

**James W. Alexander PTA
General Meeting – Minutes
Tuesday, November 16, 2021, at 7:00 pm
Killarney's Publick House, 1644 Whitehorse Mercerville Road**

Call to Order & Establish Quorum: Meeting called to order at 7:03 pm, and the Pledge of Allegiance immediately followed. Motion to establish quorum by Dan Griffin, seconded by Kelly Fillinger.

President's Report: Renee Tisi reported that the PTA has held several successful and safe events this year and hopes to continue having a more typical year. She reminded everyone that events need to follow Hamilton Township Board of Education guidelines.

Treasurer's Report & Taxes: Sophia Knapp shared that the current account balances are as follows: the main PTA account has \$13,792.33, the Games of Chance account has \$283.00, and there is \$500 in Petty Cash. The PTA submitted their taxes electronically, and the IRS accepted them on November 7. If anyone requires reimbursement from Halloween, please submit it to the Alexander Treasurer e-mail account as soon as possible. Recently, the PTA has made two purchases to benefit Alexander. The first purchase was 22 DVD players for the teachers, library, and Mrs. Nami's old room. The second purchase was bottled water for Mrs. Minogue to give kids who forgot water and needed it. The PTA will replenish this supply regularly.

Annual Appeal Donations: Sophia Knapp reported the PTA had received \$763.93 in Annual Appeal donations as of today. She shared that Trish Patsaros will send acknowledgment letters and thank you notes and not accept reimbursement for her purchase of stamps and stationery.

Correspondence & Box Tops: Renee Tisi shared an update on behalf of Trish Patsaros, who could not attend. She read thank you notes from Ms. Larkin and Mrs. Nami on behalf of a family with a recent loss. Renee also shared thank you notes from faculty members for the DVD players, classroom enrichment, and the bottled water.

Annual Appeal Update: Renee Tisi reported that an algorithm used to send Annual Appeal postcards did not capture all Alexander families. Therefore, the PTA decided to send a flyer home to all students. This year, Giving Tuesday happens on November 30, and there will be a post about donating to the Annual Appeal on our Facebook page. There will be a reminder to make a charitable contribution in late December, as December 31 will mark the end of the calendar year. There will be another communication about the Annual Appeal released in the spring. There was a suggestion from Dan Griffin that we could make flyers for local businesses to display. Denise Wyers reminded all that an Annual Appeal is in perpetuity and that it can take six or more impressions before someone decides to donate.

Approval of October 2021 Meeting Minutes: Motion by Dan Griffin to approve minutes from the October meeting, as printed and distributed at tonight's meeting. Motion seconded by Michelle Grunbaum and approved.

Communications Committee: Chrissy Trank updated Community Standards for the PTA Facebook page, and those assembled will vote on the text at the end of the meeting. Print copies were made available for those in attendance to read in advance of the vote. Theresa Timian shared that she had made recent updates to the Alexander PTA website, including gift cards sales and financials.

Spanish Translation of Flyers Update: Elaine Griffin reported that English/Spanish flyers for ordering yearbooks would be going out soon to all Alexander students. A monthly update in Spanish for the PTA is currently in the works.

Yearbooks: Dan Griffin reported that they ordered a bundle of 300 yearbooks; in addition, the overdue dual-language flyers were going home to students. A yearbook may be ordered at any time, even if you are not ready to design the extra pages for your student, and purchasing it earlier is cheaper than at the end of the school year.

PTA Property & Storage: Renee Tisi shared that Erin Andahazy will assist with collecting, organizing, and storing PTA items and property. Renee added that we do not want to keep junk, as the current unit is the size of a closet. Arrangements to bring things to Erin will be available on the PTA Facebook page. Items should be in tubs or boxes and labeled. Once we see how many additional items Trunk or Treat needs to store, we can vote on a larger unit if required. The current space rental costs \$1600 and is ours until September 2022. Renee Tisi motioned that members could purchase containers to prepare PTA items for storage, and Hillary McWhorter seconded the motion. Renee reminded everyone to use the tax-exempt form to make this or any purchase for the Alexander PTA.

