

Frost MS PTA Meeting Minutes DRAFT

Date: September 11, 2019

Secretary: Susanne Fitch

Meeting called to order: 9:00 AM

Present: Susanne Fitch, Ellen Ingson, Kathy Hughes, Maura Stevens, Becky Mancuso, Suzanne Peeler, Rhonda Finberg, Rema Cancino, Lani Bacharach, Anthony Harris, Kokeb Kassa, Jill Kiss, Timoney Dunlap, Alexia S. Grimes, Janine Taylor, LaTisha Elcock, Karen Moss, Nadia Kader, Sujata Sahgal, Martha Balerts, Scheryl Arenholz, Hanh Michael, Kathleen Cashin

Introduction and Welcome: PTA President (LaTisha Elcock)

- LaTisha Elcock introduced herself and invited everyone at the meeting to introduce themselves.
- The school year is off to a great start.
- Frost is a welcoming community, which prepares children well for the middle school experience. Fairfax is a transient community. For this reason, Frost is well-practiced at transitioning and welcoming new kids. Parents should not hesitate to turn to Frost teachers, staff and administration with questions and concerns.

President's Report: PTA President (LaTisha Elcock)

- The minutes from the June 2019 PTA meeting need to be modified in order to correct the spelling and to complete the names of board members. This change is required so that the new board members can be added as signers on the PTA bank account.
- A motion was made to modify the June 2019 PTA meeting minutes. The motion was seconded and the motion carried.
- The time of the October PTA meeting has been changed from 6:30 PM to 7:00 PM as a result of parent feedback. The first item on the agenda for that meeting is a non-partisan "meet the candidates" forum for School Board candidates. Parents will also have the opportunity to meet the new Assistant Principal to Frost MS, Kenya Champ, who will begin her tenure at Frost later this month.
- Ellen Ingson asked where the meeting would be held. Her concern was that the library might be too small a venue for an evening meeting with the school board candidates present. Mr. Harris replied that the meeting could be moved to the cafeteria or a lecture hall to accommodate a larger crowd.
- Lots of parents are stepping up to take on remaining chair positions, including the important role of 8th grade celebration chair. This puts the PTA in a good place for the year ahead. However, the role of hospitality chair is still vacant. The PTA board is seeking suggestions for volunteers who may be suited to that role.

Treasurer's Report: PTA Treasurer (Suzanne Peeler)

- Reviewed audit report along with comments and recommendations. Recommendations and suggestions include:
 - wording budget increases more clearly
 - eliminating pass-throughs and including line items in the budget instead
 - creating an annual narrative report of the year's finances

- requiring that bank statements be opened and signed by an individual who is not a signer on the account. All PTA officers are signers. The statements are sent electronically, not in hard copy. In order to comply with this requirement, a committee chair will view the statements and sign off on them.
- Two signers are required on checks, even though the PTA's bank, Apple Federal Credit Union, will not enforce this.
- The auditors had no issues with the numbers in the audit. All recommendations raised by the auditors have been addressed.
- LaTisha Elcock noted that the auditors were extremely thorough. The PTA takes the audit very seriously and wanted to share the information.
- Suzanne Peeler reviewed the budget report and outlined the proposed budget for the fiscal year 2019-20, explaining each line item.
- It was noted that general donations to the PTA come in mostly online.
- Questions were taken from the floor.
- While reviewing line items, LaTisha Elcock asked for suggestions for parent education events. A parent presented information on the new Screenagers movie. It was suggested that Woodson might be interested in screening the film as a pyramid event.
- There was a motion to approve the budget, which was seconded and then unanimously approved.

Principal's Report: Frost MS Principal (Anthony Harris)

- LaTisha Elcock noted that this report is usually closer to the top of the agenda, but it became necessary to move it down in order to get the new budget approved.
- Mr. Harris introduced himself. He is proud to be principal of Frost MS. It has been his dream to serve in this capacity, after having served for four years as an assistant principal at Frost in the past. He noted key values that he learned from his family as the oldest of four children: really listening to understand, responding appropriately, treating people with respect, and the value of hard work. He strives to impart these values at Frost among the staff, kids, and families. There is no substitute for hard work. The Frost motto under his direction is "Work hard, be nice, widen your circle." He outlined his career as an educator for the past 19 years in Fairfax.
- Frost is very diverse. There are kids with various learning styles, a deaf and hard-of-hearing center, advanced placement classes, Algebra 2 classes, as well as specialized math classes for kids needing additional support.
- Mr. Harris encouraged parents to stay engaged and stay involved.
- Part of his plan moving forward is a renewed focus on engagement to include:
 - Engagement in the classroom
 - Staff engagement
 - Parent engagement
- A recent parent survey indicated that there are not a lot of chances for parents of middle schoolers to engage. In response to that, this year Frost offered a "New to Frost Middle School" parent meeting which was well attended. A "New to Frost: Small School" parent meeting, for parents of kids coming from smaller schools, had fewer attendees.
- Topics for future meetings in a Parent Learning Series include: How to Do Middle School and Parenting in the Digital Age.
- Mr. Harris gave kudos to LaTisha Elcock and Kathy Hughes for an excellent start to the school year and to LaTisha in particular for her video presentation at Back-to-School Night.
- Woodson Football Feeder Night: Mr. Harris will run the field. He noted that parents should accompany kids to football games.

