

NOTES (Approved May 1, 2025)
General Business Meeting of the Membership of the John F. Kennedy School PTA
Thursday, March 27, 2025
Time: 7:30 PM-9:00 PM
Format: Hybrid (in-person and zoom)

Attendance:

Online: Kim Durniak, Patrick Adams, 1 non-member Michelle Becker (KG parent), Cassie Johannes, Amanda Beckwith, David Sakowski, Kate Van Sleet, Lily Stanton Marra

In person: Becky Lopes-Filho, Alexis Orellana, Donna Rains, Andrew Sessa, Jess Perez Adams, Cynthia Singer-Riordan, Crystal Woody, Ryan Williams, Francesca Broekman, Becky Payne, Kathleen Hornby

Quorum of 13 met: with total of 18 members (7 members online, 1 non-member online and 11 members in person)

President's Welcome & First order of business

- Approval of last general meeting's notes [2024.9.26 \(GM MTG 1\) PTA General Business Meeting Notes](#)
- Motion to approve minutes from previous meeting 9.26.24:
 - Motion by Francesca
 - Kathleen Hornby seconds the motion
 - Approved by 16 members, 1 abstention and 1 member joined call after the vote

New Business for Nominating Committee

- Overview of Proposal and rationale for proposed motion was summarized by Becky as well as all of the work that went into considering and drafting the proposal
- **Motion:** Proposal to amend this PTA's by-laws for the purpose of increasing the size of the board by two roles (1 co-president and 1 co-treasurer)
 - Proposal language in [full](#)
- Floor was open to discussion, questions, debate, motions to amend the proposed language changes:
 - Fran raised the point of discussion, noting that the board currently at 6 and increasing to 8 still keeps the board at an even number and suggested a desire to have an odd number of board members to avoid potential for split vote. She suggested discussing bringing the board up 9 officers by adding another co-secretary
 - Becky P. suggested some kind of sergeant of arms role for record keeping could help in this type of situation

- Kim D., wondered if there could be a way to name another party without actually increasing or decreasing the size of the board to 9 officers
- Alexis O. and Ryan W., both suggested that it might be better to come up with a plan for how to break a tie vote rather than adding additional board members. Even with an odd number of board members could have a situation where not everyone is present or all positions filled to create the odd number of board members.
- Alexis O. placed emphasis to support the board and the added capacity with extra board seats since there is an increased interest in people wanting to serve and support at this level is encouraged.
- Donna suggested creating working group or determining an arbiter, so that it can be determined what does it look like when we don't have a majority
- Andrew pointed out that if something that divisive comes up, it would force the board to come together and being able to act together
- Becky L-F. suggest that the need for more people on the board is more important at this moment and will figure out details around
- Vote on the Proposal (affirmative vote by $\frac{2}{3}$ of members present and voting by a show of hands)
 - Motion to support the amended as proposed in the meeting notes
 - a) Motion by Donna
 - b) Andrew seconds the motion
 - Unanimous vote in agreement (17 votes, 1 abstention)
 - Taking suggestions into advisement

Nominations

- Becky L-H. presented an overview of the nominating committee work.
 - The committee included Francesca Broekman, Kathleen Hornby, and Kimberly Durniak (committee chair)
 - The committee worked together to drum up interest in the board and came up with a slate for a 6 person board. Review of process [here](#)
 - Sidebar - MAPTA assured us we would have the bi-laws ratified with the update in board size in time for the election in May. If not, we would need to postpone the election meeting.
- The Nominating Committee submits the following slate of nominees as the recommendation for the following offices, read by chair Kimberly Durniak
- Presented the Slate:

| | | |
|----|--------------------|---|
| a) | President: | Becky Lopes-Filho |
| b) | Co-Vice President: | Kathleen Hornby and Jessica Perez Adams |
| c) | Treasurer: | Amanda Beckwith |
| d) | Co-Secretaries: | Andrew Sessa and Crystal Woody |
- Nominations Open to the Floor, PTA members can nominate anyone, yourself or another person, for any position. Nominee must be present and must accept the nomination

- Nominations from nominating committee recorded and read from the floor:
 - Becky Lopes - Filho, accepts nomination for President
 - Amanda Beckwith, accepts nomination for Treasurer
 - Kathleen Hornby, accepts nomination for Co-Vice President
 - Jessica Perez Adams, accepts nomination for Co-Vice President
 - Crystal Woody, accepts nomination for co-Secretary
 - Andrew Sessa, accepts nomination for co-Secretary

- Nomination from the floor:
 - Donna nominates Andrew Sessa for Co President
 - Andrew accepts nomination
 - Jess nominates Becky Payne for co Treasurer
 - Becky P. declines the nomination
 - Becky L-F. nominates Ryan Williams for Co-Secretary - rising 6th grade parent, currently holds many positions within other PTAs
 - Ryan accepts nomination

- New Slate proposed after nominations from the floor, will take a vote on individual positions at the May 1, 2025 Board Election meeting:
 - a) Co-President: Becky Lopes-Filho and Andrew Sessa
 - b) Co-Vice President: Kathleen Hornby and Jessica Perez Adams
 - c) Treasurer: Amanda Beckwith
 - d) Co-Secretaries: Crystal Woody and Ryan Williams

Reports of the Officers and Committees

1. Report of the Treasurer

- Started the year with \$18K we have XX come in thus far this year
- 8th grade has had more in fundraising this year
- Field trips anticipated
- \$43,490 currently in the bank

