Swanson Elementary PTO Meeting Minutes - January 19th, 2016

In attendance: Lynne Thomas (President), Lisa Meder (Treasurer), Andrea Benslimane (Director of Special Events), Cindy Dries (Director of Fundraising), Shelly Budde (Co-Director of Hospitality and Outreach), Sara Gauntt (Co-Director of Hospitality and Outreach), Robyn Rubenstein (Secretary), Jen Beug, Chris Forgie, Kristin Belanger, Erika Slager, Angela Sidebottom, Julie Carpenter, Sue Kaloti, Scott Hordesky, Michael Fuchs, Terry Needham, Jen Peterson, Kori Hartman

A. Opening (Thomas)

Thomas called the meeting to order at 6:34 PM.

B. Review and Approval of October Minutes

After review, Gauntt motioned to approve; Sidebottom seconded. Minutes approved.

C. Principal's Report (Hartman)

1. Hartman expressed thanks to the PTO and the Fall Fundraiser committee for sponsoring the Fall Conference dinner and Fun Run reward lunch for the staff.

2. Winter assessments are ongoing. Data from these tests will be used to help set goals and make decisions moving forward. Staff will review test results during the Teacher Workday on February 15th.

3. Hartman apologized for the logistical issues encountered during the Winter Concert at BCHS. Due to increasing enrollment at Swanson, the concert will likely be held at BCHS again next year, however, changes will be made to help resolve the issues seen this year.

4. There will be an open forum to discuss short-term solutions to the overcrowding issues at Swanson. The forum will be held on Thursday, January 28th at 6:30 PM in the Swanson gym. This forum will not include a discussion on redistricting. Swanson enrollment is currently at 809 students.

D. President's Report (Thomas)

1. PTO closet – Thomas asked all event Chairs to check the PTO closet for supplies prior to purchasing new supplies for events. Thomas plans to buy new shelving to help organize supplies. The PTO closet is located down the hall from the office, on the right side just before the art room. Rusty has the key for the closet.

2. Financial procedures review – Thomas reminded all Chairs of major events to maintain a detailed budget of expenses. All funds raised must be documented on deposit forms and submitted to Lisa Meder (Treasurer) within 14 days of receipt. Chairs cannot use cash received from registration/ticket purchases to fund expenses for the event. If a cash box is provided for an event, the full amount must be given to the Treasurer or another Board member immediately after the event. Remaining cash should be
counted separately by two people. Deposit slips can be found in the PTO box in the office, next to Rusty’s desk. Money from events can be kept in the safe in the office, if necessary, but should be removed as soon as possible.

E. Treasurer's Report (Meder)

1) 2015-16 Budget Review – Several Scrip checks were deposited with a Fun Run deposit, and are therefore missing from Scrip. Once this change is made, Scrip will have a net profit. All classroom teachers received a check for $250 as a Fun Run reward, for a total of $8000 in classroom donations. The $1000 expense for the Swanson Auction is for the deposit at Western Racquet. A donation of $814 was made to the Music Department for the purchase of an electric piano. Meder noted that there is still $1500 available for parent-run extracurricular activities. Kaloti noted that “Family Fun Night Raffle” should be removed from the budget, since we are no longer doing the basket raffle. Thomas will speak with Nicki Wolosek-Consiglio regarding expenses for Spiritwear.

2) Current Status – Total cash as of January 8th was $55,916.89, with a checking register balance as of January 18th of $48,125.69. This difference is mostly due to the $8,000 in checks distributed to teachers.

F. Committees

a) Fun Run Recap (Rubenstein) – The Swanson Fun Run was a successful fundraising, with 76% of Swanson students receiving pledges. Nearly 99% of pledges were collected, resulting in a net profit of nearly $35,000. $8000 of this profit was used to reward classroom teachers. Ninety one students received a VIP reward day for raising $200 or more in pledges. We will likely hold this fundraiser again next year.

b) Fifth Grade Recognition (Thomas for Delgadillo and Bartels) – Ice cream sales have raised a net of $453.12, with more sales planned through May. Jen Peterson won the parking spot raffle. The committee is planning an Election Day bake sale for Tuesday, April 5th. The Family Splash event at Country Springs Waterpark will be held on Thursday, March 3rd, from 3:30 to 8 PM. Registration will begin in February. The committee will also sell glow items at the Blizzard Ball. The theme for this year’s Fifth Grade Recognition will be “Wake up to the Wild Cats”. There will be no meeting in February. The next meeting will be held on March 14th at 6:30 PM.

