

Minutes of the Mantua PTA
February 4, 2004
Mantua Elementary School

The president called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. Present at the meeting were:

Executive Board: *Carole Thomas, Pam Promisel, Beth McKeown, Laura Mead, and Rob Luftglass.*

School Representatives: *Jan-Marie Fernandez, Tina Tingler, Cheryl Thompson, Jan Pry, Ann Baum and Lisa Buck.*

Board Members: *Loren Brandman, Randi Kirkland, Beth Whitehead, Cheryl May, Suzanne Summers and Laura Samotshozo.*

General Membership: Nancy Ryan, Judy Dain, Hilary Strasser and Jane Love.

Laura Mead made a **motion** that the minutes of the January 7, 2004 meeting be approved. Loren Brandman seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Archived Minutes are now on the website and draft minutes are planned to be available on the web approximately a week after each meeting.

Beth McKeown distributed an income statement for the seven months ending 1/31/04. Our financials are tracking well. Based upon current projections, the PTA should start next year with approximately \$12,000.

Carole Thomas presented the **Announcements:**

- We received a certificate from the Virginia PTA showing that we met the local unit standards.
- Upcoming events include the Talent Show, the Virginia General Assembly Ride to Richmond, a Parents Advisory Council meeting, a Woodson Coalition Meeting/Fundraiser and the Frost Middle School Orientation.
- Community Spirit Nights include discounted tickets for Wizards and the Globetrotters and a skating event.
- A fundraiser is now being conducted with <http://www.respond.com>, a website managed by TEOCO – a company run by Mantua parent, Atul Jain. The PTA will receive \$1 per valid use of this service.
- The traffic committee is looking for someone to take over leadership, taking Margarita Foster's place.
- John Jennison has volunteered to be the Liaison to RENEW (Woodson renovation)
- Suzanne Summers has volunteer to be our county representative for the FCCPTA
- Dave Lenox has volunteered to be our Special Education FCCPTA Liaison.
- Homework Helpers is now providing tutoring assistance on Sundays

- Reflections – Mantua had several entries that received awards at district level. First Place winners are on the PTA website.
- We are looking for volunteers for the Nominating Committee for the PTA Executive Board for next year.
- FCCPTA scholarship – the PTA would like to make a \$25 donation to the scholarship fund. Beth made a motion that a donation be made by the PTA with money to be taken from the benevolent fund line item. Pam seconded the motion and it carried.
- The Auction Committee has decided to try something new next year. Next year's auction will be only online.

Mrs. Fernandez made the **Principals' Report**:

Recently, a group of students from Korea demonstrated Tae Kwon Do to the school, after which there was a reception. Also, several teachers have attended conferences including a conference on childhood disorders and another on professional learning communities.

Tina Tingler thanked the PTA for desserts for the after-school TC program. Ms Tingler is also reviewing the Manipulative Visual Learning System see if it might be applicable for Mantua. As a part of this evaluation, Ms. Tingler visited a school in West Virginia that is using this system.

SlAPSHOT, the Washington Capitals mascot, visited the school last week.

Cheryl Thompson announced that the Yo-Yo man is visiting next week. She also encouraged volunteers for the mentoring program.

Teacher Representative Report: Jan Pry thanked the parents for book donations. Ann Baum thanked the PTA for supporting/promoting the Read Naturally program, which has been very successful.

The following **Committee Reports** were filed:

Yearbook: Laura Samotshozo reported that work on the yearbook is progressing nicely, with group photos to be taken on February 5 and professional photographers taking candid photos on February 6. Also, per Ann Baum's suggestion at last month's meeting, photography students from Woodson will also be taking photographs.

Carnival: Pam Promisel announced that there will be a booth coordinator meeting on February 5. The carnival is March 13. We still need a chair of the setup/cleanup committee. Beth Whitehead volunteered to take this post.

Kids Care Club: Rob Luftglass announced for Jennifer Cooper that the Talent Show will take place on Saturday. Pizza and refreshments will be served.

Drama Club: Beth Whitehead announced that Artistic Concepts has done detailed testing and analysis on the sound system in the gym. Their quote to fix the system, including a mixer board and a new amplifier is approximately \$1,900. Laura Mead made a motion to fully fund the sound system upgrade, allocating up to \$2,000 from the Original Arts funds. Jane Love seconded the motion and it carried.

Website: Loren Brandman requested that she or Pete be contracted with any events to be put on the PTA website calendar.

This month's topic is **Homework**, presented by Mrs. Fernandez. This area has prompted many questions and concerns from parents. As emphasis on Standards increase, this tends to increase homework. There is a document, "Homework Guidelines for Upper Grades – Mantua Elementary" that includes FCPS guidelines for homework. For grades K-3, students should spend no more than 30 minutes doing homework per night; students in grades four and five should spend now more than one hour per night; and grade six students should spend no more than an hour and a half per night. If student has worked 15 minutes beyond guideline, then parents may notify teacher and the student will receive credit for the assignment.

Homework is important for practice, to extend an activity, for preparation and for learning self-discipline and study skills. The goal is to balance homework with other activities and to balance it through the teaching teams.

It is important that homework is meaningful, not just repetitive practice. Research has shown that homework in math makes a significant difference, with a direct impact on advancement. Homework's impact on student performance in other subjects is less clear, though it is clearly important in Reading.

Judy Dain asked for clarification on homework and the Enrichment periods for 5th and 6th graders. Ms. Fernandez indicated that we are still fine-tuning Enrichment, but that goal is to look at each student's individual needs and provide the appropriate enrichment. Our goal is to remain flexible and to keep revamping to meet each child's needs.

Next month, the topic will be RENEW (Woodson Renovation).

Motions Carried

A motion carried to approve the minutes of the January 7, 2004.

A motion carried to make a \$25 donation to the FCCPTA scholarship fund with money to be taken from the benevolent fund line item

A motion carried to fully fund the sound system upgrade, allocating up to \$2,000 from the Original Arts funds.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm. The next meeting will be March 3, 2004.

Robert Luftglass
Secretary