

**Minutes of the James Madison High School PTSA  
June 3, 2021**

The meeting was called to order in person and over Zoom at 7:03 pm.

**In attendance:** Greg Hood, Timothy Buckley; Abby Shannon, Alyssa Kowal, Andrea Kowal, Andrea Kramer, Angie Gutenson, Beth Eachus, Braden Holt, Cheryl Cass, Chris Lande, Christine Barilla Nell, Debra Steppel, Donna O'Harren, Gayle Schlueter, Gwen Riddle, Heather Ireland, Heba Singer, Luke Kurcina, Lynn Collins, Rene Taylor Newman, Robyn Nguyen, Sarah Lundquist, Shelly Koshuta, Sonya Marsden

**I. Call to Order and Welcome – Chris Lande**

Chris thanked everyone for attending, especially those in person. This is our final PTSA meeting of the year and first attempt at a concurrent meeting, which we will likely see more of next year.

Chris commented that graduation was wonderful and we are ending the year better than we started.

**II. Approval of May PTSA Meeting Minutes – Sarah Lundquist**

Chris Lande noted that the May 2021 PTSA minutes had been posted on the JMHS website for review. Chris asked for any feedback. Andrea Kramer made a motion to approve the minutes as written; Tim Buckley seconded. A vote was taken and the minutes were approved as written.

**III. Principal's Report – Principal Greg Hood**

Mr. Hood gave the following updates:

We couldn't have predicted 2 months ago where we would be today. Prom was great and we were able to have more students than we thought; even better – they could be unmasked. Convocation was still held in the gym. Graduation at Jiffy Lube Live (JLL) went great despite some concerns about what it might be like. We would love to hear feedback from parents and students about venue, content, etc. Eagle Bank allows more seating but isn't a great venue; DAR is better.

Braden Holt commented that he thought graduation was amazing and much more interesting than he's heard it was in past years. Chris Lande thought it worked well with weather and timing, given that it wasn't during rush hour. Abby Shannon thought it was wonderful, though parking for some was awful depending on location. She added that the JLL staff was so nice and helpful. The only drawback is that you just can't count on weather and if it rains it would be very muddy. Gwen Riddle commented on how spacious it was and that the ceremony was beautiful and well paced. The family audience members were sitting close enough to the students to see – the Jumbotrons were fantastic. Mr. Hood noted that it's not up to us to decide whether to go back – we would have to partner with other schools, as there would need to be 3 graduations in a day for cost reasons. Sonya Marsden commended the administrators for putting plans in place so calmly.

**IV. Student Services Report – Timothy Buckley**

Mr. Buckley gave the following updates:

We are requesting that students review their course schedules for next year by next Friday, June 11. They should into Student Vue and look at Course Selection. Let us know now before counselors leave in mid-June so we can build schedules as accurately as possible. It's possible that things have changed for your student since they first requested those classes. (For example, maybe they want to go up or down a level now that they've finished their current class.)

Materials collections is coming up; Thursday, June 10 is a big one. Students should please turn in books, laptops, etc., as soon as they're done with them.

Mr. Buckley thanked the PTSA for the Above and Beyond award he received.

Summer activities: Summer school will be hosted at Madison for credit recovery if a student didn't pass a class. Signup is underway – please sign up sooner rather than later. The Bridges program will return in person, offered the weeks of July 26 OR August 2. This year we are opening it to rising sophomores, especially if they haven't had an opportunity to come into the building. Therefore it will be more broad-based, not just oriented to freshmen. Mentors are being trained and we've also created a sort of "welcoming committee" for new students of all grades as well.

## **V. Faculty Report**

Mr. Hood thanked the PTSA for all the end of year activities and support. He also mentioned that Schoology is coming next year to replace Blackboard; the pilot uses have been successful. Google will still be used in FCPS as well.

## **VI. Student Government Report – Braden Holt**

Braden thanked the PTSA and administration for their support of all that he and the SGA have tried to do. This year was filled with uncertainty but they appreciate that the PTSA had their back and brought some cool opportunities, like the LOVE sign on the trail.

Braden then turned to Luke Kurcina, the incoming SGA president. Luke announced that the past few weeks have been busy with prom and other senior activities. The feedback on prom was very good overall and there were a lot of people there.

