



GENERAL MEETING MINUTES January 24, 2020

Call to Order: 11:58 a.m.

President Kristin Paull welcomed those in attendance to the first PTO General Meeting of 2020. She thanked Secretary Krystin Johnson for being present at all of the General and Executive Board Meetings and taking minutes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes from the November 15, 2019 General Meeting were presented for approval, copies having been provided. Cindy Blaydon moved to approve the minutes. Diane Dealy seconded the motion, which was approved.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION: Westlake Choir Director Ed Snouffer accompanied several of the principal performers in the 2020 Westlake musical, *Seussical The Musical*, including Sidharth Srinivasan, Riley Ireland, Kinsey Neas, Maddie Laude, Amelia Azadi, Lucy Colangelo, Chelsea Burgess, Kate Spradling, and Maggie Nueberger. The students performed two songs from the show. Mr. Snouffer acknowledged the efforts of Assistant Director Jenn Goodner and Assistant Director Austin Hart, as well as the Choir Parent Board Musical Chairs Betsy Gochnour and Dana Bradley. Tickets will go on sale on the choir website (www.westlakechoir.com) at 8:00 a.m. on Monday, January 27th.

COUNSELOR'S REPORT: Counselor Heidi Sauer reported that her department's current focus is course selection. The counselors assisted students in their classes last week and will meet individually with students beginning next week. Parents were advised to utilize the time management sheet available online to help their students with course selection. Parents must e-sign the course selection by February 19th, which is the last day that students will have access to the Skyward Career Plan. Students may, however, work with counselors after this date on additional course selection issues.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT: Principal Steve Ramsey acknowledged the tremendous work of the Westlake Counseling Department, drawing attention to the fact that very few schools of Westlake's size offer individualized, hands-on assistance for all students. In March, they will begin working with the current 8th grade classes on course selection for the 2020-2021 school year. The Parade of Champions, celebrating the football team's recent state championship, will be held this Sunday (February 26, 2020) at Chap Stadium, beginning at 3:30 p.m. Additionally, both girls and boys basketball teams will be advancing to the playoffs, soccer is now active, the choir department is putting on the annual musical, and the Westlake Jazz Band is traveling to San Antonio. Principal Ramsey also spoke of the difficulties and stress to which our seniors and juniors are subjected over the college selection process.

GUEST SPEAKERS

Lanette Kinnaird, Project Graduation: Ms. Kinnaird began with the history of Project Graduation, which was launched after twelve children were killed on their graduation night in 1970 in Maine as a result of alcohol-related activities. The concept quickly spread to schools around the country as a means of keeping graduates safe on a traditionally dangerous night. It has been a tradition at Westlake High School for over 30 years, with 85%-90% of graduating seniors attending. At Westlake, Project Graduation is a drug-and-alcohol-free celebration for graduating seniors which takes place at the high school immediately following the graduation ceremony. All bags are checked by parent volunteers and trained dogs. The event, which ends at 5:00 a.m., features casino games, outdoor games, a dodgeball tournament, a silent disco, an arcade, movies, many prizes, and much food. This is accomplished through the generous donations of community members and businesses, who provide these items as well as funds needed to keep the attendance costs down for students. Although the cost to Project Graduation for each student is \$250, tickets can be purchased for only \$150 through March 31st (the purchase price then rises to \$200). Sales of t-shirts and yard signs also defray expenses. Ms. Kinnaird encouraged those in attendance to donate and volunteer. The link for volunteer sign-up will be available in February at www.westlakepg.com.

Casey Ryan, Assistant Principal: Mr. Ryan also encouraged parents to register their students for Project Graduation and to order caps and gowns for graduation. On behalf of Astronomy teacher Bob Murphy, Mr. Ryan thanked the PTO for funding the new telescopes, which are currently set up on the practice field for anyone who would like to see them in operation after today's meeting.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: President Paull explained that the telescopes were funded through the semi-annual allocation process, which also funded character shoes for the choir, such as those worn by the student performers at today's meeting. This year's largest allocation project, the outdoor classroom, has been installed, and a PTO meeting will be held there at some point this spring, weather-permitting. Additionally, the PTO executive board slate is being set for 2020-2021, and anyone interested in serving in an executive board or general volunteer capacity should communicate with President Paull.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Copies of the Treasurer's Report having been provided for those in attendance, Treasurer Kori Phenegar reviewed the bank balance as of December 31, 2019 (\$149,889.85) and informed those present that the primary recent expenses have been in the areas of pavers, tax preparation, and final fall allocations. Funds available for the upcoming spring allocations process total approximately \$70,000, as all fall fundraisers performed well. Clubs who volunteered to work varsity football concession stands have been paid – a change for 2019-2020 from previous years when clubs had to wait until the following August for these funds, which could be burdensome for the clubs. In addition, income to date has exceeded budgeted expectations by \$51,755.52.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Kimberly Santacroce, Mums Chair: Ms. Santacroce informed those present that preparations for next year's mum sales are beginning. She invited anyone interested in assisting with this process to please contact her.

Tiffany Hildreth, PTO Allocations Chair: Ms. Hildreth provided a brief explanation of the allocations process as the means by which fundraising dollars are quickly translated into assistance for staff members and enhanced educational experiences for students. Teachers are currently submitting their requests, which will be reviewed by Ms. Hildreth and the administration, as well as the PTO Executive Board. At the next PTO General Meeting, the results of this process, including specific information about requested items being provided, will be shared. President Paull explained that fundraising dollars are also used to fund the activities of the Staff Appreciation Committee, including monthly meals, gift cards during the holiday season, and an entire week of special events for staff members in April.

At the February General Meeting, a representative from the Bond Oversight Committee will be providing a brief presentation. There will most likely be no March meeting. April's General Meeting will feature a Q&A session with the Board of Trustees candidates, and at the May meeting, the slate and budget for 2020-2021 will be presented.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:47 p.m.