

Ocean City Crew Boosters, Inc.

MINUTES REGULAR MEETING MAY 11, 2016

6:30 pm – 7:00 pm Public Comment and Coaches Comments

Maria Lawn stated that she was curious about the timeline for Nationals – are we leaving on Saturday after the races are complete? Karen Koptic explained that they practice Thursday, qualifying races are on Friday and race is on Saturday. The bus comes back on Saturday.

Christine Franckle (parent) said that I have been in contact with Ruthann Meyer through email about two weeks ago – I just wanted to share some information. There was an incident that happened with my daughter with text messaging with some females on her boat – I was made aware of the situation by Coach Kelly via a telephone call from my daughter Ellie, and I immediately picked her up. I asked Coach Kelly and she said she wanted to speak with me then. She said one of the girls in the boat sent her a text message that my daughter sent that was negative and derogatory toward the coach. I listened to what Coach Kelly said and asked my daughter if she did it – my daughter denied sending the text messages, we went home, I called her father and we interrogated her for about two and half hours and she said she did not do it. She insisted that she did not do it and we reiterated to her that it is a reflection on everyone, not just her. I told her that I needed to be 100% sure and she held her ground. I contacted the Police department and asked if I could get deleted text messages and was told that I could buy an app. The next day I met with the Athletic Director and in the process my daughter showed how you can manipulate and how you can change a phone number and showed the Athletic Director. I downloaded all her text messages (2,000 pages) and gave it to the Athletic Director and he said he would talk to the coaches. He did, and he said Ellie Frankel should go back to the team. She wasn't kicked off the team but put on land and put in the Varsity B boat. She was demoralized, taunted, etc. in school and did not go back to crew practice. I gave the Athletic Director the proof that my daughter did not send the text messages. Anyone can go on a Verizon account and look it up and mine shows what it says. We read through every one. She doesn't do drugs, doesn't drink and is not having sex. I am proud of that. She did not waiver on her innocence. Immediately, when this came about, I stopped getting text messages from the coach – she was basically thrown off the boat – Coach Kelly said she cannot be a CIA agent. You cannot just look at the phone. I went to the Athletic Director, he had been in contact with the coaches and he would get back with me. I did not meet with the coaches until this past Monday (event happened April 18th). I did everything I could to prove her innocence. I spoke to both vice principals at the high school and showed them the proof. My daughter was found guilty of something she did not do. I did fill out a HIB form. I believe it is a form of bullying. There was a perpetrator, there are some, not all, that stood by and let this happen to my daughter. It is now in the hands of the Safety team. It will go to the Board of Education and they will make a decision. I am an educator in the district so I cannot see the information. I finally got a meeting and we were all there, the Athletic Director apologized for what my daughter has gone through, Coach Alex apologized and said people make mistakes. As an educator, you make mistakes and apologize. Coach Kelly has not apologized. No one has taken steps against the perpetrator who started this. I am here to let you know this is a bullying case. They have the proof that my daughter has not sent the text messages. They offered that she go back to whatever boat she wants to be on. She feels that there is an imbalance of power and she does not feel safe. This was just enough for her

not to want to come back. We wanted you to know about the situation and that you do work hard and do your best. I know up until 2 months ago, it was a positive experience for us and my daughter. I also wanted to return the tickets because we were more than willing prior to the incident, but now my family members do not want to be a part of this. Our intention was certainly to meet our obligation by volunteering the last two races; at this point, I am requesting the bond money back.

Suze DiPietro said she is very sorry to hear what has happened. Our purpose of the boosters, we are in charge of the food and equipment. Coaches are paid by school. This does not come under our jurisdiction; I am not sure what we can do. I am glad you made us aware of the situation.

Christine Franckle said we just wanted the Board to know about the situation and as a parent we wanted to bring the truth out not hearsay.

Billy Mack (parent and husband of board member) asked about the policy of selling the tickets. This is my second year and parents have been asking about volunteering. What is the policy about children rowing that have not paid a dime? What do you do?

Suze DiPietro stated that this is a school varsity sport; we cannot kick people off. This has been a chronic problem from inception. Last year we did a lot better in getting people to pay.

