

Mills River Elementary School Parent Teacher Organization

PTO Meeting Minutes

September 17, 2026 @ 1:00 p.m.

Meeting Called to Order/Attendance

Katie Foley

- Katie Foley, Betsy Casebolt, Amy McKinstry, Sarah Sams, Rachel Mann, Tracy Klaes, Carly Jones, Katherine Dare, Natasha Sidwell, Amie Alvo, Leah Pollock, Katie Rangnow, Christina Duncan, Kelly Cagle, Evan Smith

Annual Title 1 Report

Ms. Ray

- Ms. Ray does general education interventions for students who are struggling. She uses scientifically based strategies. When this position was created, Mr. Auten could trade pay to make her position work. At the current time, a lot of Title 1 money pays her salary and retirement benefits. Title 1 funds throughout the county have taken a hit, and this loss has been disbursed between the schools.
- As a Title 1 school, we are required to have parent involvement events. Parent Info Night was the first of these events for the year. We will also have student-led conferences with a math component. We include parents in the School Improvement Plan, and we have a PTO rep at School Improvement Team meetings.

President's Report

Katie Foley

- Thank you to all volunteers for the time and efforts spent towards the fundraiser so far. We really appreciate it.
- The Heavenly Scoops spirit event was well attended. We had a good turn out for a quick, "stop in for a bit", style spirit night.
- \$642 was raised from the pie auction during the MRB spirit night held last week. In total, over \$1,000 was made at the event.
- The next spirit night will take place at Chick-Fil-A of Airport Road. They are willing to partner with us in October and again in January. The October event is 10/27. They have sent a flyer, and we will share once approved.
- Amie Alvo wants to coordinate a "take out meal" type spirit night with Carrabaa's. Flat Rock Bakery and Moe's Southwest Grill can also do a take out meal type spirit night event. Carrabba's is more centrally located and we hope to partner with them first. We are waiting for more information to come.
- We will see where we are financially before planning a spirit night in November or December. We want to respect the time of our families around the Holidays.

Vice President' Report

Betsy Casebolt

- Betsy is pleased with the Welcome Breakfast social. The outdoor setting is nice and Sarah has heaters we can use during the winter months.
- A beautification event is being led by the Dads Group and Cub Scout Pack 612. This will include moving mulch, trimming bushes, and pulling weeds as time allows.

- Christina Duncan has a connection for hay bales and pumpkins to help beautify the front entrance for fall. It will be determined if a Sign Up is needed for donations as well. We should consider asking the Mills River Farmers Market vendors for donations towards beautification too.

Treasurer's Report

Amy McKinstry

- The 8/20-9/15 financial report was shared.
- \$755 for spiritwear gained. Amy will follow up with Larissa once she has returned to work.
- The balance from fall sponsors will be around \$9,000 by the end of September.
- \$129 is in the bank from Kona Ice spirit night at Parent Info Night. The Rock made \$220 and there are 6 more reservations on the books.
- \$95 came out of staff appreciation to account for teacher workday lunch expenses from back in the summer.
- Ms. Lucia has pie auction money set aside for Larissa. More things will hit on the revenue side once she returns.
- The book vending machine was filled.
- Fundraiser related expenses and revenue will hit in October.
- We need to limit committee expenses depending on how the fundraiser goes. Katie and Amy will follow up with Mr. Auten about funds related to tutors.
- The Board will reevaluate the budget and expenses as needed after completion of the Fundraiser.

Secretary's Report

Rachel Mann

- July meeting minutes were approved by the board and sent out on 7/27.

Fundraising

Katherine Dare & Others

- Our Fall Fundraising goal is \$45,000 and we are currently at \$22,093. We typically have more funds collected at this point in the event. Half of the students are registered. 30% of those students have donated and this is typical for the time being.
- Website shares (sharing the FunHub link) increase participation. Funds have increased drastically in the last 24 hours.
- Auten and Fletcher sent a fundraising related message to all parents enrolled in text communications.
- There could be lots of reasons that participation is down at the moment. There are less Kindergarteners this year and less Kindergarten classes. Countywide and at MRS, student enrollment is less. The Fundraiser is also taking place earlier this year.
- To increase participation, an email was sent to administration asking them to push the fundraiser with staff via email, at the staff meeting, etc.
- Tracy created a flyer that we shared about how our funds are spent. Are there suggestions for what else we can do?
- We don't do catalog fundraising because only a percentage of sales actually goes back to the school.

- Using the word “tutors” instead of “academic supports” has been easier for parents to understand.
- The Hendersonville Elementary PTO raises money for their tutors also.
- We need clarification about if the word tutors is okay to use in advertising moving forward.
- We will request an all call be sent on Monday as the final push. Volunteers will appear on the morning news to help advertise the top prize baskets and give a preview of the bobbing for apples reward incentive.
- The Pie Auction was a lot of fun and the staff at MRB enjoyed it too. Boxes for the pies were the only expense. It was a good idea to have it on trivia night so there was an Emcee to announce the auction/spirit night too. October has been offered for another spirit night at MRB but no official date has been set.
- The rock is renting really well. Jeremy and Carly are in touch about using the website to help with reservations. People are using the service of paying for someone else to paint the rock for them. A cover is needed for when it is not being rented.
- A “Your PTO Dollars At Work” document was created. It explains how funds have been spent for the last 4 years. This was shared via the PTO email list and will also be passed out in the car rider line.

