

Saratoga Music Boosters

A 501(c)(3) organization supporting music programs in the Saratoga Union School District and Saratoga High School

Regular Meeting (via Zoom), October 12th, 2021: Minutes

Attendance: total number of attendees = 22, including the following

Executive Board:

Dave Holt - President
Andrew Dimock - Co-Secretary
Alicia de Fuentes - Co-Secretary
Isabelle Gecils - Parliamentarian
Vidya Vineet - VP Donations
Tim Tang - Accounts Receivable/Treasurer
Richard Aochi - Controller/Treasurer
Jay Jayanth - Treasurer

Music Directors:

Mr. Jason Shiuan
Mr. Michael Boitz
Ms Isabel McPherson
Mr. Jon Jow
Ms Elizabeth (Beth) Nitzan

Booster Volunteers:

Takako Hasegawa
Sameer Vaidya
Senthil Krishnamurthy
Rashi Sanghi
Revathi Koteeswaran
Nicole Chang
Rahul Agarwal
Cecile Cohen-Jonathan

Meeting minutes:

Dave Holt calls the meeting to order at 7:33pm and begins by thanking the entire group along with volunteers, recognizing the directors are super busy and still having to wrestle with COVID, while continuing to offer a great music program.
Thanks the Cookie dough volunteers and liaisons as their work slowly moves us toward a normal life and keeps SMB programs alive.

September Minutes:

Dave Holt asks attendees if there is any concern with the September minutes before moving to approval.

Richard Aochi moves to approve minutes; Isabelle Gecils seconds. Minutes unanimously approved.

Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) between SMB and SUSD

It is expected that SUSD will fully approve the MOU, which means Saratoga Music Boosters (SMB) can formally start all music programs in the Saratoga Union School District (SUSD).

New SMB Treasurer

Dave Holt introduces Jay Jayanth as the new SMB treasurer and shares his background in the finance field.

Jay Jayanth states that he is excited to be part of the SMB team and eager to take it to the next level.

Dave Holt thanks Revathi Koteeswaran, SMB's former treasurer, for all her hard work.

Isabelle Gecils confirms that the executive board is able to appoint a new member when there is a vacancy.

Jay Jayanth is officially voted in by the executive board.

Open position

Dave Holt requests that all attendees scout out possible SMB volunteers. It would be ideal to identify parents who have kids participating in the music programs.

Cookie Dough

Dave Holt: Notices the absence of cookie dough volunteers and shares that his daughter is pushing sales to all. Do the music directors have any information on this?

Michael Boitz: the cookie drive is challenging high school kids to out-sell SUSD.

Proposal to fund the purchase of string instruments for SUSD

Dave Holt: The proposal is to fund instruments for 5th grade and have them ready for the second half of the year.

Isabel McPherson: Shares that this year for 6th grade there are over 120 students in beginning instrumental music exploratory track. Given this demand, the needs are as follows:

Instruments needed: 55 violin, 30 viola, 30 cello, 14 bass (bow and case included standard)
Accessories needed: shoulder rest (violin/viola), rock stop (cello/bass), rosin, finger tapes

Delivery is expected for late December or early January: however, it is not clear whether the 1/8 size basses will arrive during that time frame. She continues to query the manufacturer as of 10/7/21.

Isabelle Gecils: how many of the students currently in the music exploratory track are expected to remain in the music program?

Dave Holt: there is no expectation, as there is no past data to allow for such prediction. Ms McPherson has presented three different quotes; SMB is able to fund the request because of its surplus funds.

Isabelle Gecils: what do we miss if we do not fund this, and if we fund this, do we miss funding something else?

Dave Holt: the purpose of SMB is to build music and the beneficiaries will be the 5th graders. Notes that he was at the superintendent's meeting and the harsh reality is that student enrollment is dropping substantially; by getting kids involved early in the music programs we will retain a higher percentage and keep our mission intact commencing in elementary right through to high school.

Jon Jow: yes, enrollment is dropping, especially in younger grades, so building music into school time allows for more access. 130 students started when this change took place, not everyone continues all the way through to high school but last year we had 70 students participate in band in 5th grade (fluke year because it was all online due to COVID) and this year we have over 120 students. Although enrollment is declining we are not experiencing this.

Michael Boutz: echoing Jon, says he had a larger freshman orchestra than ever before. Can attest to that in terms of the keen vision we must have all the way to our high school, we don't want to be one and done, we must hope they make music part of their life. We hope this is viewed as a long term program. Knowing that Jon and Isabel are at the helm, we are certain this is the case. "I am beyond ecstatic."

Jay Jayanth: Does this mean there will be additional asks?

Isabel McPherson: This will cover the band and orchestra instruments.

Dave Holt: It is an amount associated with the program. The purchase is for the program.

Cecile Cohen-Jonathan: When will SUSD be moving toward having orchestra become a school day program?

