

Lyon/Pleasant Ridge PTA Minutes
October 10, 2006

President Chris Northwick opened the meeting at 9:15 a.m. in the Pleasant Ridge Gymnasium.

In Attendance: Kevin Dorkin, Matthew Rich, Lisa Hoye, Debbie Shefren, Chris Northwick, Liz Price, Robin Hinrichs, Dee Dee Gross, Vicki Schurer, Kathleen Butler, Kristi Carroll, Lisa Dickholtz, Kay Laurie, Kristen Borth, Jen Farber, Cheryl Kasner, Angie Katsumakis, Sandy Brennan, Rula Marziani, Eileen Grant, Denise Tener, Ana Cassorla, Beth Schmidt, Deb McMahon, Mimi Bommarito, Suzy Feldstein, Stacey Saef, Debbie Berg, Leslie Howell, Lisa Daly, Natalie Weber, Fontaine Stellas, Michele Nelson, Debbie Wells, Eleni Athas, Michelle Allison

I. Approval of the Minutes

The minutes of the September 8, 2006 meeting were approved.

II. Officer's Reports

Treasurer—Dee Dee Gross presented the monthly financial report (see attached). She noted that there will be two reports every month: 1) a listing of the actual year to date revenue, expenses, and profit/loss for each budget item along with the total budgeted for that item and 2) a current net worth report which shows the current total assets and liabilities. The total income listed on line 26 on the September report is accurate, but some of the individual line items are estimated. These will be clarified at the next meeting. If you need clarification about your particular budget, ask Dee Dee.

President—Chris Northwick welcomed everyone to the meeting. She reported that we are now voting for a final member of the Local School Council. The Local School council for Lyon and Pleasant Ridge is comprised of 2 teachers from each school, 2 parents representing the PTA (the 3rd and 4th vice presidents), 2 parents at large, and the 2 principals. Kristin Borth, Maggie Wall, and Eileen Grant now serve on the council. Stacy Paton is applying for a two-year term. Her information and ballots for voting are on the table. Vote for her if you like. Votes will be accepted until October 16th.

Chris also reported that the PTA has begun the grant process for the year. Chris and Kay Laurie, the chairman of the PTA grant committee met with the building council of Pleasant Ridge last week. Liz and Kay will be meeting with the Lyon staff this week. They are soliciting applications from teachers, principals and staff for grants for special projects and/or special needs of the schools. The PTA has allocated \$17,000 in budget for these grants (see lines 63-65 in budget). We are planning to approve grants for the full amount this fall. The committee is looking

for parents to review and approve grants. There will be a meeting November 3rd at Lyon for anyone interested in being involved in the process. Chris noted that some people signed up at the last meeting, but if you still want to sign up, you can sign up today. If you cannot come to the meeting but are interested in participating, we will try to arrange for you to submit comments and recommendations ahead. She also thanked Kay for all her hard work getting this process going.

After discussions with the principals, the PTA board has decided to offer the teachers two ways to spend their \$50.00 for instructional aids (see PTA budget item 52). They can choose to receive a gift certificate for \$50.00 to the Learning Post or they can present a set of receipts totaling \$50.00 for reimbursement of items purchased elsewhere. We will be determining in the next month, hopefully, which option the individual teachers want to utilize.

Chris also made the following announcements:

- 1) The PTA is conducting a drive to encourage the teachers at both schools to join the PTA. This will extend throughout October.
- 2) PTA is a tax-exempt organization. If anyone does any spending for his or her committee please, use the tax-exempt ID number to avoid paying sales tax. There are forms available on the table today and can also be picked up from Chris or Dee Dee at the later date.
- 3) The date of the book fair at Pleasant Ridge has been changed to May 23-24, 2007.
- 4) There has been a proposal for an International Night to celebrate the diverse cultures found in our schools. This will happen sometime in the spring. Anyone who would be interested in getting involved in the early planning for this event, notify Chris.
- 5) There have been some new additions to the home page of the Lyon/PR PTA website. There is now a link especially for teachers on the right hand side of the home page. This provides information about the PTA grant process and other things of special interest for the teachers. There is also a link for communication with the board in the bottom right hand corner of the home page. Hopefully this will make using the website easier.
- 6) The next email communication deadline is October 31st. Please send your information to Kellie by that date.

1st Vice President—Liz Price asked all board members to check their mailboxes for information. She noted that the Sportswear, Pumpkinfest, and Book Fair committees had some important information on the table to be picked up. Liz also reported that she had talked to Sgt Urbanowski about parking for Lyon School events. Sgt. Urbanowski stated that we could use the parking behind the old Glenview Police Station for overflow for special Lyon School events. Signs will be made and information sent out in the newsletters to alert parents.