The SGA is getting a jump on next year to plan homecoming, the county fair, and the start of the school year. There is an activity for freshmen planned for next week, coordinated largely by Piper Boatwright. Alyssa Kowal added that we don't know the regulations for next year but as parents are more inclined to approve of outdoor activities, homecoming will likely be similar to this year's prom.

The LOVE sign decor has to come down by June 15. Braden gave kudos to Lizzie Endicott, who planned and designed it.

## **VII. President's Report – Christopher Lande**

Chris commented on how great it is that we made it through this tough year! and we're here in person. Online is great and allows us to do more than we ever expected we could do, but being in person is even better. Hopefully the trend is heading upward. He gave thanks to everyone working so hard to make things happen, and he thanked Board members for a great year.

## **VIII. Treasurer's Report – Tarah Weaver**

Beth Eachus reported for Tarah:

We are in great shape financially. Some line items haven't come through yet, like awards. We were able to give more senior scholarships because prom was taken care of by FCPS.

Beth pointed out that two items in the budget are restricted: \$8,000 for the Pantry, which will be used this summer, and \$10,000 in funds to cover anything necessary related to construction. The latter will be reexamined in September.

Donna O'Harren asked how much we've made through the Amazon Smile program. Chris said maybe \$100 per quarter – it's not a huge amount. He has plugged the program but it could always be enhanced.

## **IX. Committee Reports**

Academic Awards – Beth Eachus announced there may be some sort of in-person ceremony in the fall. Academic letters still haven't arrived but will be distributed when/as it makes the most sense.

Mr. Buckley noted that there will be an end-of-year academic awards ceremony online Tuesday, June 8. Winners will be notified in advance so they can attend.

Academic Boosters – Beth Eachus announced that we have raised almost \$6,000 through mock tests. There are two scheduled for this summer. Students really like online mock tests to help them know what to study over the summer.

Awards/Scholarships – Sonya Marsden announced awards:

Make a Difference awards for outstanding seniors are \$1000 each, which goes right to the school the student is attending in the fall. It was a record year for submissions; congratulations to all the winners!

Triple I awards are given to outstanding teachers via submissions from teachers, students, parents, and staff. They receive a special lanyard and a check. More nominations than typical were received this year; congratulations to all the winners!

This was such an unusual year that the PTSA created a new award called Above and Beyond, which was given to Tim Buckley and Kurt Kohls, both of whom did so much extra work this year.

Staff Appreciation – Beth Eachus reported they will be doing a year-end lunch for the staff from Best Buns. This spring they've done gift card raffles and other fun things to show the PTSA's appreciation for the staff.

Athletic Boosters – Mr. Hood announced that spring athletics are going great. It's time for district finals now – there are possibly 4 games this Saturday: baseball, softball, and both boys' and girls' lacrosse. All teams are ranked very high in their divisions. Spring sports might even go into middle or 3rd week of June, meaning even some seniors will keep playing!

Orchestra – Sonya Marsden announced that they were able to have a concert, which was wonderful.

Debate – Abby Shannon announced that 4 students competed in the Grand National finals. They all placed very high, and one team earned enough points to receive the Academic All-American Award for the first time in JMHS history.

JMHS Pantry and Outreach – Beth Eachus reported that the committee will do something big once a month instead of weekly. Besides food, they also give grocery gift cards and hygiene items. She also noted that the staff has been incredible because they know the students so well they can make recommendations. She thanked the community for their generosity.

#### **X. New Business**

Chris Lande announced the slate of nominees for next year's PTSA Board:

Beth Eachus, president

Gayle Schlueter, 1st vice president

Abby Shannon, 2nd vice president

Sarah Lundquist, secretary

Treasurer - open

We have a couple of interested parties for Treasurer so hope to fill that position soon. The Board can appoint someone later; it doesn't require a vote.

Chris thanked the candidates for expressing interest and being willing to take on these positions. He asked for nominations from the floor. As there were none, Shelly Koshuta made a motion to approve the proposed Board. Robyn Nguyen seconded. A vote was taken and the slate was approved.

#### **XI. Old Business**

All Night Grad – Chris Lande recognized Sarah Espanol for all of her senior celebration efforts this year. Tomorrow the (former) seniors will go to Six Flags. Sarah will need a co-chair for next year.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 pm.