

SVES PTA Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order / Opening Remarks

The November 15, 2016 meeting was called to order by Julie Hanssen Harris at 7:00PM.

2. Meeting attendees introductions, including grades of children at the school.

- Chaiyonk K., 6th grade student
- Marci M., 3rd grade student
- Colleen E., 3rd grade student
- Jill T., 1st grade student
- Phoebe A., 2nd and 6th grade students
- Julie L., 2nd grade student
- Lauren T., 1st grade student
- Nancy D., 4th and 6th grade students
- Swar H., K student
- Stacey G., 2nd grade student
- Julie H., 1st grade students
- Kara M., 1st and 3rd grade students
- Holly L., 2nd and 6th grade students
- Brenda C., 1st and 4th grade students
- Dorie H., 3rd grade student
- Grima Z.
- Cesar Z.

3. Principal's Report

Mr Washington, Assistant Principal, provided information on community concerns and staffing.

Dorie Howell, SVES PTA President, said several parents were concerned prior to this meeting and asked if Mr West or Mr Washington could address the issues surrounding the Crossfield Elementary School cellphone tower. Mr West and Mr Washington were not aware of the proposed cellphone tower at Crossfield ES and could not provide more information.

The Public Health Training Assistant position filled and the new employee will start November 28, 2016.

Four grades are at or near their maximum number of students/class including kindergarten, 1st grade, 4th grade and 5th grade. Staffing a position in Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) is a lengthy process that requires several weeks to fill.

4. Treasure's Report (Stacey Graf)

As of October 31, 2016, the SVES PTA has \$52,982.35. Deposits last month came from membership dues, PTA donations, Backpack Program donations and the Hoe Down. Expenses last month included Amazing Earth and the Backpack Program. Future expenses will include the Enrichment Program.

5. Officer Updates

1. Ways & Means (Nancy Darmory)

The Hoe Down family fall event on October 21, 2016 made \$4,300 due to higher attendance; past years have earned \$3,500. The Hoe Down expenses are \$965 (\$400 of which is for the DJ). There were 22 middle and high school volunteers and 7 parent volunteers. Nancy will have children at SVES for two more years and would like to transition the responsibility of the Hoe Down coordination to another parent volunteer. Nancy would like to brainstorm and come up with new ideas for the Hoe Down.

Swar would like to see companies pay for some of the costs for the Hoe Down.

Nancy said this year, there was a rise in the number of children (mostly 6th grade students) who were dropped off at the Hoe Down, which is a safety issue. The Hoe Down,

SVES PTA Meeting Minutes

Skate Night, Bingo Night, the Basketball Challenge and all other family events are not drop-off events. An attending adult should be responsible for every student present. Ideas to encourage parents to attend future events include: add wording to all communication (PTA Bulletin, flyers, website, Facebook) about parent's responsibility at SVES events, ask teachers to inform students that it is not a drop-off event, have adults act as chaperones (like at South Lakes High School), have Boy Scouts act as "sheriffs" and/or have someone at the entrance of the event to enforce a 'no drop-off' policy.

2. Membership (Colleen Elliott)

We have 170 SVES PTA members which is 3 more than last month. Colleen attended the Staff Meeting at 8:00AM on November 15, 2016 to explain how the PTA would like to work more with the teachers. Eight teachers are members of the PTA. Colleen encouraged teachers to attend meetings and explained the mini grant process and where they could get more information.

Brenda suggested encouraging grandparents to join the PTA. Brenda thinks a teacher representative would help get teachers involved in the PTA.

Mr Washington brought up SLHS's policy that only allows PTSA members to apply for mini grants.

Julie Hanssen Harris would like teachers to present their mini grants at PTA meetings or at least attend PTA meetings in order to get approval of their mini grant.

PTA meetings before school were suggested; they had been attended by teachers in the past. Parents who are at the school for enrichment programs anyway may be more likely to attend a morning PTA meeting.

