

**RIDGE H.S.A. INC.**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**  
**NOVEMBER 12, 2019 at 1:30 pm**  
**TEACHERS' LOUNGE**

**BOARD MEMBERS:** *Albano, Ardito, Beiersdorf, Bender, Bosch, Briganti, Bruce-Lockhart, Bruno, Carr, Chudy, Daffron, DeVincenzo, Dowling, Flynn, Freeley, Gershenson, Gross, Harris, Holder, Hong, Kahn, Katzman, Killeen, Kong, Kupiec, Langheim, Lindenberg, Long, Losquadro, Maltin, McCarthy, Minetti, Monte, Muselli, Nadeau, Neuman, Patrawala, Pilchik, Seyfried-Clark, Singh, Sorabella, Steketee, Stephens, Strohmenger, Sullivan, Tobaccowala, Twilliger, Wall, Wallace, Williams, Wright*

**PRESENT:** *DeVincenzo, Dowling, Flynn, Minetti, Monte, Patrawala*

**ABSENT BUT VOTING:** *Albano, Beiersdorf, Bender, Briganti, Bruno, Carr, Chudy, Gershenson, Harris, Holder, Hong, Katzman, Killeen, Kong, Lindenberg, Maltin, Pilchik, Sorabella, Strohmenger, Wall, Williams*

**MOTIONS:**

1. *A motion was made, seconded, and approved by those present to approve the Minutes from the October 22, 2019 Ridge H.S.A. meeting.*
2. *A motion was made, seconded, and approved by those present to approve the Statement of Financial Position as of November 12, 2019 and the 2019/2020 Year-to-Date Profit & Loss Statement.*

**Welcome & Call to Order**

Barbara Dowling

Barbara Dowling, H.S.A. President, called the meeting to order at 1:36 pm.

**Principal's Report**

Dr. Jean Schoenlank

Bill Ward Fund

Dr. Schoenlank explained that the Bill Ward Fund is a discretionary fund and that it is in great shape thanks to last year's donations. The fund is overseen by a committee that includes Dr. Schoenlank, two teachers, and an H.S.A. representative. Last year it was getting lower so they sent a notice midyear explaining the purpose of the fund and encouraging families to use it if needed or to donate if inclined. They received some generous donations that increased the balance from \$12,000 to \$20,000. Not much was used this past year.

They will send out the same message this year (a letter will be sent next week in Enews). The letter also outlines how the fund began—a group of families started it in June 2000 and named it for the previous principal Bill Ward. Families may use it to fund various activities and costs such as summer adventure, field trips, instruments, and book fair. It helps remove this worry from families so that students can partake in activities. It is a gift to have this at Ridge School. Dr. Schoenlank will write about it in the Ridge Report.

Tasneem asked whether the funds could be used for activities outside of Ridge and Ridgewood. Dr. Schoenlank answered yes, it can be used for anything that is determined to be helpful. It is

about the need and is not exclusive to programs at Ridge or in Ridgewood. It's most often used during the summer for camp (Summer Adventure, Ridgewood YMCA, Graydon, etc.). It has also been used for tutoring (academic as well as emotional).

### Language Arts Update

Dr. Schoenlank explained that Language Arts instruction—reading, writing, read loud, and word study—comprises about half the school day. Language Arts is a major focus of the assistant superintendent in charge of curriculum, teachers, and Dr. Schoenlank. They all put forth a great effort to deliver Language Arts in the best way possible so students will be proficient readers and writers when they leave elementary school.

Every five years, each subject comes up for a curriculum review. Last year parents and teachers were sent a survey on Language Arts. Jean O'Neill, the supervisor of curriculum, asked teachers over the summer to write revisions to the curriculum based on the feedback. It was a huge task and, as a result, we now have an updated Language Arts curriculum.

Professional development continues; last week they spent a day looking at Units 1-3. Staff Developer Christy Mraz came to Ridge. This week an inhouse person will discuss language and mechanics. Research does not show that worksheets help in these areas. Professional development will continue throughout the year and they are making sure assessments match what is covered in each unit. In the Ridge Report, Dr. Schoenlank will send a link to Rubicon, Ridge's online curriculum housing system, which shows the curriculum for any subject and grade level.

### Book of the Month

Dr. Schoenlank said one of their goals is to be more culturally aware and that the original book for November was told from a Native American perspective. However, the book was too difficult for younger grades. It was appropriate for 5<sup>th</sup> grade so she gave the 10 copies to these classes for their study of settlers.

She replaced the book with *Giving Thanks: A Native American Good Morning Message* by Chief Jake Swamp. The book's message is about thanking Mother Earth and being grateful for the simple gifts we have. It's about honoring nature, which is a common Native American theme. She asked teachers to focus their teaching of Thanksgiving on gratitude for simple things. Teachers are more cognizant about the message they deliver about Thanksgiving and the need to dispel myths. They are especially aware of what they are teaching about Thanksgiving to younger children and focusing on the important message of gratitude.

