

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
REORGANIZATION MEETING MINUTES, DECEMBER 4, 2017**

Board Secretary David M. Sherman convened the reorganization meeting of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 7:00 p.m. in the District Office General Meeting Room on December 4, 2017.

Holdover Board Members Present: Mel Brodsky, Leslie Finegold, Susan Moore, Cathy Peduzzi and Felix Raimondo

Holdover Board Members Absent: None.

Incoming Board Members Present: Jennifer Dow, Eunice Franklin-Becker, Rosemary Northcutt and Adam Schupack.

Incoming Board Members Absent: None.

Also Attending: Dr. Michael Christian, Superintendent; Jeffrey T. Sultanik, Solicitor; Karen Berk, Director of Pupil Services and Special Education; Andrew Boegly, Director of Technology; 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; the Honorable Carolyn Nichols; Gary Johnson; Bob Sague; Deanna Durante; Noah Becker; Megan Penrice; Blake Rosen; Teresa Parris; David Grunfeld; Charles Forster; Tara Horwitz; Jill Forster; Phoenix Spencer; Alena DiSanto; Miles Rothman; Mary Thiess; Sarah Scanlin; Jackie Anuszewski; Kevin Tierney; John Carroll; Brian Daly; Jason Salas, Mark Cratin; Deb Delano Brenner; Diane Boyle; Phil Lachenmayer; Robert Slagle; Christi Sullivan; Linda Doll; Lisa Dresnin; Beth Miller; Chris Epstein; Marsha Turner; Donelle Brotz; Dana Coia; Stephanie Brennan Malarski; Liz Brennan Malarski; William Northcutt; Anne Pearsall; Gordon Geasland; Jamie Davis; Beth Suchsland; Diane Crocco; Linda Hatch; Denise Pygatt; Lisa Nicolosi; Paulette Jones; Jacinta Toll; Tom Harvey; Peter Davis; Roy Brown; Greg Stokes and Steve O'Malley.

Mr. Sherman led the Pledge of Allegiance, read the roll and announced that the purpose of the meeting was to elect a Temporary President, swear in new School Board members, elect School Board officers for the coming year and, if needed, authorize continuation of existing signature plates until new plates could be made.

Public Comments on the Agenda: None.

Election of Temporary Chairperson: Mr. Sherman sought nominations from holdover Board members for the position of Temporary President. Mrs. Moore nominated Mrs. Peduzzi for Temporary President. There being no other nominations, Mrs. Peduzzi moved and Mr. Brodsky seconded a motion to close the nominations. On a roll call vote all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 5-0. Mr. Sherman asked for a vote on Mrs. Peduzzi's nomination as Temporary President. On a roll call vote all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 5-0.

Swearing in of New Members: At Mrs. Peduzzi's invitation, the Honorable Carolyn Nichols administered the oath of office individually to Mrs. Dow, Mrs. Franklin-Becker, Mrs. Northcutt and Mr. Schupack.

Election of Officers: Mrs. Peduzzi sought nominations for the position of Board President. Mrs. Finegold cited Mr. Raimondo's service to the School Board as chair of the Finance Committee and his previous service to Conshohocken Borough as chair of the Conshohocken Sewer Authority and member of the Planning Commission. She nominated him for President. Mr. Brodsky commended Mrs. Moore for her leadership as President the past four years citing successful union contract negotiations, a top bond rating and the third lowest tax burden in the county; he nominated her to serve another one-year term. There being no more nominations, Mrs. Moore moved and Mrs. Finegold seconded a motion to close the nominations. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mrs. Peduzzi called for votes in favor of Mrs. Moore for President. Mrs. Peduzzi, Mrs. Moore and Mr. Brodsky voted in favor.

Mrs. Peduzzi called for votes in favor of Mr. Raimondo for President. Mrs. Finegold, Mr. Raimondo, Mr. Schupack, Mrs. Northcutt, Mrs. Franklin-Becker and Mrs. Dow voted in favor. Mr. Raimondo was elected President. Mr. Raimondo commended Mrs. Moore for her service to the Board as President and stated that he was looking forward to working with everyone on the Board and the Superintendent to fulfill the District's mission and provide the best possible education for the District's children.

Mr. Raimondo called for nominations for Vice President. Mr. Schupack nominated Mrs. Finegold citing her six years of service to the Board and leadership as chair of the Curriculum Committee, service on the Intermediate Unit Board and serving as that Board's secretary. There being no additional nominations, Mr. Brodsky moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to close the nominations. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Raimondo called for votes in favor of Mrs. Finegold for Vice President. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion as carried, 9-0.

Mrs. Finegold thanked the Board and stated that she was honored.

