



Verein der Eltern und Freunde
der John-F.-Kennedy-Schule zu Berlin e.V.
Society of Parents and Friends
of the John F. Kennedy School Berlin e.V.

John-F.-Kennedy-Schule Teltower Damm 87-93 • 14167 Berlin

Minutes
Tuesday, November 15th, 2022
JFKS Aula

Board Members Present: Jacqui Bespolka, Robert Erlbaum, John Mask, Tanja Maka-Magill, Shannon Callahan, Lisa Ward, Theresa Helou

Board Members Excused: Lia Rigamonti (Theresa has proxy), Eva El-Alfy (Theresa has proxy), Kasia Esteves (John has proxy), Kim Douglass (Shannon has proxy), Vanessa Lestingi (Robert has proxy)

Members Present: Mark Fritzenschaft, Lynn Brinda, Debra Fernandes, Fionnula Hoffmann, Nadia Eighobashi-Meinhardt, Laura Martinez-Fonts

Meeting started: 18:58

1. Approval of Agenda

12 yes
0 abstention
0 no

2. Approval of Minutes of the last meeting

12 yes
0 abstention
0 no

**Approved with the stipulation regarding one point to be corrected*

3. Note from the Administration – Mark Fritzenschaft

- a. Everything is going swimmingly. Haus Reil is furnished and in full operation now.

LB: There should be a note about the completion of the Haus Reil renovation in both the Parent Newsletter and the JFKS Admin Monthly Bulletin. Perhaps students should write it.

4. Note from the Student Council – Not present



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5. Report from the President – Jacqui Bespolka

- a. Save-the-Date: 12 December. This marks the one year anniversary of the passing of Buck Chisolm. The Verein will be posting a sign in the tulip garden honoring Buck's contribution to the JFKS community. The Parent Council Board will be offering Christmas cookies, Model UN will be offering punch, and the Scouts will potentially have a grill to offer hamburgers. All offerings will be for fundraising efforts with the proceeds going to the respective activity/entity.
- b. A Verein member proposed that artwork created by the students of JFKS could be used to create holiday cards.
- c. Baupiloten. The wishes of students and others about their vision of how the JFKS campus should appear in twenty-year's time were collected. The architects of potential improvements to the campus led the exercise in order to understand the expectations and needs of those currently who make use of the campus. Unfortunately, the architects had a different expected outcome from the exercise and were not ready for such a high level of creativity.
- d. Fundraising Event. The Verein Board met prior to this meeting to discuss the potential for a fundraising event such as a Gala. While the Verein currently has funding available for some activities, there are some large ticket items which the Verein would like to be able to support for the school, such as 10 Promethean Boards which would cost around €60.000.

LB: We could invite a famous artist to give a show

SC: So you envision having it here?

LB: Yes. You can do it more affordably. You can charge €50. Go to local wineshops and let them donate and sell at the event. Are we trying to make money?

JB: Yes.

LB: Oh.

JB: It's meant to be a fundraiser. Either fancy and at a hotel or less fancy and



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less expensive and at the school but this would mean a lot more work and volunteers required.

FH: What does the Verein spend money on? So it's been decided that there's a Gala? I think the parents should get to decide where the money gets spent.

JM: The expenditures for the last three years are listed on the Verein website. The decision makers for the Verein funds are the board. Those wishing to be a part of that process are encouraged to join the board.

6. Report from the Treasurer – Robert Erlbaum

- a. Bookkeeping is up to date as of the end of the last quarter, September.
- b. Membership fees will be deducted from member accounts via SEPA next week.
- c. Tuurio app. The new Tuurio app will be used in future to manage the Verein activities.

JB: The app is intended to digitize the Verein communication, membership, fee collection, and event organization.

RB: [Tuurio app demonstration given] The app is bilingual and follows an easy signup process. The developers are based in Berlin, so they are available to help us and the data management falls under German law.

LM-F: The sign-up process is clear and looks pretty straight-forward.

