



Public Meeting Minutes

December 2, 2025 / 6:30 - 7:30pm CST

Monroe Elementary Media Center

TIME: TOPIC:

6:37 Call to Order & Intro - Sign-in and introductions

- Jessica & Ashwak (Parents), Wendy Brown, Mike Mack, Kristin Contons, Jinna C-J, Page Andrews, (Staff), Heather, Tiffany, Niki, Brenda, (PTO Board/Parents)

6:38 PTO Business - Approve Oct 2025 meeting minutes

- Correction - Art Adventure theme for this year was listed inaccurately. The correct theme is **People & their Environment**.
- Minutes were amended. Tiffany moves to approve minutes, Niki seconds, Minutes approved

6:40 Teacher Contract Updates - Presented by Mrs. C-J

- Been working without a contract since June, want to get it settled asap, to get back to focusing on students.
- Union is asking for a fair contract that reflects the respect and resources teachers deserve and our students need. Right now the school board has only approved enough funds that would result in a pay cut (not to mention the increased health insurance costs)
- Insurance has gone up 120% even on the old contract (increased premiums started Sept 1), plus cost of living increases are needed (wages have not kept up in past years). Paras are especially affected by the health ins increases (separate union, but teachers are in support)
- Good wages are needed for attracting teachers to our district and retaining them - esp new and young teachers

- Healthy teachers = healthy schools
- Parent support makes a HUGE difference! Looking for support from families - you can share on social media that you support teachers, or even **attend the rally before the school board mtg on Mon, Dec 8** at 6:30 (gathering at 5:45, rally 6 pm, at Sandburg Education Center in Anoka).
 - Speakers at the mtg are also welcome - ask Ms. C-J and she can help you prepare for that. **Wear Red!**
- Visit ahem.mn.aft.org/community to learn more and stay connected.

6:50 Monroe Updates - Presented by Kristin Contons

- **STEM night** was a huge success, feedback reflected that parents enjoyed moving from room to room as a group with their student, and the different activities
- **Fundraiser and Space Race** (glow run) was a huge success - kids love the event, and they get excited about the fundraising
 - Big assembly to celebrate successes, as well as "Dress the Principals" is coming next week (Tuesday maybe?).
 - PTO is providing the silly string & ponchos for the top earners to spray their favorite staff member at the assembly, Kristin has goggles
- **New reading curriculum (CKLA)** is starting to settle in, teachers and students are getting used to it, and really enjoying the topics & content in the units.
- **December is Game Month** - every grade level learns a new game! Tournaments will be the last few days of school before break. Looking for some **volunteer Chess experts** who are able to come in to help teach/coach students!
 - 5th grade - Cribbage
 - 4th grade - Chess
 - 3rd grade - Farkle
 - 2nd grade - Checkers
 - 1st grade - Otrio (3 dimensional tic tac toe)
 - Kindergarten - Pop-It Dice
- **Food Drive & Spirit Week** is next week - flyers will be coming home soon. Adding the fun of assembling different "food kits" (birthday kit, movie/game night kit, etc)

- New displays about the Food Drive & Art Adventure are drawing a lot of student interest!

6:55 Grade Level Updates - Page Andrews (5th grade)

- 5th grade just went to Orchestra Hall, and they're just starting to prep for Starbase at the end of Feb/early March.
- Adjusted the PTLW project order, currently working on infection detection (human body, immune system, tracking spread of infection, etc).
- **See attachment** for all the details from the other grades!

7:01 Media Center Show & Tell - Mr. Mack

- Been working to carefully & slowly spend the \$1000 grant from the PTO. New purchase is the set of Encyclopedias from 1990 (\$50) - fun activity to use a real, old-fashioned World Books, and compare to what kids can find online!

7:07 Volunteer Opportunities - Presented by Wendy Brown, VSC

- Art Adventure is coming up in Jan, takes a lot of planning and coordinating
- Need volunteers for sorting food collections next week, esp Tues & Wed
- Volunteers have provided 1083 hours so far this school year (through the end of Nov). We have 165 registered volunteers.
- I Love to Read Month is going to kick off with Celebrity Reader Day on Feb 6 (instead of ending the month with it).
 - So far we have Vikings Cheerleaders, Fire Dept, Support Dogs, News Anchors, etc.
 - If any parents know anyone who is a minor or local celebrity, or does character (costume) parties, please let Wendy know!

7:11 Space Race, Budget, PTO Updates & Events - Presented by PTO

- **Space Race (Boosterthon)**
 - Donations from 2 countries (US and Liberia!)
 - 65% of donations were not parents - awesome support from extended community!

- Next year we might pay Booster a lower percentage and run the fun activity ourselves, so that 10% more of the funds will come back to the school (PTO Board parents have a lot of sound & light equipment, can probably put together another event that is just as fun, for less cost)
 - Might want to explore putting together a fundraiser committee, so there isn't quite as much landing on the PTO Board.
 - If we reduce what Booster provides to retain more funds, we still want to make sure that we maintain the low level of planning that has been needed from the staff (so everything is provided, they can just walk in and it happens)
 - Maybe try a Cosmic Bowling option, since gym teacher is already doing Bowling unit in Nov? Or rent a Human Foosball game? Lots of time to plan, but still want to do something fun that the kids love.
- **Budget overview** - see attachment for an overview of what our annual budget provides for the school and students
 - Booster funds have come in, we're just shy of the stretch goal of \$25,000!
 - If we receive all the matches that are potential, we'll receive another \$3000-\$4000 (last year was about \$2000, but that may have been lower due to moving fundraiser from spring to fall in the same calendar year)
 - Dine to Donate income is currently at \$654
 - Continuing to discuss (once all fundraising and corporate matches come in) whether we can provide a large grant to the school for new ipads (to make up what was lost from district buyback program), or offer larger teacher grants, etc.

7:20 Internet Safety Series - Presented by Nikki Matt, PTO

- Working with Officer Foster from Hennepin County Sheriff's Dept and Homeland Security, to present a free monthly class where families can come to learn, discuss and ask questions. Childcare will be provided!
- Dates are Jan. 13th, Feb. 10th, Mar. 10th, Apr. 14th and May 12th - watch for flyer with topics for each meeting
- Specifically for Monroe parents, and families are asked to register for each one

7:34 Adjourn - Thank you for attending!