

# SVES PTA Meeting Minutes

## 1. Call to Order/President's Remarks

The October 11, 2016 meeting was called to order by PTA President Dorie Howell at 7:04 PM.

## 2. Approval of Minutes

Julie Lele moved to accept the September meeting minutes and Julie Harris seconded the motion. The motion passed.

## 3. Principal's Report

Mr. West provided updates on upcoming events and important dates.

3.1. October 14 is Panoramic Picture day for the 6<sup>th</sup> Graders.

3.2. Volunteers are needed on October 19<sup>th</sup> for the planting project on the walking trail that leads to the school. Mrs. Harris reported that it is complicated what they are doing but will be pretty. The company being used specializes in native plants. Adult volunteers are needed from 8 am onwards to help for any period during the day. There will be high school volunteers too.

3.3. October 21 is the Hoe Down.

3.4. October 26 at 9:20 am there will be a Principal's Coffee on the topic of Raising Media Smart Children with Common Sense. There will be a video and discussion.

3.5. October 28 is the South Lakes Homecoming Parade for the children. The parade starts at Hunters Woods Plaza and goes all the way to SLHS. It is a great community event. Meet up time is around 4:45 pm.

3.6. November 4 is the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter. There will be a 2-hour early dismissal.

3.7. November 7 and 8 are student holidays.

## 4. Special Guest – Tony Shivars, Ffx Co. Council of PTAs volunteer VP of Advocacy

Discussion on the proposed Ffx Co. Meal Tax that is on the ballot.

Mr. Shivars, a parent of two boys attending Armstrong Elementary gave an overview of the proposed 4% Meals Tax. He reported that Fairfax County is one of the strongest counties in the country. It is one of only 9 counties with a AAA bond rating, it has won recent awards for transparency and efficiency, SAT scores are 100 more than the Commonwealth average and much higher than the national average, the county has a 92% high school graduation rate and serves a very diverse population.

He reported that there isn't currently a meals tax, the firefighters are in support, 78% will go to support schools and the rest to other county services such as parks and infrastructure. Of that 78% for schools, most will support teacher salaries. We already know that the county predicts a \$79 million shortfall in next year's school budget and this will take the burden off us. 28% will be raised by people coming into the county to do business and eat. The county loses too much money to the state, receiving back only \$0.21 from Richmond for every \$1 sent there.

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Opponents of the tax claim that it is regressive and that businesses will see reduced traffic. There is no evidence that this is the case. The county has studied this and Arlington County studied it and found that in the year after the Meals Tax was implemented there Arlington County experienced an increase in restaurant sales. As far as the tax affecting lower income people it is actually going to provide additional services which they utilize so it is to their benefit.

Funds raised from the Meals Tax will be given to county schools on top of what the Board of Supervisors already provides the schools. It will not replace other funds. There is no guarantee that real estate taxes won't be increased in the future. Every time a real estate tax increase is proposed to support schools it is voted down. This Meals Tax is a way to take part of the burden off county residents and to help stop the loss of qualified teachers to neighboring counties like Arlington and Loudon that can pay them on average \$10-\$15k more in annual salary. Teachers used to choose Fairfax County first when looking for teaching positions and that is no longer the case. Parents wishing to help promote the Meals Tax are encouraged to spread the word at neighboring and school events. We also need volunteers at polling places. Fairfax County is the only major jurisdiction that doesn't have a Meals Tax. In DC the Meals Tax is 10%. People expect to pay this tax as they travel and dine across the region.

A discussion was held about the PTA helping to spread the word in favor of the Meals Tax outside of school channels through the PTA Facebook page and website.

## 5. Treasurer's Report

- 5.1. As of September 30, we have \$13,000 available for operations.
- 5.2. The big deposits came from memberships and donations.
- 5.3. Big expenses included Grace Arts, school backpacks and website.

