

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, JANUARY 15, 1998**

President Kessler convened the January meeting of the Colonial School Board of Directors at 8:00 p.m. in the Board Room of the Colonial Elementary School on January 15, 1998.

Board Members Present: Stuart Kessler, Marc Orlow, Robert Carroll, Rich Connolly, Gary Johnson, Robert O'Neill, Jack Pinheiro, Thomas Yunker.

Board Members Absent: Beverly Brown

Also Attending: Dr. Stanley Durtan, Superintendent; James M. Bell, Director of Operations/Board Secretary; Joseph Bickleman, Controller/Treasurer; Frank O'Hara, Solicitor; R. Scott Klinger, Director of Personnel; Dr. Ann Stormes, Director of Curriculum & Instruction; Fred Shipman, Director of Pupil Services; John Lukens and Katy Swetkowski, Student Board Representatives; Carol Cohen and Alan Mizgorski, CEA; Sally Abbott, Kate Campbell; Ann Carracappa; Linda Chmielewski; Tom Davis; Charla DeValia; Allan Dovberg; Neil Engle; Tom Flathman; Tom Gibson; Mark Helms; Jean Johnson; Hugh Lipshutz; Michael Macanininch; Darilyn Moyer; Donald Newmeyer; Mary Theiss; Karen Tucker; and residents of Plymouth and Whitmarsh Townships interested in possible development of the WFIL tract.

Mr. Kessler led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Kessler, on behalf of the Board, recognized and awarded certificates of appreciation to staff, students and a board member for their outstanding accomplishments in scholarship, professional service, community service, music, and athletics. A complete list of those honored at the meeting is included as Attachment #1 to these minutes.

Minutes: Mr. Kessler asked for comments or questions on the minutes of the General Meeting of 11/20/97, the Reorganization Meeting of 12/1/97, the Community Relations Committee Meeting of 12/15/97, the Curriculum Meeting of 12/15/97 and the Special Meeting of 12/15/97, as shown in Enclosures #1 through #5. No issues were raised. Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the minutes as presented. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Financial Reports: Mr. Kessler asked the Board for comments or questions on the Budget Transfer Reports of 12/97 and 1/98; General Fund/Federal Program Bills for 11/97 and 12/97; the Capital Reserve Fund Reports 11/97 and 12/97; Food Service Bills and Reports for 10/97 and 11/97; and the Outstanding Investment, Cash Flow Summary, Comparison of Taxes Collected, Real Estate Escrow Reports

for 11/97 and 12/97; the Reconciliation of Cash Accounts for 11/97, and the Budgetary/Deficit Status and Treasurer's Reports for 11/97 and 12/97, as shown in Enclosures #6 through #15. Mr. Orlow asked if changes had been made to Enclosure #7, and Mr. Bickleman advised that typographical errors in dates had been corrected. Mr. Connolly moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the reports as presented. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Public Comments on the Agenda: None

Old Business: Mr. Kessler noted that the Board had received an update of the Strategic Plan, shown as Enclosure # 16, and asked Dr. Stormes to review the document briefly. Dr. Stormes summarized her report given at the work session of 1/12/98. She reported that the Strategic Planning Committee had met on 10/28/97 and 10/30/97 and updated the strategies and action plans contained in the plan. She noted that the committee had labeled two strategies as completed and listed six others as still valid but requiring additional time to complete. Dr. Stormes also noted the elimination and realignment of some action plans. She indicated that the committee believed that the strategic plan continued to serve its function of providing a framework for addressing important concerns of the district and the communities which it serves. She advised that the committee would review the plan again in approximately two years. Mr. O'Neill moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the revised plan as presented. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Correspondence: Mr. Kessler noted that the district had received several pieces of correspondence, as shown in Enclosures #17 through #20 and #30 through #32. He raised for discussion items requiring Board deliberation and/or action.

In Enclosure #17, four families in the district expressed concern about changes in the response of local fire companies to alarms at district buildings. Mr. Kessler asked Dr. Durtan if he had spoken to any local officials to clarify the situation. Dr. Durtan reported that he had spoken to Mr. Bonenberger, the Fire Marshal for Whitmarsh Township and confirmed that procedures had been changed so that only one company, Barren Hill, would now respond to unconfirmed alarms where several had responded in the past. He noted that that the fire chief would call in the other Whitmarsh companies if the situation so required. Dr. Durtan also reported that all three companies would respond to a call indicating a confirmed fire. He advised that Mr. Bonenberger felt that the township was providing safe, responsive fire service comparable to that in surrounding communities and suggested that the district contact the fire chief at Barren Hill Fire Station if it required additional information on the decision to change procedures. Mr. Carroll reported that procedures were different in Conshohocken Borough and Plymouth Township where all companies continued to respond to district alarms. Several board members were concerned that the changes could result in too few firefighters responding to serious incidents, especially during the day when many of the

volunteer firefighters were at work outside the community. The Board discussed options for addressing the perspectives of the district and the fire companies and asked the Buildings & Grounds Committee to raise district concerns with fire officials at its next meeting.