Mr. Raimondo sought Board action to authorize to continue use of existing signature plates until new plates can be prepared reflecting the new Board officer appointments. Mrs. Dow moved and Mr. Schupack seconded a motion to use existing plates until new ones can be prepared. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mrs. Franklin-Becker made the following motion:

I move that the Board amend the agenda for this meeting to include the following motion: (i) that Dr. Christian post a request for proposals for general legal services on the school district website by the close of business on Tuesday, December 5, 2017 to include questions that will be provided by the Board President and Vice President; (ii) that any Board member who wishes to propose any questions for inclusion in the RFP forward their questions to the Board President and Board Vice President by noon tomorrow and that the Board President and Vice President collectively decide whether to include those questions; (iii) that Dr. Christian instruct respondents to the RFP to have their responses

to the questions returned to the district, electronically, by 3 p.m. on Monday, December 11, 2017, and that Dr. Christian distribute the responses to the Board immediately upon receipt; and finally, (iv) that a special meeting be scheduled for December 13, 2017 at 7 p.m. in the Board Meeting Room for the purpose of considering and selecting a Solicitor and that the administration take the necessary steps to advertise the meeting.

Mrs. Northcutt seconded the motion.

Mrs. Peduzzi stated that the Board, including Mr. Raimondo, had expressed concern in the past regarding amending an agenda without proper time to consider the action proposed. Mrs. Peduzzi moved that the item be tabled. Mr. Brodsky seconded the motion to table.

Mr. Sultanik noted that before votes were taken on either motion there needed to be an opportunity for public comment under the Sunshine Act since the first motion was not on the original agenda.

Mrs. Moore stated that some members knew the motion was going to be made while others didn't and obviously didn't have time to prepare or have input into the decision. She strongly urged the Board to table the motion.

Deanna Durante of Whitemarsh Township commented about social media posts regarding a meeting that was to take place at another location to discuss this issue and noted a lack of transparency. She also commented on the large turnout for the meeting which she interpreted as a show of concern by the community. She asked Mrs. Franklin-Becker what prompted her to make the motion to amend the agenda. Mr. Raimondo noted that this was a time for public comment and that questions could be answered at another time. Mrs. Durante stated that she contacted a number of superintendents around the state and was told that this practice was highly unusual. Mrs. Moore added that the move does not follow established Board policy. Mrs. Durante's comments lasted approximately two minutes and 45 seconds.

Linda Doll of Whitemarsh Township stated that she is one of the few if not only parent or community member to attend most Board committee meetings. She said that she was disappointed by what she was seeing this evening. She noted that she didn't recall this issue being discussed at a committee meeting, which is where items are usually discussed. She stated that historically the Board has worked together and voted in the best interests of the students. Mrs. Doll stated that she was not liking what she was seeing. Her comments lasted one minute and 13 seconds.

Chris Epstein of Plymouth Township stated that she has had children in the District for the past 19 years and still has children in Colonial schools. She expressed disappointment there was obvious discord among the people who were representing the community and the children of the community. She urged Board members to rethink their action and take time to work together. Mrs. Epstein spoke for three minutes and 43 seconds.

Greg Stokes of Whitemarsh Township noted the quality of the District and stated that people were moving into one bedroom apartments so that their children could attend school here. He questioned why Mrs. Moore was not re-elected president. He said that, while he didn't always agree with her decisions, they were made with the best interests of the children in mind and not personal or political agendas. He also questioned why the new Board would want to replace a

solicitor that had served the District for a number of years. Mr. Raimondo corrected Mr. Stokes and said that an RFP was requested. Mr. Stokes spoke for two minutes and 25 seconds.

Plymouth Whitemarsh High School junior Steve O'Malley stated that he was at the meeting as part of his government class. He stated that what he witnessed was four new school board members coming to the meeting with a clear agenda, and it is not what he expected from the Colonial School District. He expressed disappointment in what had happened. Mr. O'Malley spoke for two minutes and 44 seconds.

Dorothy Raimondo of Conshohocken Borough stated that she was confused by the public dissension. She stated that nothing bad had happened. She stated that change is taking place and change can be a positive thing. She stated that Colonial is going to remain a good school district. Mrs. Raimondo spoke for 56 seconds.

Brian Daly of Plymouth Township stated that he had three children go through the District. He said that he agreed with Mrs. Raimondo and suggested that everyone should calm down. Mr. Daly said he was not familiar with the RFP but said he was confident that the Board would work out its issues. He suggested everyone stay on an even keel and let the Board do its work. Mr. Daly spoke for 39 seconds.

There being no other public comment on the motion, Mr. Raimondo asked for a vote on the motion to table the RFP item. On a roll call vote, Mr. Brodsky, Mrs. Moore and Mrs. Peduzzi voted in favor; Mrs. Dow, Mrs. Franklin-Becker, Mrs. Finegold, Mrs. Northcutt, Mr. Raimondo and Mr. Schupack voted against. The motion to table was defeated, 6-3.

