

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, SEPTEMBER 20, 2001**

President Orlow convened the general meeting of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:03 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on September 20, 2001.

Board Members Present: Marc Orlow, Robert O'Neill, Robert Carroll, Gary Johnson, Stuart Kessler, Hugh Lipshutz, Thomas Marchozzi, Jack Pinheiro and Thomas Yunker.

Board Members Absent: None.

Also Attending: Dr. Vincent F. Cotter, Superintendent; R. Scott Klinger, Assistant to the Superintendent for Administrative Services and Personnel; Dr. MaryEllen Gorodetzer, Director of Educational Services – Elementary; Patricia Iannelli, Director of Educational Services - Secondary; James M. Bell, Director of Support Services/Board Secretary; Joseph Bickleman, Director of Financial Services/Treasurer; Fred Shipman, Director of Pupil Services; Jeffrey T. Sultanik, Solicitor; Terese Boegly, Principal – Colonial Elementary School; Denise Marks, Assistant Principal – Colonial Elementary School; Liz McKeaney, Resource Teacher; Stacey Baker; Karen Fondots; Michelle Mowad; and Bill Rosenthal.

Mr. Orlow led those in attendance in a moment of silence to honor those harmed by and responding to the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington. He also led the group in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes: Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the minutes of the Personnel Committee Meeting of 08/07/01, the Work Session of 08/13/01, the General Meeting of 08/16/01, and the Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting of 09/06/01, as shown in Enclosures #1 through #4 of the agenda. Mr. O'Neill noted that there was some material missing on page 3640. Mr. Bell advised that he would look into the problem and correct the minutes. Mr. Kessler moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the minutes with the necessary amendment. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Financial Reports: Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the financial reports that were listed as Enclosures #5 through #18 on the agenda. They included the Bond Fund Report, Capital Projects Report, and Capital Reserve Fund Report for the month ending 08/31/01; General Fund and Program Bills; Outstanding Investment Report, Cash Flow Summary, Comparison of Taxes, Real Estate Escrow Report and Reconciliation of Cash Accounts for the month ending 08/31/01; the Budget Analysis through 08/31/01; the Accounts Accrual, Contracted Payroll Accrual, Hourly Payroll Accrual and Budget Transfer Reports for 06/30/01 and the Treasurer's Report for the month ending 08/31/01. Mr. Pinheiro raised questions regarding payments for asbestos removal work in the high school auditorium. He sought and received a consensus of his fellow board members not to pay for mistakes in scaffolding that delayed the renovation project by holding rental fees pending resolution of the issues. Mr. Kessler asked and received clarification of the payment to Apex Tutoring

for the Wilson Reading Program. Mr. Kessler moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the reports, minus any pending payments for work related to asbestos removal until pending issues were resolved. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Public Comments on the Agenda: None.

Staff Report: Mr. Orlow recognized Dr. Gorodetzer who introduced Ms. Boegly, Ms. Marks and Ms. McKeane who outlined the high quality, interactive math program at Colonial Elementary School. They noted that the program was the model and standard for math instruction across grade levels and meshed well with Dr. Cotter's curriculum initiatives. In response to questions from board members, presenters emphasized that their reform efforts focused on the way that instruction was delivered but contained a differentiated instruction component that included both heterogeneous and accelerated groups. Dr. Gorodetzer explained the role of the resource teacher and confirmed that the teachers had a great deal of flexibility in how they handled the actual delivery of instruction.

Old Business: None.

Correspondence: Enclosure #19, an email from a parent, was on the agenda for the meeting but was not discussed during the meeting.

Superintendent's Report: Before Dr. Cotter highlighted his Superintendent's Report, as shown in Enclosures #20 through #21, he announced the passing of John Klocko, the Custodial Supervisor of Ridge Park Elementary School and a district employee for 27 years. He then briefly summarized his report, noting that all teaching positions had been filled and that adult evening school classes would be offered based upon enrollment. Mr. Kessler moved and Mr. Pinheiro seconded a motion to approve the Superintendent's Report. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Student Board Representatives Report: Ashley Kurtz welcomed Colleen Dougherty as the Board's newest Student Board Representative. She then expressed her happiness to be back in school and highlighted recent events at the high school, including the 9th grade orientation, assemblies on the new Student Handbook, Student Council projects for support of the victims of the disasters in New York and Washington, a blood drive, and the fall theater production. Ms. Dougherty thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve as a Student Board Representative. She reported on the football team, the back-to-school dance, the 9th grade parent orientation, the senior flea market, and the Spanish Exchange program.

