

**Minutes of the Board Meeting of the JSSPVA  
November 14, 2017**

**In attendance:**

Board Members: Mindy Douthit, Rebecca Quigley, Nancy O'Donnell, Emily Wyner, Antje Boeing, Robin Stone, Crystal Pennington, Betsy Kilroy, Kris Whisner, Lara Scarborough, Adrienne Weisenberger, M'Liz Simonds, Kath Lyman, Suzanne Nelson, Kendra Wallace.

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 am by Mindy Douthit, President.

The second order of business was to approve the minutes from the October Board meeting. Kath Lyman motioned to approve the minutes, Nancy O'Donnell seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved as drafted.

**Principal's Report**

Mrs. Wallace thanked everyone for the support at the Fall Book Fair. The teachers were overwhelmed by families' generosity re: purchasing and donating new books for the classrooms. The books will be very helpful as reading/writing is being overhauled in all K-5 classrooms

She then thanked everyone for their support re: Veteran's Day donations and speakers for the 4th-5th Grade classrooms. This year's approach of limiting Veteran special guests to these grades (vs. school-wide assembly) aligns with curriculum and has created a fun "buzz" among younger grades who look forward to participating in future years

Finally, she addressed the need for parent volunteers to help with lunchroom sorting and recycling. This program is important as the school is making a major effort to be environmentally responsible. Parents should note that they do not need to discipline children in the lunchroom—their focus is simply on the recycling effort. Mrs. Wallace stressed that parent volunteers may witness a wide range of student behavior should not discuss beyond school walls.

**President's Report**

**Vaping**—Mark Howard willing to come into school and address issue. Discussion about best time/format for presentation. Mrs Wallace confirmed that kids at Sears are vaping. This topic will be integrated into Jr High health classes this year via guest speakers. Will look at parent/child joint session as well so parents can sit with kids and learn together. Agreed that morning session is preferred vs. evening. Mindy will coordinate with Mark. Mrs. Wallace will send communication about sessions via advisors, not just JSSPVA.

**New Trier New Superintendent Meeting**—Paul Sally’s office has offered to meet with the JSSPVA and provide a tour of the new East campus. Mindy will coordinate this effort for sometime in the Spring--perhaps for the May meeting when both outgoing/incoming Board members will be present. The Board discussed this opportunity and agreed it might be advantageous to explore additional ways to leverage Sally’s offer--perhaps offer a Q&A with Sally which would be extended to all Sears parents.

### **Past President’s Report**

**Giving Tree**—Kath Lyman reported that 146 Sears families have donated to the fund thus far (less than 50% participation). She will be looking into targeted emails to families who have not yet participated, in addition to a “push” in December regarding holiday giving.

### **Vice President’s Report of Subcommittees**

**Book Fair**—Rebecca Quigley reported that this year’s Fall Book Fair was a huge success. Everything was very smoothly coordinated, and the efforts of the co-chairs are much appreciated.

**Skate Exchange**—The exchange will take place on Thursday, 11/16 right after school.

**Veteran’s Day**—Rebecca echoed Mrs. Wallace’s previous comments that the Veteran’s Day program was very successful--both the in-class Q&A sessions and the donation effort. The 5th and 8th grade classes enjoyed the intimate experience interacting with the Veterans. The students were extremely engaged and comfortable asking questions.

### **Treasurer’s and Past Treasurer’s Report**

Antje Boeing reported that she is exploring switching all school accounts from North Shore Community Bank to JP Morgan Chase. This move will ultimately make it less costly for families to use apps like Square and QuickPay, and it will provide more flexibility for “Merchant Services”. The JSSPVA also currently has CDs at Charles Schwab, but ultimately all accounts would be under Chase. The transition would involve three steps: 1) immediately transfer the money in JSSPVA cash account over to Chase--this includes the core JSSPVA operating budget and the Giving Tree account...2) establish Merchant Services with well-negotiated fees (such as credit card transactions, QuickPay, etc). ...3) move the CDs over when they mature. Mindy asked for a motion to approve this financial strategy. Kath Lyman moved for an approval, and Adrienne Weisenberger seconded the motion.

### **Board Committee Reports**

**Benefit**--Betsy Kilroy and Crystal Pennington reported that the Benefit Committee is in full "crunch mode". They asked all JSSPVA members to help out whenever possible--look for emails and sign-ups during the coming weeks. The co-chairs provided the following updates:

- There is a need for local businesses and/or families to sponsor specific Benefit costs. A list of these costs was distributed to each meeting attendee (wall of whiskey, late-night snack, etc)
- Sears School plastic cups with Benefit details will be distributed to students this week. The hope is to get the kids excited about the event too!
- Mrs. Wallace urged co-chairs to get invitations out to teachers soon so they are aware of the event details and they can plan to attend. The co-chairs are looking for families to sponsor teacher/spouse tickets.
- There is still a need for major silent auction items (vacation homes, airfares, etc). Please contact Crystal with any leads.
- Due to the fact that Scamper will be held at school the evening prior to the Benefit, the Board discussed ways to leverage the Scamper audience and publicize the event/auction. Special Scamper reserved front row seating and/or preferred parking will be offered as one of the "pre-sale" items on the Benefit auction web site.
- Printed auction books will be distributed first week of school after Winter Break.
- Party tickets will cost \$175 per person
- Fundraising Goal--\$100,000 net proceeds

**Communications**—Kris Whisner reminded attendees to send all newsletter items to: josephsearsschoolpva@gmail.com. If there are one-off emails that need to be sent outside of the bi-weekly newsletter, please send directly to Kris' personal email. She does not frequently check the PVA email account.

