



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, February 20, 2024**  
**JFKS Aula**

**Board Members Present:** Jacqui Bespolka, Lia Rigamonti, Tanja Maka-Magill, Eva El-Alfy, Robert Erlbaum, Kim Douglass, John Mask, Kasia Esteves

**Board Members Not Present:** Theresa Luss (formerly Helou), Jean-Marie McKinney, Lisa Ward

**Members Present:** Robert Bartz (Administration), Courtney Metzler (PCB), Christine White (PCB), Haley Scribner (PCB), Christoph Schneider, Robert Lenk, Juli Sickels (Teacher), Stefanie Weisner

**Meeting started: 19:02**  
**Secretary/Schriftführer: John Mask**

**1. Approval of Agenda**

*8 yes*  
*0 abstention*  
*0 no*

**2. Approval of Minutes of the last meetings (December, January)**

*8 yes*  
*0 abstention*  
*0 no*



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### 3. Remarks from the Administration – Robert Bartz

- a. Happy to be here tonight. Is the attendance of the Administration a requirement for Verein Board meetings?

JB: No, but it is helpful regarding requests and discussion of potential major projects desired by the school.

EE: The Verein funds large projects such as the Haus Reil renovation and the purchase of Chromebooks – both of which were initiatives of the Administration.

RBartz: I will only ask for the support of purchasing gifts for visitors from the embassies of Tapei and China, for which I have already submitted a request.

- b. I spoke with teachers about funding and we discussed all the different items being requested by teachers. I believe that there is no need to fund this through the Verein because the Senat covers this.

TM-M: This is good to know. We cannot cover what the Senat has allocated budget for unless that budget has already been consumed.

RBartz: Our goal is that, ideally, no teacher must spend their own money for teaching items. We don't want teachers to bring every little €4 request to The Verein for funding. I understand that The Verein cannot be in conflict with the Berliner Haushaltsverordnung and the Verwaltungsvorschriften über Auskünfte. There is a budget allocated for teacher expenses from the Senat to the school.

EE: Yes. The Verein also must protect its non-profit status. There is a budget allocated by the Senat for teaching materials.

JS: I am an ES teacher. How do teachers access the funding from the Senat?

RBartz: This is allocated by the Administration. I started looking into what the teachers want last year, and several lists were presented to me. I support the collection [into a list] of all the requested items, and that Carolin Borschel consolidates these for purchase two times per year. I see that there are three main groups who require fulfilment of requests: High school teachers/Administration, Elementary School teachers, and Carolin Borschel. My preference would be that [the teachers get what they are asking for]: a cabinet that contains all the requested items, and teachers can determine on their own what they will take from it. It would be my wish that the teachers could decide overnight that they need something and the cabinet would fulfil



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all these needs until all teachers are satisfied. We might have to refill the cabinets each time, but this would be my ideal situation.

JB: Sorry to interrupt. This sounds more like a discussion which should take place between the Administration and the teachers/staff. I would kindly ask that this be taken up in the next staff meeting and that we might continue here tonight with the planned agenda.

RE: [To RBartz] Can you tell us what major projects might be necessary this year [so that we can allocate our budget to this]? You can consider this and get back to us. This would help us to ensure that we are able to utilize our budget appropriately and end the year with the desired zero balance. We are interested in projects which would total around €30k.

EE: For example, the Drama Department recently considered getting new audio equipment which would cost around €50k.

RBartz: Should I request something like €50k for the Drama Department?

RE: Something like that would be great.

#### **4. Remarks from the Student Council – [Not Present]**



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## 5. Report from the President – Jacqueline Bespolka

