – both on the website and on the sign-up sheets available at the meeting. She reminded people of the **Ice Cream Social** to be held on Friday September 16th (the PTO is combining this event with the movie night sponsored by Watchung Youth Services) at Phillips Field.

Michelle reported that the PTO would now offer a **PTO Meeting Recap** at 7pm on the day of the PTO meetings. The recap meetings would be held right before the Board of Education meetings in the Valley View Faculty Lounge.

1st Vice President – Lauren Krouk

Lauren reported that the **PTO Membership Drive** had begun and she reviewed the procedure for completing your membership online.

2nd Vice President – Christine Ead

Christine reported that the **Class Parent and PTO Committee Chair Meeting** had been held just prior to the PTO meeting this morning.

Treasurer – Greta Santucci

In Greta's absence, Michelle presented the **Proposed 2011-2012 PTO Budget**, which, she summarized, had no major changes over the prior year's budget. A question was raised why we needed **\$750 for "Community"**; the response was that the Borough of Watchung provides us with venues and resources for much of our projects and events. A question was raised why we spend **\$1,600 for the Suzanne Kenney Scholarship**, if our work is done on behalf of Bayberry and Valley View students. The response was that the scholarship is provided to a WHRHS graduate who attended Watchung schools and that all of the sending districts offer similar scholarships. A comment was made encouraging people to participate in **Scrip and the consumer products program**, since it's "free money to the schools".

A motion was made and seconded to approve the budget as approved, and the vote was to approve.

Recording Secretary – Susan Ober

Sue reported that the **June minutes** were on the website, and that the PTO had given \$10 Target gift cards to all teachers as Back-to-School gifts. The PTO also sent floral arrangements to the Bayberry and Valley View Offices and Teachers' Lounges, as well as the Board of Education office.

Corresponding Secretary – Tiffany Brigante

Tiffany provided an overview of our **new website** (she is the “webmaster”).

Immediate Past-President – Edie Belcastro

Edie congratulated the new board and said it is doing a great job and commented on the terrific new website.

Administration Reports

Superintendent – Dr. Malyska

Dr. Malyska welcomed everyone to a wonderful new school year and reported that we were off to a smooth start (the “best start of the best school year ever!”). She thanked Kristin Rizzi and Christine Listorti for chairing Bus Chaperones, and thanked Sandy Loreti for helping out with the “Hill Hollow breakdown”. She invited people to come to the BOE office to see the display of 1st day pictures on the bulletin board. She thanked the PTO for the flowers for the BOE office.

Dr. Malyska reported that the district was now imposing an activity fee (\$50 for VV, \$25 for BB) to cover the cost of running the after school programs. She said it was the only way to keep the budget at no increase, and that all Somerset County schools charge similar fees, with many of them a much higher amount. She said the BOE had to freeze the teachers' after school pay for three years and that many of the teachers are declining fees for after school programs. She thanked Edie Belcastro and Mike Santucci for chairing the Ice Cream Social and provided information on the Watchung Youth Services Commission – it is a group that meets once/month to work toward bringing money in from county agencies that we can use locally (such as the Pursuit of Excellence, Girls on Track and Girls on the Run programs.) They are sponsoring a movie night Friday September 16th after the Ice Cream Social, featuring “Despicable Me”. Someone suggested a possible safety concern for people walking to their cars in the dark after the movie and a suggestion was made to advise people to bring flashlights.

Dr. Malyska introduced Tina Kelly and Ellyn Margulies as new BOE members and reminded people that the BOE meets twice/month.

She was asked whether the parent rep to the Anti-bullying forum had been chosen and she responded that the principals would choose. She was asked whether the Emergency Cards could be done online; Mrs. Nunn responded that this is a “Power School” issue and should be addressed to Mr. McCarthy, the Power School liaison.

Dr. Malyska reported that we have a modified math curriculum (the “common core”) and that we are following the NJ curriculum for science. She said the teachers were 100% with us in this challenging financial environment. She commended the principals and teachers for adjusting to the new VV and BB time schedules and she asked that people be patient with the new bus routes and schedules.