## 6. Officer Updates

- 6.1. Membership (Colleen Elliott) – Elliott reported that we are at 167 memberships currently which represents 35% of SVES families. At this time last year there were 145 memberships. She has sent out a few targeted emails to people who haven't joined and encourages others to do the same. For example by sending an email to people in their child's class to encourage them to join.
- 6.2. Communications (Julie Harris and Kara Manton) They reported things are going well with 152 members of the PTA Facebook group. People are using the group for discussions. They encouraged people encourage other to join. Also Manton has been working hard on updating the website and they have been working on the bulletin. They need information a week in advance to be included in the bulletin.
- 6.3. Enrichment Programs (Gamble Gilbertson) The first day of enrichment programs was a success. She taught the French class as the teacher was sick but they will offer a class at

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the end of the session to make up for this. The acting class looked successful too. 15 classes were offered, two had to be cancelled (Wildlife Wow and Graphic Novel Guild), 3 classes were sold out and 3 classes were close to sold out. 142 unique students representing 114 families are participating. This represents 27.6% of the student body in grades 1-6. Some kids are taking 2-3 classes. Gilbertson needs parent volunteers from 8:10-8:25 am to help direct students. Some classes might need additional parent volunteers. Winter programs will be marketed after Thanksgiving with enrollment beginning near winter break.

An attendee commented that 3 years ago there wasn't anything offered to the younger grades so the PTA is doing a great job. Mr. West said the programs are well-received by the faculty now that there is ample space to hold them.

7. Spirit Wear (Dorie Howell) Howell reported that she is exploring using other vendors that might allow for perpetual ordering rather than batch ordering and that may have less of a product mark-up.
8. Back Pack Program (Dorie Howell) Awaiting news of a grant from the Maximum Company. The program is currently stressed as there are 5 additional families needing help with year. A generous donor has offered to provide the milk for the entire year.
9. Show What You Know (Dorie Howell) A volunteer has been secured to lead this program so it will take place.
10. Poetry Anthology (Dorie Howell) One person came forward to volunteer but contingent on obtaining additional funds beyond the \$300 budgeted. If she can raise outside funds she will go forward.
11. Box Tops (Dorie Howell) The volunteer helping with this reports that it is going well.
12. Back to School Night Debrief (Dorie Howell) The night was a success. The vendors and Boy and Girl Scouts liked use of the cafeteria to mix with families arriving and departing.
13. Hoe Down (Nancy Darmory) Darmory reported that the Hoe Down will be from 7-9 pm on October 21. Mr. Platts is the DJ and is having the students practice line dancing. Darmory would like additional adult volunteers, especially to help with taking payment at check-in. She will check with Mr. Platts about ensuring the sound level doesn't get too high and encouraged others to check in with him if they think it is too loud.
14. Homecoming Parade (Dorie Howell) A volunteer is needed to help organize the school's participation. It is a one day event.
15. New Business

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1. Molnar Family – The family with 3 SVES students who unexpectedly lost their father now has a GoFundMe page set up. This will be shared on the PTA website and Facebook page. The mother has asked for privacy and at does not wish anyone to visit. The PTA will reach out in a few weeks to coordinate ways to help.
2. Destination Dining – A coordinator is needed to arrange these. Howell has a list of restaurants who are interested. Just need a coordinator to make the arrangements. Each night typically raises about \$180-300 in proceeds. A PTA member reported that the crepe restaurant in Vienna is interested but they need a minimum of \$1000 in sales before they will share proceeds. A suggestion was made to have a food truck vendor at a movie night event in the spring.
3. Mini Grants – Discussion was held regarding a request by Ms. Ford for a \$296 mini grant to attend a professional development conference in Richmond. PTA members reviewed her request and decided that it did not meet the criteria for consideration in that it would not serve a broad range of people in the community. Colleen Elliott reported that she will be attending a staff meeting to encourage staff to join the PTA and will advertise the mini grants to the teachers then.

### 16. Closing

Brenda ?? made a motion to adjourn the meeting . The motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.