New Business: Mr. Orlow directed the attention of his fellow board members to a request from the director of the high school marching band for an overnight field trip to the Outback Bowl in Tampa, Florida from 12/29/01 to 01/02/02 to participate in half time activities. See Enclosure #22. He noted that the band boosters would pay the cost of the

trip. In response to questions from board members, Dr. Cotter confirmed that the students would miss one day of classes. He reported that band sponsors had applied for the opportunity to participate and noted that the trip would be a new experience for the participants. He reported that there would be sufficient chaperones for the 40 students expected to go on the trip. Dr. Cotter also advised the Board that administration recognized the issues surrounding a trip by air after the terrorist activities of September 11th and noted that administrators would be meeting with parents and students to discuss the issues. He also felt that it would not be appropriate to delay responding to the invitation to participate since the organizers needed to firm up their schedule of activities. He indicated, however, that the band would have until 11/16/01 to withdraw if that appeared the prudent thing to do. Mr. Kessler moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the trip. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow asked Mr. Kessler to explain the recommendation to extend the contract of Gilbane as clerk of the works for three major projects underway at the high school. Mr. Kessler noted that Gilbane's contract to monitor the development of the WFIL tract, the construction of the fitness center and the renovation of the auditorium was originally to end on 08/31/01 but that delays in the projects argued for an extension to 11/30/01. He noted that the company had provided beneficial services and moved that the contact be extended until the later date at a cost not to exceed an additional \$18,125.00. Mr. Kessler noted that the B&G Committee unanimously supported the extension and that the actual cost to the district could be less if the projects concluded earlier than anticipated. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow noted that administration was recommending the award of a bid for the purchase of a 20-passenger school bus. Mr. Bell briefly reviewed the bid and responded to questions from board members. He indicated that the specifications for the bus addressed safety issues and that the vehicle was a replacement for two vehicles that were being traded in. Dr. Lipshutz moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the bids recommended in Enclosure #24. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow asked Mr. Kessler to review with the Board a recommendation to extend the contact for CICADA Architecture Planning, Inc. in connection with the renovation of the high school auditorium. Mr. Kessler noted that the original contract expired at the end of August and that work was still underway. He noted that the extension would be on a time and materials basis and that CICADA's charges had always appeared reasonable. Mr. Bell reported that the present timeline for the project called for its completion in the first week of November but noted that some issues with acoustical panels could delay completion. Mr. Kessler moved and Mr. Pinheiro seconded a motion to approve the contract extension as outlined in Enclosure #28. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow asked for acceptance of the mediator's recommended settlement of 09/13/01 as the basis for a new contract between the district and the Colonial Education Association

(CEA). Mr. Sultanik reported that the association had approved the report. Mr. Orlow noted that, even after the Board approved the proposed settlement, it would have to approve the final language of the contract. He highlighted the major components of the recommended settlement. They included a three-year contract averaging a 4.92% increase in salaries each year before factoring in retirements, adding 2.5 to 3% to the salary scale, and a change in health insurance from Personal Choice 5 to Personal Choice 215 that resulted in modest increases in co-pays and deductibles for health care and co-pays for prescriptions. He also reported that the contract would replace the district's current pay-for-performance plan with a collaborative Pathways to Excellence program that provided greater accountability and rewards. Mr. Orlow felt that the plan met the goals of the district, and he noted that it had been endorsed and approved by the association. See Enclosure #29.