Billy Mack stated that there has to be a better way. The Athletic Director is only interim and this year is over. I just think why isn't the school more involved – we have the largest team of the high school. Has anyone approached them? I am learning. Jane Mack said you (Suze DiPietro) threatened to take a boat away, but you did not threaten to take away a boat from everyone that did not pay. The Board was not at that meeting and it should not have been discussed at a boathouse meeting.

Heather Williams (parent and past board member) said that her daughter was approached by the coach and board members and told to leave until paid. I went to the MAC machine and got money and paid – my daughter was crying.

Billy Mack asked if there was another booster club that runs a similar program – can we reach out to them and ask what they do about parents that are not participating in any way. In scouts we ask if there are financial difficulties and I feel that some people are just skating the issue and not paying. They are going to take advantage of food, rooms, etc. – they do not deserve it. There is no policy in place.

Jane Mack stated that you cannot expect the Booster club to pay for the buses for the kids that have not paid a dime. You cannot expect the paying parents to pay for unpaid kids.

Kirsten Canuso said she was looking at the numbers – the parent liaisons were diligent working collecting the monies owed, you may have felt hounded. She gave the numbers for the past three years, however, she did not have the number of rowers. Jane Mack and Ruthann Meyer have been tirelessly working to collect the money. Last year we had about the same amount of rowers. The 2011/2012 year the program had less kids.

Lynn Baumgardner asked how many rowers have not paid. Steve Nathan said two boys last year did not pay. Stephen Martinelli said we are not getting flack – they say well, I know people who have not paid so why should I. Lynn Baumgardner said to Heather Williams bought a brand new boat last year and we need everyone to pay. This is a very expensive sport and we work very hard and we want to collect 100%. If you have a special situation, I am sure we can make arrangements. But, nobody should row for free. Everyone should do something. Realistically we bought a new boat, rented a new boat – we want the best equipment and that is how we win. To be the best, we have to collect the monies owed.

Jennifer Kane (parent) stated that she just wanted to say that Ruthann Meyer did a phenomenal job and we realize that it is a thankless job. The point of view from a parent of a girl in that new boat is that someone from the Board told Alex specifically that if the money was not collected, they could not row. The Board should contact the family. The coach should not. You cannot tell the coach. Steve Nathan responded that both head coaches were there and they were both told the exact same thing – the equipment will not be available until it was paid. How they executed the message was up to them.

Jane Mack stated that you (Steve Nathan) cannot say that. Just because one coach acted on the information received and the other coach did not doesn't make it right.

Karen Koptic said on March 24, 2016, we as a Board sent the Athletic Director a list of seven questions of almost exactly what everyone is asking. His response to nonpayment was that because it is a school sport, we cannot do anything but inform the coaches who does not pay – the coaches should know who helps to support and remind the kids that their families have obligations.

Billy Mack said we should have a policy in place and the need to know the reason. It has stirred up a lot of emotions for the kids and the parents. I believe it is a parent issue. If someone needs help, I would appreciate a meeting and suggestions from anyone for the future. I would not say don't use the equipment – that will not solve it. Nothing will work for everyone all the time. I feel just as slighted as the next guy. I would never say you cannot be in the food tent because you have not paid.

Karen Koptic said that because of the different fundraising obligations, the Athletic Director suggested getting rid of the food tent. I was told that since we do not pay the coaches during the season, we cannot enforce it.

Billy Mack said we paid \$150.00 for pins for the boats. Those pins could be made by a local guy for peanuts. I will find out how much my guy can make them. I understand that it is an expensive sport. The problem is with the parents not paying and just because someone else has not is not correct. I cannot believe that they are not paying more attention to this sport. We are supposed to have banners, trophies in the case – what do they have against the sport? They are not offering it – there is a problem when 108 kids are involved.

Stephen Martinelli stated that Karen Koptic has been looking at this for about three months. Our solution was to call the parents and that is where we are right now.

