



Hilton Head Island High School
HHI Seahawks PTSO, Inc.
September 12, 2023

Call to Order, Welcome & Sign In- 12:28pm

Attendance: Kelly Ruckno, Rebecca Mastrorocco, Ellen Simmons, Elizabeth Ott, Tammy Novak, Dawn Washington, Lissy Rawl, Tina Rohr, Audrey Clayton, Krista Dunton, Angie Greenfield, Jenifer Fielding, Jessica Howard, Tatiana Ramirez, Steve Schidrich

Principal's Report- *Steve Schidrich*

Back to School: The Obligations lines were very long. Cluster school principals met regarding obligations that dated back even as long ago as Early Childhood Center. These obligations slip through the cracks at the other schools because they have no way to enforce payment of the debts. It was suggested that they not allow students to walk or graduate unless the obligations are paid

Open House: Thank you to the PTSO for feeding the teachers for Open House. Will be having Parent/Teacher Conferences next month and hoping the PTSO will be able to do the same.

Homecoming Week: The week of October 22nd will be Homecoming Week. We'll have the usual activities of Powder Puff games and a dance on Saturday. They're still forming plans for possibly having a volleyball tournament. Mr. Schidrich will meet with the SGA to finalize events.

COVID resurgence: We're starting to have a recurrence of issues with COVID again. This week we have four staff members out; last week there were three out. At the height of COVID, we had federally funded "ESSR funds" available for COVID relief. Some of this money was used to compensate teachers who volunteered to spend their planning period helping out another class when that teacher was absent for illness. There is no new teaching being done, just supervising the class while they work on their assignments. Teacher employment contracts are rather open-ended, simply stating that they may be asked to do "other work not specifically spelled out in the contract." Whereas it used to be a more cooperative culture in the schools to help others out, now teachers have begun to expect compensation whenever they do something extra. Now, the Esra funds have dried up, so there has been a little push-back from some teachers when asked to do something extra. The principals of our cluster schools will be meeting tomorrow to discuss this issue and how we can improve the culture between the teachers. If they cannot find money in the budget to compensate teachers, Mr Schidrich may ask the PTSO to sponsor gift cards or something along those lines to reward teachers who do step up.

Behavior at Football Games: We've had some issues with bad behavior at the last two football games, not only from high school students but also middle school students and even parents. Foul language, intoxication, throwing things off the upper level bleachers. Middle school students are often dropped off unsupervised. This is not just a Hilton Head problem but occurs across the county. We try to have law enforcement present, but that is costly. Deputies are paid \$42/hour for football games. We try to have at least four SROs (School Resource Officers) or security guards present at games. One school has posted a sign at the entrance to sporting events, stating that middle school students must be accompanied by an adult or person 19+ years old. However, this is not official BCSD policy, so all the schools need to get on the same page with each other to have a unified way of dealing with these issues. Current policy says that a report is made, as well as a recommendation for counseling, or legal

action if indicated. However the formal policy is likely going to be revised to be tougher and may result in expulsion or transferring to Right Choices School.

Similarly, vaping in the bathrooms is a problem. We are trying to have more teacher or admin representation in the bathrooms, or at the entrance controlling the number of people going in. If there is a high suspicion that someone is vaping (e.g. puff of smoke seen or smelled), they will do a search of everyone who was in the restroom at the time. Certain students who are known to be repeat offenders are not permitted to go to the restroom without an escort.

Referendum: On September 18th there will be a Town Hall Meeting in the SCC at 6pm to discuss the proposed Referendum on the November ballot. Please attend and spread the word to others.

Instructional Review: On September 19th the school will have its Instructional Review, which is a blitz evaluation of classes in order to make suggestions or find areas that need improvement. These items can then be addressed prior to our School Report Card period.

SIC Report- *Mike Quigley*, SIC Chairperson, came to speak about the Referendum. A handout was distributed. The following key points were made:

1. There is a rule prohibiting any Beaufort County employee from attempting to persuade a vote. They can only present facts. However, the official stance of the SIC is to promote the yes vote for the Referendum on November 7th. There is a website (voteyes2023.com) where you can find more detailed information. Please help get the word out. Include parents at our feeder schools. If you have any questions, email Mike.Quigley@TD.com.
2. One of the most important things to keep in mind is that although taxes went up, the millage rate will go down to keep everything even, so there will be no net increase in taxes.
3. Originally, close to a billion dollars-worth of projects around the county were identified. This list was whittled down to the most important items, with an estimated cost of \$439 million. Obviously our primary concern is Hilton Head High School, which would be the big ticket item, accounting for an estimated \$160 million of that total- roughly 25% of the money. There are also many other improvements throughout the county, particularly at Bluffton, May River, and Lady's Island.
4. Planning for the rebuild (i.e. surveys to the public and coming up with an appealing architectural design) was financed by the 2019 Referendum and has already been done. Prior to that, no referendum had been passed for 11 years. Why are people against a referendum? Possibly because they think it would raise taxes, some may have distrust for the District's use of funds due to its track record, and some may be opposed for other reasons (there is a group in Lady's Island that doesn't want to rebuild the middle school but rather want those students to be absorbed into other schools). During the past 15 years, Bluffton experienced exponential population growth, necessitating the building of May River HS, and further decreasing existing funds. If the 2023 Referendum is approved, the project would break ground in March or April, 2024.
5. A PR firm has been hired to help get the word out and push social media, beginning in October. Mr. Schidrich has a meeting this afternoon to get a better plan for how parking will be handled. It is important for residents who DON'T have children to realize that a large portion of HHIHS graduates (35% of the 2023 graduating class) don't go to college, but rather enter the workforce immediately. This population will benefit from the CTE improvements that are planned for the new building. Also Jen Fielding and Ingrid Boatright met with members of the Chamber of Commerce yesterday about possibly developing an internship program for our students.

