

Meeting Minutes

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

June 14, 2023

86 West Gate

Present: PA Exec: Heather Lytwyn & Sandi Conrad

Staff: Heidi Koop

Attendees – Cayla McKechnie, Sebastien De Lazzer, Allison Pollard (virtual), Scott Antonation, Nancy Coreas

1. Welcome – Sandi C. 7:30

The meeting hybrid format is applied for the first time.

Round of introduction

2. Approval of the Agenda

- Moved to be accepted by Heather, seconded by Cayla: Approved & carried

3. Approval of the Minutes – May 16, 2023 & AGM June 14, 2022

- Moved to be accepted by Sebastien, seconded by Heather: Approved & carried

4. Election of Executives

- Chair: Sandi Conrad
- Vice-Chair: Cayla McKechnie
- Treasurer: Heather Lytwyn
- Secretary: Sebastien De Lazzer
 - Moved to be accepted by Nancy, seconded by Allison: Approved & carried

5. Westgate Admin Report

Staff Representative Report

1. It has been such a pleasure to attend these meetings over the course of this year. I have really appreciated the co-operation and hard work of our executive. A big thanks to Heather Wallace, Jennifer Bell, Sandi Conrad, and Heather Lytwyn. And another big thanks to Sandi Conrad and Heather Lytwyn for acting as interim chairs and putting your names forward for next year. I'm also excited by our new members Cayla and Sebastien.
2. I have appreciated 3 key elements of what makes our parents association so amazing:
 - First - The support provided to the school community as a connector. The work of the grade reps to host an event where families can meet each other is such a gift. After covid, we noticed how disconnected families felt. And as more and more of our students are not coming from our connected churches, families don't know each other. We want to be a community where parents reach out to each other, trust each other, and help to make this community a stronger place.

PA Meeting Minutes (Continued)

- Second - The support provided to the school community through financial support. The two fundraisers hosted by the PA helps the school to purchase some of the “extras” that just aren’t in the operating budget. They improve the student experience here at Westgate.
 - Third - The food provided and Teacher Appreciation expressed was wonderful. It helps the teachers to feel supported - so thank you! Thank you for all of it
3. For me this year, it has been so interesting to join the meetings. I usually give a brief report and am available to help advise the PA on how to go about holding events, fundraising, etc. I was also new to my role this year and so we kind of figured it out together. It’s been fun to not be the “vice-principal” at these meetings, but just a staff rep, who might know some of the ins and outs of the place.
4. Some key pieces I wanted to mention today
- 75 of our grade 10 - 12 students left for the Middle East or Europe a week ago. This meant we had to do some very creative problem solving
 - i. Some exams were written early
 - ii. Some field trips were moved around
 - iii. Some students lost half their teachers
 - iv. And some class swapping was done

This week, the rest of the school writes exams, except for some grade 6 and 12 field trips. We have worked hard to slowly build skills and resilience in the students when it comes to exams. This includes a bit more routine and prep in the younger years and a bit more university prep in the final years. Some of the “exams” are traditional and some are more creative - a lab, a presentation, a sharing time, etc.

Next week, we begin our alternative education week. It was a strange set-up this year and it got split in half by a weekend, but during this “week”

Grade 6 is at Camp Assiniboia with a outdoor focus

Grade 7 is at Bird’s Hill with a biking focus

Grade 8 is at West Hawk with a hiking focus

Grade 9 is at Rushing River with a canoeing focus

Grades 10 - 12 had some options

Middle East

Europe

Yearbook

Urban Rec

Canoeing

Next year we are looking at a bike/hike trip in the Rockies.

We are very excited about Graduation this year. From the school side, we really look forward to the Ceremony and the Dinner/Banquet/Dance. In addition, parents are organizing a “Safe Grad”. Most of the grade 12 parents are on sub-committees helping to plan their kids “Safe Grad” - a big thanks to Jennifer Lewis and Rachel Franz for co-chairing that committee.

On June 30th is our last day of school. We have an Award’s Ceremony and Closing Chapel @ 9:30 a.m. We expect to be finished by 11:30 a.m. It’s a really important time for us to say goodbye for the summer, but in some cases, a final farewell. Parents are invited to join. It really helps to create a festive atmosphere.

6. Review Action Items – Sandi C.

- **Online Meetings** – We decided to go ahead with online meetings. Westgate uses Google Meets, which is free but we needed transcription and attendance features. The school offered a with Microsoft license to use Teams.