Lynn Baumgardner said as a board member from four years ago, I have a problem that you have kids in a brand new boat and the parents are doing nothing – I do not feel that it is wrong for the Board to tell the coach what boat they can row. I don't have a problem with it. Jane Mack asked what if the he doesn't listen. Lynn Baumgardner reiterated that the Boosters own the boats – they can go and pick an older boat.

Kirsten Canuso stated that she is confused – I agree with Lynn Baumgardner – in summer we were told that we were too much into the business, we are supposed to be here only to buy the equipment.

Lynn Baumgardner wants all parents to pay. You tell the coaches – we every right to tell them when it comes to the finances. Kirsten Canuso said we have a coach that will not listen. Lynn Baumgardner said then we will not buy any more boats. Kirsten Canuso said he takes boats from other kids; kids are saying they are not in the boat.

Jennifer Kane said this was before the money was due – they told the coach to tell the kid – and the kid is saying “what the heck”. It was the way it was done – they threatened the kid. No one said to the parent that they need to pay. Heather Williams said the money wasn't even due yet.

Mary Ann Giardia (parent) said that there is an equity issue here – when the message is sent differently by the coaches – it shows a lack of decorum and respect for the children. Sometimes adults will talk to other adults instead of the children. We are role models for our children and when they come home being asked to pay and a threat of not rowing in one boat and not another boat – I thought it was girl coach/boy coach. Maybe it comes down to the Athletic Director saying that you cannot take a kid out of a boat. We need a policy that if we are going to make things tight and right we need to take small steps and create it ourselves. The Board of Education is willing to leave unfilled seats in the choice program because of the PARCC score. Criteria is criteria and I understand that-that is their position. The money does not seem to be important to them.

Karen Koptic said we need help from the parents. We have been hammering the Athletic Director and have no results. We are all members of OCHS Crew Boosters. The Athletic Director has been invited to meetings. We asked for marine radios for the boats – for safety reasons – we have not gotten a response. Jennifer Kane said that when she talks to the Athletic Director he seems amiable. Karen Koptic said that he says he will get back to me and I still have not heard.

Billy Mack said that he is shocked that anyone who would be hearing this much – there must be more to it. There is someone in this school system against this sport. Melissa Terrels (parent) said this has been ongoing.

Allison Yoa (parent) asked what is the policy – you cannot deny them being on the team – can you deny them being on a boat? Steve Nathan said we can control the equipment – we can inform them who has paid and who has not paid – how it is executed is up to the coach, we can only make recommendations. We are not going to solve it tonight. Again, there have been good questions, and it has been ongoing. We are open to suggestions. The coaches can decide as to what they do or do not do. The school does not supply the equipment in lacrosse or soccer.

Boosters supply the equipment – it is hard to buy a \$26,000.00 boat. Perhaps we should have another meeting about this.

Jane Mack said another school fundraises all year long – and the monies are allocated to their individual accounts. This was brought up at the last meeting. Heather Williams (parent and past Board member) said they spent many hours trying to implement this system when she was on the Board for three years and that it takes too many man hours to track. Jane Mack said come the start of the season, if they are not paid in full, they are told they do not have a seat until paid.

Karen Koptic said we had a fundraising chairperson resign – no one has stepped up to take over the position. We also have only one nomination for elections. We really need the parents to step up.

Billy Mack asked if other schools fundraise? Kirsten Canuso answered that St. Augustine's Prep does not fundraise, each family puts a certain amount of money in, it goes into a pot and divided among all sports.

Suze DiPietro was calling boats last weekend and talked to Egg Harbor Township and Mainland and they are having the same problem with payments. Suze DiPietro asked them what do you do? They all have the same problems. There is no magic wand.

Billy Mack said it seems like the same people do the same things. It is only going to get bigger and better that is why I am saying this. We can maybe get a better system. Stephen Martinelli said we are working very hard on this – it is really easy – if everyone pays what they owe every year and if everyone volunteered their share – everything will run smoothly. Some places give you credit for time vs money. I think this program is great – if the school doesn't want to help we will make it work. I am not a big sports guy and it is an awesome sport for the kids – my daughter is learning some good things and some tough things – everyone needs to help out. We have approximately 200 parents – piece of cake – it will all work out. It is a good sport.

