

**James W. Alexander PTA  
General Meeting – Minutes  
Tuesday, October 19, 2021, at 7:00 pm  
Killarney’s Publick House, 1644 Whitehorse Mercerville Road**

**Call to Order & Establish Quorum:** Meeting called to order at 7:05 pm, and the Pledge of Allegiance immediately followed. Motion to establish quorum by Dan Griffin, seconded by Kelly Fillinger.

**Approval of September 2021 Meeting Minutes:** Motion by Dan Griffin to approve minutes from the September 2021 meeting, as printed and distributed at tonight’s meeting. Motion seconded and approved.

**President’s Report:** Renee Tisi shared that the Alexander PTA is off to an incredible start. There are many active committees, and there is some excellent news to share during tonight’s reports. Renee happily imparted information on the first donation to the Alexander PTA Annual Appeal, made just before tonight’s meeting via PayPal.

**Treasurer’s Report:** Sophia Knapp reported \$12,866.39 in the main PTA account and \$2,838 in the Games of Chance account. She noted the more considerable amount in the Games of Chance account was due to bank requirements. There is currently \$500 in Petty Cash available. The recent Mum Sale netted \$3,330 in sales, with \$1,263.60 in profit for the PTA. At the Block Party, the PTA collected \$1,048 in monies for memberships. Sophia also shared that the PTA is switching to Hamilton Horizons Federal Credit Union due to Investor Bank’s evolving fees and accounts and cash deposits requirements. The change is a positive one, as the new bank is very non-profit friendly. Special thanks to Jennifer Mirando for helping with the research on this transition.

**Correspondence & Box Tops:** Trish Patsaros reported no new correspondence or updates on the Box Tops program.

**Ice Skating:** Trish Patsaros shared that the PTA will host a Family Fun event at the Mercer County Park rink on Saturday, January 30, 2022, from 4:30 pm – 6:30 pm. There is no admission charge, but attendees will need to either pay for skate rentals or bring their own skates.

**Annual Appeal:** Renee Tisi shared that Denise Wyers worked tirelessly on the Annual Appeal postcard, and people have started to receive it in their mailboxes. Approximately 1,530 postcards went out as a part of this mailing. The QR code for donations will soon be on the PTA Facebook page. Donation methods include scanning the QR code on the postcard or sending in a check to the school to the attention of the PTA. The Annual Appeal can be run in perpetuity and help bridge the gap on smaller events and fundraisers run by the PTA.

**Reimbursements & Taxes:** Sophia Knapp stated that Theresa Timian sent out tax-exempt forms for Room Representatives to use when purchasing items in person and online. The fastest way to receive reimbursement is to send pertinent documents to the PTA Treasurer Email within two weeks of an event. If a Room Representative needs something for their class, please reach out to Sophia. The PTA will reimburse regular shipping, not expedited. The IRS has previously audited us, so reimbursement of sales tax is verboten. This year, we will be doing our taxes without an accountant, saving \$575.

**Spanish Translation of Flyers Update:** Elaine Griffin spoke with Robert Acerra, from NJPTA, who told her that translation of materials is a problem for many local PTA organizations and recommended using the PTA national website for resources. There could perhaps be a weekly or monthly roundup instead of translating every flyer. Seth Chorba can help with getting the National Spanish Honor Society at all three high schools on board for translation help. Johanna Flippen and another parent offered to help, as they are bilingual.

**Communications Committee:** Theresa Timian reported no updates at this time.

**PTA Property:** Renee Tisi shared that the PTA began renting a space at a local storage facility just before the pandemic started. She knows some people have stuff in their homes, and we need to know who has what. Those members with items stored in their homes should connect with Renee before the next meeting. Erin Andahazy volunteered to organize the storage space. Depending upon the outcome of this effort, there may be a need for a bigger storage unit, which this group can discuss at next month's meeting.

**Block Party:** Renee Tisi reported that each food truck in attendance donated \$100 to the PTA. The 50/50 raffle made \$283 profit, and the games and concessions made \$2,273.89 profit. Renee thanked everyone for coming together to set up and help out.

**Mum Sale:** Sandy Gallucci reported the sale of 656 mums in 2021, nearly double sold during the last fundraiser in 2019. This year's wholesaler was Voorhees Greenhouses.

**Spirit Wear:** Lisa Gray stated that the items would arrive at Alexander during the next few days. There was \$4,649 in total sales, with \$1,542.80 in profit for the PTA. Typically, there is another Spirit Wear sale before Christmas, so be on the lookout.

**5th Grade Committee:** Lisa Miller announced the availability of a Signup Genius for fifth-grade parents to sign up to volunteer. The committee will have a brief meeting immediately following this one, primarily for introductions of Subcommittee Co-Chairs and distribution of binders.

**4th Grade Representatives:** Renee Tisi announced that two 4th Grade Room Representatives, Sandy Gallucci and Tara Sottong, will attend this year's 5th Grade Committee meetings in preparation for next year.

