

**Thoreau Elementary PTO – General Meeting minutes  
November 20, 2009**

**In attendance:** Laura Aguilar-Omernik (parent liaison coordinator), Todd Castilow (treasurer), Heather Allen, Connie Roderick, Michael Becker, Wendy Brand, Michelle Frelina, Louisa Medaris (president), Lauren Rosen Yeazel, Felipe Reyes, Tom Pokrandt, , Heather Swan, Tim Gebhardt, Erin Weiss, Leah Sandholm, Leanne Tyska, Katy Moritz, Kate Huntington, Stephanie Robinson, Heide Pankoke, Christy Ehlert, Susan Willis, Alexis Micheller, Tracy Clausen, Cindy Liu, Anna Peterson, Blandine Fontaine, Eloi Fontaine, Liz Fritz (principal), Jenice Con Foo (fundraising), Aphra Mednick (co-secretary)

**1) Announcements by Principal Liz Fritz:**

- **H1N1 Vaccine Clinics:** have been postponed due to not enough vaccines available, all of the consent forms are being kept however it is possible that new consents may be needed depending on when vaccines become available, note: nothing will happen without informing parents in advance, parents will be able to be present if child receives vaccine, if vaccine clinic reopens volunteers will be needed, 2 doses of vaccine are needed
- **Parking Violations:** last Thursday (11/5 ) parking tickets were given, Thoreau has a brochure available that explains parking rules, there was supposed to be a crossing guard but there was not a need last year, with enrollment being up Principal Fritz will request, in this order:
  - another evaluation for a crossing guard and more paint identifying the crosswalk
  - moving handicapped parking to other side of the crosswalk
  - permission for drop-off time allotments for 5 minutes for unloading before and after school
  - will speak with Brian Solomon (alderman) about issue

**2) Playground Improvement Committee Update, Leanne Tyska, chair:**

- fence on Nakoma Rd will be put in the Friday after Thanksgiving, it will increase from 4 ft to 7 ft, Principal Fritz will coordinate with parents to be sure that children are away from construction if fence installation is not completed before children return from Thanksgiving break
- will be doing a survey with parents to get ideas for prioritization of playground improvements,
- the blacktop has 3 more years of life
- Spring Carnival proceeds will go to playground as the current playground funds all went to fence,
- landscaped area outside of the library was cut back for increased security and visibility,
- Principal Fritz will look into getting more gravel for kids to play in,

**3) Finance Report, Todd Castilow (treasurer):**

- Incorporation: looking to incorporate in order to enable PTO to be tax exempt and not liable for any damages, \$35.00 to file for incorporation, voted – **all voted yes** to file the tax exempt status
- Bylaws: working with Tom Willis whom helped construct original bylaws, 4-5 pages long, talks about officers of the board, election processes, needs to be ratified, it is needed to file for federal tax exemption which will cost \$500.00 (it's a one time cost), once completed and approved they will be posted on the bulletin board and available in the office, two changes to the current by-laws 1) “religious” taken out 2) mechanism if PTO dissolves, all assets go to Thoreau, then MMSD, then government, **all voted yes** to apply for tax exemption
- We are making the Bylaws available online and at school for review and feedback period ending December 5. You can find this document online at <http://www.thoreauschool.org/>. Any questions, suggestions or feedback should be directed to [todd@castilow.net](mailto:todd@castilow.net) or left in writing in the treasury folder in the PTO mailbox in the school office. Once the Bylaw review period is complete and the incorporation is confirmed we'll file for the following:

1. A new Federal Tax ID (EIN) with our new name: Thoreau Elementary PTO, Inc.

2. Federal Tax Exempt status with the IRS under statute 501(c)(3)
3. Wisconsin Certificate of Exempt Status from the Department of Revenue

For fundraising leads, our tax exempt status begins the date we apply for 501(c)(3) status. Todd Castilow will inform the appropriate PTO members.

#### 4) Fundraising, Jenice Con Foo (chair):

- **volunteers needed** for gift wrapping pick-up on Thursday, November 19<sup>th</sup> from 1-5:30, people can do ½ hour or more
- Box Tops – raised \$260.00, another submission will be in the spring
- SCRIP: Kathleen Hoppe is chair, \$571.00 has been raised since September, some parents expressed problems with customer service, Jenice spoke with them & they reported having trouble getting cards from vendors, but they are still assigning the fundraising \$ even if cards hasn't been sent out
- Amazon School Rewards – signed up but not up and running, sets the Thoreau School up as a portal at Amazon.com, portal will be set up on the Thoreau PTO website, 15% of cost of order will go to Thoreau, hope to have it up before Thanksgiving, portal can be sent to others for use
- Cookbooks: please submit recipes, typed on the computer is preferred, recipe requests have been passed out to families in English and Spanish, there will be a glossary in the cookbook that will provide basic English to Spanish cooking terms, hope to receive 200 recipes, looking for simple recipes from a variety of cultures
- Target: open a Target credit card & designate Thoreau as the school, 5% of purchase goes to Thoreau
- Coffee – you have to order a minimum of 10 bags (total \$105.00), your child can draw a picture that will be used as the label (black & white), parents will be alerted through an email
- Spring Carnival (Alexis Michelle & Heather Allen, co-chairs): a silent auction and carnival, games have been secured, activities will include mainstream kid fun stuff (cake walk, etc), feel free to email suggestions to Louis Medaris, plan is that families will buy lunch as a way to raise money, it's expected that food costs will be ½ the money raised, Principal Fritz requested that classrooms not be utilized for the carnival, Todd brought up that we cannot charge for entertainment, nor have gambling tickets
- volunteers will be needed on the day of the carnival, **Spring Carnival will be Saturday, March 20<sup>th</sup> from 10am-2pm**
- Bid for Kids, Tom Bach (former planner) presented: in March, silent & live auction, 300 items (sporting events, vacations, cases of beer, etc), 3 of them were held every other year at the Nakoma Country Club, an adult night (no kids), \$35,000 were raised each year with ½ going to Thoreau and ½ going to Cherokee (as they are also a neighborhood school), \$ went to an endowment parents & teachers make a grant request, committee votes on who gets grants, Thoreau and Cherokee had the largest endowments in the district, takes a year to plan, planning should start for 2011 before the 2010 summer starts, 6 people were on the committee, 300 people attended the last one, people from community not just individuals with children @ Thoreau, Nakoma donated the space, each classroom donated a basket that was bid on
- General – discussed fundraising fatigue, will send out letter for direct donations once the PTO has tax exempt status

#### 5) Parent Liaison Committee, Laura Aguilar-Omernik, chair:

- Directory is completed, needs to be printed, looking to keep costs down so it will look different, should be out before Thanksgiving break, volunteers needed to help with mailing
- Parent liaisons will be used to help with SCRIP and cookbook
- brought up that communication has historically been the focused of the responsibility for the parent liaisons,

- Laura will survey the teachers to identify needs and how the parent liaisons can help support teachers