

**James W. Alexander PTA
General Meeting - Minutes
Tuesday, February 8, 2022, at 7:00 pm
James W. Alexander Elementary School - Multipurpose Room**

Call to Order & Establish Quorum: Renee Tisi called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm. Those in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Motion to establish quorum by Trish Patsaros, seconded by Hillary McWhorter.

Approve January 2022 Minutes: Motion by Dan Griffin to approve the minutes from the January meeting, as handed out before the meeting. Motion seconded by Hillary McWhorter and approved.

President's Report: Renee Tisi shared an update on PTA memberships. As of today, there are 205 members of the Alexander PTA. An updated count of memberships and formal notifications got delayed, with everything now entered into MemberHub. Some members may have just received their membership email. The Alexander PTA paid the balance due on last year's memberships of \$444 on December 6, and \$820 was paid to NJPTA on February 7 for this year's memberships, bringing us up-to-date. Renee spoke about how some members choose to include a donation to the PTA when paying their membership fees; for example, a member writes a \$20 check, with \$12 going to membership fees, with the \$8 going to the PTA Annual Appeal. When reviewing the membership transactions over the last few months, Elaine Griffin and Sophia Knapp noted that \$37 should have gone into the Annual Appeal is missing. We reached out to the Mercer County level PTA organization and the NJPTA at the state level. The Treasurer has made all deposits, and there is a discrepancy. There is paperwork that reflects that the money is missing; we are unsure from which year that money is missing due to the delays with membership processing. Aside from those two things, there is nothing further the Board can do. A critical piece of information that came out of this situation is that none of our General Members are bonded and insured; only our Board members have such protection from the loss of PTA monies. In the future, anyone running an event or fundraiser cannot have registration or purchase forms and the associated funds coming to them. These items will go to the Treasurer first for the money to be collected and accounted for, and then the forms will go to the person running the event or fundraiser. This policy change has nothing to do with what has recently transpired and everything to do with protecting PTA monies from adverse events. Elaine Griffin spoke about how this change provides greater transparency, and members must make arrangements with the Treasurer ahead of every event and fundraiser. Renee also discussed the option of a lockbox in the Front Office, which is accessible only by Board members. There were questions concerning monies collected that arrived via mail into the Front Office, PTA bylaws, standing rules, and keeping track of orders and monies. Valerie Zieniuk reminded the members that she is a signatory on PTA accounts and can also collect and deposit funds. Renee stated that the Board would have to work through the process and fine-tune it. Motion by Elaine Griffin to table this discussion. Motion seconded by Dan Griffin and approved.

Treasurer's Report: Sophia Knapp reported \$17,580.92 in our main account, \$745.01 in the Games of Chance account, and \$500.00 in petty cash. She also shared that Annual Appeal had raised \$1,536.51 to date, with \$435.51 currently in the Annual Appeal account. It cost \$725 to send out Annual Appeal postcards to some of the Alexander community, paid for via contributions to the Annual Appeal. Once again, the collective group discussed how everyone in the Alexander community did not receive a postcard in the mail. Some noted that their postcards took some time to arrive due to NFP indicia use; others did not receive the postcard due to an algorithm utilized by the marketing company we enlisted to help with the mailing. Renee Tisi shared that we learned from this experience and won't use a verklempt mailing algorithm next year. There was discussion surrounding a postcard for next year, relating to paying postage versus delivering by hand. Sophia read a letter from Richard Klockner, former teacher and principal, which accompanied his donation to the Annual Appeal.

Correspondence and Box Tops: Trish Patsaros stated that she mailed thank you notes to all the individuals who made Annual Appeal donations to date. There was no update on the Box Tops program at this time.

Annual Appeal Update: Renee Tisi noted that she covered this topic during the Treasurer's Report.

PTA Property & Storage: Erin Andahazy shared that many items currently reside in her garage. She noted that she needed help from Hillary McWhorter to get into the storage unit, see it, and organize it. Michelle Grunbaum brought up the storage closet in the cafeteria that needs to be emptied and organized, as it has not been since before the pandemic. She felt that it would be a good space for Theresa Timian and Room Representatives to utilize once it is clean.

Nomination Committee: Tara Sottong reported that the committee met this past week. She shared that she has served on this committee for the past six years and that some years, people do not wish to serve on the PTA Executive Board. For the past two years, people have actively wanted to be on this Board. This year, three of the five committee members served on the Board in the past, so they understand what is involved in holding a leadership position. Tara then reported the nominations for the James W. Alexander PTA Executive Board for the 2022 – 2024 Term:

President – Kristine D'Ambrosio;
First Vice President – Kelly Fillinger;
Treasurer – Sophia Knapp

Tara reminded everyone of the Bylaws that if anyone chooses to run for a position, there could be an election in 20 days. Motion to accept these nominations as presented by Dan Griffin. Motion seconded by Erin Andahazy and approved.

