

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462  
GENERAL SESSION MINUTES, MAY 18, 2017**

President Moore convened the general session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 7:07 p.m. in the District Office General Meeting Room on May 18, 2017.

**Board Members Present:** Bernie Brady, Mel Brodsky, Leslie Finegold, Susan Moore, Kathleen Oxberry, Cathy Peduzzi, Felix Raimondo, Beth Suchsland and Alan Tabachnick.

**Board Members Absent:** None.

**Also Attending:** Dr. MaryEllen Gorodetzer, Superintendent; Jeffrey T. Sultanik, Solicitor; Karen Berk, Director of Pupil Services and Special Education; Andrew Boegly, Director of Technology; Trevor Jackson, Business Administrator/Board Treasurer; Dr. Elizabeth McKeaney, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; Dr. Leticia Rodríguez, Director of Human Resources; Terry Yemm, Director of Operations; David M. Sherman, Community Relations Coordinator/Board Secretary; Tom Peeler, Audio Visual Technician; Raquel Dunoff and Christopher Johnson, Board Student Representatives; Charlene Koretz; Jill Forster; Donelle Brotz; Nate Orfe; Eric Wilson; Geoff Bram; Christin Baldwin; Ken Grimes; Dana Coia; Nicole Carbo; Niki Rose; Rebecca Kaslow; Rebecca Rigberg; Susan Burns; Christine Arrow; Annie Gubeno; Patrice Bobyock; Caitlin Gilmartin; Dell Dimmerling; Robert Slagle; Beth Miller; Meghan Heiduk; Valerie Willson; Trish Rocchino; Nancy Piccolo; Eunice Franklin-Becker; Mike Bouissey and Gary Johnson.

Mrs. Moore led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Executive Session Announcements:** Mrs. Moore announced that the Board met in executive session on May 1, May 8 and May 11 to interview superintendent candidates. Those meetings lasted approximately three hours. She added that on May 11 the Board also met to discuss a confidential student matter protected by law. That meeting lasted about 30 minutes. Mrs. Moore stated that the Board met in executive session immediately prior to the meeting to discuss confidential personnel and student matters protected by law. That meeting last one hour.

**Approval of Minutes:** Mrs. Moore asked Board members to act on the minutes of the general meeting of April 18; the Facilities Management and Transportation Committee of April 6; The Community Relations and Student Life/Safety and Wellness Committee (CRSL/SW) and the Curriculum Committee of April 17 and the Human Resources Committee and Finance Committee of April 24. See enclosures #1 through #6.

Mrs. Suchsland moved and Mr. Brodsky seconded a motion to approve the minutes. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

**Financial Reports:** Mrs. Moore sought Board action on the financial reports on the list for approval. They included the Budget Transfers, the General Fund/Federal Program Bills, the Capital Reserve Fund, the Food Service Bills/Cafeteria Report, the Outstanding Investment Report, the Cash Flow Summary, the Comparison of Taxes Collected, the Real Estate Tax Escrow Report, the Trust Fund Report, the Reconciliation of Cash Accounts, the Budgetary/Deficit Status Report, the Bond Fund Report and the Treasurer's Report for the month ending April 30. See enclosures #7 through #18.

Mrs. Suchsland moved and Mr. Tabachnick seconded a motion to approve the financial reports. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

**Public Comments on the Agenda:** None.

**Staff Report:** Dr. Gorodetzer noted that in recognition of National Physical Fitness Month, Colonial Elementary School Physical Education Teacher Geoff Bram was present to provide a report on Physical Education in the District. Mr. Bram presented a PowerPoint highlighting the history of Physical Education, current practices in the school district and what the program may look like moving forward.

**Superintendent's Report:** Dr. Gorodetzer summarized her report that included the Personnel Report and Substitute List and the Extra Duty/Extra Pay List. See enclosures #19 and #40. She stated that the Personnel Report and Substitute List included three retirements, one resignation, eight leaves of absence, three changes of assignment and summer program appointments. Dr. Gorodetzer added that the Extra Duty/Extra Pay List included one action. She stated that all items were reviewed in executive session.