Suze DiPietro asked for one more question – Jennifer Kane asked if we received an email sent by the Varsity 4 parents – she stated that she just wanted to make sure it was clear that when all this happened, the Gardias rented the house in September and others rented rooms – done with kids in mind – not being separatist or elitist – just done with really good intentions. They didn't even know who was going to Nationals – in the sense of teamwork and clear message – when it comes to the kids, they like each other – it was not our intention to be separate. If the shoe was on the other foot – we had no idea rooms were blocked. Karen Koptic stated that in the February 10th meeting minutes, which are posted on the website, it states that the Board had reserved enough rooms for all rowers and parents. Jennifer Kane responded that she does not read minutes. Suze DiPietro reminded Jennifer Kane that she went to Mercer Lake last year (sic 2 years ago) for Nationals and the Board booked the rooms shortly before the race. Karen Koptic said that you need to come to the meetings or read the minutes on the website. Joseph Guardia (parent) said available doesn't mean mandatory. Joseph Guardia said these girls (the Varsity 4 boat) are working their butts off and we didn't rent a house for any other reason than to keep those girls together. I understand teamwork, I am not an elitist, only trying to help the kids. Kirsten Canuso asked if Joseph Guardia was a principal and did he talk to the Athletic Director? Joseph Guardia said if you want me to, I will call the Athletic Director and ask for a copy of the policy. Kirsten Canuso said that most policy is from the State. Joseph Guardia said he was just trying to be nice

to the young ladies. Karen Koptic said it is not that you are a bad guy, the issue is that the children are left in the hotel rooms, there is a fee that is spread among everyone else and it goes up based on that number. We did not hear that 5, 7, or 10 rowers will not be at the hotel. Jane Mack said she was told that she was not allowed to give out the information about the hotel – she said she was told that she had to wait until after Cities. Suze DiPietro said she blocked 45 rooms for parents, rowers and coaches – there are two hotels, however, she was trying to get all rowers and parents to stay at the Baymont. We can accommodate all. Jennifer Kane said that someone told Coach Alex that the Athletic Director said that they do not have to stay in the hotel as long as they are with the parent.

Mary Ann Giardia said that responses are being delivered differently. The Athletic Director says “preferred”. I feel that we have to lay out the questions on paper and don’t give answers unless they are on paper.

Jennifer Kane said you need to talk to the parent, not the coach – he spent hours trying to solve this – this is not his job – you need to go to the parent. The coach is there to be a coach.

Karen Koptic said that we asked that if you are not going to be with us, you need to tell us. Jennifer Kane said she didn’t know that we had a package together. Jennifer Kane said she must be too busy – perhaps information could be sent a little bit more direct.

Lynn Baumgardner stated that she knows how busy we all are – it is not the first time you (Jennifer Kane) are going to Nationals, the school would not allow them to go with the parents. Unfortunately, we did not have to travel out of the State, we stayed together as a team, traveled as a team, on and off the road. The point is as a team, we have never been at a tournament and some people stay here or there – you stay together as a team. It is a team event. You support each other at the event. Melissa Terrels (parent) said we are allowed to have rooms, but not allowed to know who gets to stay in what room. Lynn Baumgardner said it has not been hidden. Jane Mack said she had been told not to give out the information.

Suze DiPietro said she wanted to make sure that everyone would be together and in addition, we had to wait to see which boats qualified. Also rooms opened up because other schools that were not going to Nationals removed the holds they had on blocks of rooms.

Steve Nathan asked Heather Williams when she finished her term on the Board. Heather Williams responded “three years ago”.

Billy Mack said you should inform everyone about the rooms.

Allison Japson (parent) said that at the first meeting (stroke dinner), as a freshman parent, perhaps the Board could mention that you will block rooms and the importance of selling the tickets. Kirsten Canuso said we did try to stress it; maybe next year we can say it nicer.

Allison Yoa agreed that the first meeting was overwhelming, however, we did feel incredibly lost and felt talked “at” not “to”. Kirsten Canuso said we try to grab all parents in the beginning so that there aren’t any stragglers.

