



Greeley Sports Boosters

Horace Greeley High School

Chappaqua, New York

Minutes

November 27, 2018, 8:45am

Ed Center Conference Room B

ATTENDANCE

Board Members

Laura Brail
Cindy Greenstein
Amanda Goodstadt
Heather Laforteza
Karen Yarasavage
Mike Hutchings
Jeff Dorst

CCSD

Jason Semo, Athletic Director
Jane Shepardson, Board of Education Representative

Committee Chairs, Team Liaisons, Members & Guest

Julia Burton, Lisa Dunleavy, Marla Shar, Lori Venturino Salore, Stacey Reynolds

WELCOME

- The October 2018 minutes were approved.

BOOSTERS UPDATE

- **Gifts** The treatment tables should arrive any day. They cost approximately \$1000 under budget. There was discussion about whether the surplus money could be used to purchase camera equipment for the student Boosters. Laura has spoken to the club's faculty advisor (Alison Mitchell) about whether she believes the cameras will be used and what sort of system can be put in place to make sure the equipment can be checked out, returned, etc. It was agreed that additional information is needed before there is a vote. Until the Student Booster Club is fully up and running, teams may still find their own student photographers/videographers.

- **Web-Store Fundraising Program - Winter** The team stores are open and feedback would be appreciated. There were some misunderstandings about the web-store program resulting in parents not setting up a store for one of the teams even though the coach was already working with Rainbow.
- **October Meeting Follow Up/Action Steps Taken to Date**
 - *Communication* It's clear that we continue to have communication problems with getting information to everyone who needs it. We need to proactively give information to team liaisons and financial managers. Julia has been giving team liaisons our media guidelines at the beginning of each season and Cindy has just started providing our financial guidelines.

We have many resources on our webpage, but people don't know they are there. People don't always share information from one year to the next.

There is also miscommunication about what Boosters' role in communication is. Matt Friedler, is responsible for communicating information to students. Boosters information is mostly communicated to parents. If Boosters or individual teams want information to go to students for special events such as Senior Day, Pink Game, Fundraisers, Tournaments, etc., it should be sent to Matt. Also, more people need to use Sports You.

There was discussion about the coaches meeting to be held on Wednesday, 11/28. Not everyone who should have known about the meeting was told. Some teams continue to rely on parents to email one another. The theme of the meeting will be challenges faced by student athletes on a regular basis. Jason will speak first and then individual coaches will discuss expectations for their particular teams with parents.

- *BOE Policies* There will be a BOE policy meeting later this morning. Laura shared our concerns with Jane (prior to today's meeting) that the current Gift Policy #3010 doesn't consider large groups such as teams who wish to collectively appreciate their coach at the end of a season. Jane explained that there is a municipal law stating a district employee is not able to accept a gift valued at more than \$75 total (NOT per family). Jane has checked with their attorneys. She knows the law isn't enforced or applied consistently across sports or activities.
- *Website* Jeff reorganized some of the resources to make them easier to find.
- *Communication to Students* As previously discussed, all communication to students must go through Matt Friedler, Student Life Coordinator.

- *Modified and Youth Sports* Second survey is going out this morning. Laura reached out to Jason and Andrew Corsilia about an incoming ninth grade athletics orientation. Meeting date is TBD and they will discuss format, logistics, etc. We will need volunteers for the orientation, including to write information packets.
- *Team Posters* Lori Townsend volunteered to talk to teams about posters (e.g., how many are printed, how they are funded). There may be a way to help teams facilitate this process (bulk purchasing, better pricing, etc.). If anyone is interested in helping Lori, please reach out to her.
- **Champions & Events** There was a send-off for the seven swimmers who went to the state championship. In the past, any athlete who won a state championship was recognized at a BOE meeting. Jason will discuss this idea with Christine Ackerman. It was suggested that we recognize our state champion at the next Pep Rally. It was also suggested that we recognize state champions or other major title winners at different games in order to increase attendance.

Karen brought up the fact that state send-offs seem geared towards individual sports and questioned whether, for example, there should be send-offs for teams that make sectionals since this might be a comparable achievement depending upon the sport. Jason said that once something like this starts, it will need to be done for every team because in individual sports (e.g., swimming, skiing, tennis), athletes routinely go to and win sectionals.

- **Financials** Cindy distributed financial reports via email.

ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT UPDATE

- **Logo Project – status; timeline** Jason spoke with Joe (head of Varsity, the company doing the project) and they have started putting general overarching ideas together. We want to have the logo ready in January and do a big unveiling. Varsity says it has no problem meeting a January deadline. The next meeting with Varsity will include Boosters representatives. Jason will send the contract to us so Cindy can send a check.
- **Winter Team Photo Day** Jason is working on setting a date.
- **Athletic Building & Field C Construction** The flooring for the new fitness center arrives on 12/3 and the new equipment arrives around 12/13. The district is working on moving the existing equipment to the pole barn before the equipment is sold, disposed of, or given to the middle schools. The dance studio flooring will not be installed on 12/3 (but should take only one day to install when it's ready), as the studio's completion will be delayed a couple of weeks depending on how moving the existing equipment goes.

Wiring for digital display is ready. Both scoreboards are in. Most of the new backboards are in, as are the curtains, which are being utilized for both gym classes and athletic practices. The new scoreboards are incredible. Students love them and we are trying to use them during practices so our teams get used to them and they aren't distracted by them. Tonight's girls' basketball game will showcase the new scoreboards.

C field is almost done with the exception of some of the surrounding landscape. We will be adding a pathway between C and B fields to connect the Senior Parking Lot with the Competition Field.

Jason will talk to Mario (the new head custodian) about State Championship banners purchased in 2017 that are still not up.

- **Landscape for Hiring Coaches** The landscape has undergone a major shift because of club and travel sports. Coaches are gravitating towards club/travel because the pay is much better, they get to choose their players, and they don't have to worry about issues such as playing time and practice schedules. It has become very difficult to find coaches. As an example, Jason advertised for indoor track, as well as girls and boys basketball for three months. He was contacted by a total of four applicants, only one of whom was worthy of an interview (and who did get a position). There are some big openings in the spring, including girls varsity lacrosse. Parents are aware and send resumes of their own contacts to Jason. This is helpful. Advertisements really don't work unless they are tied to staff/athletic department positions. Another issue is that coaches need to be here at 2:30-3pm so applicants need non-traditional work schedules in order to make that timing work. Jason asked Tony Sinanis (the new Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and Leadership Development) to find out whether applicants for permanent substitute positions in the district might be interested in coaching. Jason said it's critical that parents try to support coaches as best they can.

DISCUSSION: COMMUNICATION

- **Boosters Weekly Blast – this year vs. last year; format, numbers, etc.** Julia addressed complaints about the length of the blasts. The overall point of the blasts, besides informing and promoting, is to make people feel good so they'll donate. To do that, we need to include as much content and as many photographs as possible. Our readership has dramatically increased and now 1,200 people get our emails. Approximately 400-450 people open them. Julia isn't opposed to changing things, but doesn't like to limit what people write because the writers put in a lot of effort. It was decided that we would look at changing the format of the blasts only if readership starts to decline.
- **Athletics and Sports Boosters communication at other comparable schools** Mike spent a considerable amount of time reviewing other school and booster club websites. He examined what information is relayed to parents, as well as consistency, trying to determine where our district stands and whether there are best practices. He looked at

twenty different schools, mostly in this area.

He reported that the athletics websites are pretty consistent (despite differences in layout and organization), including the same types of information: schedules, concussion management, etc. Our district's athletic site is consistent in content with others, however, one of the biggest differences was that at least two-thirds of the other sites had athletic handbooks (single documents containing everything about the program, with a table of contents and in PDF format, so printable). Almost all really important information in the handbooks is on our website, but a handbook is a cleaner way to organize it. The key difference is functionality and the ability to find what you need easily, which is NOT the case with our website.

Jane said that the most common questions she is asked are, "Where do I find the sports schedules?" and "How do I get notifications?" Too many clicks are needed to get to the schedules and they are too difficult to find. It would be helpful to streamline and find a good website to use as a model. Mike commented that a very helpful feature on some sites was having a calendar on the homepage so the schedule is upfront.

Almost all sites had coaches' contact information and athletic department contact information. New Caanan had one of the best websites and it even included information for the parents of team captains in a Captains Parents Guidelines document .

While athletic department websites were relatively consistent, Mike commented that Boosters websites were all over the map. Even good Boosters websites were pretty basic, containing fundraising information, mission statements and scholarship information. Our website actually has much more information than any of the others he found. There was discussion about the fact that because our site is so comprehensive, it confuses parents. Really, much of the information on our site belongs on the Athletic Department website – Boosters has been filling a void in the communications practices of the Athletic Department -- and we should return to focusing on fundraising and other items that are our actual responsibility.

Another issue when reviewing sites is how they appear on mobile devices. Mike is going to send a list of his top five sites to Laura, Jason and Jane. Laura reiterated that the most important things to consider are finding content, user friendliness, relevance and timeliness.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:21 am