Mr. Brodsky moved and Mrs. Finegold seconded a motion to approve the Superintendent's Report. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

**Board Student Representatives' Report:** Mrs. Moore recognized Ms. Dunoff and Mr. Johnson for their service as Board Student Representatives for the past year. Each was presented with a plaque and thanked by Board members. The two presented a poem as their final report. It highlighted Advanced Placement exams, a college counseling presentation, the spring concert, Colonial Players closing night, a Best Buddies program, spring sports, dances, next year's senior portraits and the junior prom.

**New Business:** Mr. Raimondo asked Board members to consider the Proposed Final Budget for 2017-2018. He noted that the budget totals \$123,975,433, which is an increase of \$5,848,433 or 4.95 percent over the current budget. The Proposed Final Budget includes a real estate tax of 21.4879 mils, or an increase of 2.5 percent. He stated that the new real estate tax equates to an additional \$52.41 per year for each \$100,000 of taxable assessed value or an increase of \$78.67 on the District's median assessed value of \$150,105. Mr. Raimondo added that the budget in the state required form PDE 2028, is available for public review in the administrative offices and on the District's website. Mr. Brodsky stressed that this is a proposed budget and is subject to change. He stated that any change in the tax rate will not be higher than what is presented.

Mr. Raimondo moved and Mr. Tabachnick seconded a motion to approve the final proposed budget. On a roll call vote, all but Mr. Brady voted in favor. Mr. Brady voted against. The motion was carried, 8-1.

Mr. Raimondo sought board action on the 2017-2018 Central Montco Technical High School (CMTHS) Operating Budget. He stated that the budget totals \$9,755,255 and the District's share is \$2,362,647, an increase of \$47,236 from the current year. See enclosure #20.

Mr. Raimondo moved and Mr. Brady seconded a motion to approve the CMTHS budget. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mrs. Moore asked the Board to act on the appointment of a Board Treasurer per Section 404 of the Public School Code.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mrs. Suchsland seconded a motion to appoint Trevor Jackson to the position of Board Treasurer. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mrs. Moore asked the Board to consider the appointment of a Board Secretary per Section 404 of the Public School Code.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Brady seconded a motion to appoint David M. Sherman to the position of Board Secretary. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mrs. Moore sought Board action on the appointment of an Assistant Board Secretary per Section 404 of the Public School Code.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Tabachnick seconded a motion to appoint Trevor Jackson to the position of Assistant Board Secretary. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Raimondo asked the Board to approve the CSD Real Estate Tax Installment Payment Plan Resolution that is an option for all taxpayers to pay their bills in installments. See enclosure #21.

Mr. Raimondo moved and Mrs. Finegold seconded a motion to approve the CSD Real Estate Tax Installment Payment Plan. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Raimondo sought Board action on the request that the Pennsylvania Liquid Asset Fund, in conjunction with PNC Bank serve as the primary depository for school funds, and that the banks and depositories found on the list in enclosure #22 be solicited for interest rates on school investments during the 2017-2018 school year. He noted that this was in accordance with Section 621 of the Public School Code

Mr. Raimondo moved and Mrs. Peduzzi seconded a motion to approve the bank and investment depositories. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Raimondo asked Board members to consider the Solicitor's agreement for the 2017-2018 school year.

Mr. Raimondo moved and Mrs. Suchsland seconded a motion to appoint Fox Rothschild, LLP as Solicitor for the Colonial School District for the time period of July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018 based upon the following: a) A retainer of \$24,823.00 per year; b) A base hourly rate of \$180.00; c) Alternate rates in accordance with the enclosed Engagement Letter dated March 15, 2017; d) Rates as established by the insurance carrier where Fox Rothschild, LLP is an approved provider and e) Motion to approve the HIPAA Business Associate Agreement between Colonial School District and Fox Rothschild, LLP as the result of Fox Rothschild, LLP handling cases that involve protected health information on behalf of the District.

