

Jupiter High School Band Parent Meeting Minutes

Date: August 25, 2016
Location: JHS Chorus Room
Meeting called to order: 7:10 pm

President Susan Taylor called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

BAND DIRECTOR REPORT - Andy Gekoskie

New Director of Bands Andy Gekoskie told attendees that everything is going great and as planned. He thanked his wife Katrina for all of the support at home.

- Wind Symphony is doing reseating tests.
- Symphonic Band may be split into two bands: a 9th grade band conducted by Mr. Gekoskie and a 10th to 12th grade band conducted by Mr. Moore.
- The Jazz Ensemble is doing well.
- We now have an Orchestra/Strings class taught by Dr. Doug. This program will need organizational help, and they will have their own Fair Share.
- All-State audition contracts are due tomorrow
- There will be Spirit rehearsal on Saturday unless there is an official cancellation of activities by the school district due to weather.

Mr. Gekoskie was asked how to pronounce his name: juh-CUSS-key – or you can call him “Mr. G.”

Mr. Gekoskie was also asked to share his goals for the JHS Band program.

- Marching Band: Take the band where it's at and make it even better. We have the right people on staff and on the design team. He wants to take the marching band to the next level.
- Wind Symphony: A concert camp will be held in January with a guest conductor and section coaches to help prepare the MPA music. Dr. Bob Cameron from Duquesne University (Pittsburgh) will work with the students. This will be like an All-District or All-State band just for our Wind Symphony.
- Mr. G plans to have students Skype with composers of their MPA music so they can understand the meaning behind the music.
- Mr. G would like to raise the level of musicianship and possibly attend State MPA again.
- He plans that his first year will be an observation year, and then he will start tweaking what we do.

Mr. Gekoskie mentioned that Dr. Iannitti is very focused on the arts and supports the arts.

MEETING MINUTES

The minutes from the May 18, 2016, Band Parent meeting were distributed previously by email. The minutes were approved on motion by Debra Wasserman and seconded by Wendy Anderson.

OFFICER/COMMITTEE REPORTS

FINANCE REPORT – Tammy Palette & Rosalie Jablonski

Financially we are doing “OK,” but bills are starting to come in, and we will be in trouble soon unless people get caught up with their Fair Share. 50% of billed payments have not been paid. The payment schedule is available on our website and on our online calendar. Debbie will also end out an email with the payment schedule.

We must pay a deposit for the FMBC hotel in two weeks.

Hours worked at Roger Dean Stadium Concessions over the summer have been credited to fundraising accounts.

Volunteer Credits have not been credited to fundraising accounts yet.

We are in the process of determining the cost of the uniforms.

Financial statements were emailed two weeks ago.

PROPS / CONCESSIONS – David Cooper

We need help with props! We need about 30 parents to help with the props in the show. We have fun!

Concessions

We have a JV game tonight, and a Jupiter Christian School game tomorrow night. Concessions workers are usually done by 11:00 pm at Friday football games.

For Jupiter Christian games on Saturday afternoons, we will serve a light menu.

You do not need to be a marching band parent to help with concessions!

VOLUNTEERS – Susan Taylor

Spirit of Jupiter Rehearsals

Please sign up to help with Spirit rehearsals, even if you cannot work a full shift. We like to have at least three parents with the students at all times. Don't pay attention to your kids if they say they don't want you at school. They probably won't see you anyway!

Open Positions

We need volunteers for the following positions:

- Fundraising Chair (or Co-Chairs)
- Auditorium Seat Plaques
- Cheesecake Fundraiser Assistant – *this was filled after the meeting by Amy Schatz*
- Mixed Bag Designs Fundraiser Chair – *this was filled after the meeting by Heather Bournes*

Football Games

We have enough volunteers for this week's football game, but look for emails for opportunities for future games and sign up via SignUpGenius.

The band is planning to perform at halftime.

CHARMS / WEBSITE – Debbie Wiley

Debbie did a demonstration of logging into Charms and showed the different modules used by JHS, including: Finances, Update Info, and Forms.