Trail Committee

Tracy Klaes

- A quarter mile trail of crushed granite is being put in. Updates are being made regarding drainage and retaining walls. Steps will be included in the project. Tracy will put up a sign that says steps are coming soon.
- The latest completion date is still November 15th. If we lose weeks of labor because of rain, the date is still contracted as is.
- Yearly maintenance of the trail will be dependent upon the labor of Kevin. There is a maintenance plan that is not related to PTO.

Corporate Sponsorship Committee

Tracy Klaes

- Berm Peek is the newest sponsor.
- We’ve received roughly \$9,000 from corporate sponsors thus far.

Purchase Request Committee

Executive Board

- Mr. Auten will filter purchase requests before they are funneled to the PTO.
- This form can be added to the website.

School Store

Katherine Dare & Carly Jones

- Wednesday was the first day of sales. We made \$120 on day 1. It was a great first day of sales and the energy is good. Sales will occur on Wednesdays and Fridays each week.

School Improvement Team

Katie Foley

- The PTO website was discussed at SIT. 5th grade is the only grade level with a classroom page. McVey is researching if the website is ADA compliant. Additional classroom pages are on hold until we know more.

- Website stuff is tricky because we don't know if our site needs to be compliant. We are looking into it with Jeremy. We need clarification about if we can be linked to the school's website or not.
- The offer for a Barre3 class was presented to staff. Katie is waiting to hear about their interest.
- Our school grade is currently a "B" and has been really consistent over the years.

Staff Appreciation Committee

Amy McKinstry

- Duty free lunch will be on Oct. 2. A new master lunch schedule is needed.
- Sarah will arrive at 10:45 that day. We already have clorox wipes in stock. A document will be present to tell about the roles assigned to volunteers.
- Katie Rangnow will send out the Duty Free Lunch Sign Up the week of Sept. 21st.
- Staff appreciation for October will be donated pies from volunteers.

Spiritwear

Amy McKinstry

- We need to sell spirit wear in the car rider line. Parents have been asking about it.
- We aren't doing a new order anytime soon and will reevaluate doing so or not after the fundraiser.
- A spiritwear sock idea was shared. We could sell \$2 socks for \$10 to make money. Youth and Adult sizes would be needed. Amy would like to sell these at Christmas time. We could ask Mandi if we could set up outside of the book fair to do so.

Dads Group

Tom Pollock

- We need two more volunteers for Dads opening doors tomorrow, 9/18.
- For "Adopt a Bus" we still need 2-3 more dads to volunteer for cleaning a bus one time a week. An email with more information was sent to the dads group.
- The shipping container of bikes has been vented.
- Bryan McKinstry and Tom Pollock are leading a work day between the scouts and school volunteers on 9/27.
- Leah will talk to Tom about his interest in publishing dads group information on social media or not. Currently, email and texts are their means of communication.

SPAC (Superintendent Parent Advisory Committee)

Katherine Dare

- 22 out of 23 Henderson County Schools met or exceeded growth.
- The county is at the highest graduation rate in 2 years.
- Our state ranking went from 31 to 18! Growth and graduation rates keep that number going up.
- The bridge at Rugby Middle was taken out by Helene. The county approved to fix it but another engineer is needed. Another bridge is coming.
- The media tech advisory committee needs a parent on it. Katie will ask McVey if we have that.
- A Curriculum Committee will take a look at the health curriculum for 6-12 years. Katherine is going to be on it.

Volunteer Coordinator

Katie Rangnow

- Sign up is needed for Duty Free Lunch on October 2. Katie Rangnow will send it out the week of September 21.
- A Sign up will be needed for parents to donate pies for teacher appreciation in October. Exact details are TBD.
- A Sign up may be needed asking for donations to beautify the front entrance for fall.

Social Media Coordinator

Carly Jones

- There appears to be a lot of engagement. PTO members are encouraged to like the posts on our pages to help the algorithm.

New Business

- Carly is creating a shared calendar with Rugby and feeder schools to help plan fundraisers. We can chat more about what dates to include on this.
- Sign up genius links can be added to the website.
- Is there a contingency plan for tutor funds if PTO funds aren't raised?
- PTO would like to take on the fall festival next year. We could try things like; local businesses sponsor a booth, raise prices of food, assign booths using materials we already have (repeat booths from previous years), etc. in order to save money and increase funds raised at the event.
- The car rider coffee cart idea should be discussed further. The following people are interested in assisting; Kelly Cagle, Christina Duncan, and Katie Rangnow.
- A School Board Candidate Q&A will take place on 9/29, 5:30 at the Hendersonville Theatre.

Meeting Adjourned

Next Meeting: October 15, 2026 @ 1:00pm. Location - Mills River Academy

Video call link: <https://teams.live.com/join/9368136949973?p=qbEYNC3GKFoh44FSTT>