On a roll call vote, all voted in favor of the Solicitor's agreement. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mrs. Finegold asked Board members to act on several special education contracts in one motion. They included an agreement with The Comprehensive Learning Center for 2017-2018 with annual tuition set at \$92,820 per student, an increase of two percent. See enclosure #23. The second agreement is with ASPS, Inc. for speech pathology services for the remainder of the 2016-17 school year and the 2017-2018 school year at an hourly rate of \$75.00 per hour. See enclosure #24. The third contract is with Sweet, Stevens, Katz & Williams LLP for the 2017-2018 school year. See enclosure #25. The fourth contract is with Austill's Rehabilitation Services, Inc. for physical/occupational therapy services for students attending Timothy School for the 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years. See enclosure #26. And, the final agreement is for three years with the Lincoln Center to provide three community counselors, one at Colonial Middle School (CMS) and two at Plymouth Whitmarsh High School (PWHS). See enclosure #41.

Mrs. Finegold moved and Mr. Tabachnick seconded a motion to approve each of the agreements. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Brodsky sought Board action on a contract renewal for Substitute Teacher Services (STS) for the period July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2020. See enclosure #27. Mr. Brodsky noted that the administration considered other alternatives but decided that STS was the best option for the District.

Mr. Brodsky moved and Mrs. Suchsland seconded a motion to approve the contract renewal. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Tabachnick asked the Board to consider an extension to the District's Wide Area Network Agreement from July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2022. See enclosure #28.

Mr. Tabachnick moved and Mr. Raimondo seconded a motion to approve the agreement extension. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Raimondo asked Board members to act on the District's cost plan for purchased services through the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit (MCIU). See enclosure #29. He noted that the proposed preliminary cost for the 2017-2018 school year is \$1,042,201.10. Mrs. Finegold inquired as to the difference in cost compared with the current plan. She was informed that the difference was minimal.

Mr. Raimondo moved and Mr. Tabachnick seconded a motion to approve the MCIU cost plan. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mrs. More asked Board members to act on the administrative recommendation to appoint Amanda Nerenberg and Brandon Cohen as Board Student Representatives for the 2017-2018 school year per Board Policy #004.1. She noted that both students were very impressive in interviews held prior to the meeting.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Brodsky seconded a motion to approve the students as recommended. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Raimondo sought Board approval of recommended supply bids for the 2017-2018 school year including Art Supplies, General Supplies and Paper and Office Supplies (see enclosure #30), PWHS Athletic/Physical Education Supplies (see enclosure #31) and CMS Athletic/Physical Education Supplies (see enclosure #32).

Mr. Raimondo moved and Mrs. Peduzzi seconded a motion to approve the supply bids. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Tabachnick asked the Board to consider recommended rental rates for the Montgomery Early Learning Center 2017-2018 before and after school programs in all elementary schools and the 2017 summer camp program at Colonial Elementary School. See enclosure #33.

Mr. Tabachnick moved and Mrs. Oxberry seconded a motion to approve the recommended rental rates. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mrs. Peduzzi requested that Board members act on the addition of Policy #103 – Nondiscrimination in School and Classroom Practices. See enclosure #34. Mrs. Peduzzi read the first paragraph of the policy and stressed the importance of adding the policy at this time. She noted that the policy would replace Policy #103.2 – Discrimination Complaint Procedure. Mrs. Peduzzi noted that the new policy was reviewed at the April CRSL/SW meeting.

Mrs. Peduzzi moved and Mr. Raimondo seconded a motion to approve the addition of Policy #103 and the removal of Policy #103.2. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Raimondo sought Board action on a real estate assessment appeal settlement for Parcel #49-00-04391-00-6 in Plymouth Township.

Mr. Raimondo moved and Mrs. Peduzzi seconded a motion to approve the real estate assessment appeal. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Dr. Gorodetzer ask the Board to revise the 2016-2017 school year calendar to designate November 11, 2016 and February 17, 2017 as Act 80 days. If approved those days would count as school days. Presently, with the high school commencement scheduled earlier this year, the District is two days

short for seniors. Dr. Gorodetzer noted that the action would not be necessary if there wasn't a need to use two snow days during the winter.