She closed her presentation by saying that the schools could never achieve the results they do without the contributions of the PTO.

Valley View Principal – Dr. Resko

Dr. Resko began by thanking the PTO for the year-end Teachers' Luncheon and for the breakfast for the new school year in-service days.

The entire staff participated in two days of In-Service training on September 6th and 7th. The professional development focused on the new Anti-Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB) law, Professional Learning

Communities, Data Analysis, and CPR/AED certification. Remaining hours were filled with faculty meetings, reviewing student IEPs with Child Study Team case managers, and grade level meetings.

Mr. Andrew White and Mr. Michael Vignola are the Deans of Discipline this year.

Dr. Maliha Sheikh is the district HIB Coordinator. The middle school team consists of Mrs. Lauryn MacLeod (HIB Specialist), Mr. Andrew White, Mr. Michael Vignola, Mrs. Buccarelli, Mrs. Kim Lavin and Dr. Barbara Resko. A parent and a student will also be represented on the team.

Mrs. Danielle Maresca, former fifth grade teacher, was reassigned to a special education class.

Congratulations to Mrs. Susan Walsh and Ms. Natalie Yoos for attaining tenure!

School opened on September 8th with 316 excited middle schoolers! The custodial staff under the direction of Eric Schwartz made the classrooms and hallways sparkle! The floor project in the All Purpose Room is expected to be completed later this month. Until then, lunches are being held in the main hallway adjacent to the gymnasium.

Fifth graders had a “social” on the afternoon of September 9th. They celebrated their successful transition to middle school!

The tenth anniversary of September 11th was commemorated by the entire middle school and included various classroom activities and art projects.

Fire, security, and bus evacuation drills were completed during the week of September 26th.

NJASK reports (Spring 2011) were mailed to parents/guardians on September 9th.

Parents had access to PowerSchool effective September 11th to assist them in tracking their children’s academic progress and attendance. Parents of transfer students and fifth graders received passwords and log-in procedures in letters mailed on September 14th.

Students at Valley View Middle School will continue to benefit from longer class periods Tuesday through Friday due to the A-B-C-D- Rotating/Drop Schedule. One class each morning and one class each afternoon will be dropped each day (see webpage). The length of each period is 52 minutes and the periods rotate and drop in the morning and afternoon. Consequently, each day is a “new” experience for students and the extended time allows the teachers to better meet the needs of all students. This year the schedule also allows for a “Traditional Monday” which is considered an “anchor day”. On Mondays, there is a straight bell schedule for periods one through nine with no drop/rotation. Classes on Mondays are 40 minutes in duration.

Interim notices will be sent this year to parents/guardians of students in danger of failing during a marking period. First marking period interim notices: October 7; First marking period ends: November 15; Report cards distributed: November 23.

Back-to-School Nights were held on September 19th (Grades 7/8) and 29st (Grades 5/6).

Bayberry Principal – Mrs. Nunn

Mrs. Nunn thanked the PTO for all they do. She said the playground equipment that was a PTO year-end gift of 2010 was being installed (the costs to install were a PTO year-end gift of 2011) and that the installation had been delayed because of Hurricane Irene. She thanked the PTO for the E-books (year-end gift 2011), and said that the BOE was paying for additional e-books.

She said the school is off to a great start. The preschool has 2 rooms: one for those turning 3 by 10/1 and one for those turning 4 by 10/1. There are still openings for both classes. Kelly Masterson, who had been at Sundance, is

the lead teacher and Pat Price, a certified music educator, is teaching music. Mrs. Nunn said they posted for Teachers' Aides for the preschool, because of the economy everyone they hired is a certified teacher.

She reported that another new program this year is the combined Kindergarten/1st grade class, taught by Mrs. Thomson. It includes 8 older kindergarteners and 8 younger 1st graders. She said it was similar to a multi-age class taught several years ago. She reminded people to read "Friday Backpack" every week.

