



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

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023**  
**JFKS Aula**

**Board Members Present:** Jacqui Bespolka, Lia Rigamonti, Tanja Maka-Magill, Eva El-Alfy, Lisa Ward, Kim Douglass, Theresa Helou, Kasia Esteves, John Mask

**Board Members Not Present:** Robert Erlbaum, Jean-Marie McKinney

**Members Present:** Sarah Martin, Christine White, Arthur East (SC), Clemens Schmid (SC), Elenore Wang, Katy Williams

**Meeting started: 19:05**  
**Secretary/Schriftführer: John Mask**

**1. Approval of Agenda**

*9 yes*  
*0 abstention*  
*0 no*

**2. Approval of Minutes of the last meetings: May, June, and August**

*9 yes*  
*0 abstention*  
*0 no*



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### **3. Note from the Student Council – Clemens Schmid, Arthur East**

- a. The first Student Council meeting was held. Nothing concrete to report as this was the first meeting of the representatives.
- b. A potential request may materialize regarding the addition of benches to certain areas within the school.
- c. The SC expressed a desire to learn more about the development of the installation of water fountains in the school.

JM: The Treasurer has participated in discussions with the Senat and has reported that the request for installation of water fountains in the school has indeed been approved. A timeline for this is not yet known. We will ask the Treasurer to report on this in our next Verein meeting.

### **4. Report from the President – Jacqui Bespolka**

- a. Good Evening Everyone,

Our recent community event, Fun Day, went well and was very successful! For many in our community, it was their first experience of Fun Day, and I want to give a big thank you to Theresa Helou for chairing the Fun Day committee and congratulate the entire organising team on a job well done. We received a lot of positive feedback and are thrilled that all the school clubs and organisations were able to fundraise with a collective total of approximately 9 000 Euros. The Verein percentage from the total cash collection was, unfortunately, not enough to cover the costs of the event, but I will let Theresa share the details with you later in this meeting.

At this point I would like to stress that while the Verein was not able to cover our costs, the Board believed that it was money well spent on an event that brought our JFKS community to connect, come together to have fun, eat, drink and be entertained while creating an opportunity for our school clubs and organisations to fundraise for the first time since 2018! Almost 10 booths/stands of approximately 40, who made 100€ or less that day got to keep their entire cash proceeds. This is one of the many community events that the Verein organises to enhance community spirit. Of course, this is only made possible through the support of your membership fees, donations, and countless hours of volunteer time, be it the Verein board or Verein members-at-large. So to all members and volunteers, thank you!



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In addition, I would like to provide an update on the topic of financial support for teachers for school supplies through the Verein, which was raised by a Verein member at the meeting in August.

Like so many within the JFKS community, the Verein endeavors to enhance the learning experience of the students – as stated in the Verein’s mission. This includes the support of initiatives of the teachers who take a leading role in the student’s educational experience. During last year’s review of teacher expenditures for classroom supplies the point became clear that many teachers are spending significant amounts of money out of pocket for their instruction. In an effort to evaluate how the Verein could help, the Verein Board took on the advice of a tax expert whereby the Board learned that the provision of quarterly cash distributions was not legal and put the Verein at risk of losing its non-profit status. This is because these were cash distributions whereby money was allocated without connection to a vote and without a receipt to demonstrate what the money was used for. Thus, for good reason, the Verein immediately stopped these distributions. This may have felt like a step backwards for the teachers; however, the solution to the problem existed and simply required the combined efforts of the Verein and the Administration to uncover.

Over the months since the funding review last winter and through the time of the decision to stop the cash payments, the Verein Board has worked to ensure a solution exists for teachers to be equipped with the supplies they need to run their classrooms at a level that our hard-working teachers strive for.

What the Board and the ES and HS Administrations determined is that many, if not all, of the classroom supplies listed in the request are either already readily available or can be made available to all teachers through the school budget from the Senat. There are indeed multiple sources for supplies for teachers: the budget from the school and Senat, the Trust Fund, and even the funding which is commonly run by parent representatives through a class appointed treasurer.

