

**James W. Alexander PTA
General Meeting - Minutes
Tuesday, October 18, 2022, at 7:00 pm
Alexander Multipurpose Room**

Call to Order and Establish Quorum: President Kristine D'Ambrosio called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm. The Pledge of Allegiance immediately followed. Motion to establish quorum by Kristine D'Ambrosio, seconded by Michelle Grunbaum and approved.

Approve September 2022 Meeting Minutes: Motion made by Valerie Zieniuk to approve minutes from the September 2022 meeting, as distributed. Motion seconded by Keri Carlton and approved.

President's Report: Kristine D'Ambrosio recently attended a President's Meeting held by County Council, where they discussed school-level food pantries. She shared that the PTA might start asking for a food donation for free admission into its events, yet she noted the idea is a work in progress. Kristine also spoke with Dr. Rocco about our Certificate of Insurance and the Facilities Use Agreements required to have an event at the school. She is hopeful that now that other Hamilton schools are talking to each other, the district might provide standardized language for required clauses in Certificates of Insurance to allow third-party vendors.

Treasurer's Report: Sophia Knapp reported \$13,489.70 in the main account, \$1,750.02 in the Games of Chance account, \$5.00 in the savings account, and \$500.00 in petty cash. The PTA recently paid the annual fee for the storage unit (\$1,464), cut a check to pay for the mum sale (\$2,740), paid dues to the Mercer County Council and NJPTA (\$452), and submitted the fee for the Games of Chance Biennial Renewal (\$100). Sophia shared that Oriental Trading and Target accepted our tax-exempt forms for use on PTA purchases. With pre-approval from the Board, members may place orders online; in-store purchases require separate steps. She is still waiting to hear from Dollar Tree on our application for tax-exempt status; once this process is final, there will be a bar code for members to use at their stores, with pre-approval from the Board.

Correspondence & Box Tops: Jessica Carabelli shared that a flyer explaining the Box Tops program and how to use the app will go home by the end of the week. She also read correspondence from the second-grade teachers thanking the PTA for the Back-to-School goodies and the upcoming Scholastic Book Fair.

Biennial Renewal of Games of Chance License: Valerie Zieniuk reported that the PTA has to renew its state-issued Games of Chance Certificate every two years. This certificate allows us to have raffles, 50/50 sales, and Tricky Trays. It costs \$100 to renew, and she submitted the paperwork last week. She hopes to have a new certificate in hand by December.

Super 50/50 Sale: Valerie Zieniuk shared that current ticket sales remain at \$1,000. All purchases support the things the PTA does for the Alexander community. She reminded all that the deadline to purchase tickets is at 7:59 pm on Tuesday, November 15, at Killarney's, just before the drawing at 8:00 pm.

Scholastic Book Fair: Hillary McWhorter shared that the sale dates are Monday, October 31, through Friday, November 4. Students can shop during in-school hours with teachers, and there will be short periods for shopping immediately after dismissal, as well as during afternoon and evening conferences. Two flyers will be going home: one for the coin collection (All for Books) the week of October 24 and another for the Book Fair. Hillary reported \$236 in sales on the pencil grams sold at Back-to-School Night, which covers all the gift certificates for Alexander students in need. Jenn Zodda is making a reusable sign with a witches' cauldron and bubbles so students can visually track their coin collection progress. Hillary noted that the goal is to raise \$1,000 total during the coin collection. She also shared that Kate Potocki would join her and Debbie Galant as part of their transition to becoming the Co-Chairs of the Book Fair in 2024-2025.

Room Representatives: Theresa Timian noted that, while Class Parties and volunteering are returning to normal, some issues have arisen. The Room Representatives receive guidelines in the guidebook at the beginning of the school year. Each Room Representative can be a chaperone on one of the two field trips for their class. Theresa also noted that everyone is not going to become best friends, and that's okay. The key is to work together for the sake of the children in that class. This year, Room Representatives are asking for donations of snacks and water from parents versus having the PTA donate those items. Theresa said she would see how it works this year and perhaps revisit this setup next school year. She also pointed out that it is critical to run party plans by the teacher first, as different teachers like different things. Theresa shared that the Halloween Parade is on Monday, October 31, beginning at 9:30 am, and the parties will start at 12:15 pm, with a 1:15 pm dismissal.

5th Grade Committee: Tara Sottong shared good news from Sandy that there will be a fundraiser on Saturday, December 3: a Breakfast with Santa at the Masonic Lodge on Nottingham Way. She stated there would be a flyer going home with a link to a Sign-Up Genius where one could select specific time slots to attend. The 5th Grade Committee will gather tonight after this meeting. Tara also reported that the face painting station at the Block Party brought in \$244 in income.

Membership/Alumni Committee: Elaine Griffin reported that there are currently 194 paid members of the Alexander PTA. The PTA Membership Drive winners were as follows: First Place - Mrs. Ferraris' class, with those Kindergarteners receiving Alexander water bottles; Second Place Mrs. Johnson's class, with those fifth graders receiving Alexander drawstring backpacks. From the Alumni Committee, Elaine reported that the upcoming Trunk or Treat has 38 Steinert students/Alexander alumni signed up to help out.

Spirit Wear: Jen Mirando reported \$4,600 in total Spirit Wear sales, with \$1,150 in profit. She shared that there would be a flash sale in November to provide pre-holiday delivery.

