

Date: September 9, 2025
Location: The Freedom Institute

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Debora Gilmore, PTO President, called the meeting to order at 12:36 pm. She welcomed those in attendance both in-person and virtually. All those in attendance, both in-person and virtually, introduced themselves and shared information about their student at Freedom.

ROLL CALL

Attending in person were Mrs. Christy Vaill, Debora Gilmore, Kathleen Dougherty, Sue Kramer, Eva Aspegren, Janell Weigand, Mary Brandt, Arynn Link, Sharlene Weimer, and Andrea Bowes. Mr. Chris Marker also attended later in the meeting. Attending the meeting virtually were Kelly Minucci, Shauna Gonsalves, Johanna Taylor, and Gabriela Souza.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

Sue Kramer, PTO Secretary, reviewed the minutes from the last PTO meeting held on April 8, 2025. Mary Brandt made a motion to approve the minutes from April 8, 2025. Kathleen Dougherty seconded the motion to approve the minutes from April 8, 2025.

PRINCIPAL'S UPDATES

– Mrs. Christy Vaill gave information about a new parent committee for senior parents. This group will be organizing some special events for seniors only. There will be a free senior photo day in which each senior will have a free senior portrait taken complimentary of senior parent, Monet Layton. Another special fall event for seniors will be Pumpkin Spice and Senior Advice day. Mrs. Vaill gave a report on the current number of seniors and the number of seniors in previous years at The Freedom Institute: graduating class of 2024 - 3 seniors; graduating class of 2025 - 18 seniors; graduating class of 2026 - 32 seniors.

– Mrs. Christy Vaill introduced students who wished to address the PTO about having a Freedom homecoming dance for our students. Three young ladies presented their ideas about creating a core memory of high school homecoming. They chose an Under the Stars theme which they believe would be easy and inexpensive to decorate. They shared ideas for possible locations and for fundraisers to offset the cost. After receiving positive input and feedback from those attending the meeting, the students next step will be to survey the student body to determine interest and willingness to pay for the event. This homecoming event would be tentatively planned for late October or November.

OFFICERS' REPORT

No information to report at this time.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Several PTO committee positions were filled. Thank you to those who volunteered.

Decorating - Janell Weigand will again chair the Decorating Committee. The next event to decorate will be Friendsgiving on November 20th.

Friendsgiving - Andrea Bowes will chair the Friendsgiving Committee, and Sharlene Weimer will be the vice-chair.

Teacher Appreciation - Eva Aspegren will co-chair the Teacher Appreciation Committee again, and Mary Brandt will co-chair.

Graduation - Debora Gilmore will co-chair the Graduation Committee again, and Sharlene Weimer will co-chair.

Spirit Store - Arynn Link will co-chair the Spirit Store committee.

NEW BUSINESS

- Recognizing coaches' and staff birthdays was discussed. Mary Brandt offered to bring a cake for each birthday. An idea was proposed of students signing a card or writing an adjective describing each recipient for each birthday celebration.
- Those attending agreed to keep PTO meetings the same—2nd Tuesday of the month from 12:30-1:30.
- PTO elections will take place for the 2026-2027 school year in either March or April of 2026.
- Eva Aspegran gave a reminder that Freedom is a not-for-profit organization. For anyone philanthropically interested, spread the word and direct them to her. A charitable donation and the value of donation tax receipt can be used as a tax write off. Also, Eva will add a link directly for PTO donations. Freedom continues to consider and look at expansion opportunities.
- Mr. Chris Marker gave a very positive review of the start of the school year. There are currently over 120 actual Freedom students and 12 Freedom AI hybrid students enrolled. He credited the parents and complimented the students stating they were sweet, happy, and extraordinary kids that treat each other with respect—without having cliques. He was pleased that Freedom has the same positive vibe after the growth this year.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Fall American Dreamer Series Speaker - 10/6 @ 9 AM Freedom

- Date and Time subject to change if needed
- Honored to have Byron Donalds as the scheduled speaker

Friendsgiving lunch - 11/20 @ 12 PM Freedom

- Decorations
- Signup for potluck - 120 people
- Purchase additional food items if signup is short

Fall field trip - 10/ or 11/ @ AM

- Tentatively considering options
- Theater a possibility

Winter Celebration - 12/15 @ 9 AM Freedom

- Decorations
- Cash for Finals
- Ice cream bar & snow balls

NEXT MEETING - MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Date: October 14, 2025

PTO Meeting Dates for 2025-26

September 9

October 14

November 4 *1st Tuesday due to No School on Veterans Day

January 13

February 10

March 3 *1st Tuesday due to No School on Spring Break

April 14

QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

No additional questions and comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Andrea Bowe made a motion to adjourn this meeting.

Arynn Link seconded the motion.

Debora Gilmore adjourned this meeting at 1:30 pm.