Suze DiPietro stated that Jane Mack has a thankless job – she is the first line of defense and this is her first year as a liaison. My hat is off to Jane and Ruthann for the incredible job they do. They have the hardest jobs.

Karen Koptic stated to the audience that if anyone is a parent of a rower going to Nationals to stay for the meeting – we have some important information for you.

The regular meeting was called to order by 7:47 pm.

Board Members Present:

Suze DiPietro, President
Karen Koptic, Vice President
Kirsten Canuso, Treasurer
Stephen Martinelli, Secretary
Jane Mack
Dan Dubbs
Steve Nathan
Lynn Baumgardner

I. Approval of April 13, 2016 Regular Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the April 13, 2016 meeting was made by Dan Dubbs, seconded by Steve Nathan; all in favor

II. Approval of May 5, 2016 Parent Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the May 5, 2016 meeting was made by Karen Koptic, seconded by Jane Mack; Kirsten Canuso abstained; all in favor

III. New Business

A. Nationals

Karen Koptic spoke last night with Coach Millar and he informed the Board that the Ocean City High School was not going to provide transportation to Nationals. I called Phizenmayer and asked him why not and he said that he did not understand why we thought the school would provide transportation. Three bus companies were called and none have buses available. A ballpark figure for one bus is \$6500.00 for one bus; but we need two. Then I asked Mr. Phizenmayer for options – can parents take kids? He said “no”. I then asked him if he wanted the kids to drive? What are our options – he said he would get back to us and he has not yet.

Melissa Terrels asked if they provide for other sports – it was answered that they only provide transportation to the airport.

Steve Nathan said I would go back and ask for the policy – see if it is school sponsored and if they have to provide transportation. Heather Williams asked if we could get the superintendent involved. The Athletic Director said he talked to Superintendent and Administration and that is the answer. Karen Koptic said you are not paying for room, not paying for transport – he said this is what it is.

Steve Nathan said we should go to the Athletic Director, he has to report to the Superintendent. Will the Superintendent know the policy? Kirsten Canuso said they will call the lawyer. Joseph Giardia said you could go on the website and see the policy.

Jennifer Kane asked if it does not specify in-state or out-of-state we can check on that. Karen Koptic said he is always very nice but we do not have any answers. Jennifer Kane said one of her husband's clients has a bus company but he cannot get a price until he gets the specifics in writing. Jennifer Kane said we would have to provide rooms and meals for the drivers. Jennifer Kane asked if this is applicable, the cost will be split among the athletes.

Steve Nathan said he will drive his son.

Becky Greene stated that she is in agreement, why don't you just drive them – can they all go – we would rent vans that hold 17 kids.

Heather Williams asked if we asked about using a school district bus – they own one bus. Karen Koptic said it is an 11 hour ride on a school bus.

Allison Yoa asked if other parents can take them.

Heather Williams asked about how the boats are getting to Nationals. Suze DiPietro said it will cost about \$1,000.00 for tolls and gas. They want Coach Millar to front the money first; Coach Millar wanted to know if the Boosters could pay up front and the tow people said “no”. Steve Nathan offered to front the money.

Suze DiPietro said now you have a taste of the lunacy involved.

Karen Koptic said even our forms are not approved by the School Board, we used forms from two years ago. The transportation is up in the air right now. Jennifer Kane's husband spoke to bus company – they have buses, need drivers. Her husband will contact Karen Koptic to get information needed. Karen Koptic asked for ballpark figure – cannot give one without the information requested.

Steve Nathan asked if we get policy and we can drive – we need all parents to look at the policy – no matter what it is it is going to be in the \$1,000.00s.

Stephen Martinelli said we only have to worry about the insurance for the kids while on the water. Lynn Baumgardner said we are covered by our own insurance. Kirsten Canuso asked if Ocean City High School is paying

registration fees? Suze DiPietro answered said yes. Kirsten Canuso said then they have sanctioned the event.

Karen Koptic said we are getting information and passing it along. In reference to buses – we need to research our options and we are going to need a lot of meetings.

