

Cape Elizabeth Music Boosters

General Booster Meeting Minutes

October 4, 2021

6pm Via ZOOM

Attendees:

Robyn Devenish Clay, *President*

Elizabeth Scifres, *Vice President*

Aaron Scifres, *Treasurer*

Abby Wark, *Secretary*

Joanne Lee, *High School Music teacher*

Rob Wheeler, *High School Music teacher*

Caitlin Ramsay, *Middle School Music teacher*

Becky Bean, *Pond Cove Music teacher*

Emily LeBorgne, *Middle School Music teacher*

Sarah Scott, *parent*

Aubrey Miller, *parent*

WELCOME

Robyn welcomes everyone and invites people to introduce themselves.

APPROVAL OF May 26, 2021 MEETING MINUTES

Elizabeth moves to approve the minutes of the last executive meeting. Aaron seconds. The minutes are approved.

CAPE ELIZABETH MUSIC BOOSTERS General Introduction

Robyn gives a general introduction to the Music Boosters, reading a brief excerpt from the By-Laws. "The Cape Elizabeth Music Boosters is a Maine non profit corporation which has federal tax exempt status as a 501 (c)(3) charitable organization. We are a parent group that supports the music programs in all three schools in the Cape Elizabeth School Department by providing assistance, encouragement, and financial support, while remaining independent of the Cape Elizabeth School Department. Our members include all parents and guardians of children in Cape Elizabeth schools. All music directors and instructors of the Cape Elizabeth School department have the status on non-voting ex-officio members of the Cape Elizabeth Music Boosters and are entitled to attend and participate in, but not vote at, all meetings of the Cape Elizabeth Music Boosters."

Robyn shared that the Music Boosters were established in 2004-5 as a High School Music Booster group and later were changed to support music at all three schools in the district. Robyn closes her introduction by announcing that the by-laws are available on the website for further review if anyone is interested.

BOOSTER POSITIONS

Robyn introduces the Board as follows:

Board

President: Robyn Clay

Vice-President: Elizabeth Scifres
Treasurer: Aaron Scifres
Secretary: Abby Wark

Elizabeth is introduced as the new Vice-President. Her role will be to shadow Robyn and learn some of the CEMB institutional knowledge. Robyn thanks the Board for the work they have put into the Boosters this year.

Next, Robyn reviews the social media positions as follows:

Current Positions

Website: Aaron Scifres
Facebook: Elizabeth Scifres
Instagram: Caitlin Ramsey
Jazz Cabaret co-chairs: Robyn Clay, Elizabeth Scifres

Robyn notes that we have open positions that need to be filled. They are:

Open Positions

Publicity
Jazz Cabaret Program Layout and Design
High School Concert Program Layout and Design

Robyn explains that the Boosters used to have parents of older children who helped with these roles but as their kids age out of the schools, we need to find more help. For help with the program layout and design, Robyn has reached out to Becky Neilsen (spelling?), a teacher at the high school who teaches design and might have students who are interested in helping. A Publicity person is needed to help publicize meetings, events, fundraisers, *etc.*

We are also looking for volunteers for these new positions:

New Positions

Middle School Liaison
Pond Cove Liaison
Fundraising

The Liason positions would play a role of helping to recruit members and keep up to date with events at each of the lower schools. In addition, Emily suggested last year that a fundraising person might be appointed to help with that role, but so far no one has volunteered. Robyn reminds everyone that we're all here for the same reason – that we love our schools, our music programs and our young musicians. We encourage more people to get involved in this fun and important group.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Aaron shares the current draft of the 2021-22 budget. He notes that the last two years have been unusual due to the Covid-19 pandemic. He highlights the two main categories of the budget: incoming funds and expenses. For incoming funds, Aaron highlights two strategies: 1) that we plan to apply to the BottleShed for funding and 2) we also plan to write parent appeal letters. For expenses, we have some standing annual expenses, such as the Jazz Cabaret and teacher gifts, and whatever is left in the budget is used for grants to the teachers.

