



Ft Couch PTSS - General Meeting April 18, 2023, Minutes

Executive Board

Carrie Fick, President • Elizabeth Taylor, 1st Vice President • Erin Peterson, 2nd Vice President • Amy Quevedo, Treasurer • Michelle Urban, Secretary, Sarah Beitler, Board Advisor • Eliza Luxbacher, Teacher Liaison

Ft Couch PTSS - General Meeting – Called to order at 9:33 am attendees (9 in person including Board Members and 5 Virtual)

Reading and Approval of Past Minutes – Approved by Elizabeth Taylor and seconded by Susan Coyle

Correspondence: *(Michelle Urban)*- Team 4 sent a thank you for everything.

Statement of the Treasurer: Read by Our Vice President Elizabeth Taylor – See Website for Treasurer's Report – April's Meeting Tab

Reports:

Teacher Representative – (Ms. Eliza Luxbacher) - No Report

President's Report: Carrie Fick

As usual, we have a lot going on at the school. Much of it will be covered in the committee reports, so I will try to make my report short.

Budget 2023-24: The executive board, including the principals, have had multiple meetings to plan the budget for next year. The proposed budget for next school year was emailed to you before this meeting, and is posted on the PTSS's website, and will be posted there for a month-long review before we officially vote to approve it. We took a lot of time when making the budget to focus on funding activities and events that help enrich the students' and staffs' experience and the education, extracurricular activities and overall morale of the people that fill the halls of the Ft Couch Building every day. The PTSS activity fee will be \$50 next year, which will increase our budget a bit to cover some new initiatives. Next year, we will be funding pizza parties for each homeroom to have with the principal and assistant principal. This will help with the principals and students get to know each other better, which will make the principals seem more approachable to the students (not that they aren't approachable now). There will also be a 'Couch Cash' program that will be rewarding entire classes for the positive behavior of individual students in that class. The budget for staff appreciation events has increased, which means that we hopefully will not need to ask parents for as many donations throughout the year. We added some money to fund Arts in USC. We kept the socials budget the same, but will only be holding 2 socials, instead of 3. So, we'll be able to provide things like a photo booth at each social, and hopefully not have to ask the parents for as many food/drink donations. We have decreased line items from the budget, where the money has not been spent the past few years, and have removed a few line items, like Valentine Grams. Please feel free to review the budget online.

Revised Bylaws - The Ft. Couch PTO Bylaws have been recently reviewed and revised. The updated Bylaws (and revisions) were sent in an email to you, and are posted on our website for review. We will vote on the approval of the Bylaws at our May meeting.

Introduction of the candidate for Secretary: Our nominee for secretary is Anne Clarke. She and her husband Ed have 3 children. Nicholas is in 7th grade, and Kiera and Michael are in 5th grade. They moved to USC this year from Mount Lebanon. Anne grew up in Mount Lebanon, and graduated from Mount Lebanon High school. She then went on to graduate from Denison University and law school at Hofstra University. She has worked as a judicial clerk in NJ, was a trial attorney in the Allegheny County DA's office, and later a trial attorney in a private practice in Pittsburgh doing insurance defense. She left the practice of law to raise her family. She has had previous PTA experience, volunteering to be the PTA secretary at an elementary school in Mount Lebo for 2 years. We are happy to have Anne as a nominee.

Committee positions - We will have various committee chair positions open for next year. If you are interested in volunteering for a specific committee, let me know. We will have sign-up sheets laying out on tables at our Welcome Day event for the various volunteer positions throughout the year.

Vice President: We are on the search for a Vice President for next year, which would then become President the following year, and advisor the year after that. It's a 3-year position. We are also actively forming a plan to help to distribute the duties among the entire executive board, so that the president will not have as many duties. If you are interested in learning more, please email me with any questions about what the position entails. We really do have a fun team. I have had a great experience, getting to know the principals, staff and secretaries well. This is a great way to do it.

Highschool: The PTO president at the high school, Kelly Powell, has asked for me to let 8th grade parents know what volunteer positions are available at the highschool for next year too. The Vice President, Secretary and Membership Chair positions are open for next year.

PTC Update: I don't have much to update from the PTC. They are forming two committees. One committee will be an auditing committee. This will include a CPA, an accountant. They plan to work with high school students that are interested in careers in accounting to perform the audits of all of the PTOs. This is an option for us if we want to take it. The PTC is also forming a committee to help all of the PTO/PTO units keep their websites updated with the latest information. We will be having an end-of-the-year 'turnover' luncheon, where the executive board members for next year are invited to attend.

1st Vice President (*Elizabeth Taylor*) – Thank you to everyone for all your help.

2nd Vice President (*School Principal Erin Peterson*)

We have a lot going on between now and the end of the school. Testing starts next week with ELA followed by Math and Science PSSA and the 8th graders will Algebra Keytones in May.

Gordon and I met with students to discuss new activities and athletic for next year.

Field Trips are starting up soon. The 8th graders will be going on May 26th for a social studies field trip.

Thank you to PTSO for including myself and Gordon in the meeting, and for all the assistance the PTSO is giving to the school. A few new items that we are excited about are the Couch Cash program and the Homeroom pizza parties, both to begin next school year.

School to Watch celebration is planned for May 22nd in the morning. We will receive our banner and have an assembly for the students.

Field Day is being planned for June, and it will be back at Fort Couch.