Mrs. Franklin-Becker moved and Mrs. Northcutt seconded a motion to amend the agenda as previously stated.

Mr. Brodsky stated that all of this had come as a surprise. He said he had no idea regarding the RFP. He noted it hadn't been discussed in committee and hadn't been discussed by the Board. He also questioned how the Board could void a contract in the middle of that contract.

Mrs. Moore stated that she had no issue with an RFP and that the Board has issued them in the past to make sure the District had the best value for the money spent and the best representation possible. She said an RFP should be part of normal Board business. She stated that she didn't understand the rush or the secrecy and couldn't possibly support the motion.

Dr. Christian sought clarification from the Board on the timing of the RFP posting and closing.

Mrs. Peduzzi recounted her first meeting as a Whitemarsh Township Supervisor and encouraged all new members to base their decisions on what they individually felt was right.

Mr. Schupack took exception to the implication that he wouldn't do that. He stated that Mr. Brodsky and Mrs. Moore had submitted questions for the RFP prior to the meeting and that nothing is coming out of left field. He also noted that an RFP is not meant negatively toward the current solicitor and hopes the solicitor will take part in the process. Mr. Schupack added that the Board has a right to go out into the marketplace to make sure the District has the best representation possible. He said that there have been no responses to an RFP yet and no decision has been made.

Mr. Schupack stated that nothing has been decided in secret and that the Board will make the best decision it can for the students and families of the District.

Mrs. Moore stated that she, Mr. Brodsky and Mrs. Peduzzi had not been part of the discussion to issue an RFP and had no idea it would be brought up at this meeting. She asked why the rush?

Mr. Raimondo called for a vote on the motion to amend the agenda. On a roll call vote. Mrs. Dow, Mrs. Franklin-Becker, Mrs. Finegold, Mrs. Northcutt, Mr. Raimondo and Mr. Schupack voted in favor; Mr. Brodsky, Mrs. Moore and Mrs. Peduzzi voted against. The motion was carried, 6-3.

Mr. Raimondo called for a vote on the motion to issue an RFP for solicitor services. On a roll call vote, Mrs. Dow, Mrs. Franklin-Becker, Mrs. Finegold, Mrs. Northcutt, Mr. Raimondo and Mr. Schupack voted in favor; Mr. Brodsky, Mrs. Moore and Mrs. Peduzzi voted against. The motion was carried, 6-3.

Public Comments: Robert Slagle, Colonial Education Association (CEA) President along with Vice Presidents Jill Forster and Beth Miller stated that their membership has had significant interest, genuine curiosity and a real level of anticipation about this meeting. He added that the CEA and Board have previously fostered productive dialogue, built trust and have had the District's schools and students as their top priority. He hoped to continue that and more and stated that the association remains approachable. He thanked all members for their service. Mr. Slagle spoke for one minute.

Ms. Durante said that she didn't think the previous comments from the public meant people felt the District was going to decline but rather that it seemed things were being done in secret. She stated that it seemed odd that prior decisions were apparently made as to what was going to happen this evening. She asked the new Board members if they denied that. Ms. Durante spoke for one minute and 25 seconds.

Mrs. Epstein asked if it was common to have a motion contain specific timelines for action and responses. She also asked if protocol had not been followed as some seemed to indicate, how could the vote on the motion take place? Finally she asked how any member of the Board could shut down public comments and questions because they don't like what they are hearing? Mrs. Epstein spoke for one minutes and 57 seconds.

Mr. O'Malley reiterated his previous opinion that the Board should not meet in secret and should not come with personal agendas. He spoke for one minute and five seconds.

Mr. Schupack thanked Mr. O'Malley for his comments. He added that the new Board members did talk about whether it made sense to issue an RFP as they had every right to do. He noted that the item was placed on agenda at a public meeting and public comment was heard. He stated that the decision was not about the outcome but rather about the process and, no decision about the outcome had been made. He also said that further public comment would occur at a public meeting when a decision is made.

Mr. Brodsky responded by stating that yes, the Board has every right to issue an RFP. He said he was in favor of RFPs. However, he said that he was appalled that this decision was made without consulting all Board members.

Deb Brenner of Whitemarsh Township spoke positively about the District and her involvement with Colonial as a volunteer. She commented about a family atmosphere that she felt existed on all levels. But she added this meeting did not feel that way. She said change is hard but it can be good. But she said it doesn't feel good to the people sitting in the audience when the Board gets off to a start by butting heads. Mrs. Brenner spoke for three and a half minutes.

High school student Phoenix Spencer stated that she thought the Board should have held off on issuing an RFP based on the majority of public comment seemingly against it. She spoke for 39 seconds.

There being no other business before the Board, Mr. Raimondo adjourned the meeting at 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David M. Sherman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "D".

David M. Sherman
Board Secretary