GRANTS

Elizabeth introduces a new grant proposal system that clarifies how grants can be sought from the Boosters and what will be required to apply for grants. She clarifies that as a Boosters organization we are here to support extracurricular expenses that are *not* supported by the school budget. She highlights that grants are expected to be submitted six weeks before funds are required. Grants are approved by a simple majority vote. Elizabeth recommends that everyone review the grant documentation on the Boosters website for complete details.

FUNDRAISING

Annual Appeal Letter

We are aiming to send out our Annual Appeal Letters by November 1st. Robyn would like to include families of 5th-12th grade music students (5th grade has not always been included). Caitlin agrees that including 5th grade families is a good idea. Teachers are asked to send Robyn the lists of student enrolled in their classes by October 18th. Once names are received, we need to look up addresses and send each student and their family an appeal letter. Normally, we would have a letter-stuffing event in person to get the letters stamped and addressed, but this year the pandemic makes this tricky, so we may divide and conquer this task. Volunteers are asked to reach out to Robyn.

Spirit Wear Sale

Robyn announces that our annual Spirit Wear Sale is coming up. This year we will feature black shirt to have a change from last year's gray design. We need a minimum of 15 orders to have the sale go through. Elizabeth suggests that we promote this to Pond Cove and Becky is happy to help make this happen.

Bottle Shed Application

Robyn and Aaron are working on a BottleShed application as well. Robyn notes that Caitlin sent out a possible sock fundraiser but we have tabled this until we have more help.

TEACHER UPDATES

Becky Bean

"We are singing, playing, moving and listening in the music room at Pond Cove. It is great to have all the students back together and feeling somewhat more normal!

Thanks,
Becky"

Emily LeBorgne

"Things are going well in music!

Pros:

- I now see every student in the building in grades 5-8. This is new from the past 4 years when I saw all 5th and 6th graders but only 7th and 8th graders not in band.
- Welcomed 55 new 5th grade chorus members.
- Remaining covid funds were able to purchase singing masks. Will arrive soon.
- There is the opportunity for sectionals in 5th-7th grade chorus this year.

- 6th and 8th grade chorus numbers have held steady

Cons

- Scheduling was difficult this year. Due to living in the chorus and general music world.
- Lost some 7th grade chorus members :(
- 7th and 8th grade chorus was split up this year.
- Since starting 5 years ago, my student load has increased by 300 students but my budget had not. “

Emily also adds that she is operating 29 general music classes and 4 choruses (one per grade). She predicts that the Boosters could help her this year with funding, as she has tripled her number of students but her budget has not changed.

Caitlin Ramsay

“CEMS Band:

- The year is off to a great start!
- We've been fortunate that despite the hard hit that Covid has made on band (and chorus) programs across the country and ME, our level of participation is pretty similar to pre-Covid times.
- The 6th graders had their first (ever) full band on Friday- which was very exciting. This fall, 6th graders will be working on music from their red band book- and that's what they'll be performing at their December concert.
- In the 7th and 8th grade bands, we've been focusing a lot on ensemble skills. Each ensemble has been working on two pieces in preparation for our December concert.
- 5th Graders have started band classes without their instruments in preparation for our October 16th mini lesson event. In class, we've been working on recognizing notes, counting rhythms, parts of the instrument, and we've recently started some embouchure work outside so we can be maskless. I'm still in the process of marking all of the 5th grade instruments in preparation for October 16th.
- October 16th Event: We have four MS parents who have volunteered to help out and three parents are donating items for the mini lesson teachers. If there are any other parents who are available to help out (especially later in the day), I could definitely use more help.
- Changes to our honors festivals this year: $\frac{7}{8}$ Festival will be a nominated festival. However, Emily and I will have students audition for us in order to be considered for nomination. 6th grade festival format will be different (TBD)- likely shorter.
- Jazz band sign ups will start next week with both jazz bands starting the last week in October.

- Looking ahead to performances, Emily and I plan to do online concert programs this year- something we planned for the spring of 2020, but never happened due to Covid
 - The high school programs include information about the booster and donors. Could the boosters create something similar for the MS programs? Once we know the format of our online programs (either full page or half page), could a pdf be created that we can add to our programs?
- Would love it if we could get help with pre-concert supervision this year. It would be really helpful if the boosters could organize this for us- instead of us putting out the call to families.