**Community Liaison**—Nancy O'Donnell provided the following highlights from the 11/13 School Board Meeting:

- The Board held a public hearing on the intent to sell \$3.2 million in cash bonds. The bonds would be used to finance facilities projects that specifically improve The Joseph Sears School campus (NOT the Village House). Facilities projects will be presented during the 2018-2019 school year and will likely address: 1) proper HVAC around the school...2) a better lunchroom solution.
- Mr. Scott Wallace gave an update on the Village House renovation. Mr. Wallace said that a memorandum of understanding between the District, the Village of Kenilworth and the Kenilworth Park District is nearly completed. The memorandum will provide the framework that will be used to draft the legal agreement for joint use and construction of the renovated Village House. The Board will review the memorandum as well as early architectural drawings of the Village House at the the Board's meeting on December 7.
- Awards of Recognition were presented to the following JSS community members:
  - Jill Carrell--for starting Girls on the Run
  - Bell-Bartholomay family for contributions to the Outdoor Garden
  - Ms. Valerie Feradaz for work in the Outdoor Garden

- Kenilworth Park District Superintendent
- Mrs. Wallace reported that the District would continue to research and review English/Language Arts writing and reading curriculum materials with a possible recommendation for the adoption of materials to come in June. Mrs. Wallace also noted that arts, music and world language have all begun curriculum renewal cycle work this year.
- Mr. Besset Sabourin gave a report on the District's extended school year program. Mr. Sabourin provided survey results from families of students who participated in the District's extended school year program over the summer. Respondents had a positive reaction to the Summer program. While the most popular time was the week prior to start of school, many families noted the schedule offered wasn't ideal. It was suggested students new to JSS should take advantage of the program for an easier transition into the new school year. The feedback collected through the survey will guide improvements to the program in 2018.
- The question of teacher pension was raised...is there anyway to determine what the District's pension obligation would be if the state goes bankrupt? It was clarified that Sears does carry Pension liability and must pay into the state pension plan each year, but it is difficult to get a sense of the number we would be liable for if we are held responsible.
- Suzanne Nelson asked if there is a protocol for hiring consultants within the District? (i.e. curriculum consultant, etc). It was clarified that any consultant who requires fees in excess of \$10,000 must be approved by the board. But often consultants are hired at smaller fees. Board members would like to see more transparency on the hiring of such consultants.
- Consultant Hiring—Board wants more transparency when hiring Consultants. Discussion about protocol for hiring.
- Dr LeRoy report—Dr Drury (Jr High reading specialist) will have work published
- District Communication Strategy—Chike Eroku—do not over communicate. Use social media
- The Board approved the hiring of Ms. Laura Wise as Front Office Greeter.
- Board members discussed the SY 18-19 fee schedule and junior kindergarten tuition. School fees and junior kindergarten tuition will remain the same as they are in SY 17-18
- The Board unanimously approved revisions to the 2017-2018 Board Meeting Calendar. The committee of the whole meeting scheduled for November 30 has been cancelled and a special meeting scheduled at 8 a.m. on December 7 has been added.
- Board members discussed a preliminary draft of the SY 2018-2019 Calendar. The first day of school will be Monday 8/27/18...the last day will be Tuesday 6/12/19. Other important dates are still in discussion. The Board will post the final, approved calendar in January.

**Enrichment**—Rebecca reported that the Nick Page Music program was huge success. She thanked the Enrichment co-chairs for coordinating this effort.

**FAN**--Lara Scarborough reported that Sears School is sponsoring the upcoming event on 11/16: Dr. Jo Boaler will speak on "encouraging creativity in math problem solving". On 11/28, Meg Jay, Ph.D., will present: "Super Normal: Stories of Adversity, Resilience, and Growth." How people who have survived tragedy develop a sense of mental toughness.

**New Trier Liaison**—Adrienne Weisenberger reported the following upcoming New Trier calendar items:

- 11/16-no school (conferences)
- 11/17-no school institute day
- 11/25-Tri-Ship will begin selling Christmas Trees—all money raised goes towards scholarships
- 12/2-Sears student placement tests 7:45 am at the Northfield Campus

**Nominating**—Committee meetings will commence in January. JSSPVA members should contact M'Liz Simonds with potential committee members, and/or if you want to volunteer for a position on the 2018-2019 Board. The proposed nominating committee must be presented and approved by the JSSPVA Board before it conducts any official business.

**Sears Café**— nothing to report.

**Secretary**— nothing to report.

Meeting adjourned 9:57 am

Respectfully submitted by:

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Mindy Douthit, President

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Emily Wyner, Secretary