Mr. Tabachnick moved and Mr. Brodsky seconded a motion to approve the calendar revision. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mrs. Finegold asked Board members to consider a special education placement agreement in lieu of a Free Appropriate Public Education. She noted the agreement was reviewed in executive session for privacy reasons.

Mrs. Finegold moved and Mrs. Peduzzi seconded a motion to approve the placement agreement. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Brodsky sought Board action on a separation and release agreement between the Colonial Board of School Directors and employee #102167.

Mr. Brodsky moved and Mrs. Suchsland seconded a motion to approve the separation and release agreement. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

**Solicitor's Report:** Mr. Sultanik asked the Board to act on the adjudication and expulsion of student #51817001.

Mrs. Suchsland moved and Mr. Brady seconded a motion to approve the adjudication and expulsion. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Sultanik stated that it was evident to him that public education was under direct assault by the state legislature. He spoke for several minutes regarding proposed legislation HB1213 and the negative financial impact it could have on school districts across the state. He stated that the legislation would eliminate a district's right to file a reverse assessment appeal and would redefine how commercial properties are assessed. He stated that the Colonial School District would lose more than \$7 million per year in tax revenue per conservative estimates. Mr. Sultanik encouraged all parents, community members and employees to reach out to local legislators and urge them to stop HB1213. Board members noted that there would be no way to recoup that revenue at a time when enrollment is rising.

**Committee Reports:** Intermediate Unit (MCIU): Mrs. Finegold stated that the IU Board met on April 26 in Norristown. She highlighted the IU's advocacy effort in support of early childhood intervention funding, an \$800,000 grant proposal for workforce development and a \$211,000 grant proposal for career readiness.

CMTHS: Mr. Brodsky reported that the CMTHS senior awards program is scheduled for June 1 at CMS.

Human Resources: Mr. Brodsky stated that the superintendent search remains on schedule. The Board plans to interview semifinalists next week with finalists the week after. He said the hope is to announce a new superintendent by June 1.

Finance: Mr. Raimondo stated that the committee met on April 24 and discussed much of the business enacted earlier in the meeting. He said a final budget will be discussed at the June 5 committee meeting.

Curriculum: Mrs. Finegold mentioned a May 2 program that highlighted STEAM initiatives district wide K-12. She said it was amazing to see what and how students are learning today.

Facilities Management and Transportation: Mr. Tabachnick stated that all renovation projects are on schedule and proceeding nicely. He noted that the entryway to PWSHS should be completed in July. Mr. Tabachnick added that work on a new baseball field will begin in June, as will the replacement of the turf and track on and around Colonial Field.

Community Relations and Student Life/Safety and Wellness: Mrs. Peduzzi touched on Teacher Appreciation Week district wide, a Colonial School District Education Foundation promotion with Cycle Bar and noted that the Spring Newsletter will be in homes in the coming weeks.

Legislative: No report.

Municipal/Community Liaisons: Mrs. Peduzzi stated that renovation of the Miles Park ball fields will begin in September and the pavilion will be closed at that time. She reminded everyone that Whitemarsh Township Day 2018 will be held on Victory Fields.

**Public Comment:** Robert Slagle, president of the Colonial Education Association (CEA), stated that the CEA in conjunction with the Pennsylvania State Education Association is working hard to combat HB1213 and other proposed legislation that would have negative effects on public education. He noted the positive working relationship between CEA and the School Board and stated that we are all in this together.

Mrs. Moore asked Mr. Jackson to highlight the District's recent bond rating upgrade. Mr. Jackson stated that Moody's has upgraded Colonial to a Aaa rating, the highest rating the organization has. He added that Colonial is just one of seven districts in the state to achieve that rating. Mr. Jackson reported that the improved credit rating will save the District \$700,000 over the life of the most recent bond issue.

There being no other comment of business before the Board, Mrs. Moore adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



David M. Sherman  
Board Secretary