Jon Jow: The best answer I have is that it is a personnel question and that is above my pay grade. The response I get for not moving in that direction is due to declining enrollment. (ie, district is reluctant to hire additional teachers if the student body will be shrinking)

Dave Holt: This body has no authority to discuss this, it is a question for SUSD authority. Any further discussion through Southwest Strings?

Isabel McPherson: Aryn Krijnen had purchased from this vendor before. We have been satisfied with the vendor.

Motion by Tim Tang to allow Isabel McPherson to proceed with the purchase of instruments as indicated by the proposal. Rashi Sanghi seconds; motion passes unanimously.

Dave Holt: This is instrumental to getting kids started in our program. Thanks Isabel for her work.

SHS Jason Shiuan proposal

Jason Shiuan: Instruments needed are 3 basses and bass bags. We had students switch to bass and therefore needed to set up each student with basses at home and school.

Because we had students switch instruments we needed to switch accordingly. We had a huge influx of violas, two cellos, and had several students join the bass clarinet section. Like Isabel, we tried to get several quotes but we needed to combine from different sources because we were not able to get all instruments guaranteed by start time. Delivery time is unusually long due to supply chain difficulties.

Dave Holt: What is the difference with prices of SHS basses and the elementary ones?

Michael Boitz: typically elementary uses $\frac{1}{4}$ size basses, middle school uses $\frac{1}{2}$ and high schools use $\frac{3}{4}$ sizes and that is the reason for different prices.

Dave Holt: Wanted to ask that because the prices are quite different. Are the instruments a better quality?

Jason Shiuan: Yes, the instruments are not intended to be ephemeral.

Isabel McPherson: SUSD uses the very baseline model of the instrument. As you get more skill the instrument has to grow with you.

Jay Jayanth: Did you shop around?

Jason Shiuan: We try to stick to the same brand. When I go to a vendor and I ask for a bass clarinet the vendor knows exactly what I want, including longevity.

Isabelle Gecils: My son is in battery and the snare drums are broken, etc

Michael Boitz: Because we had a large number of kids in percussion, almost all of that section was donated by ONE donor and that is why we spent money on percussion. Definitely the battery, drums, well the whole drum line, is next on our list, it is on our horizon in the near future. We already have a list of what the percussion instruments will be. We plan for three years down the line, we service our instruments to make sure our instruments last a long time. Drum/percussion is our next investment.

Dave Holt: If we were to look at the budget for the year, how does this fit into the budget?

Jason Shiuan: the request is to ask from last year's surplus or the benefactor.

Revathi Koteeswaran: So for that to happen we would need to do a program grant because as of today it is not in the budget.

Tim Tang: What will happen in the following years when you have fewer students? Is there a point you have too many? Is this just nagging?

Dave Holt: These things break.

Michael Boitz: That is an unpredictable situation, you get different waves, it depends on what number comes into the program. We have never reached that point yet, the instruments last a long time, the battery instruments have lasted way longer than expected, the uniforms last 8-10 years, we get longevity out of our things because we take care of the stuff.

Revathi Koteeswaran: When measuring costs, that is, rent vs buy, it turns out to be effective to purchase it.

Isabelle Gecils makes motion to authorize the program grant; Tim Tang seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

Check Scanner Proposal

Vidya Vineet: Unable to follow up on Check Scanner Proposal because I have been bouncing around different departments and busy with donations, cookie dough, etc.

September Financials

Dave Holt: Rev, before you joined we welcomed Jay. We were praising you for all you have done.

Revathi Koteeswaran presents the September financials: In this meeting we will only go through the cash flow. This is customized for SMB to be easy to view and understand. Left is actual and the right is the activation budget.

Band: \$151,000 (actual) \$194,000 (activation)
Orchestra: \$59,469 (actual) \$68,670 (activation)
Choir: \$14,400 (actual) \$20,000 (activation)
International trip: this amount should match
Redwood has not started collecting funds yet
Fifth grade: \$1,000 (actual) \$6,500 (activation) (they are not likely to attain full budget)
Cookie dough: not yet collecting payment
Other \$7,090? It is part of RMS.

SMB restricted is unallocated - this is where the wish list money goes, like the purchase of the instruments.

Expenses are lagging income, we expect to end the year with a negative income, probably around \$17,000 - \$18,000.

Because we are a non-profit this is not a concern. We usually raise more than 150K, we will end up carrying over 50-60K.

Dave Holt: We don't want a surplus just to gather donations, we want to support our music programs, so raise money and spend it as needed. Since we had surplus last year as we didn't have many expenditures we are able to purchase instruments, etc. We expect matching funds to come in throughout the year

Vidya Vineet: I would like to say Redwood band is collecting funds.

Revathi Koteeswaran: It may be a nomenclature issue. We can rectify this.

Tim Tang: Vidya needs to know which category and I need to get the code.

