MINUTES
CORL STREET ELEMENTARY
PTO BOARD MEETING
April 9, 2013

Minutes:

In Attendance: Heather Ross (President), Linda Erickson (Co-VP), Jenny Seller Miska (Secretary), Scott Mato (Principal), Lee Ann Cook, Janice Germann, Robin Bierly, Michele Rowland, Deanna Patel, David Hutchison

1. **Call to Order:** Heather Ross called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

2. **Approval of Minutes:** Robin Bierly motioned to approve that the March minutes be approved. Lee Ann Cook seconded. Motion passed.

3. **President's Report:** Heather reported that everyone seemed to have a great time at the Dodgeball Tournament and thanked the chairs, Robin and Michele, for all their work.

   There will be a vote for new officers at the May meeting. Mr. Mato will send out a request for nominations to the parents.

   Heather provided emails from the Author visit committee (below) and the Garden Committee. Beth Bailey email to Heather dated 4/9/2013: "Carolyn and I are thrilled to have 100% participation among the K-2 classed for early spring planting which will be held April 17, 18, 19. We have awesome parent volunteers for every one of the classes so far! Grades 3-5 will be planting in mid to late May. Seed were obtained (free of charge…shipping cost only) by Seed Savers Exchange and Seeds of Change programs. Tait Farm will be donating pepper and tomato seedlings again this year John Ross will be building a trellis for climbing veggies like peas and cucumbers and he will also be working with Carolyn and Beth to build an open air three bin compost container so that the students can see the different stages of compost (similar to what Radio Park has)."

4. **Principal's Report:** Mr. Mato also reported that he enjoyed the tournament. He also thanked Robin and Michele for making it possible.

   He announced that 4th grade teacher, Mrs. Kondash's husband passed away today (4/9/2013) after a long illness. They let the children know, and they will expect her to be out of the classroom for several days.

   A Corl Street parent was interviewed about why they chose to opt out of the PSSA testing. Excerpts of the interview were on the TV news.

The $5 waffle shop gift certificates seem to be paying off. There are lots of comments so far in the "Brag Box" about the little things that staff do for each other. Next year this effort will be funded out of PTO undesignated funds rather than a line item.

The Chorale concert went well. The band concert is the first week in May

5. **Treasurer's Report**: Heather reported for Kasey, who was not present. The teachers are using their book allocation funds. Mr. Mato agreed to send out another reminder.

   The 3rd and 4th grade Harrisburg field trip is under the allocated $4000 by $500 so far. The last big expense for this year is the 5th grade trip to the Zoo.

6. **School Board Report:** Dave Hutchison announced that on April 25th and 27th, there will be H.S. project updates. There will be an update at Radio Park on April 29th. This one is intended for Corl Street families as well.

   He also reported that a group is forming to determine how to respond to Keystone testing.

   Keystone testing is required of all up and coming high school freshman in order to graduate. (Note: according to the http://www.pdesas.org website, The Keystone Exams are one component of Pennsylvania's proposed system of high school graduation requirements. Keystone Exams will help school districts guide students toward meeting state standards.) The question that the group will be discussing is how we can manage this testing in a thoughtful, helpful, value-added way.

   Mr. Mato responded that the State requires teacher assessments. Half of the evaluation is done by the principal's observations; the remaining is data-tied to the PSSA scores. Dave H. indicated that the evaluation scores are tied to the entire school's PSSA performance. Mr. Mato indicated that there are many unanswered questions about the future of this kind of evaluation.

   There was extensive discussion about testing, teacher evaluations, Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), and Pennsylvania's application for exemption to "No Child Left Behind." The group discussed possible ways to educate themselves and other parents about these issues, including the possibility of the League of Women Voters putting on a public forum on the topic.

   All agreed to wait and see how the remaining questions get answered first before acting.

7. **Standing Committee Reports:**

   - Dodge ball Tournament **–** Michele and Robin reported. Michele said that even though 6 people dropped out at the last minute, we raised more money – about $968 vs. $600+ last year. This is probably due to the increased registration fee. The concession stand brought in money as well. The PSU dodgeball team refereed, and we gave them $50 and community service credit. They were very happy with that.

Jen Brucker has agreed to organize the Tournament next year.

They reported that the post tournament event at the Westside Stadium was also successful and great fun. If we go there again next year, the Westside Stadium agreed to give the PTO $100 instead of taking 10% off the checks.

Robin reported that the half-time Top Gun competition was cancelled. The person who had the radar gun did not show up. (Linda Erickson said they have one if they decide to do the competition next year during the Tournament.) Because of that, there are 6 Spikes tickets left over. It was decided to use these for a drawing for all attendees at May's PTO meeting.

Heather Ross will provide t-shirt printing information, so that it can be included with the registration packet. That way teams have an option for having team shirts made professionally.

Michele and Robin presented Heather will a Dodgeball medal for all her work and support of the Tournament.

- Author Visit - Heather reported that the author visit was very well received (see email below from Catie Breneman). A parent requested that parents be invited ahead of time to participate as well. Per these minutes, this request is documented for next year.
    - 4/8/2013 email from Catie to Heather and Linda Erickson: "The Author Visit was a huge success . The kids LOVED Floyd Cooper. Many of them commented that he was their favorite author. He shared his story and demonstrated how he does some of his artwork. The kids loved how he turned their scribbles into fun drawings. There were many parents who helped with the luncheon for him as well as our teachers and staff. We would like to thank the PTO for sponsoring this unforgettable event."

8. **New Business:** Heather asked everyone to think about PTO officer and committee replacements for next year.

   There was a discussion re: who is responsible for finding replacements for their committee positions. It was agreed that preparing someone on the committee to chair it the following year is ideal, but isn't always possible. There was additional discussion about how to do outreach to try and engage parents of kindergarten and 1st graders. There should be opportunities to explain opportunities for involvement. The idea of involving room parents to recruit new volunteers.

   Dee Patel offered to help organize PTO sponsored play dates over the summer. She found this very helpful in acclimating to the school culture.

Michele Rowland brought up the newsletter and the merits of resurrecting it. Many found it helpful to have current events and information compiled into a written newsletter. She is unable to take it on again, but wondered if anyone else had an interest.

Heather will set up the Otto's fundraiser or delegate to Kasey. Ideally, the event will happen before the end of the school year.

9. Old Business:

- 2013-14 budget: Heather referred to proposed budget. Harrisburg trip is every other year, so will not appear on next year's budget. She proposed putting some of the money into Teacher Allocations next year as this item was added later and represented a deficit this year. She also proposed reducing the Target and Giant revenues to reflect lessened participation in these programs.

- Spikes Ticket Sale Fundraiser: Heather indicated that we need someone to organize. She will send out a request for volunteer/s.

- Lee Ann Cook led a discussion on the 5th grade party. The Ramada, which includes use of the pool is booked for June 6th. The t-shirts are ordered and the school district is providing transportation. Food is the primary expense since we can't bring outside food to the Ramada. She asked what would happen if they went over budget. Heather confirmed that the PTO could provide a small cushion in the event that this happened. Lee Ann will bring updated budget to next meeting for vote.

  There was conversation re: whether parents were to be involved with the party and was there any precedent for parents attending. Lee Ann confirmed that they will invite parents to some or all of the party.

- Book Exchange information to go out to parents soon. The exchange date is May 8th.

- Dee Patel requested ideas for Teacher Appreciation week. There was discussion and it was recommended that Dee contact Joy Porter who organized this last year.

10. Adjournment: Heather Ross adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

The next meeting is Tuesday, May 7th at 6:30 p.m.