Room Representatives: Theresa Timian shared that it has been quiet on this front and that there should be more information on the parameters for spring parties next month.

5th Grade Committee: Danielle Wiltsey reported that the committee would meet immediately following the PTA Monthly General Meeting.

Membership/Alumni Committee: Elaine Griffin shared that she had nothing new to report at this time.

Dining Out Committee: Dan Griffin reported setting up a Dining Out Night to support the Alexander PTA for Wednesday, February 23, at Chickie's and Pete's in Bordentown.

Rutgers Rain Garden: Elaine Griffin stated that she has been working with Mrs. Goliszewski on creating grade-level appropriate curriculum pieces for the Rain Garden. The contract has been approved, with a targeted installation date of mid-April during Spring Break. Elaine will send around a sign-up sheet for those interested in either finding out more about the Rain Garden or helping with installation in the spring.

Assemblies: Michelle Grunbaum reported that Alexander hadn't held assemblies for the past two years due to the pandemic. She stated that she had some information about a Black History traveling museum and would be working with Mr. Bookholdt about when and where to set it up. Teachers would sign up for times to take their class through the displays. Potentially, the setup for the Black History traveling museum would be on Friday, February 25, with students viewing displays on Monday, February 28 and Tuesday, March 1.

AR Workshop Fundraiser: Lisa Gray shared that 31 of the 36 total spots in this workshop on Friday, February 18, were still open. Kids are welcome to participate, and it's available to those outside of the Alexander community. 10% of profits from this event go to the Alexander PTA; no mention of the PTA or a flyer is required.

Skate Night: Trish Patsaros shared that the Skate Night will now happen on Monday, March 7, from 6–8 pm. She will make up a flyer to send home with students and also needs a volunteer to help check people in that evening.

Scholastic Book Fair: Hillary McWhorter reported that she and Debbie Gallant recently met and worked with Mr. Bookholdt to plan the Spring Book Fair. The current schedule is for setup to begin on Friday, May 20, with the sale happening from Monday, May 23 to Wednesday, May 25. Hillary noted that they were looking to perhaps have more after school or evening hours, waiting to see how things would change with the end of the mask mandate. She also gave a final report on the December 2021 Book Fair - \$7,493.55 of books sold, with a profit/reward of \$4,439.49, and a current Scholastic Dollars balance of \$5,500.97, \$1,300 of which goes to teachers.

Casino Night: Renee Tisi confirmed that this event would not happen this year for various reasons, such as the level of planning involved and the need for a larger

committee. Renee asked those in attendance about super 50/50s and what licenses and approvals would be needed to have one. Erin Andahazy read some information from a contact who has run a Super 50/50 in the past. After some discussion, those assembled decided to have the drawing at the last meeting of the PTA on June 14 at Killarney's Publick House. Mr. Bookholdt suggested awarding different size prizes out of the 50% available to the winners. Erin Andahazy will run the super 50/50, with assistance from Elaine Griffin as the Board Vice President usually in charge of Tricky Tray. Valerie Zieniuk will submit the paperwork to Hamilton Township. There was additional discussion about adding a space on the ticket to write in a student's name; Renee Tisi requested to table the chat for further discussion by the super 50/50 committee.

All Other Business

Gertrude Hawk: Renee Tisi shared an update from Jen Zoda that a spring sale will be starting soon, with packets to be sent home with students shortly. This sale will provide delivery in time for the spring holidays, with the same level of support to the PTA as with previous sales.

Nomination Committee Chair Tara Sottong reminded the Board nominees to see her after the meeting, as she has consent forms for them to sign. Those Board members ending their term must turn over all of their materials within ten days to the new Board members.

Community Yard Sale: Hillary McWhorter spoke about doing one at Alexander, with participants setting up tables on Carl Sandberg and Estates. Food trucks might be a possibility, and participants would pay a fee per table. There was discussion around selecting dates, as there would need to be a rain date, and the food trucks would need guarantees for those dates. Hillary noted that we would need permission from the Board of Education, as the sale requires the use of school grounds.

Teacher's Report: There was no update from Teacher Representative at this meeting. There were simply remarks of gratitude and appreciation for the PTA for everything they do for the teachers and staff!

Principal's Report: Mr. Bookholdt reported that he was hopeful that more events and programs could happen soon and that parents would even be able to attend. He spoke about selecting a date for the fifth-grade graduation, potentially the Wednesday or Thursday before the last day of school. There was a question about field trips; Mr. Bookholdt was trying to get one per grade level, with the fifth graders going first, and expressed concern about refunding monies to families should pandemic issues cancel a field trip.

Meeting adjourned at 8:23 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Valerie Zieniuk, Recording Secretary.