The December book will be *Pete the Cat's Groovy Guide to Life*, which is full of inspiring quotations.

### Other Updates

Dr. Schoenlank invited Lindsay Rubin to give an update on her guidance work at our next H.S.A. meeting in January. Dr. Schoenlank will publicize this to encourage more parents to attend.

Ashley asked about the Referendum Open House. Dr. Schoenlank said it was attended by about five Ridgewood parents (most not from Ridge), the business administrator, architect, two board members, Dr. Fishbein, and herself. They learned a lot about the school's systems.

## **President's Report**

Barbara Dowling

### Important Dates

#### **November**

11/12—Book Fair & H.S.A Public Meeting (1:30)  
11/13—Book Fair  
11/14—Book Fair  
11/21—Colonial Craft Day  
11/27—Early Dismissal  
11/28-29—No School

#### **December**

12/6 – Holiday Show (9:15 am & 1:45 pm)  
12/10 – Spelling Bee (12:00 pm)  
12/12 – Spelling Bee (1:00 pm)  
12/13 – Teacher Appreciation Lunch  
12/17 – Geography Bee Test  
12/23-1/1 School Closed

#### **January**

1/7 – LEAP Begins  
1/10 – Geography Bee  
1/14 – H.S.A. Public Meeting (1:30 pm)  
1/20 – School Closed  
1/23—Wizards Game (7:00 pm)  
1/24—Instrumental Concert (8:30 am & 1:30 pm)  
1/24 – Wizards Game (7:00 pm)  
1/30 – LEAP Ends

### Book Fair

Barbara said the Book Fair will be held Tuesday through Thursday. It's our big fall fundraiser and the first day seems to be going very well. This year they introduced the e-wallet. Parents may create an account and only get charged for what students purchase, eliminating the need to send money to school.

### Online Directory Release

Barbara said the online directory was released last week. In its release, the message to parents focused more on paying H.S.A. membership dues rather than on purchasing the directory. The dues allow the H.S.A. to provide all that they do and we're hoping membership dues will be paid by December 1st.

The online directory is updated in real time and provides everything the printed directories did (family info, school calendar, committee chairs, teacher lists, etc.). Instructions to download the directory were sent in Enews. Lana asked if a separate email was sent out because parents are asking for class lists. Barbara said yes, an Enews blast was sent last Monday that included a PDF with instructions to download the app and pay dues. It will be sent again today. Dr. Schoenlank suggested sending a separate notification. Lana suggested having class parents send it out. Barbara said they will send out a blast Thursday or Friday reminding parents of the December

1<sup>st</sup> due date and explaining that we need their support to fund the H.S.A. through membership dues. She thought it would be better to include directions rather than a link.

Dr. Schoenlank asked if the directory was user friendly. Barbara and Kerry said it was. Kerry said it takes a couple of steps to access it and you need to log in. Tasneem said you need to log in each time. Ashley said hers stays logged in and she likes that it's easy to click on the class and student for contact information. Tansneem said you cannot print from it because of privacy issues. Kerry noted that the ads pop up at the bottom.

Dr. Schoenlank asked how many directories have been purchased. Tasneem said 92. Barbara said we charged less this year (\$25 rather than \$30) because there were no printing costs and they didn't know how receptive people would be to it. Barbara explained that they focused on selling ad space in order to charge parents less. Tasneem said 143-146 were purchased last year. Ashley noted that the P & L showed higher sales, but Tasneem said this was because of ad sales. Barbara said they would continue to promote it and thanked Kerry for all her work on the banner ads and sponsorship. She also thanked Heather Holder for all her work on it. Heather and Kerry have been working on the directory since June. Barbara thinks the online format works well and hopes people will give it a chance.

#### Wrapping Paper Fundraiser

Barbara reported that the fundraiser has ended. They are still crunching numbers but it looks like it was a success. This year we moved to online sales. Promotional packets were sent home; they offered both paper and online sales. Tasneem noted that they do not have the final numbers, but it looks like profits nearly doubled. Barbara and Tasneem agreed that Stacy Strohmenger did an amazing job promoting the fundraiser.

#### Winter Wonderland Gala & Auction Update

Barbara said the gala will be held on February 1st at the Terrace in Paramus from 7 to 11 pm and that plans are coming along well. It will be a great evening out for parents and a chance to have fun and bid on some amazing auction items. There will be an open bar, dinner, dancing, silent auction, 50/50 raffle, and live auction. It will be held in the grand ballroom, which is a beautiful wedding venue. The social committee has been working hard. They and Mindy Muselli have put a web invitation on the gala page of the H.S.A. website where tickets may be purchased (\$110 until December 31; \$125 after that). Parents may also make a donation online if they'd like.