- a. Good evening Everyone,
- b. Herr Bartz, thank you for attending our meeting today. Your presence and report on fundings, financial needs and other important updates, demonstrates a strong connection, communication and comrade between the school and the Verein, which is essential for our volunteer work within the Verein that ultimately benefits our wonderful JFKS community.
- c. At the last ES faculty meeting that was held before the winter break, Tanja and I give a 15mins presentation on the funding request process, how Verein funding comes into play when supporting our teachers and students, followed by a short Q&A session. We heard many feedback on the issue of "lack of funding" for the ES teachers with regard to the teacher's supplies, which unfortunately resulted in a few discontented teachers. As chairperson, I cannot stress enough how discouraging it was to hear teachers are telling their classroom parents not to support the Verein, but to instead channel funds into their individual classrooms. Such statement is not only very shortsighted but extremely selfish. Fortunately, at the meeting, Herr Bartz confirmed the Senate does (or can fund) teachers' materials such as "transparent boxes and googly eyes".
- d. Following Herr Bartz's statement, it is clear that the teachers need to have a better understanding from Administration on how the Senat, Trust Fund and Parent class kitty funds can be used support teachers with their daily teaching materials before reaching out to the Verein as a supplement or matching source of funding. Our guidelines states that Verein fundings can come into effect after all these other sources have been exhausted. The Verein needs to regain its focus on project-based fundings that benefits the school and our students at a macro and not just micro level, fundraisers and community events.

CM: Is the budget published?

JM: Yes. At the AGM.

CM: Is the budget made public?

JM: No. And it should not be.

RE: Only members are allowed to see the budget. Non-members have no need to know this information.



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## 6. Report from the Treasurer – Robert Erlbaum

- a. We have been able to withdraw the membership dues from the members who have provided SEPA information in Tuurio and have collected around €30k.
- b. We have roughly €45k in our accounts.
- c. Only five members have withdrawn/reversed the SEPA deduction, which cost the Verein around €30 in fees in total.

SW: These fees should be paid by the members who withdrew their SEPA transaction.

RE: Yes. Good idea. We would like to get to this.

SW: How many members are there?

RE: Roughly 800.

SW: So the total membership dues to be collected is €75 x 800?

RE: Not everyone is required to pay membership dues. There are non-paying members. These can be grouped into two categories: families on financial assistance (Beriner Pass) as well as Embassy families.

Rbartz: Why don't the Embassy families pay membership dues?

JB: This has historical reasons. The Trust Fund, which is provided by the Embassy, has historically given large sums to the school and asked in return that the Embassy families not pay Verein dues.

SW: What are annual revenues?

RE: Around €45k.

CM: How many donations were received last year?

RE: Roughly €4k. But this includes Sachspenden – such as when people donate a cake.

[**Addendum:** Embassy families do not pay Verein dues because these families pay (an amount equivalent to the cost of BBIS) for their children to attend JFKS.]



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## **7. Report from the JFKS School Spirit Shop – Kim Douglass**

- a. I am still working on the financials from last year for the AGM.
- b. We had a really good year last year.
- c. Help is really needed in the school shop. Though we have a list of volunteers, I usually end up being the only one who can be on-site in the shop when we are open. Everyone is encouraged to donate their time.

JS: Is this something the high school students could do?

KD: Any help would be appreciated, but an adult would need to be present.. I am looking for volunteers so that I don't have to be at the school every Wednesday.

RE: One more point regarding the shop. Our lawyer has finally contacted Sumup to take legal action in retrieving the funds being withheld.

HS: How much is being withheld?

RE: Around €8k.

## **8. Open Forum – Information to potential candidates about open Verein positions**

- a. Open position due to end of term: President, Treasurer, Voting Board Member (x3), Auditor (x2)
- b. Open position due to end of interim term (previously elected person resigned mid-term in June 2023): Secretary
- c. Open position due to resignation (departing Germany in summer): Vice President

Candidates who wish to introduce themselves may do so now.

HS: My name is Hayley Scribner. We moved here in 2023. I was the vice president of an education foundation handling between 1-3M per year. I'm very excited to be here and contribute to the Verein. I would love to apply for



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the vice president role.

RL: Hello. My name is Robert Lenk. I have been a member of The Verein for one year. In the beginning it was my motivation of seeing the Flea Market and Fun Day and other events that motivated me to join The Verein. I am qualified for a role on the board as I have founded several associations with people from all over. Volunteering is such a social necessity that brings the community together and I am thrilled by the way that this board has shown that in my time here. I am up for any position on the board.

CM: My name is Courtney Metzler. I serve on the Parent Council Board and am the parent of 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders. I am also a yoga instructor. It's a part of the social fabric to volunteer. I have ten years experience in non-profit in the US. I am interested in the chair position.

CS: My name is Christoph Schneider. I did some PCB work 10 years ago. I have two kids in 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade. I have no experience on a non-profit board or with the Verein.

