

# Echo Hill PTO Meeting Minutes     January 15, 2024



Call to Order Time: 6:34pm  
Virtual Zoom meeting.

**Quorum:** Hegland Stouffer Becker Huston

## Welcome & Introductions

### I. Linn-Mar PPEL Discussion

Linn-Mar Superintendent Amy Kortemeyer and COO/CFO Jon Galbraith introduced themselves and thanked us for including them in our meeting tonight. Together they presented and discussed information about Linn Mar's upcoming Physical Plant & Equipment Levy – PPEL – which comes up for a vote on March 5, 2024.

The following excerpt from the Linn-Mar website summarizes what Ms. Kortemeyer and Mr. Galbraith shared in the virtual meeting:

## Physical Plant & Equipment Levy (PPEL)

The Linn-Mar School Board is asking the community to renew the voted Physical Plant and Equipment Levy (PPEL) on March 5, 2024.

### What is PPEL?

- The PPEL is a voter-approved levy that generates funds for infrastructure and equipment repairs, purchases, and improvements. Funds can only be used for these purposes.
- If the PPEL is renewed by voters on March 5, 2024, the district would continue to use the funds to cover costs related to building and grounds maintenance, technology advancements, and other allowable expenses.
- If the PPEL is not renewed, the district would need to use general fund or SAVE money to support building upkeep, transportation, and technology, delaying potential projects planned from SAVE funding.

### How are PPEL funds used?

The Linn-Mar Community School District was provided with \$3.5 million in FY24 from its voter-approved Physical Plant and Equipment Levy (PPEL). We rely on these funds to cover many crucial needs. The existing PPEL approved by voters will sunset on June 30, 2025, without renewal. The district has used these funds for the following purposes:

- School security upgrades, including doors and locking systems
- Technology infrastructure upgrades

- Roof repairs and replacements
- School restroom updates
- Parking lot improvements
- Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system maintenance
- Annual replacement of three to four buses

As we continue to focus on preparing students for the career and college opportunities of the future, our district must ensure they have access to critical resources and services.

Find more about the PPEL at <https://www.linnmar.k12.ia.us/news/physical-plant-equipment-levy-ppel/>

Ms. Kortemeyer added that this PPEL funding is critical to ensuring Linn-Mar remains a “destination district.” Factors that contribute to the need for PPEL funding are historic levels of education budget cuts at the state level, the new school voucher program in Iowa, and an enrollment decline in the district.

Reminder: the vote is March 5, 2024. If you’re unsure of where your polling place is, you can locate it on the Iowa Secretary of State’s website: <https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/voterreg/pollingplace/search.aspx>

- II. **Treasurer’s Report:** Treasurer Abby Huston reported on the financial standing of the PTO.
  - the recent apparel sale garnered \$355;
  - the Echo Hill Night at Goldfinch brought in \$150;
  - an additional \$260 was received as part of the Dash For Cash fundraiser from earlier this school year;
  - BoxTops for Education brought in \$60;
  - Confirmed that Echo Hill is included in the Casey’s Rewards program.
  - Winter Social / Board, Book, Puzzle Swap had about \$250 in expenses.
  - a. **Teacher Stipends:** This use-it-or-lose-it fund allows for \$100 per year for each teacher; they only need to turn in the receipt from a purchase for their classroom. We’ve only received one request since our November meeting. We have 21 stipends still to award. Abby will reach out to teachers again to encourage them to use this funding for their classrooms.
  - b. **Teacher Request Update & Vote:** Mrs. Angie Rupe was present and requested \$94 to cover flexible seating (8 seats) and additional clipboards for her classroom. She discussed how important it is to have both of these tools to keep her students engaged in learning. Hayley Hegland made a motion to vote on Mrs. Rupe’s request; Jessica Becker seconded the motion. The motion was approved. Mrs. Rupe will have Heather Feigenbaum’s assistance to order the items soon.
  
- III. **Principal’s School Update:** Mr. McDonald said the snow days have been a challenge in recent weeks, but all is going well with professional development days. He looks forward to welcoming the students and staff back again soon. Jessica Becker added that she continues to research logistics of the addition of a core board for the Echo Hill playground.

## **PTO Activities/Events**

- IV. **Winter Social/Game, Book, Puzzle Swap:** felt like a successful event with lots of families participating. Ashlyn Wailand coordinated; loved that the teachers were able to use all the items that parents/families didn't take. Echo Hill families are notoriously last minute in sending in items, but overall a success. Low risk, high reward event.
- V. **Family BINGO Night, Friday, Feb. 2:** Jessica Becker and Ashlyn Wailand will coordinate this event. We will borrow Mr. Hugo's sound system for better audio this year; candy will be the prizes (no sponsors needed). Budget is \$200; coordinators will work with Mrs. Garcia for logistics, including seating capacity of the cafeteria.

## **VII. Committee Leads Updates**

- a) **Hospitality:** Molly Mulholland will begin working soon on conference meals for teachers; conferences are March 5 and 7. She's considering a "Sponsor a Teacher" option, with donations to cover catered meal expenses. She would potentially like to use GiveButter, the PTO's fundraising platform, for this purpose. She will coordinate with Treasurer Abby Huston to set this up soon.
- b) **STEAM Night:** Noelle Wittkop reported that the STEAM Team continues to work on planning this big event for Friday, April 19, at Echo Hill. Six presenters are confirmed; ideally would like 15-20. Suggested adding this all-call for presenters to a take-home flyer for students and also posting it to the Echo Hill Families Facebook group.
- c) **HyVee Receipts:** Noelle Wittkop reported that the receipts collected so far have garnered \$561 for Echo Hill. Noelle is in the building every Wednesday, when she collects receipts from around the school. She is planning another contest in conjunction with spring conferences. Watch the Tuesday e-newsletters for details and weekly totals.
- d) **Community Fundraising:** Curran Lipsett was not in attendance to give an update.
- e) **Volunteer Coordinators:** coordinators were not in attendance to give an update. Next workshop is Thursday, January 18, 9:00 AM, in the Echo Hill cafeteria.

## **VIII. General Updates / Open Discussion:**

President Hayley Hegland reminded us that we elect new leadership at the May meeting, so be thinking now about parents who would want to step up and be involved in the PTO. Hayley Hegland and Abby Huston (treasurer) both plan to segway off the board at the end of the school year. We thank them for their service to our school, staff, and students!

Meeting adjourned 7:40 PM.

**IV. January 15, 2024 PTO meeting attendees: \*VIRTUAL MEETING\***

Name	Name	Name
Amy Stouffer	Hayley Hegland	Abby Huston
Noelle Wittkop	Michelle Schuler	Jessica Becker
Heather Lough	CJ McDonald	Angie Meholensky
Amy Kortemeyer	Jon Galbraith	Angie Rupe
Molly Mulholland	Sarah Fridono	