Debbie also showed different pages on the website to encourage parents to use it as a reference, particularly the online calendar, the Forms page and the Email Archive page.

FUNDRAISING

Coupon Books - Jessica Billy

Coupon book sales end August 31. Half of the cost is credited towards your student's fundraising account. There are upcoming opportunities to sell coupon books in front of stores; check your email.

To get books, contact Jessica Billy.

It was asked if the sales will be extended past the August 31 deadline. It will depend on how many books we have left over. We need to close this fundraiser as soon as possible so we have access to the funds.

We do have an incentive to sell books: For every 10 books sold, you will receive a coupon good for one movie ticket at Cinépolis Jupiter (\$20 value).

Cheesecakes

This is a typical catalog fundraiser, and it starts tomorrow. The Cheesecake man will come in and give students a sample of the product and give advice on how to sell!

Product will arrive in mid-October. Product MUST be picked up on the specified date; it arrives frozen and we do not have space to store product that is not picked up on time.

Cheesecake chairs are Shannon Appel and Audrey Albright. They are looking for someone to “train” for next year, since Shannon is the parent of a senior. Preferably, this person would be someone with a Windows computer, as the ordering software does not work on a Mac.

Tritan Tumblers – Cynthia Carrino

We have a few custom JHS Band tumblers left for sale. These are very similar to Tervis Tumblers and do have a lifetime guarantee. Tumblers are \$25 each, and approximately \$10 goes into student fundraising accounts for every tumbler sold.

CONCERT UNIFORMS - Harvey White

All students in Symphonic Band and Wind Symphony, including those in Percussion Ensemble classes, need tux pants (with a stripe down the middle) and a white wing-tipped tux shirt. The band provides cummerbunds and bowties at performances. You are welcome to purchase your own bowtie and cummerbund.

We would love to have some black cummerbunds and/or bowties donated; we need about 50 each. We will also accept donations to purchase more.

Terri Carrasco says she will make some calls to get donations.

Purchasing information for concert attire is available on our website (at jupiterbands.com/home/uniforms). Concert attire can be purchased online through FormalFashionsInc.com or locally at Professional Images in North Palm Beach.

Girls have the option of purchasing a tux skirt (for either band) or a black concert dress (for Symphonic Band only).

Vipers are NOT acceptable shoes for concerts. Students should have close-toed DRESS shoes.

Please get your concert uniforms now. Pictures for the annual composite are November 17-18.

Jazz Ensemble uniforms must be confirmed with Mr. Moore, but they are typically a dark long-sleeved dress shirt and dark pants.

FESTIVAL OF BANDS - Wendy Anderson

Our 2nd Annual Festival of Bands is Saturday, October 29. Planning meetings will be held every Thursday at 7:00 pm until the event. Please come out to help!

All Spirit of Jupiter families are required to provide one adult to work one shift at the event per the Fair Share Agreement.

NEW BUSINESS

CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM

August Band Camp

Some parents felt that the number of activities scheduled for Saturday felt overloaded on top of the week of band camp and the fact that Monday was the start of school. It was suggested that we do the

Parent Preview or Skit Night on a different night so kids could be released earlier on Saturday to rest up for the start of school.

Skit Night

Various concerns were raised:

- Inappropriate skits: do any adults review the skits before they are presented? *Mr. Gekoskie said that he will review the skits before next year's Skit Night.*
- Health dangers of "The Brotherhood."
- Students intentionally being left out of a skit or forced to participate in a skit when they didn't want to.
- Limited parent supervision at Skit Night.

Length of Weekday Rehearsals

A concern was raised about the length of the weekday rehearsals. Some students are not getting home until 10:00pm. Some students are not getting enough sleep on those nights.

Summer Rehearsals

A suggestion was made to change summer rehearsals so they are once a week instead of an entire week.

All of these concerns will be brought by the Board to Mr. Gekoskie and the staff for discussion.