President's Report –*Kelly Ruckno*

Since this was the first meeting of the school year, President Kelly Ruckno introduced the current officers.

Thank Yous: Many thanks go out to all our volunteers, particularly at Freshman Orientation, Back to School Day, and the weekly School Store volunteers. Reminded volunteers to submit a background

check through BCSD link found on the school website. Until you receive clearance, you may use your license to enter the school. Also, hours for the store have been in flux, thank you for your patience. The final decision was to open only during A lunch on Thursdays, since that is primarily freshman who would be more in need of clothing.

Discount Cards

- a. Thank you to everyone who helped on the discount cards. We welcome Corner Perk, Wayback Burgers, and Lobster Bar as our three new businesses. Thank you letters are going out. Please support local!
- b. Jessica asked about the possibility of school athletic teams selling cards as a fundraiser for them. Pros and cons were discussed. The officers will make a formal decision.

Teacher support

- a. Feeding the teachers a lot lately: Island Bagel breakfast, Giuseppi's start-of-school lunch, Publix dinners for Open House, and will resume the monthly Pizza Friday lunch. Also Corner perk donated free drink cards for them. On the horizon, we'll be feeding them again on 10/17 for Parent-Teacher Conferences.
- b. Considering purchasing gift cards to reward teachers, as per Mr Schidrich's request above.

Student support

- a. Approved \$300 request for supplies to make birdhouses for Geometry/Art learning project.
- b. Approved \$500 donation to help with ESOL Dept trip to Washington, DC.
- c. Purchasing 11 yearbooks for Guidance to distribute to Seniors in need.
- d. Purchased sweatpants for use when students are not in dress code. Students are given approved clothing to wear for the day. They are supposed to wash the clothes and return it to Mrs. Hernandez. If the clothes are not returned, the cost will ultimately be put on their Obligations list.

The PTSO page on the school website has been updated.

Seahawk Support Circle (SSC) Report- Audrey Clayton

Bargain Box Grant: We are so grateful to have been awarded a grant from the Bargain Box for the past few years. Without these funds, much of what we do would not be possible! The application for the 2024 Bargain Box Grant was completed over the summer. We just re-interviewed with the committee on Monday. The final decision will come in December, but we are very optimistic.

Holiday Survival Bags: The majority of the grant is used toward the Holiday Bags for students in need. The contents usually include dress-code appropriate clothing, socks, underwear, blanket, basic toiletries, laundry pods, snacks and food, backpack, etc.

All Saints has also chosen this charity as a recipient of their Angel Tree giving at Christmas.

Rebecca will check with Congregation Beth Yam to see if they are going to be able to contribute again this year.

Our supply closet is in good shape in regard to shoes and basic needs, if any students need something prior to Christmas. However we are always in need of school uniform donations, particularly bottoms!

School Store- Rebecca Mastrorocco

1. The School Store made just over \$10,000 net income from Freshman Orientation and \$23,400 from Back to School events. These monies would be unrestricted income, to be used for students and/or staff/teachers.
2. We also sold Discount Cards, but we don't have final numbers on those because they were also being sold by the bookkeeper, and those records have not yet been consolidated. Discount Card funds are restricted to benefit only students, as opposed to staff.
3. Still waiting on a bill from Charlotte, our clothing supplier, for Back to School.

Treasurer's Report– *Ellen Simmons*

Ellen circulated the balance sheet. The balance appears really high right now, but we are still waiting for Charlotte's bill.

Elections

1. We have two positions being vacated, both vice presidents. Many thanks go out to Marisa Wagner and Lauren Brooks for their years of service.
2. We are happy to have Tammy Novak joining as a PTSO member, with her financial background.
3. Kelly asked for volunteers to fill the vice president positions. Jessica Howard agreed, as did Rebecca Mastrorocco.
 - a. Audrey nominated Jessica. Dawn made a motion to approve and Rebecca seconded. The vote was unanimously approved.
 - b. Jen nominated Rebecca. Ellen made a motion to approve and Jessica seconded. The vote was unanimously approved.
4. We are going to have a Hospitality Committee, rather than just one or two people in charge of that. The goal is to make it more manageable when one person has a conflict. Tina is the head of the committee, with help from Kim Sobocinski and Lindy Bison. She asked for any other volunteers and Lissy, Tatiana, and Dawn agreed.

Minutes: Motion to approve the minutes from the May meeting made by Audrey, seconded by Dawn, and approved.

Calendar:

Next SIC meeting: Thursday, September 21st, 5:30 p.m.

Next PTSO meeting: Tuesday, October 10th, 12:30 p.m.

Meeting adjourned 2:23pm.

CHR