SW: Hello. I'm Stefanie Weisner. I am just ready to be a back-up in case that's needed.

CW: I am Christine White. I am not running for a position. My 11<sup>th</sup> grader has just one year left so I think I will stay focused on the PCB for my remaining time.

JM: There are twelve positions on the board, but not all must be filled.

TM-M: According to our statutes: "The board consists of at least five and at most twelve Members, namely of the 1st chairperson, the 2nd chairperson, who can be secretary at the same time, the treasurer, the secretary and one or more members-at-large (Beisitzer)."

CM: Alison Desantis is also interested.

JM: Thank you everyone for introducing yourselves.

Eva gives a brief overview of what a Schulförderverein is and emphasizes that the statutes and by-laws form the foundation for work of the board of directors- She points to the website for further information.

<https://theverein.com/downloads-verein-meeting-minutes>

For general information on Schulfördervereine:

<https://www.berlin.de/familie/informationen/foerderevereine-in-der-kita-und-der-schule-313>



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## **9. Update about proposed changes to Verein articles of association (Requiring as a prerequisite for membership the use of digital registration and provision of SEPA) and board decision on digital registration**

### **a. Use of SEPA:**

The board has drafted a change to the articles of association, or statutes (Satzung), which will be included with the invitation to the AGM. Attending members will vote on this at the AGM.

The proposed change addresses § 6 of the statutes (originating in the 1960s) which refers to the collection of cash. The collection of cash is no longer common practice.

As the practice of collecting cash is written into the statutes, the board has agreed to propose a change to the statutes.

If approved, the proposed changes to § 6, upon entry into force (registration in the Vereinsregister), would enable the board to establish the payment method(s) by resolution of the board of directors.

As outlined in the January board meeting, the current board proposes that, after a transition period, only SEPA should be accepted as the payment method for the collection of Verein membership dues.

### **b. Use of a digital platform for registration**

i. Board Decision (7 Yes, 1 Abstention, 3 not present): Effective immediately, the member registration process for new Verein members will be exclusively completed through the use of a digital platform of The Verein (e.g. Tuurio).

ii. Board Decision (7 Yes, 1 Abstention, 3 not present): Existing Verein members who have not yet registered via a digital platform must complete the registration process in the digital platform (e.g. Tuurio) before 30 June 2024.





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## 10. Miscellaneous

- a. Flea Market – Lia Rigamonte – The Flea Market flyer is ready. Regarding the organization of the Flea Market, this will be Lia's last time heading the effort. There is a call for volunteers for anyone who wishes to take on this role for next year's (2025) Flea Market, they should contact Lia to learn about the process this year to ease the continuity in planning for next year.
- b. Tanja Maka-Magill: reports on a web talk "Introduction to EasyVerein Membership Management" given by the LSFb (Landesverband der Kita- und Schulfördervereine Berlin Brandenburg e.V.). LSFb has recently started using the software "EasyVerein" for membership management, accounting, preparation of meeting minutes, and interface to the bank, so that only one system is necessary. The JFKS Verein currently requires three systems to accomplish this. There are various licenses that can be tried out as a free demo. LFSB will offer further web talks on the topic of digitalization and other topics check:

<https://lsfb.de/veranstaltungen>

and

<https://www.easyverein.com>

The next seminar by Lsfb will be an online double seminar on tax law and accounting for Schulfördervereine, on April 10 and 17, from 6-8 pm, online via Zoom, in German

In addition to other forms of support such as legal assistance for Vereinsrecht and equipment rentals (e.g., popcorn machines for events), LSFb also offers professional mediators if needed to improve communication within the board or with members or groups thereof.

The Landesverband der Kita- und Schulfördervereine (LSFB) recently held a meeting to discuss a software system available for managing the administration of Vereine. This system combines into one system (EasyVerein) what The Verein currently requires three systems to accomplish.

- c. KD: The Locker Committee is requesting help to update the Verein Website regarding information for the upcoming 6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Transition Meeting taking place on February 26<sup>th</sup>.

JM: I can take care of this.



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## 11. Requests

- a. Vanessa Hansen – Request for Odyssey of the Mind T-shirts for team members and coaches (100 T-Shirts). JFKS will host this event for the first time (after the previous attempt was cancelled in 2020 due to the pandemic). T-shirts were shown to have the Verein logo represented prominently. Total cost is €900, €300 of which are sourced elsewhere. The total for this funding request is €600.

