GVMS PTO Meeting Minutes

November 7, 2019 – 7:00 PM, PJ Welihan’s

PTO Executive Board

Co-Presidents: Pulin Shah & Jeannine Espenshade

Vice President: Tiana Threadgill

Co-Treasurers: Joanne Lang & Meenakshi Krishnamurthy

Corresponding Secretary: Brenda Thorpe

Recording Secretary: Jennifer Benson

Attendees: Jen Benson (and Kate too), Jeannine Espenshade, Pulin Shah, Tiana Threadgill, Joanne Lang, Brenda Thorpe, Meenakshi Krishnamurthy, Steph Gunderson, Kerry Cavalcanto, Amee Feager Davis, Alan Walter, Emily Stahl, Megan Wagenmann, Belinda Brown and Diana Goldin

1. Call to Order
2. Welcome and Board Introductions – Jeannine Espenshade
3. Thank You’s – Tiana Threadgill – full list included in the meeting agenda
4. Approval of 9/12/19 PTO meeting Minutes, approved by Kerry Cavalcanto, seconded by Pulin Shah
5. Student Council Update- Not present, Jeannine read update, see attached full report
6. Principal Report –Dr. Souders started with a thank you to Kerry Cavalcanto and Beth Mooney for the teacher appreciation dinner on November 4th.  The event gives the teachers an opportunity to break bread with one another.  Diwali was celebrated at the middle school today (11/7), a number of parents provided a buffet for our teachers and staff exposing the school team to the traditions of Diwali.  This was a parent lead effort and Dr. S is looking for ideas to bring things into the school to celebrate and acknowledge culture.  It is all about exposure, building tolerance and understanding for the students.  Dr. Souders brought up a recent social media exchange involving the arts program.  A parent brought up the fact that the arts were underfunded and a teacher complained about not having enough funds to buy paint supplies.  Never been a time in Dr Souders tenure where we have not been able to supply the classroom. Dr Souders asked to please bring it to his attention when the school gets mentioned in a negative fashion on Social Media.  He cannot be the social media monitor, but he can help respond and address the misinformation.  Encourages us to be an ambassador, social media is a powerful tool, but can be divisive.  November 20th is the next patriot pride date.  6th grade clubs will start: health and wellness, calligraphy, etc.  The middle school has learned to build the clubs around connections and interests of both the student and teachers. Those interests can be explored during patriot pride days.  There are 20+ different clubs offered through the 6th grade advocacy teachers.  Honor roll - information is in the student handbook, spells out what qualifies, 2-week window for incompletes (14 school days) for the honor roll results to be posted.  Parent conferences, not enough slots, numerous calls, teachers are available the entire school year, working into the use of other mediums like skype and zoom, to help have the conversations in a timely manner.  Feasibility study is underway in the district for possible expansion of the facilities.  Parent involvement is encouraged thinking of now and how the district will be positioned twenty years from now.  Be aware that decisions are being made and there are so many possibilities, restructuring grades, new facilities, it will be felt. Dr Souders ended with a commitment of a continued partnership with the PTO to help disseminate information via School Messenger to help with transparency and clear communication.

1. Officers Reports

Treasurer –2019- 2020 Budget Report Shared – Please see Report Attached.

Joanne Lang shared that budget changes will be seen with the introduction of the Grant Request program (see below in New Business section for detailed description). The 2019-2020 Budget was approved by the PTO Executive Board at a work session on 10/31. Just Write a check campaign is ongoing, please get the word out to parents. More advertising needs to be done for JWAC. We are $5,ooo behind last year projections at the same time. Meenakshi Krishnamurthy spoke about the Shutterfly School Fundraising Program she set up for the Middle School. Information for this passive fundraising event has been shared on Social Media pages for the GVMS PTO and the grade level pages.

Amee Feager Davis discussed the AmazonSmile program. It is easy to do: log in, choose your charity – Great Valley Middle School PTO. Great passive fundraiser. Amee also discussed the Amazon Smile Charity Wishlist program for the Middle School. Teachers can share their needs here. If parents would like to donate, they can select items from a list: K Cups, microwave, microscopes, etc. It is Prime friendly and ships directly to the Middle School. The Middle School PTO also receives .5% back. Amee shared a handout with a hyperlink to scan the QR code.

President - Jeannine Espenshade discussed the new passive fundraisers of Nothing Bundt Cakes and the PJ Welihan’s dining out event. The GVMS and @nothingbuntcakes Exton have teamed up this holiday season! Teacher gifts, hostess gifts, holiday cakes and more! Any orders placed (for pick up anytime of your choosing) or purchases made benefits the GVMS PTO! So mark your calendars for December 9-13th, and shop till you drop! Best cake in town!! She also discussed volunteers, committees and committee chairs. Brenda Thorpe discussed the entrance beautification project. Lots of Holiday Lights will be added to the main entrance in December.

1. New Business – PTO Fundraising – Pulin Shah and Tiana Threadgill – Going to do things differently this year with funding requests. Going to try Patriot Pride Grants that will be open to teachers, staff, administrators, parents and students for up to $500. More information will be shared at our next PTO meeting regarding the process.
2. Announcements/Upcoming Events
   1. 6th Grade After School Game Night Party, 11/19, 2:30-3:45pm
   2. School Psychology Awareness Week, 11/13, 9:15-10:15am
   3. Mary Poppins Jr, 11/14-16th at General Wayne Elementary School
   4. 7th and 8th Grade Dance, December 6th, 7-9pm

7.   Adjournment at 8:06p.m – Next meeting on Thursday, February 6th, 2020, 1:30pm at Middle School student dining hall