Portable DVD Players: Renee Tisi reported that those attending the October meeting discussed the concept of an Alexander wish list. After that meeting, the Executive Board talked about the need for DVD players and purchased them for the school. Every classroom has a DVD player, and there are two in the library and one in Mrs. Nami's old room. The total cost of this purchase was \$474.

Trunk or Treat: Lisa Gray was not in attendance; Sophia Knapp reported approximately \$270 in profit, based on current estimates. There was \$104 in ticket sales at the door, and the two vendors donated \$100 each. The PTA collected just over \$500 in admissions and candy donations. There was lots of praise from everyone on a great event and how smoothly things went at our off-site location at the Sawmill Branch.

Gertrude Hawk Candy Sale: Renee Tisi reported these rough estimates in sales, as online sales are still ongoing: \$3,271 in online sales, \$2,614 in paper sales, which would bring \$2,942 to us in profit. There will be another sale in late winter/early spring.

Parents Night Out: Michelle Grunbaum reported that this event was held this past Saturday, November 13, on the patio here at Killarney's. There were approximately 45 people in attendance, and the event made \$900 in profit.

Room Representatives: Theresa Timian spoke about beginning to discuss end-of-year gifts for teachers and students and moving back to a gift for each kid from the PTA, for which the budget needed to be confirmed. There was a discussion regarding food and drinks at Holiday Parties; Mr. Bookholdt confirmed that food must be the same item for everyone and approved by the school nurse for those with allergies. There should not be "goodie bags" containing food beyond the agreed upon school-wide snack.

5th Grade Committee: Danielle Wiltsey reported that she sent an e-mail to have a first committee meeting, possibly during the week of December 7, for Co-Chairs to discuss budgets and other items of importance.

Membership/Alumni Committee: Elaine Griffin stated that she has not yet received an update on PTA Memberships from Sandy Gallucci but was hoping to have one shortly. Elaine shared that the Alumni Committee was creating a Friends of Alexander Facebook page, with perhaps an Instagram account in the future.

Dining Out Committee: Elaine Griffin reported that Classic Sub gave a \$100 donation to the Alexander PTA during the recent Dining Out event at the end of October. The next Dining Out event will take place in December.

Rain Garden Update: Elaine Griffin shared that the dumpster is near the rain garden; hopefully, it will not be there forever. The rain garden is capturing runoff from the parking lot and treats stormwater, and pollinators will hopefully arrive in spring.

Spirit Wear: Hillary McWhorter reported that we could hold a winter sale, and she would have a conversation with our merchandise vendor and get an update. Elaine Griffin shared an idea for a "Friends" or "Alumni" Alexander shirt. Michelle Grunbaum brought up the idea of gloves as a student gift. Renee Tisi motioned a vote on gloves with the Alexander logo for student gifts for distribution during Holiday Parties in December; the motion was seconded and approved.

Pie Sales: Kristine D'Ambrosio reported that we sold 294 items (both pies and donuts), totaling over \$4,000 in sales. The PTA made approximately \$850 in profit.

Scholastic Book Fair: Hillary McWhorter shared that the new Co-Chair for the Book Fair is Debbie Galant. She stated that the Book Fair would get set up on Monday, November 29. It will be open during school from Tuesday, November 30 through Friday, December 3, with after-school shopping available on Wednesday, December 1, and evening shopping on Tuesday, November 30, and Thursday, December 2 during conferences. The Book Fair will not be open after school on Friday, December 2, to allow for event break down. There will be a coin collection again this year, hoping to get jugs into rooms by week's end; coin collection will go through at least Thanksgiving and

potentially until the end of the Book Fair. There will be no wish lists for teachers but an extended time frame to shop at the Book Fair. Due to current guidelines, there will be no other volunteers beyond the Co-Chairs. Fifth-grade Ambassadors will be on hand to help the younger students with their purchases.

Gift Card Sales: Theresa Timian announced that online gift card orders are due by Friday, November 26; please turn in paper order forms before Thanksgiving.

Cheesecake Sale: Michelle Grunbaum shared that Cheesecake Lady orders will be due by Friday, December 3, and Michelle will have everyone collect their orders from her house on Friday, December 17, from 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm.