8 yes  
0 abstention  
0 no

- b. Robert Bartz – Request for Ehrung und Danke für Gäste. This is for 10 mugs (which would preferably be filled with sweets). Total cost is €100.

8 yes  
0 abstention  
0 no

- c. Erin Hale – Request for Abi Ball tickets: 2 for Staff and 3 for Family Needs students. Request has been reviewed by the Family Needs Committee with a recommendation for approval. Total cost of tickets (€1349) will be offset by funding from other sources. Total costs to be funded from The Verein is €430.

8 yes  
0 abstention  
0 no

- d. Rainer Hoedt – Thank you gifts for Texas Exchange students and teachers. Trust Fund has provided funding for flights and rental car. Total cost to The Verein is €350.

7 yes  
1 abstention  
0 no



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- e. Julie Sickels – Request to support purchase of 30 books for Kay’s Anatomy instruction. Benefit will be for the use of these books by 125 students each year. Total cost is either €254,70 (Amazon) or €345 (Dussmann) – Julie’s preference is for Dussmann as this is a local business.

8 yes  
0 abstention  
0 no

*Board decision is to choose the least expensive option (as Dussmann is not necessarily local either). Final cost of book acquisition is €323,93.*

- f. Lia Rigamonte – Request for initial funding for up front costs of the Flea Market. Total request is €1.000.

8 yes  
0 abstention  
0 no

- g. Jacqui Bespolka – Gift on behalf of the Verein for American HS Principal Mark Fritzenschaft for the birth of his baby. Total cost of request is €50.

8 yes  
0 abstention  
0 no

- h. Kristen Winkler – High School locker cleaning. Total cost of request is €1.968,26.

*Board decision is to postpone this decision until a second quote from another provider can be provided to ensure lowest-cost option is available. It is standard practice of The Verein Board to require more than one quote for large funding requests.*



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- i. Kristen Winkler – Elementary School locker cleaning. Total cost of request is €1.269,73.

*Board decision is to postpone this decision until a second quote from another provider can be provided to ensure lowest-cost option is available. It is standard practice of The Verein Board to require more than one quote for large funding requests.*

- j. Kim Douglass – Request for purchase of yearbooks for departing teachers (15 yearbooks). Total request is €270.

8 yes  
0 abstention  
0 no

- k. Kim Douglass – Request for purchase of page in the yearbook for The Verein. Total request is €26.

8 yes  
0 abstention  
0 no

- l. [Email Vote – January 30<sup>th</sup>] Candace Martin-O'Connor – Request for funding for catering for Professional Development Day for all teachers. Total request is €1.966,13.

10 yes  
0 abstention  
1 no



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- m. [Email Vote – February 18<sup>th</sup>] Jacqueline Bespolka – Request for one-time payment to Kim Douglass (Board member – and excluded from the voting) for digital design work for the school shop. This design work was previously done by members of the community and also paid for by The Verein. Total request is €800.

9 yes  
1 abstention  
0 no

- n. [Email Vote – February 23<sup>rd</sup>] Patty Krüger – Request for gift for 8<sup>th</sup> grade ski trip bus drivers. Total request is €85.

7 yes  
1 abstention  
3 no

- o. [Internal Board Meeting – March 3<sup>rd</sup>] Michelle Jacques – Request to support AMIS Orchestra hosting at JFKS by funding participant gifts (x90) from the school shop and pizza (€300). Total request is €300 and 90 items from the school shop (not to exceed €1000 – expected to result in €300).

9 yes  
0 abstention  
0 no

- p. [Internal Board Meeting – March 3<sup>rd</sup>] Family Needs – Request for 1 Abi Ball ticket. Total cost €86.

9 yes  
0 abstention  
0 no



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- q. [Internal Board Meeting – March 3<sup>rd</sup>] Vanessa Hansen – Request to fund cost of cleaning after Odyssey of the Mind. Total cost of request €300.

9 yes  
0 abstention  
0 no

- r. [Internal Board Meeting – March 3<sup>rd</sup>] These minutes were approved by the board during the internal board meeting on March 3<sup>rd</sup>.

9 yes  
0 abstention  
0 no

**Meeting adjourned: 21:03**