Parents are encouraged to share concerns with Band Board members or Mr. Gekoskie as soon as possible, rather than waiting for a band parent meeting.

Terri Carrasco made a point to alleviate parent concerns, stating that she has been very impressed and mindful of the hard work required of volunteers during band camp. Volunteers make sure that the kids are well cared for, and she assured parents that students were enthusiastic and happy to be a part of the band.

DONATIONS/GRANTS - Jeff DeMario and Crystal Titus

Jeff and Crystal introduced themselves. They are working on writing grants and getting donations for the band program. They are very receptive to feedback and ideas.

They would like more support in getting donations. If you have any business contacts or connections, please share them with Jeff and Crystal so they don't have to do so many "cold calls."

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

8/26: Cheesecake Fundraiser Starts

8/26: Home Football Game

8/27: Spirit Rehearsal - 1pm to 9pm

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45pm.

Response to August Constructive Criticism from Mr. Gekoskie

The Band Parent Board and I discussed some concerns that were raised at the August Band Parent Meeting.

I want to make it clear that your concerns were heard. Please continue to communicate with me directly or with our Band Parent Organization Board members in a timely manner.

Summer Rehearsals: Weekly Rehearsals vs. Week-long Camps

Rehearsals are set up as week-long camps for several reasons:

- We have one of the best staffs on the east coast, so we share staff members with other schools AND with Drum Corp International (DCI) groups. If we have set weeks of rehearsal during the summer, our staff members can arrange their schedules so they are here working with us instead of at other schools or in other locations around the country.

If we were to have weekly rehearsals throughout the summer, the likelihood that we would have all staff members at all rehearsals is slim to none with their travel schedules. The more staff we have consistently at rehearsals, the more productive our rehearsals are.

- We set the schedule for the summer as early as possible in the school year so that families can plan their vacations and time away around the mandatory week-long band camps. Having weekly mandatory rehearsals would greatly interfere with a family's ability to get away and spend time together. We cannot make rehearsals optional because we need 100% of the students in attendance to make progress in learning and perfecting drill and music.
- Weekly rehearsals would create a scheduling burden for the school. The facilities are leased out over the summer to camps and other groups, and we would have limited access to the areas we need if we were on campus on a weekly basis.

Skit Night: Inappropriate Skits and Student Participation

As I stated in the Band Parent meeting, I will take responsibility for reviewing skits prior to their performance on Skit Night.

We can look at discussing guidelines or rules with the kids regarding skit content. We do need to balance the tradition of this event with content suitable for school.

In discussing participation in skits with students, I do not believe any students were intentionally left out of a skit or forced to participate against their will, but we can make it clear to the students that this will not be tolerated.

August Band Camp: Saturday overload

We can certainly look at the scheduling of events for next year. Some of our commitments the week of the August camp are beyond our control, such as performing at Warrior Welcome and attending the Sports BBQ. We also would like to continue our traditions of Parent Preview and Skit Night, which are most appropriately held at the end of the week. If the DCI Big, Loud & Live event is held during band camp, we would like to give the students the opportunity to attend that event also.

It should be pointed out that attendance at Skit Night is optional, so if students are exhausted from the week, they do not have to participate.

Holding camp a week earlier would greatly reduce the amount of time we can rehearse, since the school district is on 4-day work weeks two weeks before school starts. It would also further impact our band families and the amount of time they have to vacation together as a family over the summer.

Length of Weekday Rehearsals

Rehearsals are ending promptly at 9:00 pm. With the reduced amount of rehearsal hours we have this season (due to the DCI Jupiter event and early FMBC weekend among other things), we simply cannot afford to reduce the rehearsal schedule. We need every minute we have scheduled to prepare and rehearse the show.

We are considering changing rehearsals from Mondays and Thursdays to Mondays and Wednesdays next year, since we are no longer constrained by the availability of a staff member. Since many tests are given on Fridays, this change should help greatly with late nights on Thursdays.