

JP II Parent Association Meeting Minutes  
23 September 2024

Members in attendance: Angela Lowe, Katherine Luders, Sharon Patterson, Wendy Evans, Vickie Marks, Kari Creehan, and Dr. Jeremiah Russell

Angela Lowe called the meeting to order and opened with a prayer.

Minutes from the 21 August 2024 meeting were voted upon and approved as submitted.

Treasurer's Report - Wendy Evans

Wendy reported that Gay Pittman, JP II bookkeeper, has been busy and has not had a chance to update her with expense and deposit specifics, but on the last bank statement Wendy was given, there was a balance of \$23,932.76 in the PA bank account. The latest expenses given to Wendy from Ms. Pittman were for the Teachers' Back to School Luncheon, and with the upcoming Oktoberfest, there are still many expenses and deposits that Wendy will be detailing on the next budget report, as soon as she gets the information from Ms. Pittman.

Wendy reported that she is keeping two separate spreadsheets - one for general PA expenses/deposits (including PA membership), and another for Oktoberfest only.

President's Report - Angela Lowe

Angela asked for a membership update. Secretary Sharon Patterson reported that as of 23 September 2024, there were 122 families who had joined, but that number may be higher. Ms. Pittman will send her the updated online signups from the past three weeks.

Discussion ensued about possible ways to increase the PA membership numbers. Suggestions included personal appeals to friends who have not yet joined; sending out another letter requesting parents to join the PA, including one in Spanish; and perhaps holding a second major membership drive (suggested by Dr. Russell) possibly around or after Oktoberfest and prior to the holidays. Kari mentioned that teacher appeals or teacher "endorsements" highlighting specific ways the PA has helped/shown appreciation to them, etc., on social media could be a powerful motivator.

The idea was brought up to make the PA \$25 fee a mandatory fee - or even an "opt out" fee - and bundle it in with the other fees that JP II requires. Dr. Russell said that he is the one who makes that decision, but he would want to get feedback from parents first before simply assessing it as a new fee, especially since athletic fees have not gone up in three years and will probably go up next year. He said that all the fees are set in the November/December time frame, so if the PA wants him to consider it, we should request him to do so as soon as possible. An informal survey of the board members present revealed that Holy Spirit automatically charges PA/PTO fees, St. John's does not automatically charge fees, and Holy Family does not charge a PA fees at all, but instead includes all families as PA members. They hold multiple fundraisers (at least one a quarter) and also seek donations for PA/PTA events.

Angela highlighted that it was crucial for the PA to reach its membership goal of 200 families if the PA is to carry out all the activities it has scheduled for the 2024-25 school year.

Benefactor Meeting Update - Vickie Marks and Angela Lowe attended the recent Benefactors Meeting to advertise and ask for sponsorship for the upcoming Oktoberfest. It was a very successful endeavor - they received \$8000 in sponsorships from benefactors. BGeneral Fiorentino will be our presenting sponsor and gave good feedback on flyer and sponsorship info.

Homecoming Recap - Angela reported that the PA tent at the homecoming game was very well received and that the PA gave out lots of shakers and refreshments. Dr. Russell said that the Alumni tent was also successful and gave out 23 swag bags, by far the most alumni response they've ever had.

Board Update - Jennifer Mueller, our Junior Class Liaison, will be stepping down from the PA board at the end of the quarter because her daughter is leaving JPIL, so junior parent Mary Rush will take Jennifer's place immediately after Fall Break. Because Oktoberfest is so soon after Mary steps in, Angela did not ask her to oversee the Junior Class Oktoberfest basket duties, so Angela has asked the board to help with soliciting items and putting together the baskets. Angela will create a signup genius with specific Auburn/Alabama items to fit the Tailgate theme and have Mary send it out to the junior class parents.

JPIL Admin Report - Dr. Russell

There were 122 respondents to the uniform survey, and the results showed that the durability and quality of the uniforms from current vendor Dennis were what parents liked best, and they least liked the availability and pricing. Dr. Russell is looking at other vendors for uniforms for the future - and with at least two of the vendors, the pricing is equal to or better than Dennis. Each of these companies has the basic houndstooth plaid that JPIL currently uses but without the green stripe in our current plaid - the green stripe version is only available from Dennis. Therefore, if it's a new vendor, JPIL would move forward with the plain houndstooth or a different plaid entirely. If we change vendors, Dr Russell plans to put together a small committee of parents to help with decisions such as fabric quality, plaid changes, etc. Several board members noted that their items purchased from Dennis this year were not even "Dennis" items - they had tags from other manufacturers and the quality was not as good. Dr. Russell said that two of his top new uniform contenders had their own brands, and his expectation is that they would not substitute out brands, like Dennis did this year.

Decisions on new uniforms will likely be made by the administration in the next month because companies need to be notified by Christmas/end of 2024 for next school year.

There will be a two to three year transition period where "old" uniform items can still be worn or purchased from the "used" uniform closet.

Dr. Russell reminded everyone about junior and senior service day on the upcoming Thursday (9/26).