Becky Green asked if we should wait to hand in our money. Parents are to call Karen Koptic or email with head count for caterer. We have been told from other coaches that when there is an event like this, everyone pays.

Steve Nathan asked what if someone doesn't pay? Lynn Baumgardner said there will be alternates.

Karen Koptic said alternates are the coaches' call.

Becky Green asked if we get a bus – when will it leave? Karen Koptic said it is sometime Wednesday.

Steve Nathan made a motion that the Board will not cover the fees for any parent or child that has not paid; Karen Koptic seconded; all in favor.

Karen Koptic said the coaches are trying to petition two boats into the race – they will not know until 15th. We will hold off on collecting payment until Stotesbury.

Jennifer Kane asked what boats? Suze DiPietro answered JV 4 girls and 2nd 8 boys.

Steve Nathan suggested all parents get the form completed that you are taking your child home. Karen Koptic said there is a form for 3rd party transportation – please complete just in case.

Jennifer Kane asked if this only applied to leaving? Karen Koptic said the team goes together but coming home is different. Steve Nathan said the policy is the same for all sports.

Suze DiPietro stated that we have some things to work out and we will keep you informed.

B. Banquet

1. Photo Booth – Mary Jean Majka suggested a photo booth at the banquet for a fee of \$475.00. Lynn Baumgardner asked who is paying for it? Mary Jean Majka said perhaps adding \$1 per ticket to cover fee. Dan Dubbs asked how many tickets were purchased last year? This item was tabled to next meeting.

2. Chinese Auction – Steve Nathan made a motion to have a Chinese Auction at the Banquet, seconded by Dan Dubbs; all in favor.
- C. Masters Scholarships Suze DiPietro had a meeting with ladies and they need a list of seniors that have been in the program all four years and that have paid all four years. Kirsten Canuso will forward the information.
- D. Nominations/Upcoming Elections-we have openings for vice president, girl liaison, boy liaison, treasurer and fundraising chair – Karen Koptic said she has only received one nomination so far. Jane Mack asked what the nominating committee does? Karen Koptic said they review nominations, contact the people. Jane Mack asked who is the nominating committee. Karen Koptic said the Board can select at least one person who is not running for office. The Board has appointed Karen Koptic as the nominating committee.
- E. Summer Crew Program-talked to Alex Petrella and he wants to do it. Tried to get an amount to be paid and said he was ok with keeping dates and times same as last year. Has Kelly Rupert, Mike Millar and others been contacted about the camp? Kelly Rupert will try and recruit from middle school. Stephen Martinelli said Vince Palmieri, Superintendent from Upper Township School District is in favor of the program. Suze DiPietro asked how much to pay Alex Petrella to run the program. Steve Nathan said we had 65 rowers-netted \$2,000.00. Stephen Martinelli said Alex Petrella was supposed to come two meetings ago and Alex could not make it tonight and asked for the board to decide. Steve Nathan said we can pay him based on the number of rowers - \$X per rower and then % to assistants. Stephen Martinelli said we are charging \$175.00 per rower; \$100 to coaches, we keep \$75 each rower. Do the assistants rotate? Dan Dubbs likes setting an amount per rower.

Kirsten Canuso asked if we are listing what equipment is being used for Masters and summer crew? Suze DiPietro said yes.

F. Executive Session

Kirsten Canuso asked if we could change June 8th meeting to June 7th.

Stotesbury – Suze DiPietro said the food tent can be delivered on Thursday after 12:00 pm. There will only be a tent (no food) for Saturday's event.

Steve Nathan said Mr. Scott Davis has made an offer to purchase the boat for \$1,000.00 and we have a counter offer of \$1,500.00. Mr. Davis will get back to us. Steve Nathan made a motion to sell the boat to Scott Davis if he agrees to \$1,500.00, if not, Stephen Martinelli will purchase the boat for \$1,500.00, seconded by Lynn Baumgardner, Stephen Martinelli abstained; all in favor.

Good of the Order

The meeting was adjourned by Suze DiPietro at 8:53 pm.