Board Advisor (*Sarah Beitler*) – no report

Standing Committees

Yearbook - *Pam Scureman* – Read by Carrie Fick

This year's yearbook will be a hard-cover, 60-page yearbook. The cost is \$25. So far, we have sold about 288 yearbooks. All of the purchasing is done through the yearbook company and is not a fundraiser for the PTSO. The last day to order yearbooks is Wednesday, May 3. The estimated delivery date to the school is May 31. We will not have an extra supply of yearbooks. If you want one for your child to have by the end of the school year to get fellow classmates' autographs, I urge you to purchase one. There will be an option to purchase yearbooks after the deadline. BUT, the yearbooks would not be delivered before the school year is over (no chance to get fellow classmates to sign the books). The price for those yearbooks ordered after the deadline is \$33 (\$8 more). I am so glad that we have the option, because I have heard that there are always kids that initially didn't order them that realize they want them later. I think I will also have the homeroom teachers announce it, just incase there are parents that are not seeing our emails and Facebook posts.

Staff Appreciation - Gina Swanson & Sarah Beitler.

The Ft. Couch staff appreciation committee has been busy, hosting a charcuterie lunch for the teachers and staff. So many types of cheese, fruit, crackers, nuts, spreads, etc. were laid out for the teachers, who seemed to truly enjoy. LOL Upcoming, we have plans to treat the bus drivers, who do an amazing job of keeping the kids safe to and from school. Very happy to do this because they are not in the building to partake in the other festivities. Additionally, we will be organizing a final lunch and raffle baskets during the National Teacher appreciation week. Thank you to all those who have already donated a basket. We ask that you drop them off to the school during the week of April 27 - May 1 so that teachers can see the baskets before making their raffle selections. Winners will be drawn on May 4. Many thanks to everyone who donated money, cookies, soup, baskets, and especially their time. Your generosity ensured that the staff was very well treated throughout the year, and I think they appreciated it all.

8th Grade Farewell (Meghan Coulehan Natalie Livingston and Jess Strub). Read by Carrie Fick

The 8th Grade Farewell party will be held on June 1. It will be a carnival theme, and offer the kids a fun afternoon of games and music. We have a strong turnout of helpers, and are working to formulate sub-working groups.

Spirit Wear – Susan Coyle

This was Susan's last ever spirit wear sale. She is the spirit wear queen, and has been doing it for many many years! Thank you for all of your hard work, Susan! Do you have anything to report?

We had 70 + orders, 153 items, and we made \$306

Arts in USC – Read by Carrie Fick

Bakula Nayak is our Ft. Couch chair. After a few years of having either no Arts in USC or just a virtual Arts in USC, we are finally going to have an in-person art show. This year's theme is 'Pittsburgh.' I like this theme because it is a broad theme that will allow for a lot of creativity! The art show will be in the USC High School LGI on May 22nd, from 5pm-7pm. We hope that you encourage your children to participate. This year, it is a show instead of a contest. We would like feedback from parents after the show on how they think it went, so that we can make changes if we need to for next year. Fliers will be going home with the kids to explain the process. The artwork should be done on standard 8.5 x 11 printer paper size. We will be collecting art May 8-12. Your child's artwork will be returned to them on June 1, after the show.

Band – Read by Carrie Fick

Last Thursday night, the Boyce, Ft. Couch and High School bands participated in an Upper Saint Clair band festival. The festival featured Guest Conductor/composer Brian Balmages. Brian's music has been played in venues such as Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, Sydney Opera House, Toronto Centre for the Arts, and many more. All of the bands played songs that were composed by Brian. He conducted many of the songs. It was a very special performance. -There is a high school marching band Parent informational meeting on April 25 at 7pm in the Boyce theater. Please attend this is you want to learn more about marching band for your kids.

Also, Jazz Band is participating in the Jazz Festival at the USCHS theater on May 12th at 7 pm.

Orchestra – Read by Carrie Fick

There is a combined orchestra concert, grades 5-12 on May 24th at the USC High School Theater.

Musical – Read by Carrie Fick

The Ft. Couch musical this year is Little Shop of Horrors. All of the kids have been assigned their parts and roles, and rehearsing is underway. The musical will be May 5, 6 and 7. More details will be coming out about it soon. To any musical parents, there will be an option for Pam Scureman to use a QR code in the yearbook that includes specifically the dress rehearsal from May 1. But she would need those photos right away, in order to meet the yearbook deadline.

Old Business: Already spoken about old business.

New Business: Reported in President's Report

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 10:05 am

Important Dates:

April

- 24: School Board Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 25: PSSA ELA testing, grades 3-8
- 25: Marching Band Informational Meeting, 7 p.m., Boyce theater
- 26: PSSA ELA testing, grades 3-8
- 28: PSSA ELA testing, grades 3-8

May

- 2,3 - PSSA Math
- 5,6,7 - Fort Couch Musical - Little Shop of Horrors
- 9,10 - PSSA Science
- 12 – Jazz Festival 7 pm USCHS theater
- 18 - Celebration of Learning - EARLY DISMISSAL
- 20- USC Community Day
- 22-23 - Keystone Exams
- 24 – Combined Orchestra Concert USCHS theater 7 pm

June

- 1 - 8th Grade Farewell
- 2 - Field Day (rain date is June 5)
- 20- USC Kennywood Da