Holiday Shop: Renee Tisi reported that we got approval to run this event. Erin Andahazy will be running it, and due to current guidelines, she and her Co-Chair are the only PTA representatives able to volunteer. Teachers and fifth-grade Ambassadors will be on hand to assist the younger students with their purchases. The Holiday Shop will take place from Tuesday, December 14 to Thursday, December 16. Erin Andahazy requested that the current \$2,000 budget for this event increase to match what they sold at the last event in 2019. Renee Tisi motioned to increase the budget for the Holiday Shop event to \$3,000; the motion was seconded and approved.

Skate Night: Renee Tisi reported for Trish Patsaros, who was not in attendance, that the Skate Night event will take place on Sunday, January 30, 2022, from 4:30 pm – 6:30 pm at the Mercer County Ice Skating Center.

Casino Night: Renee Tisi shared that there will be no Tricky Tray event this school year, primarily out of concern for families and businesses still struggling due to the pandemic. There are also a lot of Tricky Tray events happening locally. Renee Tisi, Hillary McWhorter, Valerie Zieniuk, and other members in attendance have begun researching what needs to be secured and purchased, what forms to file with the State of New Jersey and Hamilton Township, and how this event will be successful. Others in attendance expressed concern about people wanting to attend and the loss of Tricky Tray as a big PTA fundraiser. Anyone interested in helping put together this event should contact Hillary McWhorter, and she will put together a committee that will meet soon. Renee Tisi proposed reallocating the Tricky Tray budget to funding a Casino Night, and Dan Griffin seconded the motion, and the motion was approved.

All Other Business

Kristine D'Ambrosio is exploring the possibility of holding a dance in 2022 and needs a venue, as both Alexander and Sawmill Branch are not options. Contact Kristine if you have any suggestions.

Amazon Business Prime Account: Sophia Knapp reported that the PTA just established an Amazon Business Prime account with free shipping. If anyone wants to place a tax-exempt order on items for their Class Holiday Parties, please connect with

Sophia. She also discussed needing to make an AmazonSmile flyer and send it home with students before the holiday. Denise Wyers offered to create one.

Elaine Griffin shared that if you know of a family who needs winter coats, please let either her or Mrs. Minogue know. They can get coats to kids anonymously.

Hillary McWhorter inquired when nominations would begin for the PTA Executive Board; Renee Tisi confirmed that this process would start in January 2022.

Teacher's Report: Mrs. Burke thanked the PTA for the water bottle donations and the Halloween-saving DVD players. She also thanked Theresa Timian and the Room Representatives for the crafts for the Halloween parties. Virtual visitation went well today; those classrooms with technical issues will make up their visitations on Friday, November 19. She said that she and the other teachers and staff are thankful for the PTA and its members! Hillary McWhorter suggested sending in school-appropriate DVDs that we don't use anymore; those in attendance agreed to start with donations from those interested in doing so and then perhaps asking for more. Michelle Grunbaum asked if adults need to sign in at the front office for conferences. Mrs. Burke and Mr. Bookholdt confirmed that adults do not need to sign in, as students will not be present.

Principal's Report: Mr. Bookholdt shared that American Education Week this week. He also confirmed that make-up virtual visitations would take place on Friday, November 19. Mr. Bookholdt thanked the PTA for an awesome Trunk or Treat. He was also happy that the Halloween parade went well and that we lucked out with the weather. He also thanked the PTA and the Alexander community for the Thanksgiving donations, which the school will accept through Friday, November 19. There is a need for an additional 7-8 frozen turkeys. Mr. Bookholdt noted that nominations for Teacher of the Year were due this Friday, November 19, and he had not received many nominations. For those who need it, school picture retakes will take place on Monday, November 29. He wished the PTA and their families a Happy Thanksgiving.

Vote on Facebook Community Standards: Everyone in attendance had the chance to review the proposed Community Standards for the Alexander Facebook page, as provided in print. The motion to apply the printed standards provided at the meeting to the Alexander Facebook page was approved.

Meeting adjourned at 8:19 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Valerie Zieniuk, Recording Secretary.