Dave Holt: I think this is not a whole board thing.

Vidya Vineet: Let's make it our goal to have these numbers line up.

Revathi Koteeswaran: Our budget is an estimate of what we expect the number of students will be along with their donations. The elementary and middle schools are the seed for the high school. The high schoolers pay 80-90 percent of expected donations, that is, received. Lower schools do not match this.

Dave Holt: You are looking at the budget for the whole year.

Revathi Koteeswaran: expenses lag and they take place toward the end. The directors are good at projecting their income and they manage and choose what to spend at the end.

Jay Jayanth: Are there other sources of donation?

Dave Holt: There is a huge influx at the beginning of the year, then there is the cookie dough drive, and pancake breakfast, and we continue to ask parents to contribute.

Revathi Koteeswaran: With the cookie dough we expect to make 12K and for the pancake breakfast we expect to make 10K but they are not shown because they haven't taken place yet.

Dave Holt: Even though the proposal was not sent out 48hrs ahead can we vote on this Isabelle?

Isabelle Gecils: I don't see the language that says you may not vote on it, if those items have not been received on time.

Dave Holt asks for a motion to approve the proposal as presented: Sameer Vaidya so moves; Richard Aochi seconds. The motion passes unanimously.

Isabelle Gecils: For next time let's make sure we have at least 48 hours notice.

Dave Holt: if any changes take place we will review.

Comerica Checks

Dave Holt: Trip to bank by officers needed for recording signature authority.

Revathi Koteeswaran: The recording secretary will need to record the checks. We need to approve checks 14938-14973 from Comerica.

Dave Holt moves to approve Comerica check #s 14938-14973; Richard Aochi seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

Director Reports

Michael Boitz: It's been an exciting few weeks. Join us for our fall preview concert 6pm in McAfee, then everyone is invited to go to the Benny Pierce Stadium to recognize our seniors for Senior Recognition Night. Each senior and their parents will walk down the 50 yard line to be honored and then we will have the marching band performance.

It's a come-and-go concert; you can choose what you wish to attend, and come see another ensemble a week from this Friday.

Jason Shiuan: We had our homecoming performance. In the 2021 Cupertino Tournament of Bands competition we earned third place in woodwinds, third in field percussion, second in color guard, first in overall class A, and first in general effect. I will share photos soon,

Michael Boitz: Tournament parent volunteers were amazing!

Jason Shiuan: Thank you to Mrs Gecils' action photos offering great memories. We can add to the collection of action shots in our music building. We have the next competition on October 23rd at Foothill High school in Pleasanton at 9:30pm. November 19th in Napa will be our last performance for Marching Band. (not an overnight stay)

Beth Nitzan: Choir had their first post-pandemic performance and sang the national anthem. Next Friday they will also perform in the fall festival. We also had our first Redwood Choir perform early today.

Jon Jow: Excited to start extracurriculars. It took time because of new staff in administration and they were not sure about the status with the MOU. We did start Choir this afternoon and are excited and grateful that Elizabeth Nitzan wanted to work with us. Color Guard started last week with 12 students. One of the items in MOU is to obtain funding for After-School Music Supervisor but I will be taking that role (in addition to the usual Director-Coordinator) to ensure that all programs get back on their feet smoothly and that registration and attendance are accurately taken, as well as supporting Mr. Clark and Ms. Nitzan, etc. Our district is more conservative with respect to moving forward so next meeting there will be an update on what else we can expect from RMS music. Teaching wind instruments during COVID was/is very interesting.

Jon Jow shares outdoor pictures showing Argonaut elementary 5th grade students, guiding them through mouthpiece trials on band instruments. The process has been lengthier than before due to COVID protocols and teacher coverage, but we are making our way to the end and excited to get instruments in the hands of students.

Band instruction continues to be held outside, and we are now working through the changing weather. We will also be keeping an eye out on any changing district protocol at the beginning of next month.

I was out sick for a week and a half and I never have been absent. Isabel covered a lot of classes for me at the beginning of the year. Really grateful to be working with you and for covering for me. Equity is available through SMB, so very grateful for that too.

Isabel McPherson: I think we are fortunate to work on 5th grade stuff and model teamwork for our kids. Thank you SMB for accepting the proposal to purchase new instruments. Helping with Argonaut, teaching 5th grade band and other music programs. Hopefully there are fewer restrictions with orchestra since strings can be played with masks.

Takako Hasegawa: Grateful for all volunteers.

Rashi Sanghi: All the kids responded so positively with the audience's response.

Dave Holt: What a high note to finish on. Thank you directors and volunteers we appreciate everyone's work. Motion to adjourn?

Vidya Vineet makes motion to adjourn; Dave Holt seconds; motion passes unanimously. Meeting adjourns at 9 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrew Dimock
Alicia de Fuentes
Co-Recording Secretaries, SMB