**Membership:** Sandy Gallucci shared that by November 1, all new PTA members would be in the database and that she would soon send membership cards via email. As of today, there are 170 members of the Alexander PTA. The deadline for the class-based membership challenge is coming up, and Sandy will soon share percentages achieved by each class. Pamela Davila brought up how the membership form should be bilingual; the PTA seeks a volunteer translator for this project.

**Alumni Committee:** Elaine Griffin announced that a “Why I am Thankful to Be an Alexander Alumnus” campaign would begin on Facebook and Instagram on November 1. There is no cost to participate in the campaign, which seeks to gather information on alumni who are at least in grade six. Obtaining information on Alexander alumni helps the PTA to get volunteers for events and to make scholarship decisions.

**Dining Out Committee:** Dan Griffin announced that Classic Sub on Rt. 33 will hold a Dining Out event for the PTA on Friday, October 29, from 10 am – 8 pm. The PTA will receive 15% of all sales, whether in-person, phone or online, no flyer necessary. Just mention “Alexander Elementary” when ordering.

**Rain Garden:** Elaine Griffin shared that the Rain Garden received Board of Education approval. She is working with the township on firming up the installation date, which should hopefully take place before Thanksgiving.

**Gertrude Hawk:** Renee Tisi stated that all orders are due by Monday, November 8.

**Pie Sales:** Kristine D’Ambrosio announced the pie sale would start soon, with flyers going home with students tomorrow. This year, Country Gardens will provide pies at \$15 each and cider donuts at \$8 per half dozen. Pickup will be at Alexander on Wednesday, November 24, from 12 pm – 2 pm.

**Parents Night Out:** Michelle Grunbaum announced there will be a Parents Night Out at Kilarney’s on Saturday, November 13, from 6 pm – 9 pm. The \$40 per person price includes passed appetizers, two drink tickets, and a buffet dinner, on the outdoor patio, with live music beginning after 9 pm.

**Room Representatives:** Theresa Timian confirmed no consumables for Halloween parties this year. Room Representatives all abiding by this request also increase the chance of having food and drinks later in the year. Don’t forget to send check requests within two weeks of the event to Sophia Knapp via the PTA Treasurer Email account. Please check with teachers to make sure Halloween party plans cover all students. Theresa mentioned the Holiday Party budget is the same as the Halloween Party budget. She also shared that Room Representatives may walk in the parade with their class, but they cannot enter the building. Mr. Bookholdt confirmed that masks are not required, as the parade is outside, and that students and staff should try to maintain social distance. The parade will begin at 1:45 pm on Friday, October 29.

**Trunk or Treat:** Sandy Gallucci shared that, as of today, there are 27 trunks. Anyone who volunteered to donate candy should send it to the school office by Thursday, October 21. Each trunk will get a minimum amount of candy from the PTA but still need to bring enough candy for 300 people. There are currently around 200 kids signed up to participate. Mr. Bookholdt and Mr. Marshall have graciously volunteered for repeated submersion into the donated dunk tank filled with ball pit balls. There will be two food trucks selling hot cocoa, popcorn, and other goodies. Other activities include a movie, a not-so-haunted house, and carnival-style games. Renee thanked the Hamilton YMCA for donating the use of the Sawmill Branch to us for this event.

## **All Other Business**

**Holiday Shop:** Erin Andahazy asked about the status of the Holiday Shop. Teachers have volunteered to help, but Erin will need parent help at the cash register. Mr. Bookholdt stated that he was willing to brainstorm and work with her on this effort.

Pamela Davila commented about seeking a bigger space for the next PTA meeting. Denise Wyers said it was great to see a standing-room-only PTA meeting.

**Teacher's Report:** Mrs. Fiorello thanked the PTA for a great time at the Block Party, and the staff enjoyed it. She also said that all the teachers would make Halloween fun for the students, even if there were no consumable treats or guests this year.

**Principal's Report:** Mr. Bookholdt thanked the PTA for everything they are doing and that there is a fantastic school climate because of our amazing PTA; not every school is this fortunate. Fourth and fifth-grade students recently completed the START Strong state assessment; reports will be shared with teachers first and then sent home after that. I-Ready testing for grades 1 through 5 is coming soon; this testing drives teachers' classroom instruction. The modular classrooms will be opening next week for Mrs. Nami's and Mrs. Burke's classes. Mr. Bookholdt reminded everyone that school would be closed on Tuesday, November 2, Thursday, November 4, and Friday, November 5. Parent-Teacher Conferences may be virtual again, and it is uncertain if there will be an in-person option; conferences begin on Tuesday, November 30. There was a discussion about the number of portable DVD players in the school building. Teachers cannot utilize streaming content in classrooms due to blocked websites or inappropriate ads, and that portable DVD players could be helpful. The entire school only has two portable DVD players. Denise Wyers suggested creating an Alexander School wish list, and at a future date, the PTA could send home a flyer with further information on making donations or purchases. This group will continue this discussion at next month's meeting, after some further research by the PTA Executive Board.

Melissa Rossi won the raffle for the fall sign décor.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Valerie Zieniuk, Recording Secretary.