c) Blizzard Ball (Carpenter & Kaloti) – The Blizzard Ball will be held on February 12th at Swanson, from 6 to 8 PM. Registration forms will be filled out online, printed and sent to school with payment. Online submission of the registration form will automatically send parents to Signup Genius for volunteer sign up. Flyers will also be available in the office for registration. Blizzard Ball t-shirts can be purchased at registration. The final date for registration will be January 27th. Food orders will be placed after registration. Photo booths have been added this year, and parents will be encouraged to bring cameras. Attendance will be capped at a certain capacity, yet to be determined, and communications
will stress a maximum capacity. Protocols will be in place for emergencies and to better deal with safety situations. Parent volunteers will be added as security. The committee is looking into outreach options for parking. Capacity is 1200 for cafeteria and gym combined, but the committee plans to cap admission below this number. The orchestra room and both sides of the art room will be available this year.

d) Auction Night (Budde) – The 2nd annual Swanson Auction will take place on March 5th at Western Racquet Club, and will be limited to 200 participants. Invitations will be sent out later this month. The event will include a silent auction, raffle and staff experiences. Ideas for use of funds raised include furniture for upstairs learning lab, Nature Center donation, electronic sign, makerspace, standing desks/adaptive furniture for students, new playground surface, indoor recess equipment, awning for the back of the school to create shade and picnic tables for outdoor learning spaces. The committee will decide on how funds will be raised prior to sending invitations.

e) Arts & Cultural Programs (Thomas for Wendy Dorn & Jessica Gonzalez) – Wendy Dorn and Jessica Gonzalez met with several families to discuss the cultural ambassador program. Families at Swanson from different cultures will act as ambassadors to represent and share their culture with student. Swanson is the most diverse elementary school in the District, with over 62 languages spoken at our school, and we’d like to capitalize on this diversity. This year’s student assemblies will have a physical fitness theme, including a Rope Master on February 19th, and UW Whitewater wheelchair athletics program on April 22nd.

f) Restaurant Nights (Sidebottom) – The Blaze Restaurant Night raised $190.42, and the Chili’s Restaurant Night raised $142. A Restaurant Night will be held at Buffalo Wild Winds tonight and tomorrow, and Tom+Chee will hold a Restaurant Night on February 2nd and 3rd from 4 to 8 PM. Tom+Chee will donate 15% of sales to Swanson. Sidebottom has also been contacted by Jason’s Deli and Jersey Mikes.

g) Scrip (Slager) – Two Scrip sales have been held this year. These sales have had low participation, likely due to the paperless policy. Additional sales are planned for March and May. Scrip has raised $267 (less expenses) this year. Last year’s Scrip sales raised $1200, so profit will likely be down approximately 50% this year. St. John Vianney has a Scrip sale each week, and they split the profit with parents, but this money goes directly into their student’s account to help offset tuition/fees. Another suggestion to increase participation is to have more regular sales, such as monthly orders, so families can expect the orders to be due at a certain time every month. Also, other schools sell cards purchased through Scrip at school events. This would require buying the cards up front. Beug suggested using posters to explain Scrip to families who may be unaware of how this fundraiser works.

h) Staff Appreciation Dinner (Thomas) – A Staff Appreciation Dinner will be held during winter conferences on either February 17th or February 24th.
i) G&T (Beug) – The next meeting of the Gifted & Talented Parent Advisory Organization will be held on January 20th at 9 AM at the Central Administrative Office, Room 173. This meeting will be geared towards families with students in high school, and will include discussions of block scheduling and resource periods in high school and middle school. G&T advocacy in Madison will also be discussed. There is currently no state funding for G&T programming in Wisconsin. Lastly, the Innovation Collaboratory Initiative will also be discussed. This is a program that involves half time at the high school and half time off-campus for training at local businesses. The G&T meeting on February 17th will focus on fostering creativity in K-12 education. The February 17th meeting will take place at CAO at both 9 AM and 7 PM. G&T meetings are for all parents who want to learn about this topic.

j) Battle of the Books (Rubenstein) – Battle of the Books is a before school reading program and competition for 4th and 5th grade students. BOB will begin on March 1st. Registration will take place in early February.

k) SwansonFest – The 3rd annual SwansonFest will take place on Friday, May 27th. Logistics are still being worked out. Thomas is looking for committee members and instructors.

H. New Business/Open Forum

1) Pack 23 Ben Levie Toy Drive for Children’s Hospital update – The 7th annual toy drive collected 3500 toys for Children’s Hospital, 1500 of these from the Swanson community.

2) Enrollment Committee update – FORUM ON 1/28 AT 6:30 PM – in Swanson gym. Enrollment history and trends will be discussed, as well as short term solutions, such as modular spaces, cafeteria expansion and off site locations for large events. Redistricting will not take place until the 2017-18 school year.

I. Adjournment

1) Beug moved to adjourn at 8:04 PM; Gauntt seconded. Meeting adjourned.

2) The next meeting of the Swanson PTO will take place on Tuesday, February 16th at 6:30 PM in the Swanson library.