

Northern Highlands Regional High School Home and School Association, Inc., (HASA) minutes of the general meeting held on October 17, 2018.

Present at Meeting: Maria DiMartino, Kelli Moss, Lisa Kulick, Michele Madonna, Jane Bodnar, Julie Evans, Jean Holden, Joy Wenberg, Cindy Spence, Dana Sileo, Tamara Doyle, Jean Onufrak, Lisa Monard, Ellen VenGraitis, Jennifer Moodie, Corrina Giakouminakis, Felicia Bechtel, Cathy Squasoni, Christine Ferrarie, Andrea Pennington, Linda O'Brien, Kathy Travers, Haneeta Tobaccowalla, Joan Clifford, Jess Carlin, Kathy Deja, Denise Branca, Elaine Kehoe, Debbie Greenberg-Cinquemani, Magda Svorec, Ann Ho, Christa Paolillo, Cindy Kursar, Somali Dayal Sadarangani

Staff Present at Meeting: Mr. Joe Occhino, Mr. Mike Koth and Kelly Peterfriend

HASA President Maria DiMartino:

Maria called the meeting to order at 9:06am and welcomed everyone to the HASA meeting. She then thanked Jane Bodner for providing the refreshments.

Principal's Report- Mr. Joe Occhino:

Mentioned that Saturday, October 20, NHRHS is having an Open House from 11:30-2:30pm. Showcasing facilities and the school for 7th and 8th Graders. BBQ lunch will be provided. Also, the Football Team plays Wayne Valley. Mr. Occhino also gave an update on the School Climate Transformation Project - a 3 year initiative, which NHRHS was selected by Department of Education to be a participant. They have already met with the project manager and talked about goals to get underway. They are providing survey's for parents, staff and students. This is to get a sense of how people feel about the climate of the school, not just with fights and conflict, but more on the social and emotional climate at school. Students will do the 30 minute survey Thursday, October 18th. It's conducted electronically and anonymously. The link will be sent to students through their emails. This then goes to Rutgers University to be analyzed. Parents will get a letter and link on Monday, October 22 for the survey. They have until November 7 to complete it. Staff will not have theirs open until October 24. The Leadership team will meet regarding the results on November 26, then will aim to put a plan in place according to survey results. The Leadership team also gets together with the Wellness committee to discuss how to move forward with results.

Question: Is the survey open ended or multiple choice? Answer: Multiple choice. Mr Koth said there could be follow up survey. Question: If child is absent what do they do? Answer:

Hopefully they can take it through email in the time allotted from home or on field trip.

Question: With regard to the Wellness and Leadership committees are parents on these committees? Answer Yes, if you would like to be on one you can email Mr. Occhino to see if there is any room on the committee or maybe make sub-committee.

Vice Principal's Report- Mr. Mike Koth:

Construction starts on security vestibule this weekend. Will be done after school hours or during weekends, so will not effect school day entry. Letter will be sent out to parents outlining

changes in security and how to get entry etc. School drill this month is - school bus evacuation drill. Location of seat belts, safety exits etc.

This was first week of Week of Respect: Discussed how polarized and contentious politics are at the moment; Respecting two sides. A speaker from Long Island came in and talked about bullying and Mrs. Clemente was also present, and spoke about her son Tyler Clemente who died by suicide.

School Counseling Report- Ms. Kelly Peterfriend:

Very Successful First Step for 9th grade parents/students Testing night for parents and students Thursday, October 18, College Night for juniors is scheduled for November 1. Ms. Peterfriend also said that 45% of seniors have their applications out. Letters are going out about 9th Grade parent meetings very soon. Learning style with 9th Grade and then career with 10th Grade will all be done before Thanksgiving.

Board of Education - Christine Ferrarie:

Spoke about the last Board of Education meeting, where she announced HASA had donated over \$23,000 to Northern Highlands for the school year 2017/2018. This included annual allocations of about \$9000, which included the Teacher Back to School Night Dinner, the Staff Appreciation Lunch, assemblies at school, senior awards and refreshments at various school events. HASA also approved one time allocations of \$14,500 for a planetarium movie, several trauma kits, and a senior assembly speaker. A check for \$23,037 will be presented to Joe Occhino after this meeting.

Question was asked: Can you speak about the healthcare the Negotiations Team posted about and was it NJEA endorsed?

Answer: Christine said she is on the Negotiations Committee, and will try to answer the question, but she is limited in what she can talk about. First she mentioned that it wasn't an easy thing for her, that they don't do a back and forth thing at the BOE meetings, but that does not mean she doesn't support the teachers. Christine mentioned that she has had three kids graduate from this school, she was President of HASA for three years, and she's still here supporting! She loves the school and the teachers and has a great respect for them, but there are two sides to this. The healthcare we spoke about is called Direct Zero and it was endorsed by the NJEA. She mentioned she is still learning about all the specifics, but it is a zero copay and would save a lot of money compared to the current health plan. She added that they would never want to take away the teachers healthcare.