Back to School night is on Thursday 9/15 for 3rd and 4th graders and Thursday 9/22 for K,1 & 2. This year the schedule is different: there will be 2 meetings with teachers - at 7:00 and at 8:00 and that everyone would convene in the APR from 7:30 – 8:00. This enables parents with more than one student to meet with both teachers.

She mentioned the new activity fee. For BB after school programs she will ask parents to pay the \$25 activity fee once they've been notified that their child is confirmed to attend the program.

Kindergarteners would be fingerprinted on 10/4 by the Somerset County Sherriff Dept. There are new lunchtimes which will mean that 3rd and 4th grade will eat lunch at the same time. A concern was mentioned about the noise level and Mrs. Nunn said it would be monitored. Mrs. Salinger is now teaching the ASAP program – permission slips have been sent home.

She congratulated the newly tenured teachers: Mrs. Cianci, Mrs. Turturiello, Mrs. Thomson and Mrs. Freitas.

NJ Ask scores are being sent out.

Teachers have been trained to comply with the new HIB Law (Harrassment, Intimidation and Bullying). Dr. Sheikh is the anti-bullying district coordinator, Kara Fleming is the BB coordinator, with Mrs. Fabris, Mrs. Deegan and Mr. Primeau on the committee.

Teacher Liaison – Mrs. Keane

Mrs. Keane thanked the PTO for everything it has done for the schools – the assemblies, the smart boards, flowers, gift cards, etc.

Committee Reports

Watchung Wear – Lauren Krouk and Teresa Schaefer

Sue Ober and Lauren Krouk modeled their Watchung Wear tee shirts and sweatshirts. Lauren reported that Watchung Wear could be purchased on the website through a link to Sneakers Plus, the vendor. It is available through 9/30, with another ordering window offered during November. Items available include tees, sweatshirts and bags.

Consumer Products – Diana Hoeckele

Diane reminded people to send in box tops, Campbell soup rewards and coke rewards. She also asked people to sign up for Stop&Shop and Shoprite bonus rewards. Tiffany reminded people that the new PTO website offers links to other websites, such as Amazon, Barnes & Noble, etc. – if you link to them from our website and make a purchase, we earn money. Someone mentioned a service called Squareup.com which enables any business however small to accept credit card payments.

Bus Chaperones – Kristin Rizzi and Christine Listorti

Kristin and Christine thanked all the Bus Moms and said that they'd received numerous compliments from students and parents. They mentioned that Diane, of our district transportation office is hounding the county to finish the Bonnie Burn project.

Ice Cream Social – Edie Belcastro and Mike Santucci

Edie suggested carpooling and recommended bringing bug spray, sweatshirts and flashlights! Volunteers should arrive at 5pm to set up.

Bayberry Picture Day – Wendy Ruta
Volunteers are needed!

Innisbrook Gift Wrap Sales – Kristin Rizzi and Greta Santucci

We are hoping to exceed the \$5,200 profit we made last year. Kristin reminded people to order – give friends and relatives the school code to order online. Deadline is 9/30.

Bayberry Food Sales – Susan Ober, Christina Colonias, Marybeth Lijo

Susan reported that orders are being made online and that the deadline is Friday 9/16. She asked that people let her know if they have problem with the 2 methods of online ordering: using the calendar or an order form. Christina reported that Marino's is replacing Café Verona as our pasta vendor. Marybeth reported that she is in the process of notifying food sale captains and volunteers and that volunteers are especially needed for Fridays.

Valley View Food Sales – Georgia Glasser-Nehls

Michelle reported that volunteers are needed.

Bayberry Library – Elyn Margulies

Elyn thanked everyone who signed up to volunteer. Kindergarten and 1st grade will run the same as last year and 2-4th grades will have a 20 minute book swap per week as well as a 40 minute instruction. They are asking volunteers for one hour shifts, Kim Nunn has the signup sheet. There will be training sessions for new volunteers.

There was no new business.

The next meeting will be held Tuesday, October 11 at 9:30am in the BB APR.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Ober
Recording Secretary
October 6, 2011