October 1st, 2026

Whitney Elementary PTA Meeting

Meeting Called to Order: 5:35 PM

1. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

2. Visitor Presentation: SCS Representative Jenni Pelko

Jenni Pelko provided factual information regarding the proposed Issue 9 school levy.

Budget Overview and Proposed Levy

- Goal is to protect everything we've built. Deficit spending by $28k per day. Spending down cash balance, will only buy us so much time.
- Planned reductions include $1.8 million for the 2026–2027 school year and $3 million for the 2027–2028 school year.
- The district has also moved funds from the Capital Improvements Fund to operating funds.
- The proposed five-year, 6.7-mill operating levy consists of:
    - 3.4 mills to renew an operating levy originally approved in 2002.
    - 3.3 mills to provide new revenue.
- The combination of the mills reduces the tax revenue collected by approximately $2.2 million.
- If approved, collection would begin in 2027. The previously announced reductions of $1.8 million for 2026–2027 and $3 million for 2027–2028 would remain in place.

Potential Impact if the Levy Is Not Approved

- The district would receive no additional revenue and would need to prepare for an estimated $18 million revenue loss.
- The district would move toward state minimum standards and would no longer be able to protect core programs.
- Potential reductions would include:
    - More than 120 teaching positions.
    - 13 administrative and leadership positions.
    - More than 70 support staff positions.
    - Reduced Honors and Advanced Placement (AP) course offerings.
    - Elimination of food service at Surrarrer and Kinsner Elementary Schools.

- Pelko emphasized the district's commitment to budget transparency and noted that the state conducts frequent audits. Community members with frequently asked questions were encouraged to contact Ryba or Pelko.

Presentation by Laura Housum-President of Strongsville Board of Education:

- PTA members were encouraged to share voting information with parents, including early voting and absentee voting options.
- SGOP will endorse the levy.
- The group is checking whether "Remember to Vote" flyers may be sent home with students.
- Additional information about the levy and upcoming events is available at **ForStrongsville.com** and **VoteYesForIssue9.com**.

3. Secretary's Report — Amanda Williams

The September 2026 meeting minutes were presented for approval.

- **Summary:** Voted to switch Laurel Rich to council delegate and Bethany Bixler to treasurer. Discussed new yearbook company and policies. Voted on scholastic dollar use which will be split evenly between the book vending machine and both birthday book clubs. Reviewed current 26/27 budget and committee updates. Discussed the importance of upcoming levy and future district plans.
- **Motion to approve:** Desiree Causivec
- **Second:** Jackie Steffy

4. Principal's Report / Teacher Representative — Mrs. Hawk and Mrs. Barrett

- Whitney Elementary was recognized as the only five-star elementary school in the district.
- Parent-teacher conference sign-ups have been distributed:
  - October 8: All day.
  - October 14: Evening only.
- The Fall Fest was a success, everyone had a great time. Loved the new additions.
- Appreciate involvement and support regarding Issue 9.

5. President's Report — Molly Sunkle

- Molly Sunkle read the PTA levy resolution. Carol Boyd adopted the resolution, and all members were in favor.
- Approximately $1,300 from the levy T-shirt sale will be donated to For Strongsville.
- For Strongsville is seeking volunteers to staff levy information tables at schools during parent-teacher conferences.
- A new sponsorship line item was added to the PTA budget.

6. Vice President's Report — Carol Boyd

- The PTA holiday party will be held at Brew Garden on December 10 at 6:00 PM.

7. Treasurer's Report — Bethany Bixler (Bethany Bixler was absent, Molly Sunkle presented the report)

2026–2027 Budget Updates:

- The tailgate budget is no longer needed this year.
- New budget line items were added for levy events and For Strongsville sponsorship.
- The T-shirt line reflects levy shirts that have not yet been paid for. Once processed, the amount is expected to be zero.

8. Council Delegate Report — Laurel Rich

- Fifth-grade DARE Dance ticket sales are down; additional promotion is encouraged.
- Upcoming DARE ice-skating events:
    - November 24, 6:30–8:30 PM.
    - An additional event is planned for March; the date is TBD.
- The installation luncheon is scheduled for April 27.

9. Committee Reports

PTA Membership — Amanda Williams

- Membership has reached 198 as of October 1.
- Families are encouraged to sign up for PTA membership.

Room Parents — Meredith DeGuire and Amanda Williams

- Room-parent assignment emails were sent on October 1.

PBIS Initiative Support — Molly Sunkle

- No additional updates recorded.

School Assemblies

- The Cleveland Cavaliers are scheduled to visit the school on October 23.

Book Fair — Laurel Rich and Debbie Tomoff

- Fall Book Fair: October 5–8, open during all-day parent-teacher conferences and the clothing swap.
- Spring Book Fair: March 9–11, coinciding with the Art Show and Culture Fest.

Birthday Book Club — Laurel Rich

- December 4: July–October birthdays.
- February 12: November–February birthdays.
- April 9: March–June birthdays.
- A co-chair is needed.

Holiday Shop — Bethany Bixler and Shalini Baijal

- No additional updates recorded.

Family Events:

- **Chuck E. Cheese:** Proposed event; date TBD.
- **Fall Fest:** Coordinated by Amanda Williams, Debbie Tomoff, and Michele Molls
    - Successful event, everyone seemed to enjoy!
- **Homecoming Parade — Laura Van Vechten and Jackie Steffy**
    - Camp Whitney is scheduled for October 7.
    - Leftover Candy Wars supplies will be used for Greet & Treat.
    - Children participating in the parade must be accompanied by an adult. Participation is limited to third grade and above.
    - The parade begins at 6:30 PM. Participants should arrive by 5:15 PM.
    - Road closures begin at 5:45 PM.
    - The parade will follow the same route as the previous year.
- **Clothing Swap — Molly Sunkle**
    - Scheduled for October 8 during all-day parent-teacher conferences.
    - Strongsville and Whitney clothing, including winter clothing, will be available.
    - Remaining items will be donated to the foster care closet and school nurse.
- **Greet & Treat — Jackie Steffy:** October 29.
- **Bingo & Game Night — Shalini Baijal:** November 12.
- **Cavs Night for Choir — Molly Sunkle:** November 20 at 7:00 PM.
    - Tickets cost $37 each, possibly with a Venmo payment option, still working on details.
- **Carnival — Mattie Rudd, Jackie Steffy, and Laura Van Vechten**
    - Scheduled for January 22.
    - The location is expected to be announced in November.

10. Fundraising

Restaurant Nights — Desiree Causivec and Molly Sunkle

- Potbelly's: October 21.
- Chipotle fundraiser raised approximately $220; the final total from Texas Roadhouse has not yet been received.
- Marco's White Box Night: November 18–19.

Stoller Fundraiser — Desiree Causivec and Amanda Donnellan

- Sale dates: October 5–19.
- Pickup date: November 12.

Poinsettias and Wreaths — Molly Sunkle

- Sale dates: November 3–17.
- Pickup date: November 24.
- A Christmas/winter-themed raffle basket will be assembled for SEF, including a wreath from the fundraiser.

11. Grants — Carol Boyd

- The Council grant application is due by the end of October.
- Carol Boyd is applying for funding for vending-machine books.

12. Newsletter — Desiree Causivec

- Newsletter contact email: whitneyptanewsletter@gmail.com

13. Yearbook / Historian — Desiree Causivec and Julie Montemarano

- Additional photos are needed for the yearbook. Parents should be reminded to submit photos.
- Room parents may be asked to encourage families attending parties to take and submit pictures.

14. Unfinished Business: None.

15. New Business: None.

16. Announcements: None.

17. Adjournment: 7:04 pm