Once these sources have been exhausted, the Verein remains ready to fund teacher initiatives. We encourage all requests for funding which improve the student experience. The Verein Board has a long history of making great efforts to ensure that initiatives of teachers – and other leaders within the JFKS community – are able to find funding.

It is my hope that the facts and truths about funding for our teachers and administrators can be better communicated to everyone involved and responsible for making the student experience at JFKS the best it can possibly be.



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## 5. Report from the Treasurer – Robert Erlbaum

- a. JB: Robert is unable to join us tonight; however, I can report on the figures from the information he has provided me.

- a. Account Balances as of October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Commerzbank:	€ 12.276,17
PayPal:	€ 3.043,47
Interactive Brokers:	€ 17.246,20
Interactive Brokers:	\$ 2.879,17
Total (Euros):	€ 32.565,84
Total (Dollars):	\$ 2.879,17
Total authorized expenses:	TBD
Projected balance after planned outlays:	TBD

## 6. Report from the JFKS School Shop – Kim Douglass

- a. We were very successful on Fun Day, selling almost everything we brought out to our stand.



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## 7. Requests

The Board has decided to allow those requesting funding to present their initiatives and then to allow for the Board to discuss and vote on requests in the discretion of a closed Board-only portion of the meeting after guests have left.

Sarah Martin congratulated the Verein on a successful Fun Day and then gave an update on previously funded requests from the Verein in a powerpoint presentation with audio of students playing the instruments purchased with Verein funding. This included Glöckenspiele, Ukeleles, and Soundtrap. The entire Board applauded the presentation as this way an outstanding method for the Board to see and understand the impact of the funded request on the student experience. Sarah's presentation included information about her request (item f below).

Katy Williams gave an update on previously funded requests and explained how the supplies of these funded requests have been in use for multiple academic years. Katy then presented her request to the Board (item c below).

The below requests were voted on following the open portion of the meeting. Here are the voting results:

- a. Shana Kennedy – Teacher Breakfast. Total Request is €350.

9 yes  
0 abstention  
0 no

- b. Ralf Müller / Andreas Nagel – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Ski Trip. Total request is €2.800.

9 yes  
0 abstention  
0 no

- c. Katy Williams – Science supplies: Meal worm project supplies (3<sup>rd</sup> grade), flower bulbs (4<sup>th</sup> grade), flashcards and class supply refills as well as 15 books for instruction on puberty/mental health/addition (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade). Total request is €302,86.

During the closed-disussion, the Board made a motion to increase the amount of the request in order to include enough books for an entire class of 27 plus 1 copy for the library and 2 copies for the instructors (instead of the 15



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requested). The request amount is therefore increased to €710.

9 yes  
0 abstention  
0 no

d. Carolin Borschel – Appreciation Mugs from School Shop. Total request is 40 Mugs for a total of €270 from the School Shop.

9 yes  
0 abstention  
0 no

e. Katalin Aust – Treats for Abitur and AP exam takers. Total request is €75.

8 yes  
1 abstention  
0 no

f. Sarah Martin – Piano Keyboards and stands for 6<sup>th</sup> Grade music. Total request is €5.049.

9 yes  
0 abstention  
0 no

g. Kim Douglass – Holiday gifts for Teachers and Admin. Total request is €2.500.

9 yes  
0 abstention  
0 no

h. Family Needs – AP Test Fees for two students. Total request is €391.

9 yes  
0 abstention  
0 no

i. Family Needs – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Harz Trip for two students. Total request is €550.