Dr. Lipshutz inquired about Appendix 1 to the document that board members had originally received and learned that an updated copy had been disseminated. Mr. Carroll raised a series of questions about teachers' responsibilities, planned compensation, medical benefits, the status of performance-based pay, professional development, and the work year. He indicated that these were areas in which the Board appeared ready to change some of its long-term goals. He felt that the mediator's proposal ran contrary to goals espoused by the Board in recent years and that its provisions would raise the taxes of local residents to the point that taxpayers would experience sticker shock. He felt, in particular, that a higher-than-desirable salary package and the lack on what he felt would be meaningful co-pays and deductibles for medical insurance would result in tax increases. He announced his intention to vote against the proposal. Mr. Pinheiro compared the mediator's proposal to the Board's goals of keeping salaries reasonable, containing health care costs, and enhancing accountability. He felt that the proposal supported those goals. Though he was not in favor of all of the components of the plan, he supported the plan as a whole. Mr. Kessler congratulated the union and the Board for coming to grips with very difficult and far-reaching issues. He felt that it was unfortunate that a strike had occurred but noted that both sides had conducted themselves responsibly during the work stoppage and had worked collaboratively to reach a reasonable settlement. He indicated that he would be supporting the mediator's proposal though he, like most other speakers, was not in favor of all of the provisions that it contained. Mr. Marchozzi thanked Dr. Cotter and Mr. Slagle for their professionalism during the process. Mr. Pinheiro thanked Mr. Klinger and Dr. Gorodetzer for their assistance in recent weeks and thanked district administrators and staff for their support in providing quality day care services during the strike. He offered all a vote of thanks. Dr. Cotter noted that the district response to the negotiations and the strike had been a team effort. Mr. Marchozzi moved and Dr. Lipshutz seconded a motion to approve the mediator's report as the basis for a new collective bargaining agreement with the CEA. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor except Mr. Carroll and Mr. Yunker. Mr. Carroll and Mr. Yunker voted in opposition. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow noted that the Board had received a draft of a revised calendar that dealt with the aftermath of the teachers' strike. He summarized the main components of the calendar noting that the draft basically left winter break unchanged, used Martin Luther King Day,

President's Day and the first two days of spring break as school days and ended school in the second week in June on June 14th. He also noted that the calendar contained no snow make-up days and that missed days would have to be made up at the end of the year. Board members asked the Student Board Representatives to talk to students and get their input of the calendar. They also discussed the pros and cons of using the first two days of spring break as strike make-up days or using the first two days of the third week of June for the same purpose. Dr. Cotter noted that days that were not made up would affect the district's state reimbursement. He advised that he would check on the financial impact if graduation remained unchanged and seniors did not complete 180 days of instruction. Dr. Lipshutz asked that an informal questionnaire on the calendar issues be placed on the district web-site. Other board members noted that the district could get input from Parent Council and during back-to-school nights and open houses. After some discussion, Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. Kessler seconded a motion to fix the calendar through February as shown in the draft revision while seeking community reaction to the remaining months of school. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried. Mr. Orlow noted that the Board would revisit the final months of the calendar at its October meeting.

Solicitor's Report: Mr. Sultanik recommended approval of two proposed settlements of assessment appeals. Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. Yunker seconded a motion to approve the settlement with 1001 Washington Street, Inc. at a new assessment of \$6,547,500 and a net increase in current tax revenue to the district of \$27,223. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried. Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve a settlement of a parcel of former PURTA property belonging to PECO Energy at an assessment of \$5,750,000 for the current year and an estimated total net increase in real estate taxes for the years in question of \$297,333. On a roll call vote, all except Mr. Yunker voted in favor. Mr. Yunker voted in opposition. The motion was carried.

Mr. Sultanik asked for the Board's approval of an EPA Consent Agreement regarding asbestos in Colonial School District. Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the decree as presented. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Committee Reports: Intermediate Unit Board: No report.

CMCAVTS: Mr. Johnson advised that the new roof on the Center for Technical Studies was finished and that the loan had been closed.

Personnel: Mr. Pinheiro announced that the committee would be meeting on October 1st at 7:00 p.m.

Finance: No report.

Curriculum and Program: No report.

Buildings & Grounds/Transportation: Mr. Kessler advised the Board that the committee was recommending that the district reject the bid for the electrical upgrade at Whitemarsh Elementary School that had been approved the previous month pending committee approval. He indicated that the committee declined to approve the work during the school year and advised that it should be re-bid for the summer of 2002. Mr. Kessler noted that, while the work needed to be done, there was no urgency to do it during the school year. Mr. Kessler moved and Mr. Pinheiro seconded a motion to reject the current bids and re-bid the project in the spring of 2002. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Kessler outlined for the Board the committee's recommendation to undertake a change order in the amount of \$100,000.00 to address the presence of water under the area of the new tennis courts and the resulting instability of the base laid for the courts. He advised that the committee had looked at several options and that option #3 of four presented had the best risk/benefit ratio and solution to the problem. He noted that it included creating a base similar to that for road surfaces constructed under similar conditions. Mr. Kessler moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the change order. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Kessler noted that the committee was anticipating a change order for structural supports for acoustical panels for the auditorium walls at the high school but had not yet received confirmed costs for the change. He advised that he would bring the matter to the Board as soon as the final information became available.

Community Relations: None.

Legislative Committee: None.

Public Comments: None.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James M. Bell
Board Secretary