3. Enrichment Programs (Gamble Gilbertson via email read by Julie Hanssen Harris)

"We are more than halfway through our Fall Session of Before School Enrichment Programs at SVES! It is such a pleasure seeing the excited faces of our students arriving early to school to act, conduct experiments, dance, etc... If you haven't done so already, please sign up to help with our arrival process in the morning. We just need 30 to 60 minutes of your time. Specific descriptions are on the Sign Up Genius:

<http://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0f4aafa829a5fa7-fall>

There is also a Enrichment Volunteer Handbook in the school office if you would like something tangible to refer to while volunteering.

Speaking of Sign Up Genius, we are in search of a "Volunteer Wrangler" for the morning volunteers. This is a perfect task for someone who can't physically help out at school, but is willing to send polite (yet beseeching) emails to parents to fill in the blank spots on our SignUp Genius. I will provide relevant email addresses.

I am switching over to EnrichmentSVESPTA@gmail.com for official communication about our Before School Programs.

Lastly, I am working on finalizing ADM24 forms (official forms submitted to FCPS in order to have the class in FCPS facility) and flyers for the Winter Session (Winter Session starts in January)."

Enrichment volunteers are needed to open the door to let students in the school; keep students in the lobby until the teacher is ready; stay during class for emergencies.

Dorie mentioned that enrichment classes will only be taught if the minimum number of students are registered by the deadline. All classes have a minimum number of students. Registration for winter classes begins in early December. Winter classes begin in January.

In the past, each enrichment class needed a parent volunteer in the classroom, so this year is an improvement because less parent volunteers are needed.

4. Communications (Julie Hanssen Harris)

SVES PTA Meeting Minutes

The SVES PTA Facebook group now has 175 members, up from 152 members on October 11, 2016.

Dorie uses the SVES PTA Facebook group for quick, specific questions (and has received answers quickly)

Julie encouraged members to add other parents and spouses to the group.

The Facebook group membership increased after the Hoe Down, possibly due to pictures posted of Mr Washington getting a pie thrown in his face (to raise money during the event).

6. Backpack Program (Julie Hanssen Harris)

The upcoming long weekends and holidays means the Backpack Program needs more food. Daisy troop 6006 and Boy Scout Pack 1313 are donating food and/or money to the Backpack Program to sponsor all 18 students through the end of the year. The Boy Scout Carnival would like to raise \$1200.

Brenda's Girl Scout troop plans to contribute to the Backpack Program and wanted to know if the 18 students are given food for the entire two weeks of winter break. She suggested having Khuong Mulvaney post again in the Facebook Group to promote that information. Questions about the Backpack Program included (1) what is the deadline for contributing food for Thanksgiving, (2) can the food donated be holiday specific (yes if it's non-perishable, single-serve, and able to be prepared by a child), (3) is fresh fruit included in the program (it's sometimes either purchased or acquired through the Food Bus Program, but it can not be fragile).

Tuna cans are not accepted in the program but tuna pouches are. There's always a bin in the front lobby of the school for food donations. Several people brought up the idea of sponsoring children for the holidays (Thanksgiving and/or winter) the way some churches organize gifts of toys, clothing, gift cards, etc for children in need.

7. Box Tops Report (Holly Laird)

SVES PTA will receive \$693.90 for Box Top submissions, some from donations made last school year. Box Tops have an expiration date (separate from the food expiration date) and are not eligible for submission if they have expired. Box Tops are located on many products including paper goods.

Box Tops information will be added to the bulletin board in the front lobby of the school, along with social media and the Backpack Program.

8. Teacher Appreciation Lunch (Julie Hanssen Harris)

According to the Signup Genius for the Teacher Appreciation Luncheon on Thursday, November 17, 2016, we still need desserts and \$10 donations.

9. PTA Directory (Dorie Howell)

This year's online PTA Directory should be available in January. Dorie would like a membership push in conjunction with releasing the PTA Directory. Dorie has a tax deductible form to add to the PTA website. Registration for enrichment programs is earlier for SVES PTA members and could be mentioned during the winter enrichment class registration.

10. Parking Space (Julie Hanssen Harris)

Julie proposed having a volunteer incentive for the SVES PTA parking spot. Instead of paying for a Gold Membership to be entered into the reserved parking spot drawing, we could pick a person based on how often they volunteer at the school. The more you volunteer, the more chances you would have of winning.