- Fundraising updates
 - a) Direct donation campaign was successful this year and it was the right decision
 - b) Success of this year does not mean this should or will be the fundraising campaign for future years

2. Community Events

- Past (co-secretary & committee co-chair Alexis Orellana)
 - a) Highlights of past events: Harvest Fest, Flatbread, BINGO

- b) Harvest Fest overview - continued with a Part A for those students during the day and a Part B for community
 - c) Event requires a number of volunteers and always have them
 - d) Flatbread - fundraiser with lanes reserved for bowling raised \$608
 - e) FNO Bingo night - 2nd time - overall feedback was good, found the activity that is enjoyable and accessible for all ages. Donations support the night, gift cards also donated, cost of night tends to break even with a slight intake of donated funds
- Community Input: Give us your feedback and ideas
 - a) How can we support younger kids or kids who have a hard time not winning bingo
 - b) How to have a calm down corner
 - c) Discuss with some of the SEPAC to figure out what to do
 - d) Quiet space for those who need it with 7th or 8th grade volunteers maybe
- Upcoming (president Becky Lopes-Filho)
 - a) Staff Appreciation Week (May 5-9)
 - Committee volunteers needed ([signup here](#))
 - Planning Staff Appreciation Week initiative(s) - could be one event or series of small fun things, nothing is planned yet, anything can be on the table! Share ideas now out loud, in the chat, or on this [quick form](#)
 - May 7th is a district CBT, will be the budget rally East Somerville Community Schools in partnership with whoever
 - Francesca - seltzer and candy is a great idea
 - Gift cards for a drawing (Jess)
 - How can we leverage class parents (Andrew)
 - (a) Francesca needs to be on this committee
 - (b) Francesca ideas on having class where teachers favorite color to school, etc.
 - b) Carnival (Friday, May 30, all day in-school)
 - Based on last year's, with an extra item or two added budget to this event so we are able to spend more
 - Volunteers and Carnival Planning Committee needed ([signup here](#)) (ex. supervision, popsicle/ice cream service)
 - (a) This is a 100% inclusive event if student is in school on May 30
 - (b) Can we get the students more than 30 minutes

(c) Get 2 bouncy items to help students feel like they had enough time in the bouncy

3. Front Lot Improvements (co-chairs Kat Johnston and Jess Perez Adams)

■ Advocacy for Long-term rebuild and Short-term Beautification Committee

a) Jess's updates - Where we are, next asks/days, volunteers, supplies?

- RFP was in Jan
- Breaks ground spring 2026
- Making it Somerville's first inclusive playground
- Design is gathering in Fall 2025
- In the meantime community members are working together with staff and others on beautification project in the short-term should be happening before carnival
- Student art along fencing, more seating options, planters with more natural elements, integrate sensory play for everyone
- April 10th Angelina's fundraiser to support this
- April 5th Danehy park SEPAC inclusive play
- April 2nd determining schedule on when would be the best time to do this in conjunction with Mr. Marshall, Ms. Van Tassell

Volunteers needed

Francesca - how moveable will the furniture be, Jess's answer shouldn't be moved so easily that a few

4. Advocacy (co-chair Andrew Sessa, co-VP)

■ District Budget [district [budget calendar](#)]

a) JFK PTA keeping tabs on ~bi-weekly School Committee Finance Committee meetings

- Next two meetings April 2 and 16, 6pm, Zoom, Zoom registration posted in weekly School Committee calls [here](#)
- Mayor has asked for a budget with 5% increase so everyone receives the same level of service not adding additional funds. School leaders are asking for 2% more than this. Trying to get clarity on what we are advocating for or against
- April 5th and April 19th, are the next to meetings
- Spring office hours will be held soon, next coffee hour April 11th, go anywhere there is a council member, the city needs to give the school more money, Specifically

if there is an increase we could have another dean of students, have been asking for 3 years

- b) JFK PTA rep attending ongoing SEU/SC contract negotiation meetings. Negotiations are just getting started
- c) Through Sville PTA council, JFK PTA presented FY26 asks to School Committee, including Superintendent, plus district chief of staff and head of academics. Asks were coordinated with Mr. Marshall (full deck with requests from all school PTAs + PTA Council [here](#)) [JFK PTA requests [here](#)] PTAs were aligned with Principals so that is helpful

4. New Business

1. Q&A open to the Floor (members and non-members)

- Not comfortable speaking? Put comments in the chat (for discussion now) or add them to [this form](#) (a member of the board will write back if you include contact info!)

Jess suggested a gardening committee for the back tot lot, Something happens at the Brown and Ryan could connect us to Molly Doble.

Groundworks Somerville contract has run out, so need to find something else

Donna asked about the Growing Center. Becky suggests they might do this, but

not sure

Francesca's request to next year's board - t-shirts can they get shirts for the whole 6th grade because it is a bubble year. Typically get for PK K and 1st grade
Suggestion to get a more sensory friendly shirt, Fran, the color is a challenge and sensory friendly is cost

Agenda Items not covered in the meeting:

1. 8th Grade (Becky, as liaison from Committee to the Board)

- Volunteers Needed: 7th grade parents to get involved and learn the ropes!
- Please email Becky at jfksomervillepta@gmail.com to get involved

2. FY 25-26 PTA Budget Committee volunteers needed

- Volunteers Needed: Help with analysis and envisioning our financial priorities for next year ([signup form](#))

¹ Minutes recorded by co-secretary Cynthia Singer-Riordan