Question: We want to make sure our teachers have the best and are appreciated. Why can't we use money from the cafeteria account or sports account for them?

Answer: Christine agreed and said, of course we want them to be happy, but it's not that simple. Mr. Koth added, It's very difficult for teachers to separate business from personal feelings, this is all very personal for the teachers. The BOE has to make a business decision. They have to decide what is best for the school. Mr Occhino said it's really hard for all of us, because we work with the teachers and with the Board of Ed. He also stressed we cannot use money from different accounts like the cafeteria account or sports accounts to fund

teachers salaries and healthcare. Those monies are specifically budgeted and allocated and can't be touched. It's a difficult situation.

Question: Can the 2% cap be changed?

Answer: Cannot be changed unless residents vote to increase their taxes. This vote would have to be planned 6 months in advance.

Question: How long have the negotiations been going on? When did the teachers contract end? And what stage are you in?

Answer: Christine answered Negotiations started in December or early January. The contract ended in June. We are currently in Fact Finding.

Question: Is there a time limit to negotiations?

Answer: Christine answered there is no time limit. Also added it is currently a three year contract.

Question: Will teachers be able to deny writing letters of recommendations for seniors?

Answer: Mr. Occhino answered, we hope they will write them, but yes, they could refuse to. Christine added, I don't think they'll do that, and we're hopeful that we can come to an agreement soon.

HASA President- Maria DiMartino:

Maria also mentioned that at our next meeting we have a guest speaker, Kim Hayes - Option II Coordinator.

Maria also emphasized that HASA has donated over \$23,000 and we do wonderful things for our school community.

Raffle Committee - Kelli Moss

Mentioned that they changed the mailing of the raffles date to October 29, for any volunteers that would like to help. Felicia Bechtel mentioned try to get donations from places you frequently shop. Please email hasaholidayraffle@gmail.com to put your donation onto the google doc., so there are no repeat donations. The Holiday Raffle Luncheon will be on Thursday, December 6, 2018 at 11:00am in the Cultural Arts Room. If anyone has any empty baskets to donate, they are much appreciated. Also, if anyone has any connections for raffle prizes, we are appreciative of anything you can solicit. Chairs are Kelli Moss and Tammy James. Kelli mentioned that there is a sign up sheet for volunteers to stuff envelopes with raffle tickets October 29. Felicia mentioned raffle tickets that get mailed to each family are 10 tickets for \$10 each. Prizes are 1. Louis Vuitton Bag, 2. F. Silverman donated diamond earrings, 3. Gift Certificate for a Broadway show and dinner, 4. Apple Watch and 5. Cloud 9 (Live Experience) gift card \$500. Lots more prizes at luncheon, baskets and school donated prizes like parking spaces. Tax ID letters can be provided if needed. Nothing is too small. But please check spread sheet to avoid duplications and add your donation.

Treasurer's Report- Joy Wenberg:

As of October 14, 2018 the Money Market Account balance is \$21,826.25 and Checking Account balance is \$37,551.95.

Secretary- Lisa Kulick:

Motioned to approve the minutes from the last meeting, September, 2018. It was motioned to approve by Kathy Travers and seconded by Cathy Squasoni.

Membership- Linda O'Brien:

Membership for 2018-2019 is ongoing \$35 each. Extra books are an additional \$6. They are still trickling in. Going to add to the Newsletter it's NEVER TOO LATE! to order one. For new HASA members going forward, the directories can be picked up at the Northern Highlands greeters station.

Grocery Cards- Cathy Squasoni:

The grocery store fundraiser is on going and cards are available for sale. The Shoprite and Stop and Shop cards are available for sale. Cards are in denominations of \$50 or \$100. HASA members are encouraged to buy these cards; they cost you nothing, but add up to a nice amount for Northern Highlands. Uncle Guissepe's and Wegman's don't have a program and we do not participate with ACME. Thanks for supporting this fundraiser.

Sports Association (SA)- Andrea Pennington:

Beefsteak Dinner - 175 people came. Lots of fun. Not sure on how much raised yet. Girls - 5th sectional tennis title won. Field Hockey team are in the finals against Ramsey.

Girls soccer team are in Finals for Counties. Going to be offering a program for National High School Network - cards for a subscription for a year to watch game' online. Games in the gym or field can be watched. Also get access to other schools participating in the network. Please participate in AmazonSmile program and name the Northern Highlands Sports Association as the beneficiary. Especially with the holiday's coming up.

MPAA- Lisa Monard:

Marching Band - Yamaha Cup got 3rd place and Cadet's Award of Excellence 1st place. School Play 'Fools' - ticket purchasing information will be coming out soon.

TD BANK FUNDRAISER - Michele Madonna:

Town Journal had photo of TD Bank giving check to HASA.

Maria DiMartino mentioned the next HASA meeting is November 14. This meeting was adjourned at 10:09am