

Townsend Harris Alumni Association, Inc.

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors (as approved on June 17, 2020)
January 7, 2020**

**Location: 31 West 34th Street, 8th Floor, Meeting Room D, New York New York
10001**

The following directors were present and constituted a quorum: Jesse Ash, Michael Byc, Karen Curzio (by phone), Ethan Felder, Shari Gruber, Mrs. Irina Kimyagar, Principal Emeritus Malcolm G. Largmann, Dr. Selina Lee, Kimberly Lo, Gary Mellow, Debra Michlewitz, Craig L. Slutzkin, Lara Traum (by phone), Aquib Yacoob, David Zarowin (by phone).

The following guest was present: Chris Amanna.

- I. Co-President Craig Slutzkin called the meeting to order at 6:38 PM and welcomed the directors to our second meeting of the academic year.
- II. **Introductions.** Because there was a new attendee, Chris Amanna, Co-President Craig Slutzkin asked everyone to introduce themselves to the group. Chris Amanna, class of 2006, teaches Latin in the Classical Languages Department and is a co-chair of the SLT.
- III. **Approval of Board Meeting Minutes.** The Board reviewed the minutes of the November 13, 2019 teleconference meeting. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Kimberly Lo and seconded by Irina Kimyagar. The motion to approve the minutes passed unanimously.
- IV. **Executive Committee Report.** Craig Slutzkin and Selina Lee reported the following activities and led several discussions. The report appears on page 7 of the Board Packet.
 - A. The annual Legislative Breakfast occurred on January 31. The presentation's theme was inclusion and provided the opportunity to showcase the Zen Den and the school's commitment to Wellness. The Zen Den demonstrated the school's timely implementation of wise projects which the legislators' funding made possible. For a future program, Ms. York wants to recruit 1 or 2 alumni to speak about inclusion in the context of their experiences at THHS. Suggestions from the Board included Julie Ae Kim and Malik Alabdelhamid.
 - B. The Annual Meeting took place on December 15 at alumni-owned Kew and Willow Books. Teacher/Alumna Lauren Caiccia and Principal Condon

were among the 15 attendees. Attendees voted on and passed the slate of directors presented by the Nominating Committee.

C. Lara Traum reported on the last SLT meeting. The SLT seeks to align the school's mission with the key goal of "inclusion."

1. This year the assigned agenda for the SLT's work shifted and the DOE specified two of three categories for SLT's on-going consideration. Chris Amanna commented that the two specified DOE categories for planning, improved graduation rates and college readiness, are not relevant to THHS where graduation rates and college readiness are exemplary. The SLT will focus on a third area, "building trusting relationships." The Zen Den and the Wellness Committee are first steps in improving this area of the school's culture.
2. Mr. Amanna and Ms. Traum discussed the Zen Den with the Board. A counselor, Mr. McCleary, who runs Restorative Circles, has an open door into the space. Students, primarily seniors with unassigned time, use the space during Free Periods. The space and program will continuously be evaluated.

V. **Nominating Committee.** The slate for officers include Selina W. Lee, Chair, Craig Slutzkin and Lara Traum, Co-Presidents, Kimberly Lo, Vice President, Debra Michlewitz, Secretary and Craig Slutzkin, Treasurer. A motion to accept the slate was made by Shari Gruber, seconded by Jesse Ash, and passed unanimously.

VI. **School Relations Reports.**

A. **School Report.** Principal Condon was unable to attend; Chris Amanna provided some information.

1. Preparation for FON has begun. Plans for the school musical, The Addams Family, to be directed by teacher Kevin Schwab, are in motion.
2. Craig Slutzkin provided some additional information. THHS was recognized as one of the top 5% STEM schools in the country. SING happened with some controversy about the voting procedure and the announcement of the winner. *Classic* reporters were giving instantaneous updates on Instagram as events transpired.
3. Unfortunately, a student posted a threatening message on social media.
 - a. Chris Amanna provided additional information. The NYPD determined that it was not a credible threat. The situation, which began at 6:30 PM, was resolved by 10:30PM. The following day

the guidance office provided support for any student needing some special attention. Ms York answered every email and explained the timeline of events at a PTA meeting.

- b. Aquib Yacoob, who works for a concern that addresses these issues, noted his organization could come to THHS to work with the student body. Craig Slutzkin said he would forward this possibility to Mr. Condon and Ms. York.

B. **PTA Report.** PTA Liaison Irina Kimyager reported.

1. Two events are in the offing: FON in February and a Yankee game in April.
2. There is a new Fundraising chair, Anna Frank, with many new ideas. A successful event was a Gourmet Cake Bake Sale.
3. Ms Kimyager began a conversation about making mentors available for students for career and college counseling. Gary Mellow reviewed the nature of the mentoring website. A brainstorming session about connecting current students with alums elicited many possible ideas and/ or solutions for problems that became apparent. Issues/suggestions included:
 - a. Supervision issue resurfaces recurrently.
 - b. Timing: School vacation breaks might be a convenient time for event or meetings, PTA meetings, Senior Meeting.
 - c. Format: Video, Face-to-Face, Written
 - d. Participants: More recent alumni, diversity

VII. **Treasurer's Report.** Craig Slutzkin reviewed the Treasurer's Report which appears on pages 9-16 in the Board Packet.

- A. He noted that there has been a 3.5% return on investments, a good result.
- B. He initiated a discussion and brainstorming session about improving dues collection in response to Michael Byc's question about when dues notices be posted.
 1. Timing of mailing of notices was extensively discussed.
 2. Should we add an incentive?
 3. Hooks: Video clip, tie-in to Founders' Day, auction objects or give-a-ways, smiling and grimacing Ms Nix as incentive for dues payment.
 4. Name: Potentially change name from "dues" to "Ephebic Membership"
 5. Shari Gruber reminded us that the By-Laws require timely payment of dues by Board Members.
 6. The Board agreed to tie the dues year into the academic year, meaning dues would be collected in September.
- C. Current expenses totaled \$33,122 since September 1, 2019.
- D. A parent donated \$20,000 for Music Lab Equipment through THAA. This will be reflected in future treasurer's reports.

VIII. **Other Committee Reports.** Various members of the board reported.

A. **Events Committee Reports.**

1. Karen Curzio reported about reunion events. We missed one reunion year last year because no volunteer organizer materialized despite extensive outreach. She is already looking for volunteers to organize this year's events.
 - a. A discussion evolved about strategies for organizing successful reunions as the number of reunions grows, including bundling years, as this is a labor-saving tactic, and identifying irresistible venues.
2. Kimberly Lo reported that the Subway Series Event will take place on Tuesday 7/28 at CitiField.
3. Other new and old events were discussed: Culture Vulture, boat rides, and presentations by alumni with special skill, talents, or expertise, like tax preparation or life coaching.

B. **Mentorship Committee Report.** Garry Mellow reported briefly, asking to move forward with a survey with 20 questions. Respondents would represent the different constituencies of the school community. It would ask about mentorship, social events, and other aspects of school life. The results would be considered by a small THAA team.

C. **Social Media Report.** The Social Media Report was deferred.

D. **Compliance Report.** Lara Traum and Craig Slutzkin briefly reported. Their work has reviewed conflict of interest activities and gift acceptance. The changes will be circulated to the board via email and a vote can take place at our next meeting.

IX. **End Notes.**

A. Our next meeting on March 24th will take place in Queens.

The motion to adjourn was made by Kimberly Lo and was seconded by Shari Gruber. Motion was passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:48 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra Michlewitz
Secretary