South Anchorage High School PTSO
General Membership Meeting
September 3, 2026
@Raven's Ring Brewing + OWL
Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Dr. Almon, Courtney Luff (President), Carla Woods (Vice President), Jennifer Wagner (Treasurer), Kim Leary (Teacher Representative), Van Angel (Student rep), Shelley Cooper (Zoom), Jennifer Torpy, Joseph Tiede, Susie Ward. Guest Speaker Representatives from District 9: John Boyle & Ky Holland with Garrett Whitney and Sharon Holland.

Apologies: Jyll Green

1. *Call to order*- 6:06 by Courtney Luff

2. *Approval of Minutes*
    a. Approval of August meeting minutes. Motion to approve: Kim Leary, Seconded by Carla Woods

3. *Principal's Report*
    a. Dr Almon 300-400 parents for back-to-school night. Parents brought up topics about concerns over Calc 2 not being offered. Ak Choice was full for Calc 2. Entertained idea of doing online through UAA. Challenges with providing enough class options with limited funding.

4. *Teacher Representative Report—Kim Leary*
    a. Teachers outsourcing grading assignments to students. Class sizes are large, not enough time to grade everything. Moving more towards multiple choice questions for quicker grading.
    b. Shelly Cooper reported back to school night was manageable. Her smallest class size is 38.
    c. Shelly Cooper-student government homecoming theme was decided, should be announced tomorrow.
    d. John Tiede coordinating November in Auditoria. Bringing guest speaker for academic awareness.
    e. Grant Requests: 5 grant requests approved.
    1) Teacher John Tiede, PTSO member, requesting $1000 grant for cultural collaborations. Previously approved grant for $250 but needs more due to class sizes. Bring in birds for freshman biology classes, and AP Bio. Also bringing speakers in for academic awareness. Exact amount needed for TLC for biology students is not exact at this time. Motion by Kim Leary to approve up to $2000 grant to TLC for biology class studies, Seconded by Carla Woods. All approved.
    2) Anika Schmidt requesting $1000 student grant for You Are Not Alone Club. Grub Club meeting for pizza last Tuesday of every month at lunch. Susie Ward, president, presented request. Meeting for everyone with pizza. Mental health awareness. Made stress balls in the past before finals. May use funds for positive merchandise. Once a week on Thursday at lunch open to

anyone to join. Counselors encourage kids to go who could use extra support. GAPCO has customer appreciation day, usually order average 14-16 pizzas. Safe social space. 6 new members joined today. Can be 40 kids that show up. Club will look for pizza deals or discounts to maximize funds. Kim Leary motion for $1000 grant, Seconded by Courtney Luff. All approved.

3) Teacher Shelly Cooper, PTSO member, $320 grant request for wolverine of the week to create a hall of fame. Want to buy 72 frames. Shelly to send link to Courtney to purchase. Motion by Kim Leary to approve, Seconded by Courtney Luff. All approved.

4) Teacher Rhianne Aster, PTSO member, $99 grant request for 1st gen apple pencil. Motion by Carla Woods to approve, Seconded by Van Angel. All approved

5) Sara Rink $700 grant request for recycling bins to finish implementing bins in all classes. Link being provided to Courtney and Jennifer. Motion by Courtney Luff to approve, Seconded by Jennifer Wagner. All approved.

5. *Student Report*
    a. None to discuss today
6. *Officer Reports*
    a. President's Report
        i. Add spirit-wear marketing with the student body. Would like to grow social media and spirit-wear via Anika and student body social media.
        ii. Courtney to reach out to Mr. Overgaard about sponsorship banners. What we can do to give back for business partnership? If businesses supply a banner, we'll hang it above the school store. Amy Habberstad was very involved with this in the past and could be a good resource.

    b. Treasurer's Report
        i. Bo Seward student awarded check cashed.
        ii. Bo Seward Charity check has not been cashed.
        iii. Go-fund-me funds payment came which was for glacier cruise.
        iv. Back to school night generated roughly about $1200

7. *Committee Reports*
    a. Senior Events
        i. None to discuss today.
    b. School Store
        i. None to discuss today
    c. Spirit Wear
        i. German students coming Tuesday at 10:30 for spirit wear, 20% discount.
        ii. Back to school night went well. New items will be in October. Needs help for Homecoming 9/26/26 to set up spirit wear at the game.
    d. Membership
        i. Kim Landry taking on membership. Updated on website, new Cheddar Up link.
        ii. Kim reaching out to businesses for sponsorships.
8. *Old Business*
    a. None

9. *New Business*
    a. None

10. *Guest Speakers*- Two District 9 candidate representatives attended meeting to share their insights on topics. Current Representative Ky Holland and Candidate John Boyle. Shared a few things about themselves as well as opening up for Q&A session.
    a. Ky Holland referenced Ak STAR report, commitment to economic growth and funding schools. Spouse librarian at Aquarian.
    b. John Boyle concerned about the state, more out migration than in, direct approach to keeping residents and youth. Been in Alaska 20 years. Commissioner of department of natural resources the last few years. Lawyer. Potential for state resources in Alaska. Not lacking for resources. Wife teacher with the school district. Support teachers and educators. Frustrated to see IGNITE end. Energy important as ENSTAR recently stated there could be brown outs if we have another cold winter like last year due to lack of reserves. Create attraction for families to move here.
    c. Q: Can you explain how you see the state of education right now in Anchorage?
        i. John: a lot of parents are frustrated. Unhealthy, funding has been provided but is it getting down to teachers, aids and staff. Is the additional funding actually helping students. Have consistency in education funding rather than wondering if there will be enough funding.
        ii. Ky-1/2 full, ½ empty, parents like teachers and schools, don't want to forget about what is going well. Kids are learning despite challenges according to AK STAR. Having to increase class sizes is an issue and it's concerning teachers are looking to leave. The $700 increased BSA has not actually increased with inflation. Class sizes are too large. Frustration driving families to other states and school options. Maintenance issues continue. Look at successes in things that were able to be accomplished
    d. Q: What is the one education need you see as most important, and what would be your way to improve it?
        i. Ky- teachers say defined benefits are an issue and class sizes need to be down. Teachers with experience and knowledge need to be kept
        ii. John-important to keep teachers. Teacher pays needs to be competitive. Like to see AK be at the top of competitive pay. Defined benefit plans not as key since many tend to reach to that in negotiations. Pay would be top priority.
    e. Q: Who do S Corps get different tax breaks and how do those impact the economy overall. (i.e.: tax policy for Hilcorp)
        i. A: John- if you tax places more, in the context of energy, Hilcorp and Hex set up as S Corp so they aren't paying state income tax. If we tax more, do we get more investment or do we get less? Is it more important for the state to tax these companies.
        ii. A: Ky-issue to grapple. Tangled ourselves into a situation where we've been trying to ignore this. Voted yes to S Corp tax break. At this point do we protect profits to get more gas to cut funds to education, no. Private enterprise only thrives if there is a good environment for those to exist. Private and public economy have to work together.

11. *Announcements*—Next meeting October 1st, 2026, at 6 pm at Ravens Ring Brewing Company.

12. *Adjourn*—Motion to adjourn by at: 7:42 p.m. by Courtney Luff, seconded by Dr. Luke Almon

Treasurer's Report