Dorie said the logistics around keeping track of the number of times someone volunteered would be challenging.

Nancy suggested having another reserved parking spot for teachers who are SVES PTA members and draw names for that space on a monthly basis.

SVES PTA Meeting Minutes

Someone proposed raffling off one week's use of the reserved PTA parking space at the Teacher Appreciation Luncheon.

11. Volunteers for Events (page 7)

Swar said some parents might feel disconnect from the school due to lack of family events, like the Hoe Down. Other, out of state, elementary schools have more family events than SVES does.

Dorie said there are many opportunities for parents to volunteer at the school and feel more connected with the SVES community. She mentioned Amazing Earth, GRACE Art, and that the PTA spends an average of \$300-350/student/year on events, supplies, experiences, etc. Brenda said that the school used to rotate having Show What You Know, the Talent Show, and Heritage Night. However, the last Heritage Night event was held two years ago and less than 20 students participated.

Nancy said grade-level programs were organized by teachers for parents to attend during the day and evening, such as the Big Dig and musical performances. However, more parent volunteers are needed for big family events such as the Hoe Down.

Brenda tried to organize a Halloween costume trading event and a Parents Night Out event but she didn't have enough parent volunteers. She said many volunteers come through neighbor and friend connections.

Dorie uses email to connect with parents in her daughter's class on events, ideas or things that are important to her. Sometimes parents will read and respond to an email written by a classmate's parent instead of those written by the PTA or school administration. Dorie mentioned that space constraints limit some events during the day, like a Thanksgiving lunch, which other elementary schools in the area do during this time of year.

Julie said other schools, like Lake Anne, do more events and do feel more of a community and more connected.

Brenda has been at SVES for four years and this is a consistent issue but that ideas are always welcome.

Someone mentioned the need for a stronger parent and teacher connection, which would help the parent connection.

Dorie mentioned that Ms Abassi isn't allowed to email parents of chorus students directly and that she must email grade level teachers to pass on her messages.

12. Fundraising Goal for PTA

Julie Lele brought up the idea of a PTA mission statement. We have a nice budget, but we don't have a clear direction on what we're doing with it. In years past, we have earned money for specific projects, like the new playground equipment that was purchased as part of the school expansion in 2014. If we focused on one or two ideas that need to be accomplished, parents might be more willing to volunteer time and money.

Dorie said that in past years, there was something significant that needed to be funded, liked the playground or technology. Last year the PTA bought 20 laptops for the school because the computers were outdated.

Brenda said corporate america could help, except that FCPS needs to buy technology through Fairfax County with expensive maintenance plans attached. However, the technology goal might be a good one for parents and teachers to get behind.

Mr Washington said that all students in the Chantilly High School pyramid received laptops last year. His colleagues in that pyramid have express many first-year pains of every student having a laptop.

Someone mentioned that other schools promote the idea of students bringing devices to school; SVES does not.

Brenda suggested we could phase in students bringing personal devices to school.

SVES PTA Meeting Minutes

Dorie would like everyone to bring their ideas for a mission statement to the next meeting and encourage parents and teachers to get behind one goal.

13. Payment Vote (Dorie Howell)

Last year, an enrichment teacher (now retired) was overpaid. Her hourly rate was added to the wrong pay band and when someone tried to correct the error, the teacher received an additional \$138.95 in her paycheck. The amount that the teacher was overpaid (\$138.95) needs to be paid out of either the SVES PTA budget or the FCPS budget.

Brenda would like to see further research done on this error.

Stacey agrees and does not want to set a precedent of paying out of the PTA budget without sufficient research.

Brenda made a motion to do further research on the payment and if it was determined to be a county error, then FCPS would pay and if it was determined to be a school error, then SVES PTA would pay. The motion was approved.

14. Parking Spot Drawing (Colleen Elliott)

Gold Member #32 was randomly chosen by Julie Hanssen Harris and Mr Washington as the PTA member who has use of the reserved parking space for the second quarter.

15. Closing (Julie Hanssen Harris)

Julie thanked everyone for coming. The meeting was adjourned at 8:38PM.