III. Teacher's Representative Reports

Lisa Hoye—Ms. Hoye represented the Pleasant Ridge teachers. She is the Drama teacher. She reported that the Pleasant Ridge teachers are getting ready for parent conferences which are scheduled for next week on October 19-20th. The teachers excited about this earlier date. They plan to discuss the early testing and goals for the students for the year. The teachers are also very excited about the grant money the PTA is offering. They see it as a way to enhance the students' educational experiences in the classroom. She also reported that there are plans for the 5th graders to perform some of their pantomime at the Book Fair at Lyon on November 16th. She stated that she had been looking for a way for the students to perform some of their work and this would be a perfect venue.

Debbie Shefren—Ms. Shefren reported on events at Lyon School. She noted that while Pleasant Ridge would be having parent conferences next week, Lyon teachers would be participating in an institute day. They will be doing work on the district wide Reading Initiative. She also stated that the students are all busy with fall projects. The Kindergarteners are learning about fall, All about Me and going on field trips to the Grove and Didier Farms to pick pumpkins. The first graders are learning about animals and enjoying field trips to the Botanic Gardens and Lincoln Park Zoo. The 2nd Graders are busy with their study of life cycles. The tadpoles have arrived and hopefully, they will have some frogs one day soon.

IV. Committee Chair Reports

Pumpkinfest—Vicki Schurer and Kathleen Butler reported that everything is all set for Pumpkinfest, which will be held on October 20th from 4:30-8:30 p.m. They are in the process of working on the final details. The major set up will be done starting at 4:00 p.m. on October 19th. Since school will be open for the teachers on Friday a few last minutes things will be done then. Vicki passed out a new map showing the sites for the activities. Some rooms have changed since last year and a few activities have changed as well. Vicki reported that they have plenty of volunteers. Emails will be coming confirming the shifts volunteers will be working. There are also plans for teen helpers. Heather is coordinating the club volunteers for GBS and Olga is coordinating the volunteers for OLPH.

Cultural Enrichment— Kristi Carroll announced that Pleasant Ridge had its 1st assembly of the year starring Dr. Rich. The students really enjoyed the opportunity to talk to him. On October 26th there will be another assembly presented by Face-to-Face productions entitled *By the Numbers* about Albert Einstein. It will be at 8:30 and 9:30. Parents are welcome. The first presentation at Lyon was the Imagination Theater. It fit in with the Character Counts program and was very well received.

Parent Education—Lisa Dickholtz reported on the Parents in Partnership workshops planned for November 11, 2006 at Attea Middle School. The theme is "Practical

Parenting in Challenging times". Flyers have been sent out in the backpacks. This year the workshops have been opened up to anyone who is interested, not just Glenview residents. They have also expanded their list of topics to include not only special needs and family distress, but also a wide range of issues of interest to parents. The keynote speaker is Mary LoVerde, International Speaker, consultant, author and busy mother. She will be talking about keeping your life in balance. There will also be sessions on school safety including a discussion by a 13 year old who works uncover online to help spot online child predators. The sessions will run from 8:30-12:45. Childcare is available if you register in advance.

Lisa also reminded us that the elections are coming up soon. You can still register to vote at the Cook County Offices from October 11-24. You can also vote early from October 16-31.

Fall Lyon/Pleasant Ridge Book Fair—Susie Feldstein reported that the Fall Book Fair is scheduled for November 15 and 16, 2006. She also stated that this year the PTA is trying to involve students from both schools in both book fairs; therefore, the Lyon fair has been renamed the Lyon/ Pleasant Ridge Fall Book Fair. There will be a few changes to this year's fair. There will be a preview night activity for teachers from both schools on Nov 15th. There will then be a preview breakfast for the Lyon teachers from 8-9 a.m. Wednesday the 16th. The Book Fair will be open to the public 9 a.m.-8 p.m. on Wednesday. There will be activities this year at Lyon, but parents will not come to eat lunch with their kids and go to the fair. Parents can, however, come to the school during recess and shop with your kids. There will be the usual pizza party Wednesday evening. Thursday will be grandparent and other relative night. The 5th graders from Pleasant Ridge will do a drama performance and the Book Fair will be open until 8p.m. Susie stated that she had many volunteers signed up and would be establishing committees for a variety of jobs. She passed around sign-up sheets for people to state their preferred committee. 1) A decoration committee to decorate both Lyon and Pleasant Ridge to encourage students to come to the Book Fair. The theme this year is the rainforest. 2) A wish list committee to help organize the teacher's wish lists for their classrooms. Teachers from both schools will participate in the wish list program. This year the teachers will also pick out some recommended books for each grade. These will be marked with a special bookmark to help parents pick out appropriate book for their kids. 3) One for books--This is a special fund that will be donated to Debra Gelfan Fund. Flyers will be coming home and encouraging kids to earn \$1.00. The dollar will then be contributed to the Debra Gelfand Fund for district 34 families in need. 4) Set up committee--This committee will set the fair. Set will be done starting at noon on the 15th if the weather is nice and the gym classes can meet outdoors; otherwise it will start at 4:00p.m. 5) Volunteer committee--This committee will man the fair the 2 days of the event. 6) Preview committee--This committee will organize the teacher preview at 5-6:30. The staff will be able to pick out books, complete their wish list, and make a list of recommended books. If you help with this, when you buy

