



**TONAWANDA**

Elementary School

**TONAWANDA PTO  
MAY GENERAL MEETING**

(5/8/25) In Person at Tonawanda Library/Virtual via Google Meet, Elm Grove, WI 6pm

**Call to Order/Welcome – Megan Reuter 6:03**

**In attendance:** Leah Holschbach (online), Kelly Blong (online), Molly Salinas, Danielle Linn, Emily Abeyta, Anne Zechlinski; Linsey Swain, Molly Swain, Aimee Holt; Ali Katula, Brad Holt; Jeremy Swain, Chelsie Springstead, Sumner Welsh, Chelsey Meier; Sarah Van Leishout, Chris Schulta

**Update from Principal Kristin Olson:**

- Thanks you's for recent PTO events:
  - Thank you for all the meals, gifts, and treats for Teacher and Staff Appreciation week! It was a really great week and teachers/staff felt really appreciated.
  - Thank you to the organizers of the Bowling Bash!
  - Thank you to the organizers of the Sip and Swap!
- Muffins next week on Friday, May 23rd
- Playground Update: the 3 proposed drawings for the playground were shown (number 3 was chosen by students). The kids all said that if they could have anything else it would be more swings. Mrs. Olson has asked whether there is any room for swings and whether they could give us a price for them. The decision on whether the PTO will buy additional swings needs to be decided before the next PTO meeting.
- American Heart Association Activities are coming up on May 12. It will be an afterschool event this year. The deadline to register is midnight tonight.

**April Meeting Review and Approval:**

**Motion to approve:** Anna Witt motioned to approve; Carina seconded the approval; April Meeting Minutes approved.

**President Report – Megan Reuter**

- Thank you to:
  - High Interest Day- Carrie Sgarlata for organizing morning coffee and snacks; Carina Tran & Mark Nielsen for organizing the luncheon for staff, volunteers, and presenters; Michele Jackson for behind the scenes planning; and Parent volunteers for sharing the day with us. Thank you to Megan Reuter for all her hard work to make this day a success!
  - Art Show- Kayte Parkin & Jackie Pilon
  - Brenda Schmidt and Adell Fruehbrodt for chairing the Boy's Bowling Bash
  - Sip & Swap- Danielle Linn
  - Thank you to Emily Abeyta, Carina Tran, Anne Zechlinski, Ana Navarro
- Soccer Stars reached out about the next tournament and whether we would like to do concession at it. It will be on May 31st and we will get more details as it approaches.

- EEF scholarship night will be on June 2<sup>nd</sup> . The PTO has given \$1500 to a graduating senior who attended Tonawanda and have done a certain level of community service.
- Back to School Bash – This event usually goes along with our book fair and we need a date as soon as possible. It was decided to schedule it for the second week of school on Friday, September 12.
- Updated Committee Chair Needs & Sign-Up
  - Open chairs – a signup will be sent out once all openings are confirmed.
- PTO Board elections results:
  - 20 ballots were cast in total.
  - The winners were:
    - Co- Presidents: Carina Tran/Danielle Linn (19 votes)
    - Treasurer: Leah Christianson (20 votes)
    - PTO Secretary: Chelsey Meier (20 votes)
    - VP of Fundraising: Sarah Danforth (20 votes)
    - VP of Academic Enrichment: Sarah Van Leishout (20 votes)
  - Still open:
    - VP of Family Relations (still open)
    - VP of Social Programming (still open)

### **Treasurer Report – Anna Witt**

- Monthly Financials were reviewed
- 2025-2026 Budget – Anna did a fabulous job on the 2025-2026 budget. It was presented for review at this meeting and will be up for approval in June.

### **Committee Reports:**

#### **Academic Enrichment – Sumner Welsh**

- Thank you to all the volunteers who made High Interest Day and the Art Faire such successful events!

#### **Social Programming – Carina Tran**

- Discussion of PTO funded/sponsored social events, in particular the Boys Bowling Bash and Girls Sweetheart Dance. Highlights from this discussion are summarized as follows:
  - Some in attendance raised concerns about the perception that the PTO was ending traditional events without warning. Others in attendance provided background that the PTO is parent run and open to anyone who would like to participate. There are always open positions/a need for volunteers and very few people attend PTO meetings.
  - This history of both events was discussed. The Sweetheart Dance has been around for a while (timing disputed), but the Boys Bowling Bash was started by a motivated group of moms in more recent years. Over the years, these events have come up multiple times in discussion as PTO events have changed and as priorities have shifted.
  - Points were made that the events were well attended and liked by many at Tonawanda. However, concerns were discussed that complaints have been made over the years that events aren't equal (Boys Bowling Bash costs money/Sweetheart Dance is free to attend), they go against the school motto that all belong, these events split up friend groups, these events don't allow kids to pick what they actually want to do (eg, some girls would rather bowl and some boys may want to attend the dance), and they tend to exclude nontraditional families.
  - Some in attendance felt that PTO events did not have to be for everyone and if people did not want to pay for/attend these events then they didn't have to attend. In addition, some in attendance stated that they had moved to Elm Grove so that their children could attend Tonawanda specifically to go to these events.

- Concerns were also raised that having boy/girl events could open the PTO up to potential legal issues considering our large budget in recent years. In addition, it was noted that trends throughout the US showed that schools were moving away from boy/girl events at elementary schools.
- Points were made that there are already many all-school events and that the smaller events were better for kids who did not like crowds or had anxiety in larger groups. In addition, points were made that these events were important because it was a special time for parents to bond with their kids. Most in attendance agreed with these points. However, some felt that this could also be fulfilled at a smaller grade-level event that would allow everyone to attend. However, others felt that it was important to separate the kids into specific boy/girl events because it was important for their development (ie, boys need to be with boys).
- Alternatives were suggested such as grade level events (similar to the 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Square Dance) where each grade level has an event and all children attend with one adult from their family. Other alternatives were suggested to open the Sweetheart Dance to a family dance and/or to add a Girls Bowling Night.
- Although a survey was done the previous year, a new survey was proposed to see how the greater school community felt about the future of these events. In this survey 2 questions would be asked: whether had a preference for the Sweetheart Dance/Boys Bowling Bash or whether they would prefer grade level events. The survey will be written by Chris Schulta and sent to Sumner Welsh (past executive committee member) and Sarah Van Lieshout (current executive committee member) before being distributed to the broader school community by Mrs. Olson.

### **School & Family Relations – Emily Anton**

- Teacher & Staff Appreciation:
  - Thank you to the committee members who pampered our teachers like stars. We appreciate your time and energy to make this week a success!
- Bus Driver Appreciation: thank you to Chelsey Meier for executing this event.
- Memorial Day Parade: signup coming soon! This event needs candy (not chocolate). Bring it in and drop it off in the office!

### **Fundraising – Danielle Linn**

- Sip & Swap Recap
  - It was a good night! Danielle has \$55 in cash to contribute from the Sip and Swap.

**END OF MEETING: 8:09 PM**