7. Report from the JFKS School Shop –

- a. The shop will have lots of new inventory arriving soon, well ahead of the holiday season.
- b. New shop hours will be available prior to Christmas holidays: Wednesday



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mornings and afternoons.

8. Requests

- a. Tanja Quinn - Sitzkissen. Total cost of request is €150.

10 yes
0 abstention
2 no

**Note: The request is conditionally approved pending: a) proof of costs and b) the request be circulated throughout the entire grade level to determine if other classes require the same materials.*

- b. Tamara Faber / Student Council – Hot dogs for Student Council movie night. Total cost of the request is €125.

12 yes
0 abstention
0 no

**Note: These costs are believed to be covered by the regular €100 which the Verein pledges to any club/activity of the school; however, the vote was taken in order to cover the additional €25.*



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- c. Sabine Möhrle – Materials for students to make holiday decorations. Total cost of the request is €120.

12 yes
0 abstention
0 no

Miscellaneous

- a. JB: Flea Market. Lia is leading the organization for the planning of the flea market for spring 2023. The date is not yet confirmed but may potentially be on May 14th.

FH: The date for the flea market should be checked to make sure it does not fall on the same day as a major Berlin sporting event, such as a marathon or bike race.

JB: The Verein liked the idea Shannon presented last year about having a table to collect unwanted items after the flea market ends that day, in order to bring these items to those in need. Fionnula would you be interested in taking this on?

FH: I'm not ready to take anything on until there is a discussion about last year.

JB: I wasn't at the meeting.

- b. SC: Teacher Supply Survey. I sent out a survey to ask what teachers spent for school materials beyond what the Verein supports. I asked teachers what they would like to see from the Verein, what supplies they most need and whether they would like a supplies closet. The survey results indicated that almost all teachers incur out-of-pocket expenses. First year teachers reported spending an average of €786, while Homeroom teachers reported spending around €450, and Subject teachers reported spending an average of €474. Some teachers reported having received no support from the Verein. It is not clear from the survey why some teachers receive nothing, while those teachers who do receive support from the Verein report receiving support in different amounts.



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There was a question about whether teachers are asking for too much money. The survey results indicate that teachers are not receiving the support they need.

It was also suggested that teachers are able to deduct expenses via their tax returns. To my knowledge, teachers are not able to completely deduct expenses for supplies for their classroom. The deductible amount is limited to 30% of total expenses.

We, the board, should consider providing some transparency about how the funding is planned and distributed.

RE: The deductibility of expenses needs to be checked. Also, we should ensure that teachers are aware that they are able to request funding from the Verein to support their needs instead of spending money out-of-pocket. They just need to provide proof of their need and show that this isn't financially supported from another source.

TH: A working group on this topic would help to determine which amounts are appropriate for each segment of teachers.

DF: The school has funds, while some supplies are required to be bought by teachers, the school and Senat should also be providing materials as well.

FH: Does the Verein give the teachers money?

RE: Different amounts to different teachers.

SC: The Verein constitution says that funding should be provided for teacher supplies, students in need, and community events. The expenses are only tax deductible above a certain amount. The survey results indicate that most teachers are spending their own money to enable their classroom activities.

RE: The teachers with expenses have the opportunity to request support from the Verein.

SC: Teachers are very busy and submitting requests consumes more time which they may not have. Let us please utilize the results of the survey, and perhaps also the results of a committee, to determine a new way forward to improve funding to the teachers for supplies, as well the availability of supplies (e.g. a supply closet), in order to reduce the workload on teachers to also request itemized reimbursement.



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JB: Let's look further into the survey results with the formation of a committee, and then in future we can potentially adjust how much additional support the Verein can provide the teachers. In order to prevent an overfunding from the Verein, we should also determine exactly how much is available from other official sources.

MF: I am not aware of how things work on the German side. I can only speak for the American side. Nonetheless, I can look into it.

Meeting adjourned: 20:40