

Waltrip High School PTO
General Meeting Minutes
Thursday, August 18, 2025 at 6pm
Waltrip High School Library

- **Welcome and Call to Order:** 6:07 p.m. CT by President Michelle Schone
- **President's Report** (Michelle Schoene)
 - Overview of WHS PTO and focus
 - Recent campus improvements funded by PTO --- signs., murals, etc
 - WHS PTO communications email shared for future contact
 - June Meeting Minutes
 - Motion to approve the June meeting minutes --- 1st: Rachael Riebeling; 2nd: Erin Field; Approved
 - Overview of agenda and topics up for vote
 - Financial reconciliation report: Noted that this activity is undertaken annually to ensure that that the PTO remains good steward of the money in which it's been entrusted
 - New for 2025-2026: A net zero balanced budget, featuring a detailed project budget
- **1st VP, School Enrichment** (Rachael Reibeling):
 - Volunteer Opportunities: Highlighted opportunities to volunteer throughout the school year
 - VIPS Sign-Up: Called out the VIPS required training/approval for potential volunteers; Responded to questions re: the process
 - Join PTO: Requested attendees join the PTO:
 - Voting as a benefit (can't do so without a membership)
 - Recommendation from member: Have students join as members for \$5.
 - Benefit? Shows community involvement on college applications
 - Bylaw Updates: Noted changes had been made for a vote
 - Spirit Wear: Noted that new swag is now available; Share that those who ordered swag online can pick up purchases beginning on Thurs., Aug. 20
 - Called out QR code on the agenda for voting
- **2nd VP, Fundraising** (Carrie Jaeger)
 - Deferred to committee members to discuss upcoming activities
- **Treasurer/Treasurer-Elect Report** (Nghia Dang)
 - Budget review/Preliminary discussion:
 - \$95K total carry over, including the money market account
 - Expecting to raise around \$135K for proposed expenses & hold \$35K in a rollover (emergency) fund
 - New budget line items:
 - Special projects fund: Features monies that can be used in case of unexpected needs arise for which PTO support may be needed --- i.e. bleacher repair over past year
 - Concern: Represents WMH PTO's "most aggressive" fundraising year and budget allocation. However, can be revisited during year depending on whether fundraising goals are met
 - Comment from president:
 - WHS PTO is a 501c3 comprised of volunteers
 - PTO is accountable, honest and practices financial transparency. Members have a view into what WHS' PTO spends --- the PTO's business "is everyone's business."
 - Proposed spend represents hopefulness based on prior success --- 1300 volunteer hours over around 137 days during the 2024-25 school year

- Processes in place to keep board in check and identify problems if they arise. If miss fundraising goals or spending marks PTO will revisit and reallocate monies.
- Board reviews existing laws and bring in external advisors as needed
- Budget discussion among members::
 - Approving the budget, means approving the spend as represented. Why not start lower & revisit the budget as needed?
 - Starting with an idealized, optimistic budget as a framework to start the year. Didn't always have an estimated budget in the past. Spending can be adjusted as needed.
 - An existing rollover cushion is in place. The school year starts in summer. Rollover provides a beginning budget to support students, teachers and the school.
 - Typically net on spend for events.
 - Board Member Comment: Leveraged historical budget spend and the trajectory of what's happening
 - Which items will be added or removed based on whether PTO meets or exceeds fundraising goals?
 - Budget would be shaved across projects vs removing/diminishing any single activity. Boosted overall spending with this in mind. If needed, Special Projects fund could be tapped
 - Board Member Comment: In the past, the executive board fed monies back into the school showing a commitment to being a good steward of raised monies.
 - Board Member Comment: PTO has been served well by having members across a variety of viewpoints from conservative to balanced to idea generating.
 - Preference is to have money in hand before spending as this better sets PTO, or any organization, up for success
 - Current budget allocates money but is not spending before raising. "If there's zero money in there's zero money out." Will revisit budget if fundraising goals are not reached
 - Treasurer Comment: In past PTO has been extremely conservative
 - What is the difference between Contingency vs Special Project funds?
 - Contingency: unexpected; in case of emergency
 - Special Projects: allocate as needed on projects that arise
 - What are the new line items?
 - Special projects
 - Scholarships for seniors, including a breakfast
 - Capital Expenditures was added as an official line item
 - Were there any major bylaw updates?
 - Not financial. Spit parent engagement and school culture into two different segments
 - Student culture added new student activities with the goal of increasing school pride, continue to build community/create a family-like environment, and help support increased academic achievement
 - Student Member Question: The hope is to increase the budget from \$95K to \$230K based on fundraising?
 - Answer: Yes.
- Treasurer-Elect Intro --- Maritza Ortega Harris

Committee Reports

→ **Membership Chair** (Yanira Dudley): No report

→ **Events Chair** (Amy Roe-Solis):

- Upcoming Events: Volunteers will be needed, especially for homecoming on 10/11. Will soon post event sign-ups
- Deferred to committee chairs to review activity

