

Red Alert Robotics Parent Organization

Meeting Minutes for 9/24/15

Board Members Present: Lisa Thielmeyer (President), Christy Varney (Vice-President), Karla Tugan (Treasurer), Valerie Schmoll (Fundraising Chair)

Parents Present: Amy Franco, Elise Horne, Srini Isanaka, Lori Kogut, Chris Mock Sr., Jill Newport, Stacy Osborne, Patrick Rasche, Chris Roeder, Scott Roeder, Amy Snyder, Jen Stevens, and Stephanie Terrell

Our teacher sponsor, Greg Valenta, also attended.

Lead mentor Nathan Coulombe started the meeting with a reminder to parents to check the team roster he has compiled to make sure all contact information is correct. He also reminded parents that Mr. Valenta will be handling grade checks for all team members. Parents and their students should also access the FIRST robotics STIMS website to update student information and fill out waivers for the season. Students are not allowed to travel unless this is complete. There is a link to the STIMS site under the “join” tab on the Red Alert website.

Sharon Baxter shared information about upcoming events for the team. She is in need of volunteers for the FLL tournament Red Alert will be hosting at CGMSN on 11/14. She is looking for alternate judges (training provided that morning) and a door monitor to make sure there is no food or drink in the gym and that people crowding around the tables to watch do not block access to the gym. Elise Horne volunteered to work the registration table, and Stacy Osborne will be running the concession stand. Stacy will have a sign-up sheet at the October meeting and will be asking for drink donations at that time. Lisa will be sending out a link to a Sign Up Genius and a link to VIMS (FIRST robotic’s volunteer matching system) to organize volunteers for the 11/14 tournament.

Sharon also shared information about Barnes and Noble’s Mini Maker Fair the weekend of 11/6-11/8. The team has been invited to present robot demonstrations and potentially lead some STEM related activities. Red Alert will also pass out flyers for a fundraiser. Percentages of sales during the event will be donated to Red Alert. Presales of cheesecakes and Starbucks products also count toward these totals.

Upcoming Events:

- Thursday, 10/1 – Endress + Hauser STEM Education Fair
- Friday, 10/2 – Homecoming Parade
- Saturday, 10/17 – CAGE Match at Southport High School

- Saturday, 10/24 – FIRST Forums at Purdue
- Friday, 10/6-Sunday, 10/8 – Mini Makers Faire, Barnes and Noble
- Saturday, 11/4 – FLL Tournament at CGMSN – set up is Friday evening
- Saturday, 12/5 – Central Library FLL Tournament (students assisting)
- Saturday, 12/19 – FTC District Tournament at CGMSN – set up is Friday evening
- Saturday, 12/9 – FRC Build Season Kickoff
- Saturdays, 1/9-2/20 – Build Season Meals

Greg Valenta, our new teacher sponsor, reported that he supervised a float work day after school on 9/23. About 12 students showed up to help, and he felt it was a productive time. The Red Alert float will be in the Homecoming parade before the football game on Friday, 10/2.

Minutes from the August parent meeting were presented. Elise Horne moved that they be approved, and Amy Snyder seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Stacy Osborne shared that the students will be preparing friends and family letters for donations at the 10/8 meeting, so parents should help to gather addresses. Supplies will be provided that night for students who bring in addresses. For families who want to do this electronically, there is a PDF file on the Red Alert website. The link can be found under the “About” tab on the main page and then under “Team Fundraising Opportunities.” There is also a “Donate” button on the website, but donating this way does not allow the donor to specify to which student the money should be credited. Stacy Osborne said she would look into a solution for this. For donations received from friends and family letters, the first \$500 goes toward a student’s fees, and anything over that is given to the team.

Karla Tugan shared the monthly financial report as follows:

The current bank balance in the RARPO PNC bank account is \$11,316.84, and there is \$734.46 in the paypal account. The balance in the PNC account was \$9,524.09 on 8/26. The balance in the PNC account on this date last year was \$25,551.20.

At the August 27th meeting, the board shared the team budget that they prepared for the 2015-2016 school year. Chris Roeder moved to approve the budget, and Srini Isanaka seconded the motion. The budget was unanimously approved.

Fundraising

Lisa began our discussion of team fundraising with a reminder for parents to link their Kroger Plus cards to the team so that the team will earn a percentage of all purchases. Krogers sends out checks quarterly once a minimum amount is earned. Similarly, families can designate Red Alert to earn a percentage of purchases from Amazon.com by signing up at the site www.smile.amazon.com. Karla Tugan suggested that this information be included on the Friends and Family letters.

Fundraising will be a strong focus for the parent organization this year because the captains have requested that the team attend all three district events, and the state championship tournament will be in Kokomo, necessitating an additional hotel stay. The board met on 9/20 to discuss this, and Lisa will meet with the captains to inform them of the extra \$3,000 the kids must earn to make this happen. \$2,400 will probably be enough as we have budgeted \$600 for a team social at Purdue that will probably not happen this year. Also, the team's reserve in the bank is low, so the board feels it is necessary to add to it to protect the team in case one or more of our grants are not awarded.

Lisa shared that she listened to many webinars on the FIRST website regarding fundraising and discovered that the most successful teams have their students canvas their communities, asking businesses for donations. Most donations these teams receive are less than \$500. Also, we should not limit ourselves to just seeking sponsorships from STEM-related businesses. Before opening up the discussion for brainstorming, some ideas she presented were: A mass mailing to businesses in the community (with the possibility of creating a patron book to distribute), a regatta or other large community event for Center Grove, a poker night, and a trivia night. The following ideas were part of the ensuing brainstorming:

- Pay to put a teacher or administrator in jail (like at a football or basketball game)
- BINGO-we would have to work with the Center Grove Education Foundation since they hold a gambling license.
- Teen video game tournament
- Silent auction – this will probably be saved for the next golf tournament fundraiser in the fall of 2016.
- Auction off the Red Alert students to families/the elderly to help with chores.

- Pumpkin catapult – something like the Bullseye TV show that could be done after Halloween when farms and stores are trying to get rid of pumpkins.
- Pancake breakfast with superheroes
- Parent's night out during the holidays with babysitting and gift wrapping.
- A car wash

Because the board feels that a long term to continually raise money for the team is needed, parents who were interested in forming a committee met with Valerie Schmoll at the end of the meeting.

Regarding the proposed student activity center, there was general agreement that as an organization, we would be knowledgeable of the proposal and able to answer questions but would leave the decision whether or not to support the space to each parent. A remonstrance has been filed, so starting in mid-November; there will be a 30 day period during which both sides will be collecting signatures with the group obtaining the most winning the vote.

Remodeling has begun in the space that the team will call its new home. The team has been assured that it will be ready for build season.

Next parent meeting will be Thursday, 10/29/15 at 7pm.