Mr. Kessler recognized Mr. Helms, a district resident, who wrote the letter to district shown in Enclosure #20. He presented the perspective of a number of local residents on the issue of the district purchasing a portion of the WFIL tract to meet potential district needs. He thanked the Board for the providing the opportunity at its last community forum for public discussion of the subject. Mr. Helms reported community opposition to developing the property for additional homes and indicated community interest in open space and a willingness to accept athletic fields, a parking lot or administration building if district needs require them. He presented the Board with copies of a petition bearing over 500 names of local residents opposed to putting homes on the WFIL property and noted that it had been given to Whitmarsh Township supervisors before the petitioners were aware of possible district interest in the property. Mr. Helms indicated that other district residents might speak later in the meeting and suggested that the Board briefly summarize the discussions which had taken place at the town meeting the previous Wednesday.

Mr. Kessler recognized Mr. Davis, President of the Colonial Foundation for Educational Excellence, who introduced several district teachers and a local resident to provide information on two foundation mini-grants. Mr. Engle presented information on a two-day opportunity for students participating in the volleyball programs at the middle school and high school. They will learn what it takes to be a student athlete in volleyball programs at the college level and receive some pointers in the sport from the renowned coach of the Penn State women's volleyball team. Ms. Johnson, Ms. Carracappa, and Ms. DeValia briefly outlined the F.A.S.T. (Families And School Together) program at Conshohocken and Colonial Elementary Schools, noting that it is a collaborative effort of the schools and local community services to help build a strong home and school relationship that promotes student success. The program has been funded by foundation mini-grants. All the speakers thanked Mr. Davis for the foundation's support, and Mr. Pinheiro thanked Mr. Davis for his efforts as foundation president.

Mr. Kessler noted correspondence from Mr. Wentz, Secretary for the Trustees Under the Deed of Trust of Joshua Morris and a check to the school district for \$1,800, as shown in Enclosure #31. Mr. Pinheiro reported that the trust was one formed in the 1700's to benefit public education and is still making annual donations to the district 200 years later. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to accept the donation. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Durtan briefly reviewed his personnel report on current additions, terminations, suspensions, demotions, leaves of absence, promotions, suspensions, transfers and resignations of staff, as shown in Enclosure #21. Mr. Pinheiro had a question on the employment status of the high school trainer, and Dr. Durtan confirmed that she was a district employee. Mr. O'Neill moved and Mr. Orlow seconded a motion to approve the changes recommended in the personnel report. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Dr. Durtan recommended routine additions and deletions to the substitute list, as shown in Enclosure #22. Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the additions and deletions to the substitute list as presented. On roll call vote, Mr. Kessler abstained. All remaining board members in favor. Motion carried.

Student Representatives Report: John Lukens provided an update on the high school winter sports teams, noting especially the current first place standings of boys' basketball, swimming and wrestling teams. He also provided an up-beat report on school spirit. Katy Swetkowski provided a status report on the course selection process, mid-term exams, student recitals and the upcoming band competition, and school social events.

New Business: Mr. Kessler noted that the PLGIT Arbitrage Rebate Management (ARM) Account Agreements, shown in Enclosure #23, required Board action. He briefly explained that the agreements dealt with the short-term investment portfolio for funds received from the Emmaus Bond Fund and the withdrawal of these invested funds. He noted that there were fees associated with PLIGIT management and investment of the funds. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the agreements as presented. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Kessler noted the request to authorize the high school orchestra to take a trip to Baltimore, as shown in Enclosure # 24. Dr. Durtan confirmed that transportation costs were included in the high school budget and that all the other costs associated with the trip would be met by the students. No additional dollars were requested of the Board. Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the trip. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Kessler reported that the DECA Club had requested approval to attend the State Career Development Conference in March and that the club and participants would cover the full cost of the trip. Mr. O'Neill moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the trip. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Kessler raised the issue of a late Labor Day in 1998 and administration's request that the Board decide that evening the week and approximate date on which classes would begin for the 1998-99 school year. He asked Dr. Durtan if he had a