- **PA Exec Email** – As a result of the email we were able to fill the required exec positions and have been able to fill ALL of the Grade Rep positions:
 - Grade 6 – Kristy Matyas
 - Grade 7 – Rachel Laurendeau & Zilla Jones
 - Grade 8 – Karen Peters & Allison Pollard
 - Grade 9 – Lisa-Joy Gunter
 - Grade 10 – Jennifer Goreski, Jen Lewis & Mary Anne Hembroff
 - Grade 11 – Anna Swaine, Jen Bell, Anna Johnson & Mardina Andrews
 - Grade 12 – Melanie Doell & Kristy Matyas

The objective is to have more resources to the room reps

- **Church Reps** – This is something that fell of my radar and as a result, I'll need to look at who we have and any potential changes we may need over the summer.
Heidi mentioned that some board members are representatives of churches and also parents of Westgate students. They could serve as liaisons for fundraising activities. Sandi will check her email to find the list of church representatives.
- **Teacher/Staff Appreciation** – The parent and student cards were delivered to James Friesen on Monday morning as was the Tim's muffins and coffee. Subway platters were delivered for lunch to give them a day of appreciation which was well-received by the staff and many thanks were shared. Total cost: \$553.36.

At our last meeting Scott showed us a video that the students from a German school made to showcase their school and suggested something similar to show appreciation. Comment is made that if we're going to do something that relies primarily on students, we should start planning as early as possible next year. Similar project could be done here and should be student-led. The school has Digital Film Making course and will be approached to seek feasibility.

7. Financials & Credit Card – Heather L.

- Current balance: \$11,100
- Expenses related to approved school requests:
 - 10 pairs of snow shoes
 - 16 Volleyball jerseys
 - Some bookshelves

For a total value of \$5,500

The request for a \$500 credit card has been declined because the PA is not incorporated as either a non-profit or a company. The school's credit card will be used for PA expenses and the PA will be billed for any expenses incurred.

8. Fundraisers

- The PA is allowed no more than 3 fundraisers per year. We are currently of the opinion that the PA will only be doing 2 fundraisers per year due to the other fundraisers ran throughout

the year such as the Cyclathon, Work Day and the Bursary Banquet. The Perogy & Sausage fundraiser is always a huge success and is a staple for the PA for the 1st semester. Planning for this fundraiser needs to start at the first PA meeting of the year and we'll be formalizing the planning schedule over the summer. The second fundraiser will take place in the 2nd semester, no later than the end of March. We have yet to decide what the second fundraiser will be and Scott brought up a really good consideration at our last meeting. He recommended that the work involved be balanced with the likely financial return. Despite the work being voluntary, we need to recognize that everyone's "free time" isn't really "free" and that work/life balance is important. For example, the basket fundraiser raised a little less than half that of the Perogy & Sausage fundraiser yet required more than twice the amount of volunteer time.

- Gift basket raffle is licensed.
- The idea of organising a school dance is discussed, possibly 2 a year. Historically, such event used to be a blast but not anymore. However, compared to gift baskets, the amount work is minimal for the amount raised. We also need to be mindful of donor fatigue. Nevertheless, a dance would be less seen as fundraiser but more a recreational activity. It is suggested we can have additional activities around dance activities → To discuss in the September meeting.
- Sausage fundraiser ordering process is set-up since last year and just needs updating. Process encompasses both paper and virtual orders. Preference is given to online orders as it tracks all the info. Last year profit: \$6500

9. Other/Call for New Business

- **Tax receipt issuance** – This was an action at the last AGM however given the steep learning curve for the all-new PA Exec this past year, it was not something we were able to invest too much time into. The small amount of research I've done has determined we'll need a lawyer to help us evaluate this so if there are any lawyers out there who would be willing to help us with this, that would be appreciated. If we can't find anyone to volunteer to help us, we'd need to determine what the cost would be and whether the cost is viable. Also, documenting and issuing tax receipts will be an added workload for the PA, so that too will need to be considered.

In addition, Mennonite Educational Society could issue a tax receipt in case of major gifts.

- A motion has been made to confirm that the PA will not seek charity status. Carried by Sandi, seconded by Scott. Motion approved and carried.

10. Adjournment

- Motion to Adjourn by Sandi. - Meeting adjourned at 8:28
- Next meeting: **Wednesday, September 13, 2023 @ 7:30pm**

Summary of Action Items:

- Sandi to go back to the email to find the church reps list.
- Organise the dance at September meeting

PA Meeting Minutes (Continued)

- Approach Digital Film Making teacher to develop a teacher appreciation video. Original video to be shared among parents' association and school direction.