- Fundraising VP Comment:
 - One of larger, upcoming events: Jazz on 34th (a paid social)
 - Share ideas for, support, host or come up with other ideas for socials; Looking also for opportunities for student socials, some interacting with teachers
- **Staff Appreciation** (Suzy D’Souza):
 - Sept. 19: first snack cart of the year
 - Monthly activity (except on months with big events)
 - Carts outfitted with various treats are available to teachers, admin and all other school staff
 - Big, annual staff appreciation events: Thanksgiving luncheon, holiday and teacher appreciation week
 - Activities and volunteer sign-up will be featured in the newsletter
- **School Store** (Sonia Pursell):
 - Expressed appreciation for support of school store and requested ongoing volunteers for the school store
 - Member Question: What’s sold?
 - During lunch, sell various items --- snacks, drinks, etc. Don’t sell products that compete with standing fundraisers for other groups (i.e. sodas, etc.)
- **Student Culture** (Kat Creech):
 - Will host a variety of monthly events for students such as Ram Festival Days
 - September: Fall festival as the first event in early fall
 - Others: Go Texan, holiday events
 - Events also double as club and organizational fundraising opportunities if choose to set up a table
 - Cash only events
 - Victory Days/Class Wars
 - New initiatives to celebrate student successes; Will occur every 6 weeks
 - Potentially themed: loteria, ice cream days, etc.
 - President comment: PTO looking to balance between what’s being done for kids and for teachers and fund fund activities not necessarily in district/school budget. “Waltrip should be the envy of other schools.” em
 - Member Question: Why is this committee a \$15K line item in the budget?
 - To fund activities and elevate the experiences for WHS students
- **Community & Parent Engagement** (Open position; Covered by Rachel Riebeling):
 - Parent happy hour upcoming at Nettbar Shady Acres. WHS parents will be present to talk to incoming and prospective parents
- **Education Support** (Megan Rasmussen):
 - Annually award teacher grants throughout the year, with initiatives spanning training, classroom needs (i.e., carts, robots, art supplies). On average award \$300/teacher
 - Teachers can apply now through Sept. 15
- **Scholarship** (Susie Molina): No Report
- **Communication Outreach** (Angie Gunden):
 - Shared QR code for newsletter sign-up
 - Noted class pages on Instagram and Facebook
- **Community Partners** (Erin Field):
 - Look to partner with the community to earn money for the PTO --- average anywhere from \$500 to \$3000
 - Partners receive advertising: social media, marquee, event tickets, etc.
 - Suggested linking Kroger cards to WHS PTO to donate a portion of sales
 - Upcoming Spirit Nights:

- Papa John’s on Aug. 28 --- will provide 20% of online sales noting WHS PTO
 - LaViva on Sept 24 --- will provide 20% of sales mentioning WHS PTO
- **Capital Improvements** (Angelica Sullivan): No report
- **Legislative Liaison** (Jennifer Perry): No Report
- **Teacher Liaison** (Spoony Witherspoon): No Report
- **Class of ‘26.** (Melanie Barr Fitzpatrick)
 - Overview: Parent reps help classes to raise money in support of activities throughout the year
 - Recent Event: Senior Sunrise:
 - Thanked parent helpers
 - Share event highlights:
 - Photo booth and photographer as workaround for phone restrictions
 - LaViva taco donation
- **Class of 2027** (Brooke Persyn): No Report
- **Class of 2028** (Tracey Rio): No Report
- **Class of 2029** (Dana Gallegos): No Report
- **Unfinished New Business:**
 - Financial Reconciliation Committee Report
 - Selected an annual committee to review prior year’s books, including all receipts, spending, etc.
 - Offered future recommendations:
 - Centralized location for check stubs and credit card transactions
 - Collect Amazon receipts
 - Share budget (adjusted by month) --- implemented on current budget shared in meeting
 - Use request forms for each payment
 - Motion for approval: 1st - Anna Plascencia (sp); 2nd - Brett Randall; Passed unanimously
 - Approve Bylaw updates
 - Key Changes:
 - Separation of recruitment and social role to parent engagement and student culture
 - Update typos/grammatical errors
 - Posted for 30 days for membership review
 - Motion for approval: 1st - Carrie Jaeger ; 2nd - Rachel Riebeling; Passed w/ opposition
 - Approve proposed budget
 - President comment: If vote does not pass, all spending will pause until an approved budget is in place
 - Member discussion/comments:
 - Not in support, but willing to review on offer suggestions for updates
 - How does a money market account work?
 - Excess from 2024-25 was used to open an account to earn passive income (approx. \$55 monthly as an interest bearing account.) No penalty to withdraw from account.
 - Note: Also opened a credit card
 - PTO Member Jen Powis: Motion to approve budget with amendment stating any proposed Special projects funding must be brought to full membership for a vote. 2nd - Ms. Witherspoon
 - President Concern: Will impact the bylaws as written. Budget is typically amended (with

vote) throughout the year

- Member Comment: Can be amended prior to a vote

- Jen P: Withdrew motion/Called the question
- School store chair: In 2024-25 spent about \$55K. What would be the impact of missing/exceeding budget?
 - Overflow will typically be distributed where there's a need. All projects would be shaved if there is a deficit.
- Motion for approval: 1st - Amy Roe-Solis; 2nd - Veronica Falcon; Passed --- For: 24; Opposed: 14, Abstain: 1
- Member suggestion: Provide previous year's budget for review and comparison during meeting
- President Comment: Goal is to move this process to May in the future to ensure a budget is formally in place ahead of activities beginning over the summer (July)

→ **Other Business/Discussion Among Members:**

- Student engagement line-item addition
 - Great to have a monthly outlet for students. However, uncomfortable with charging students for participation. Propose making festival events free to students
 - Keep in mind that what adults see as fun, kids may not --- ensure diversity of events
 - Student Engagement Chair Comment: Looking to include a student committee representative of various organizations
- Given that Special Projects is 18% of budget, would like to see a vote to approve any spends out of the designated funds.
 - President Comment: That is currently the case --- any changes will need to be brought to the general PTO membership for discussion and a vote.
 - Not in bylaws but can amend.
- What was the 2024-25 Budget? \$163 proposed, raised \$174 --- exceeded goals by \$10K
- President comment: All are welcome to contact the board and her directly with additional questions, concerns, suggestions @vp.enrichment@waltripPTO.org

→ **Meeting Adjourned:** 7:45 p.m. CT

(Minutes taken by Michelle Kelley, Secretary)