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9 yes  
0 abstention  
0 no

## 8. Miscellaneous

- a. The Board held a vote from September 18<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> (in accordance with the board policy allowing a 5-day period for electronic voting) on a funding request for BERMUN for 6 water containers for a total amount of €650. The result of the board vote was 7 Votes in favor, 1 Vote against, and 3 Vote abstentions. The request passed the vote and was funded. One board member called into question whether the 5-day period for voting was adhered to as the request to vote was asked to be expedited in order to fund the request in time for Fun Day.
- b. Communication Committee has taken first steps towards creating standardized email responses, and as well in creating an overview of all organizations within the JFKS community to be published on the Verein Website.
- c. Update on topic for board decision regarding Tuurio vs. Verein Website for member registration and data management. Tanja and John will continue to collect the necessary information in order to present two options to the Verein Board for decision. This board decision will need to take place sometime in early December in order to facilitate the follow-on required actions from a decision either way. It is recommended that this decision be made during an internal board-only meeting.
- d. Air Conditioners: Lia has agreed to take the lead on the acquisition of air conditioners for the school as a means to alleviate the Hitzefrei situations which occur regularly. Lia and John will work together and will involve both the administration as well as Carolin Borschel, as necessary.

KW: Are we looking into whether it is possible for classes to re-locate from the hot rooms to other cooler classrooms in the school?

EE: This could be a good thing for the PCB to form a committee to help with a solution.



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KD: Some rooms will need air conditioning units in any circumstance. Some classes are simply greenhouses.

- e. TM-M: I would like to provide follow up on some open questions from previous meetings.

It was questioned during a previous meeting whether the Verein By-Laws are valid. After review with a legal expert, I can confirm that our By-Laws are valid because, it is stated in the Verein's statutes § 12 that the Board shall adopt a guideline and announce it to the members. The current By-laws have been voted on by the Board during an official meeting and subsequently published on our website for members to access and read. Verein members have to be able to rely upon the Board for acting according to its guidelines. These guidelines are binding until the Board changes and announces new By-laws to its members.

EE: I would also like to highlight that these By-Laws are changeable. In the past, some of the By-Laws were written by those fulfilling their role with much more available time. These By-Laws are guidance to the person holding the position. Thus, the standards for some By-Laws might need to be changed in order to reflect the reality of how much any given Board member may have the time to fulfil.

- f. TM-M: I have attended board meeting of the Landesverband der Kita- und Schulfördervereine Berlin-Brandenburg e.V. (LSFB). The Board of the LSFB provided lots of helpful information. Would anyone else be interested in attending meetings? [several hands raised to show interest] There is also the Stiftung Bildung and a student start-up support organization.

EE: Thank you, Tanja, for taking the time and initiative to get involved in this.

KW: If you send this information (about Stiftung Bildung) to the HS and ES secretaries for them to include it in the teacher newsletters, I am sure there would be interest.

- g. Fun Day update.

TH: Fun Day was quite successful. A few stands raised over €1.000. For stands who raised less than €100, the stand kept all the proceeds. For stands who raised more than €100, the Verein would keep 25% of those proceeds





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(e.g. a stand raised €110, the Verein keeps €2,50 and the stand retains €107,50).

Fun Day raised a total of about €9.000, of which the Verein made €3.000.  
The costs for Fun Day totaled approximately €5.300.

JB: The expected expenditure for Fun Day costs was €6.000. We were therefore under budget. This is good. And, as I mentioned in my report, though the Verein did not make enough money to cover it's costs, we kept our costs low and also feel that this investment was a successful event for the community.

TH: We will be looking to have more support from volunteers in the future and more importantly for someone new to step into the role of leading the Fun Day organization. This was my third and admittedly final time leading the organization of Fun Day. Since we all knew this in advance, we were very good about tracking all elements of the organization work in order to make leading this event in the future as easy as possible for whoever takes over next time.

JB: Yes. Very well done, Theresa. Also, we will be holding the Fun Run next fall and will need to find a date as soon as possible to begin our planning for that.

JM: Thank you everyone for attending tonight's meeting. We will now conclude the open portion of the meeting. The Board will now convene the remainder of the meeting in a closed session to discuss and vote on the Funding Requests.

**Meeting adjourned: 20:55**