4 books at the book fair, you will get the 5th book free. Lyon School classes will still tour the book fair and fill out wish lists. They will leave them by the door like last year for parents to use later

Susie then proposed some changes to the gift certificate program PTA has done in the past at the Book Fair. She proposed expanding the staff gift certificates to the certified staff at Pleasant Ridge and increasing the amount of the gift certificates to the students on free and reduced lunch to \$10.00 for students at both Lyon and Pleasant Ridge. Those present discussed this. It was noted that the money to fund these proposals would come primarily from some money that Scholastic owes us in books from a few years ago.

A motion was passed to give all Lyon staff and Pleasant Ridge teachers and librarians (about 100 people) \$15.00 gift certificates.

A motion was passed to increase the gift certificates given to the students on free/reduced lunch to \$10.00. It was suggested that the teachers be encouraged to help the kids to pick out appropriate books with the certificates.

Holiday Helper and Candy collection—Deb McMahon announced that the Holiday Helper program will begin with the annual candy collection from Nov. 1-10. Students can bring in any leftover wrapped Halloween candy. It will be given to the Northfield food pantry, which distributes it with other food goods in November and December. The holiday food collection will begin November 14th. The list of food will be a little different this year. Be sure to check the lists in the backpacks. Deb asked parents to make sure that they follow the guidelines for the baskets so that we can fill the baskets with good nutritious food. She also asked us to remember that these are families in need and that we need a lot of fun to fill these baskets. These families can only go to the pantry one time a month. The Holiday Helper program will run for a month. Please be generous.

Benefit—Jen Farber and Michelle Allison are the new co-chairs of the benefit. The preparations are beginning in earnest. Jen Farber announced that the PTA benefit committee will meet 10/25 from 11-12 in the Lyon School library. At this meeting they will be starting to develop leadership for committees. Anyone who is interested, please attend. Jen is also working on finding some people who have worked on previous benefits to help as well. Chris Northwick noted that the benefit is very important this year. If we have more than \$17,000 in grant requests from the teachers, it may increase the amount of money we hope to raise at the benefit.

Ways and Means—Cheryl Kasner announced that Lyon School Picture Day went well. She also stated that she had been getting a lot of questions about the Dominicks grocery school donation dollars that people accrued over the summer. She stated that Lyon is registered for the Dominicks school receipts. If anyone has any, you can drop the receipts in the box at by the front desk at Lyon and they will be redeemed.

PTA Grant Committee—Kay Laurie reported that the PTA Grant Committee has started its work, meeting with the staff to discuss the grant application and review process. The grant applications for fall are due October 24th. The committee will meet on November 3rd at 10:30am at the Lyon School to review applications. Kay stated that Jen Farber, Liz Price, Lisa Dickholtz, Kristin Borth, and Chris Northwick had signed up at the last meeting to join the committee. Anyone else who is interested in helping, contact Kay.

School Board Meeting Report--Kristin Borth reported that at the last meeting the school board approved this year's budget. The board approved the construction proposals for additions to the intermediate schools. Construction will be starting September of 2007. A representative from Attea talked about their mentorship program, which seemed very successful. The board also discussed topics for next month's meeting, which will include an ongoing discussion of class size in the district.

V. **Guest Speaker**— Brian Wegely, the principal of Glenbrook South High School spoke about the District 225 referendum that is up for a vote on November 7, 2006.

VI. Principal's Report

Pleasant Ridge School—Dr. Matthew Rich said thank you to the PTA for meeting part of the morning in the gym and the rest in the library. It helped Pleasant Ridge to successfully accommodate the PTA and the school schedule. He reported that Pleasant ridge would be hosting a meeting on October 11th to discuss the NWEA tests that all the students took in September. Dr. Rich, Phil Collins, the assistant Superintendent of District 34 for Student Achievement, and a few teachers will discuss how to interpret the student test scores that will be sent home. They will also discuss how the teachers, school and district use the scores to improve individual student performance. All parents are invited to attend and bring questions. Pleasant Ridge picture retake day is October 27th for any students that need their pictures retaken. Parent teacher conferences are also scheduled for next week. Please attend.