Upcoming middle school events:

- 5th Grade Band Instrument Extravaganza- October 16th 8:00am-1:30pm

- Winter Concert: 6th Band & 5th & 6th Chorus- December 8th @ 7:00pm
- Winter Concert: 7th and 8th Bands & Choruses- December 9th @7:00pm”

Robyn responds to Caitlin’s request for help at the Instrument Extravaganza by offering to bring Kcups. Abby is going to create a sign to educate attendees about the role of the Music Boosters and to encourage people to sign up or donate. To get more middle school families involved, better signage at in-person events would be helpful. Social Media is raised as another opportunity. Joanne suggests that maybe Kevin St Jarre or someone else at the Courier might be able to cover an event (like the Instrument Extravaganza) to promote the music program and also the role of the Boosters. Members express enthusiasm about this.

Joanne Lee, CEHS Choral Director

“Music Boosters, Parents, & fellow music educators:

We are well underway for the first semester of Concert Choir and the students are making lots of progress. The ensemble is happy to be back rehearsing in the chorus room. We are singing inside, with masks, 3 feet apart. Students are very agreeable to follow the proper protocols in order for us to keep rehearsing, and keep everyone healthy. I haven’t heard one complaint about singing in masks, and I am very proud of their efforts.

Our rehearsals include music theory, vocal technique and repertoire for our December 15th concert. At 7pm. At this time, we are not entirely sure what the concert will look like, but we ask that you please reserve that day and time. The students and I are very excited about the chance to share their efforts with everyone!

Students have also had the opportunity to sign up to audition for the District I Music Festival. This year there will be online recorded auditions and accepted students will be part of a festival in January. We will also have sign ups for All State auditions, with a deadline of November 1st for having the auditions submitted online for any interested students. Information can be found on my teacher website, along with practice tracks. Parents and students can see me for more information.

While you may not have seen the chorus room recently, there are lots of changes. There is carpet in the music office and chorus room. It is freshly painted. The happy environment provides a positive setting for the group. The changes are a bit symbolic of the renewal of being able to sing after a year and half of not being able to sing as an ensemble. Students are happy, they are invested, they are connected and creating music.

It’s good to be back to singing!”

Joanne also takes a moment to thank the Music Boosters for their support.

Rob Wheeler:

“Good evening, Everyone! Thank you all for coming out tonight. Wind Ensemble and Symphony Band are off and running. It’s quite a transition coming back to playing in person after having more than a year without it. After a few weeks of figuring out where the ensembles are playing-wise and putting them through their paces a bit, we have some music and method books we are working out of and we are building momentum. Our Winter Concert will be held December, 15th at 7pm and will feature the Chorus, WE and SB. In the spring, COVID

permitting, I am planning on putting together a trip to the MICCA festival at one of their locations in MA to see High School Wind Ensembles, Symphonic Bands and Orchestras performing (more to come on that). I am also currently working with two groups of students interested in creating small ensembles in a more traditional setting other than jazz.

Jazz Band Auditions are next week and will be held in person before and after school. These auditions are for placement. Nobody will be excluded from the jazz program if they want to be a part of it. We can have several levels of instruction as we have in the past and I am anxious to get started with these folks soon! I am hoping to bring the Brian Thomas/Alex Lee Clark Big Band to Cape as a guest artist for the Cabaret in March that will also involve clinicians working with our students as well as having the group headline the evening's performances.”

Robyn asks for a timeline on planning for Jazz Cabaret this year and Rob suggests the earlier the better. Robyn suggests December 1st and Rob agrees.

NEW BUSINESS

Robyn asks Rob and Joanne for a budget for the Senior Celebration for this year for planning purposes. Joanne shares that in 2019 the Boosters paid for a large sheet cake and flowers for the seniors. Other years the seniors have been given keychains. Rob and Joanne will discuss the plans for this year and get back to Robyn with a ballpark of their budget for the celebration.

NEXT MEETING DATE: Wednesday December 1st