

**Minutes of the James Madison High School PTSA
Monday, September 14, 2020**

The meeting was called to order over Zoom at 7:01 pm.

In attendance: Greg Hood, Timothy Buckley, Elizabeth Dean, Chris Lande, Abby Shannon, Ana Lopez, Andrea Kramer, Angie Gutenson, Anjum Sikka, Beth Eachus, Cara Bretl, Cecili Thompson Williams, Christine Nell, Colleen Nielsen, Cynthia Coogan, Dara Dirth, David Castañeda, Debra Steppel, Delia Troy, Dennis Humen, Elizabeth Terry-Humen, Ellie Bechtle, Emily Korff, Greg Pompelli, Heather Ireland, Heather Rosen, Heba Singer, Hélène Klumpp, Hina Mehta, Joann Meginley, Joceline Nahigian, Joe Nichols, Kathy Feaganes, Laura Plante, Leon Kennedy, Leslie Conroy, Linda Khan, Maha Giavis, Maribel Langas Miller, Mary Ann Rashid, Melanie O'Brien, Michelle Boback, Jennifer O'Beirne, Naomi Hutchins, Nene Spivy, Pascale Centola, Ravi Myneni, Robyn Nguyen, Sandy Pompelli, Sarah Espanol, Sarah Lundquist, Seth Cohen, Shelly Koshuta, Sonya Marsden, Stephanie Bolini, Susan Kenney, Tara Saha, Tarah Weaver, Val Roush, Wendy Pearson

I. Call to Order and Welcome – Chris Lande

Chris welcomed those in attendance and asked for participants to note their names in the chat box in Zoom if it is different from their Zoom participant name. He noted that the meeting is being recorded to be posted on the JMHS website.

II. Approval of May PTSA Meeting Minutes – Sarah Lundquist

Sarah noted that the May 2020 PTSA minutes had been posted on the JMHS website. Chris asked for any feedback; no comments or changes were suggested. Sonya Marsden made a motion to approve the minutes as written; Beth Eachus seconded. The minutes were approved as written.

III. Principal Report – Principal Greg Hood

Mr. Hood welcomed everyone to the new year, which has started off well, with only a few minor technology issues. Back to School Night (BTSN) was last week, virtual for the first time. This year he is focusing on the relationships between teachers and students because they can't be together in person. He noted that syllabi are available on Blackboard 24/7 so parents have a better idea of what students are doing and what's expected of them.

Cameras should be used by staff. It is encouraged for students but not required. There are many reasons – privacy, technology, and otherwise – why it cannot be mandated.

Material distribution began today, running through most of the week, and went very well, with 1100 students signed up today alone to pick up course and other materials.

Mr. Hood introduced Instructional Coach Dr. Elizabeth Dean, who talked about how excited teachers were to finally begin school, even virtually, after all the anticipation. They are focusing on relationships between teachers and students. The teachers have shared how wonderfully students did in this first week, noting their resilience. Many classes have already visited the library. Deeper learning for all students is a focus, regardless of the situation – strong relationships are needed for this to happen.

Mr. Hood noted that nothing will be as good as “normal” but it was exciting to see how well things went overall.

IV. Student Services – Timothy Buckley

Mr. Buckley thanked the PTSA for generously contributing to the Mentor Program's professional training; the program is up and running. This Friday and every other during Q1, mentors (180 of them) will meet with freshmen during 4th period Care & Connect. They were utilized during orientation, though it didn't go as technologically smoothly as was hoped.

On September 23 all FCPS high schools will provide an SAT test for seniors who signed up. Other students will have asynchronous activities, which will serve as their attendance for the day.

Counselors are working on finalizing student schedules and hope to be done by the end of the week. Administration will reach out to seniors to see how they can connect with them and make them feel special.

(At this point, the meeting was “Zoombombed” and had to be shut down at 7:21. The meeting resumed in a new Zoom at 7:35.)

V. Faculty Report

There was no Faculty Report in the meeting.

VI. Student Government Report

There was no Student Government Report in the meeting.

VII. President’s Report – Christopher Lande

Chris noted that Zoom security clearly still needs to be worked on. He urged participants to join the PTSA – without live events to recruit members it is more difficult to attract them. He noted the Board had updated the website and there are funds to help teachers and support various programs.

VIII. Treasurer’s Report – Tarah Weaver

There are some changes to the budget this year, the biggest of which is that membership revenue is currently down because due to COVID, there was no BTSN or other events to solicit membership, so our membership budget is very conservative. A conservative budget was also set for donations and practice exam fees. (The question was asked: Why are there fewer practice tests? Chris Lande said he’s unsure whether the school will allow us to host practice tests, people might fear coming to campus to take the test, and more colleges are going test optional.)

Tarah reported that expenses are generally about the same, but the staff development budget has decreased a bit in anticipation that there will be few/no conferences for staff to attend although we still want to offer as much as possible if circumstances change. There is some flexibility in the budget.

Wendy Pearson made a motion to approve the budget; Debra Steppel seconded. The 2020-2021 budget was passed.

IX. Committee Reports

Academic Boosters – Beth Eachus reported that we are planning to offer practice exams and are working with the school and our partner Educational Connections to determine logistics. It may be online and will be timed. The practice exams will offer the same information regarding results with regard to scoring and what subject areas need work.

JMHS Pantry and Outreach – Beth Eachus thanked all that have generously supported our Madison Food Pantry program. The Madison Pantry partnered with the Vienna Student Food Initiative and assisted over 70 families this past summer with grocery gift cards each week (to minimize touch). For families that needed additional support, fresh food deliveries to doorsteps were provided as well. To start the school year, twenty bags were packed for distribution this week. Donations through our Amazon wish list are much needed! School supplies are also being distributed to our students in need. Susan Kenney mentioned that Vienna Presbyterian with Belong! is hosting a food drive on Saturday 9/19 (and the 3rd Saturday of each month) for families in need.

Staff Appreciation/Hospitality – Unfortunately, we weren’t able to hold the traditional back to school welcome breakfast for teachers. Angie Gutenson reported that each teacher will get a Madison-branded travel coffee mug with a special note. We hope to celebrate them in person soon!

Membership – In Robyn Nguyen’s absence, Chris restated that current membership numbers are down because regular recruiting events didn’t happen. The Board has tweaked the website to make it easier/clearer with different ways to pay. Much of our income comes from membership, so please join!

X. New Business

What to do for seniors? Mr. Hood said that FCPS is looking into a systemwide way to celebrate seniors. Sonya Marsden noted there had been some talk on Facebook about having yard signs for all classes. Beth Eachus offered to get a quote on yard signs from the vendor who did the senior banner over Maple Avenue in the spring. Senior signs (which go on lawns in March) are a big fundraiser for All-Night Grad (ANG) – this effort is not intended to take away from that.

Chris Lande asked when the parking lot would start to be unavailable – Mr. Hood said it was likely to happen in February/March.

Chris asked anyone who has ideas for new programs to please post to the PTSA Facebook page or let the Board know.

Chris stated that we are required to revise the PTSA bylaws every 5 years, based on a template from VA PTA. This was done since the last meeting; very minor changes were made. Beth Eachus made a motion to approve the revised bylaws; Sonya Marsden seconded. The vote was tabled until the next meeting in order to give people time to review the revisions.

XI. Old Business

There was no old business.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 pm.