- Frost recently received two awards, one for academic excellence and also a Continuous Improvement Award for attendance. Frost was recognized as one of 23 Common Sense Media schools.
- Mr. Harris is pleased with SOL outcomes. Frost students are improving in many areas.
- The “Away for the Day” phone policy is going smoothly. It has been well received by teachers and parents. Students are taking it in stride.
- There is a review committee which looks at materials not approved by FCPS. The first meeting of Supplementary Instructional Materials Review will be held in October.

Assistant Principals’ Reports: Frost MS Assistant Principals (Joe Berret and Linda Shannon)

- Joe Berret noted that counselors should get credit for their hard work in improving student attendance.
- Yesterday was the first day of the new phone policy. Teachers and staff are prepared to deal with infractions. The administrators are modeling good phone behavior for the students.
- Students have received the new Students’ Rights and Responsibilities, which outlines concrete examples of infractions using charts of behaviors and consequences.
- Linda Shannon explained that teachers will have dedicated time to work on committees. All teachers work on committees such as student recognitions, the 5K, professional development, and Falcon Focus.
- Teachers take continuous learning very seriously. Mr. Harris noted that Frost MS is a community where students and staff know that they matter while they continue to learn and grow together. Teachers have the knowledge, skills, and ability to work with all kids. They need to know their own strengths while at the same time having a mentality of continuous improvement.

Vice President’s Report: PTA Vice President (Kathy Hughes)

- One task of the PTA Vice President is to manage the grant program. Last year the PTA granted over \$10,000. Frost is the only school in Fairfax that continues to offer sewing. Many parents may not know that this is made possible at Frost through the PTA grant program, which funds the maintenance of the sewing machines and equipment.
- Twice each year teachers can complete applications to request funds to pay for programs or supplies. A main criterium for approval of the grant application is that the requested program or supply benefits most or all students and fits the objectives of the school.
- The PTA has received one application so far. The fall deadline is September 30. Applications will be presented at the October meeting and will be voted on by the PTA.
- LaTisha Elcock pointed out that parent input is critical to this program.
- The PTA Frost Directory is budgeted to bring in \$1000 in income, with \$500 in expenses. Sponsorships have already brought in about \$900. Every PTA member family gets one directory. Each additional directory is \$5. The PTA is still selling ads. The ad form is available on the PTA website. A parent has suggested that the directory go paperless in the future in order to save trees. Kathy Hughes pointed out that the paper directory is a fundraising opportunity for the PTA.

Membership Report: PTA Membership Chair (Ellen Ingson)

- The PTA membership numbers are looking good. The bulk of memberships have come in online. Over 300 families are members thus far.

- Ellen Ingson explained the difference between an individual membership versus a family membership. The individual membership provides one vote, whereas the family membership provides two. Suzy Morningstar can include these distinctions in an email notification to parents.
- Some families thought there was just one PTA. Rather, they need to join the PTAs for all schools at which they have children. Each school needs to be supported.

Calendar Review (removed from agenda)

Food4Thought: School Social Worker (Traci Lindsay-Luper)

- Bright Paths sponsors Food4Thought to provide weekend food for kids in need. Fifteen schools in the county participate.
- There are 21 families at Frost who struggle to feed their families over the weekend.
- Food is packed into bags on Thursdays, and labeled with the child's initials. The bags are dropped off at the child's 6th period classroom, to be picked up on Fridays.
- Confidentiality and discretion are key.
- The food pantry at Frost needs volunteers to pack bags on Thursdays. Interested volunteers should reach out to Traci Lindsay-Luper.
- Parents have requested a SignUp Genius, as well as a list of needed items.
- Maura Stevens agreed to coordinate Frost Food4Thought volunteers.

Around the Table

- Hanh Michael agreed to coordinate volunteers and direct them to the appropriate committee chairs.

Next PTA Meeting: Wednesday, October 9, 7:00 PM