Dr Rich also states that issues of security for the school and the students are an important topic at Pleasant Ridge now and always. He views the primary question as how can we maintain a safe environment at school so the teachers can focus on education, not security concerns.

Lyon School—Kevin Dorkin reported that October 20 will be a professional day for staff at Lyon. Parent teacher conferences will be held later. He reminded us that this was the result of the differing needs and different concerns of parents voiced in a survey done in the district last year. On October 20th the teachers will be working on the district wide reading initiative. It focuses on a balanced literacy approach. In conjunction with this initiative on October 26th Lyon will be hosting a literacy night. At this time parents can come out and learn first hand what

teachers are doing to enhance their children's literacy. This is a parents only program from 6:30-8:00 p.m.

VII. Unfinished/New Business

Security issues—Especially with the recent national events, PTA and the schools have received a lot of questions and concerns from parents about security. PTA has received numerous emails with ideas as well. Chris Northwick has shared these concerns and ideas with the principals and the district. The district sent out an email newsletter about security to the people on Brett Clark's email announcement list last week (NOTE: IF you would like to receive those email announcements, go to the District 34 website—community relations link to subscribe.) The same letter from the superintendent will be sent home with students in backpacks this week. It talks about some of the same issues we discussed with John O'Connor last month.

Dr. Rich and Kevin Dorkin then discussed some of the things they were doing at the individual schools. Pleasant Ridge had a lockdown drill last week. Dr. Rich explained that lockdown drills are one part of the drills that are conducted routinely with the kids, i.e. fire drills, tornado drills, bus evacuation drills, etc. Each of the drills is designed to teach the kids and staff how to problem solve in an emergency. In this instance the building was warned ahead of time about the drill, but this is not always the case. After each drill the school then problem solves better ways to handle these situations. In the next few weeks, the Glenview police will be coming to do a safety audit - they will be able to observe and assist with developing any new procedures necessary. These will be practiced at various times and various locations so that the kids learn exactly what to do. Lyon School and Pleasant Ridge share data and ideas and adapt strategies for each school age population. Lyon will also be conducting its own drills with the adapted procedures.

The principals and staff also know that there are other issues, such as the front entrance security, which in both schools relies in part on a human component. Dr. Rich stated that the front entryway has also been discussed with the people who are going to be working on the construction at Pleasant Ridge. The front entrance may be altered at that time, but that has not been determined yet. The principals also reminded us that this is a national issue now due to the recent school violence on the news, however, the schools deal with "minor" and ongoing safety problems every day. These are at least as important as the big dramatic ones. The staff debriefs after every situation that happens. The principals at Lyon and Pleasant Ridge, along with the other principals in the district, as well as the district security officer, discuss new ways to deal with security on an ongoing basis. Both principals also reminded us that we all have a role in security at school. Please sign in at the front desk and if you see people that you do not recognize in or

around the school buildings, try to speak to them and get them to check in at the office.

Since safety and security seem to be a major concern at this time, PTA is appointing 2 point people for these issues: Natalie Weber and Leslie Howell. They will be planning some more time to discuss these issues and keeping us abreast of the District's plans. If you have any specific questions you would like answered, feel free to email Leslie Howell at Howellnow@aol.com

PTA council—Chris Northwick reported that there was a discussion of class sizes at the recent PTA council meeting. The discussion was partially spawned by a Chicago magazine article about the best elementary school districts in the area. District 34 was not listed, but other districts all around us are. It was noted that all of these other districts have smaller average class sizes than District 34. Although class size in and of itself is not a determinant of school success, smaller class sizes do allow some best practice types of programming, such as guided reading in small groups, which are proven to enhance learning. In the last few years as the population of Glenview has increased, class size has slowly increased. It is now close to the suggested limits in many classes in the District. At the same time the number of ELL and special education students in these classes has also increased.

The School Board will be discussing class size at the next board meeting November 6th. It will be an open information meeting and parents are invited to attend. This meeting will also be the first School Board Meeting televised on the local Cable channel. PTA will also continue the discussion of this topic at the next meeting. It is an ongoing issue regarding the quality of education in the District.

VIII. Announcements—(Calendar Overview)

Robin Hinrichs announced the following upcoming PTA Events:

November 10—Next PTA Meeting with Guest Speaker—Phil Collins, District 34

Assistant Superintendent will talk about standardized testing

October 20—Pumpkinfest 4:30-8:30

October 27—Pleasant Ridge Picture Retake Day

November 9—Lyon School Picture Retake Day

November 11—Parents in Partnership Workshops at Attea

November 15-16—Lyon/Pleasant Ridge Fall Book Fair

VIII. Adjournment

Chris Northwick adjourned the meeting at 11:30.