Ashley said the value of the auction items exceeds \$20,000. This does not include the items that they cannot put a price on (experiences and activities as well as the auction items from teachers and staff). Barbara said it will be a fun night out with something for everyone.

#### **Vice President's Report**

Ashley Minetti

Ashley reported that Friends of Ridge donations are coming in. She would like to reach the goal more quickly but says they are getting there. The fourth grade circus is booked. The price went

up from \$4350 to \$4500. Kindergarten is planning to have yoga and Outragehiss Pets. Third grade will have a beekeeper and space historian Joe Lennox.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Tasneem Patrawala

*A motion was made, seconded, and approved by those present to approve the Statement of Financial Position as of November 12, 2019 and the 2019/2020 Year-to-Date Profit & Loss Statement.*

- *Motion was made by Lana Monte and seconded by Kerry DeVincenzo.*

### Statement of Financial Position

Tasneem reported that the Bill Ward Fund and savings accounts were stable.

- BWF is at \$20,115.
- Savings is at \$35,337.
- Operating account is at \$43,476.
- TD account for Legalized Games of Chance is at \$1548.

### Year-to-Date Actuals vs. Budget: Revenues

- Membership/Directory is at \$3353. Out of that, \$1725 were ad sales. We paid \$600 in online dues to Federated. Current net is \$2753. We budgeted \$6800 so we still have a way to go before we reach that.
- We have more transactions pending because of Veterans' Day, so there is more in the bank than is showing here.
- Ridgewear revenues are at \$8573 but we still need to pay an invoice of \$5538. Tasneem reported that Ridgewear did amazingly well with the online shop. Barbara added that having no inventory left over was another benefit of selling online.
- For the 2020 Terrace Fundraiser, we are at \$1375 for sponsors. Joseph M. Hurley at Weichert and Erin Pruitt at Tarvin are both silver sponsors; Lukin Center Psychotherapy is a platinum sponsor. Ticket sales are at \$1324 so far (the extra dollars showing are from testing the ticket sales system).

### Year-to-Date Actuals vs. Budget: Expenses

Accounting is over budget due to payment of the prior year's tax preparation to the previous firm. We will accrue more expenses due to Square fees.

### **Planning & Development's Report**

Kerry DeVincenzo

Kerry gave an update on the online directory. Ad sales are currently at \$1725. There may be another ad coming in for \$200 which would bring us to \$1925. The maximum is 10 ads so there is only one left to sell. It is still possible to purchase a sponsorship so we will continue efforts with those.

For the gala, we have \$1375 in sponsors, with one that just came in from Tarvin at \$250. We did not have anything budgeted for the gala because it's not a regularly held event; the last one was in 2013. The sponsorship proceeds allow us to cover expenses. Dr. Schoenlank said she hopes it will be a great success and said it's nice that we vary our fundraisers and offer something new and fun each year rather than always holding an auction.

Kerry said the auction committee meets every other week and they are almost done procuring auction items. Barbara said they are still collecting donations from local businesses. Kerry said donations for the picnic came in until right before the event. Dr. Schoenlank said she thought tickets would continue to sell until the event. Barbara said we are focusing on the goal of the fundraiser: benefitting reading and recess and classroom libraries. Students are excited about the books they choose from their classrooms, which fosters a real love of reading.

Dr. Schoenlank said classroom libraries are needed to supplement the school library because of how much students read. Last year they reviewed the classroom libraries and removed older, worn books. A representative from the publisher Lee & Low visited Ridge and talked about the importance of culturally relevant books. Dr. Schoenlank explained the mirror/window metaphor: books can be a window into a new world or a mirror to reflect the reader's own experiences. We tend not to have "mirror" books for some groups of students, which is something to consider and try to provide when purchasing books.

Tasneem mentioned the book *The Coddling of the American Mind*, recommended by the principal of GW, which raises the issue of students being sensitive about what is taught in school and schools determining that some topics are no longer appropriate to cover. Tasneem asked Dr. Schoenlank if this has come up at Ridge. Dr. Schoenlank responded that they have not had that experience with either students or parents. No one has wanted censorship, but the goal is to be sensitive about what is covered. They are highly aware of what is middle school content and try not to have that filter down to lower grades. Some younger students are able to read higher-level materials, but the content covers mature themes that are not appropriate for them. She noted that Ridge always tries to expand their materials covering diverse cultures.

### **Volunteer Coordinator's Report**

Mark Bruno could not attend and will give an update at the January meeting.

### **Secretary's Report**

Danielle Flynn

*A motion was made, seconded, and approved by those present to approve the Minutes from the October 22, 2019 Ridge H.S.A. meeting.*

- *Motion was made by Ashley Minetti and seconded by Lana Monte.*

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:18 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Danielle Flynn  
Ridge H.S.A. Secretary

**NEXT H.S.A. MEETING is Tuesday, January 14, 2019 at 1:30 pm in the Teachers' Lounge.**