recommendation based on educational concerns, and Dr. Durtan responded that an earlier start date would be better. He also noted that both starting the school year earlier and finishing it later added classes to the school calendar during hot weather, but he felt that the students would be better able to cope with the heat at the start of the year. He also expressed the belief that, with construction of the high school addition expected to be in full swing the following summer, it would be better to have classes end no later than necessary. Mr. Pinheiro agreed, noting that the renovation of the current science and home economics rooms and construction tying the addition to the present building would need to take place during the summer break. He felt that the district should attempt to maximize the time available for this work. Mr. Connolly asked whether 8/31/98 or 9/1/98 were better for starting classes. Dr. Durtan noted that it was advisable to have an in-service day prior to the start of classes but that the Board could decide at a later time, when the full calendar was approved, which of the two dates was more appropriate for the start of classes. Mr. O'Hara suggested that a motion be phrased that classes for the 1998-99 school year would begin on or about 9/1/98. Mr. Orlow suggested that the motion state that classes could start as early as 8/31/98. Mr. Kessler moved and Mr. Johnson seconded the motion as suggested by Mr. O'Hara and amended as recommended by Mr. Orlow. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Dr. Durtan sought Board approval to dispose of a former district security vehicle that was no longer operable and had been stored at a local repair facility for three years. Mr. Bell confirmed that the vehicle was twelve years old, was not operable, and would not be worth the cost to repair. Mr. O'Neill moved and Mr. Carroll seconded a motion to dispose of the vehicle under the best terms attainable. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Solicitor's Report: No report.

Committee Reports:

Intermediate Unit Board: No report. The January meeting has not yet been held.

CMCAVTS: Mr. Johnson reported that Mr. O'Neill had been re-elected chairman of the Joint Operating Committee and that the committee had approved a three-year contract with its teachers.

Personnel: No report. Negotiations with the CEA are at a stand-still.

Finance: No report.

Curriculum: No Report.

Building & Grounds and Transportation: Mr. Connolly reported that the committee was continuing its review of a performance contract proposal from

SYCOM for relamping all schools except Ridge park Elementary School and replacing a chiller at Colonial Middle School. The advantages of the proposal were facility upgrades paid through energy savings and no up-front costs to the district. Dr. Durtan advised that the district would be receiving Board copies of its feasibility studies involving environmental issues at Conshohocken and Colonial Elementary Schools and the east wing of the high school on 1/16/97. He also reported that the preparation of the construction drawings necessary to bid the high school science addition was on schedule.

Community Relations: Mr. Orlow reported that the town meeting on the WFIL tract had been attended by about 50 people and that productive discussions had taken place. He advised that the next meeting would be held in Whitemarsh Township in March. Mr. Orlow also noted that a newsletter advising residents of the status of negotiations and the date of the town meeting had been mailed to 18,000 households in Plymouth and Whitemarsh Townships and Conshohocken Borough but some of them had been delivered late. Dr. Durtan briefly reviewed the timetable for the mailing, noting that the newsletter was dated 12/9/97 and duplicated and provided to a mail house by 12/18/97 for a promised five-day turn around. He noted that the mailing reached the post offices late because of the Christmas and New Year holidays and, as bulk mail, was handled differently by each receiving post office. Mr. Orlow advised that a tape of the town meeting was playing on CITV and that residents who have not received copies of the newsletter could get them by contacting the district as posted on CITV.

Legislative: No formal report. Mr. Kessler advised that recent changes in regulations allowed the district to protect additional holidays in the school schedule if a work stoppage were to occur.

Public Comments: Mrs. Tucker, district resident, reported problems with the chlorine levels and air quality in the high school pool and asked if something could be done. Mr. Bell advised that the automatic metering system for the pool had been replaced the previous year and that he had not heard about a chlorine problem since then. He indicated, however, that he would refer the problem to Mr. Berneski, the district's Director of Maintenance, for follow up.

Mr. Helms asked the Board to take a few moments to provide a summary of the district's position on the WFIL tract, as expressed by Dr. Durtan at the town meeting. With Mr. Kessler's concurrence, Dr. Durtan noted three areas of potential need for land on the WFIL tract: Athletic fields, additional parking, and space for administrative offices if expansion were necessary at Colonial Elementary School to house additional students.

Ms. Theiss asked if there were any empty classrooms at Colonial Elementary School for additional students. Dr. Durtan indicated that all actual classrooms were in use but additional space, such as the board room, could be converted to classrooms. He

noted that the school had sufficient space to handle the students projected over the next five years. Mrs. Theiss suggested that the Board consider steps similar to those taken in other districts to buy up available land for future use and to prevent development for additional housing that could add children to school rolls. She also felt that adding an extra week to the class schedule in June 1999 might not be a serious problem. Mr. Orlow noted that it could be if bad winter weather forced the district to make up snow days at the end of the school year.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Kessler adjourned the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**James M. Bell
Board Secretary**