Block Party: Renee Tisi shared that this event was a lot of fun for everyone, even if it was a tad windy for the outdoor games. She reported \$3,170 in ticket sales and \$400 in food vendor donations, with \$998 in expenses, for a total of \$2,572 in profit. Renee also noted that there are many prizes left for next year's event.

Mum Sale: Keri Carlton reported a profit of \$1,216 from this sale, which was pretty close to last year's numbers.

Pretzel Sale: Michelle Grunbaum shared that the event was a success and thanked all who helped. The Alexander community purchased over 400 pretzels, and there was a profit of \$637.

Trunk or Treat: Elaine Griffin reported that 30 trunks would participate in Trunk or Treat. The backup date is Friday, October 28, at Steinert, pending Board approval at their meeting tomorrow night. Elaine shared that there are parking passes for spectators only, not for the trunks, and students can still pay \$5 at the door. There will be prizes for the best-carved pumpkin, with one winner per grade, three prizes for best trunks, and a trophy for the overall trunk winner.

Gertrude Hawk Candy Sale: Jenn Zodda shared that the sale ends on Monday, November 7, and she will have Room Representatives send reminders to their classes.

Friendly's Scoop Night: Jenn Zodda noted this event would take place on Thursday, November 17, from 4:00 pm to 9:00 pm, with teachers and staff scooping ice creaming or serving tables in half-hour shifts. The PTA receives 15% of that night's sales.

Pie Sale: Sophia Knapp reported that she and Valerie Zieniuk would co-chair this fundraiser and utilize A&M for this year's pies, cheesecakes, and donuts. She noted prices have increased to roughly \$18 per pie, and there is now a \$50 delivery fee, which is needed since we sold 294 pies/donuts last year. Sophia shared that she hoped to have an 11:00 am delivery on Wednesday, November 23, so families could pick up their orders at around 12:30 pm. An order form will go home with students early next week, and the order deadline will be on or before Friday, November 18.

Gift Card Sales: Theresa Timian reported that there would be a gift card sale again this year, with flyers scheduled to go home with students the week of November 14 and orders due by Friday, December 2. Gift card pickup would be in time for the upcoming holidays, during the week of December 12.

Pura Vida Bracelet Sale: Kristine D'Ambrosio shared that the PTA will sell Alexander "friendship" bracelets made by Pura Vida. These bracelets are Alexander colors (hunter

green/silver/white), which also transition well to Reynolds and Steinert. A flyer with a picture of the bracelets will go home the week of November 14.

Reflections – Show Your Voice: Valerie Zieniuk reported that this year’s program applications are ready to go. There are two grade categories (K-2 and 3-5) plus a Special Artist division, and students can enter one item each in dance, music, photography, literature, and visual arts. She noted that entries are due on Friday, November 18, with judging to take place in early December. There will be an event in late January/early February, pending school board approval, to celebrate the students and the winners whose entries have advanced to County Council.

Parents Night Out: Michelle Grunbaum shared that there will be a Parents Night Out on Saturday, December 3, at Killarney’s. There will be drink tickets, passed hors d’oeuvres, and a buffet dinner; meet new people and connect with friends. Flyers with confirmed pricing are going home with students shortly.

Holiday Shop: Michelle Grunbaum reported that she and Alyssa Dunn visited the Kastle Kreations warehouse to check out items to sell, and the trip was a success. This year’s Holiday Shop will take place Tuesday, December 13, through Thursday, December 15, in the library. All items will still be one price, but that price will increase to \$3, giving the committee greater purchasing power. Volunteers will be needed to help with set up, shopping, and break down; sign-ups will be available soon.

Tricky Tray: Lori Hutchins and Chrissy Trank could not attend; Kristine D’Ambrosio provided the update on their behalf. She reported that the event would be on a Friday night in March, pending approval. The committee has met and secured some items, including eight travel vouchers for trips to tropical islands with a total value of \$25,000.

All Other Business

Mr. Bookholdt requested that members let him know when they are planning events, especially if they would like staff to attend.

Barnes & Noble Night: Pamela Davila shared that she spoke with someone at the Hamilton Barnes & Noble about event dates. The decision was made to have this event on Monday, December 5, pending confirmation from the appropriate parties.

AmazonSmile Question: There was a question about choosing the right “Alexander” in AmazonSmile. Jess Carabelli confirmed that everyone should enter “21202 James Alexander School PTA” when selecting a charity to support in AmazonSmile.

Teacher’s Report: Ms. Pellitteri thanked the PTA for the Block Party and shared that everyone is looking forward to Trunk or Treat, the Halloween parade, and parties. She noted that everyone enjoyed today’s assembly with local K-9 officers.

Principal's Report: Mr. Bookholdt shared his gratitude for the PTA's hard work on its recent events. Fall Start Strong testing for 4th and 5th graders has ended, and school pictures are taking place now. He noted that the rock painting session for the students was excellent and that there have been discussions about possibly getting the fifth-grade students involved with school beautification projects. He also shared that another email and call went out to families about submitting nominations for Teacher and Education Support Professionals of the Year, as he needs more nominations.

Member Amy Myerowitz asked a question from the floor about the PTA hosting an event to collect pumpkins after Halloween and donate them to a local animal sanctuary. Kristine D'Ambrosio commented that this would make an excellent community service event and looked forward to connecting with Amy on this idea.

Kristine D'Ambrosio adjourned the meeting at 8:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Valerie Zieniuk, Recording Secretary.