CHOOSE Act update - rules and regulations will be open for public viewing starting 30 September 2024. The Department of Revenue will post these, and the general public has 35 days to comment. The final CHOOSE Act rules and regulations will likely be published mid to late November. This means it will be a quick turnaround time for JP II - our school enrollment opens on 15 November, and the rules and regulations may still not be published by that time. According to previously published guidance, any family that is at 300% of poverty level and below qualifies for CHOOSE Act funding.

On 2 January 2025, the CHOOSE Act application process opens at 7am. The application process will be open through April, and the awards will be issued starting in May. Awards process may take two to three weeks. According to information Dr. Russell was given during a zoom call with the state of Alabama, the awards would not be given on a "first come, first served" basis. This made it seem like there would be a funding cap for this initiative (currently there is \$100 million dedicated for CHOOSE awards for the 2025-26 school year). However, in response to direct inquiry about \$100 million being the "cap," the employee on the zoom call for the state said that \$100 million is the "floor." Because the information given in the zoom call lacked 100% clarity with regards to which applicants took precedence (earliest or most in need), Dr. Russell is awaiting publication of official rules and regulations before sending out info to JP II parents, and he is also awaiting clarification of how much funding actually will be available - basically, is \$100 million the "floor" or the "cap." Dr Russell did say that the state of Alabama was clear in their guidance that the first 500 awards will be dedicated for special needs students and that students of military families in "priority" school zones will also take precedence.

Fall Break is next week. The PSAT/SAT will be on 15 October. All 9th, 10th, and 11th graders take the PSAT, and historically, that day was "college visit day" for the seniors. However, 27 seniors are taking the SAT at JP II this year on the same day as the PSAT. They registered and paid for the SAT themselves, but starting next year, Dr. Russell would like to build it into the budget for all seniors to take the SAT at JP II on the "PSAT" day, with JP II covering the cost.

Finally, Dr. Russell reported that the band for Oktoberfest does not have insurance. The diocese requires any vendor that JP II works with to have insurance, so Dr. Russell is requesting that the band purchase a small insurance policy to cover the night of Oktoberfest. If the band does not want to pay for it, JP II would consider covering the cost (it would be labeled an "Oktoberfest" expense), if it was cheap enough.

Hospitality Report - Kari Creehan -

No final numbers on expenses from homecoming or Future Falcon Day. Because Gay Pittman submits the orders through the vendors for most of the purchases, hospitality only knows an estimate based on what they requested that Gay order. If a requested item is not available, substitutions are made, and hospitality does not always know that exact final amount. Kari has emailed Gay and is awaiting response. Kari asked for clarification on how the process should

work. Should they get \$\$ amounts spent from Gay, and then pass that on to Wendy Evans for documenting on the budget, or is it the other way around? Dr. Russell said that hospitality gets the exact amounts spent directly from Gay, and then hospitality reports those numbers to Wendy for recording on the budget.

Dr. Russell said that as JP II has been putting new infrastructure in place to support the upcoming capital campaign, Gay has been extremely busy with those efforts (opening new bank accounts, developing new sets of quickbooks, developing new budgets, etc.). Dr. Russell appreciates the PA's patience while Gay is involved with these new responsibilities.

Hospitality will be helping with the Falcon Showcase on 14 November and then will be working on the Faculty Christmas Luncheon in December. Luncheon will be held in the library again this year.

Oktoberfest Update - Vickie Marks - As of 23 September, 131 tickets have been sold (including those that go to sponsors). There are 31 sponsored "free" teacher tickets remaining, so there will be another push for teachers to attend, since those free tickets will not be assigned to anyone else. Some other sponsor tickets are being used for "in-kind" donors. Biggest rush for attendance to come after Fall Break.

As of 23 September 2024

**Income** - \$32,395 gross (\$28,500 is sponsorships)  
\$3500 still pledged  
\$600 cash donations

Oktoberfest committee has only spent \$2000 so far but are keeping in mind that the biggest expense is the drawdown raffle. Last year, the drawdown prize was \$5250. Only gave out a little over \$3000 (the others donated it back to the school). Vickie to speak with Gay and Tania Yee (Development) about the tax implications - awarded vs donated.

Vickie is hoping to serve only beef brats this year, but the committee is still looking for a beef brat vendor. Halsey? Also looking for a caterer for German potato salad. Laura Paul was suggested (she catered last year's senior picnic). Vickie asked Dr. Russell to please send out an email to recruit more volunteers for set-up/ night of, and clean-up. Knights of Columbus will help with the catering again this year.

Wendy Evans asked if Auctria data goes straight into the PA bank account, or how it otherwise gets reported. Wondering if she should be tracking it now or to wait for Gay to give her the numbers. Vickie says that all Auctria and Stripe income should be going straight into the PA bank account. Vickie will provide Wendy with an accounting of Oktoberfest expenses and income.

Class Liaisons - no reports.

New business - Melanie Sturgis asked if we can add Prayer Group as a volunteer option on our online PA membership sign up form (we already have it on the hard copy membership forms). That way, if they indicate interest, she can contact them. Angela says that Gay should easily be able to add it.

Meeting adjourned.

Next Meeting on 14 October 2024.