

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, JANUARY 21, 1999**

Vice President Orlow convened the January meeting of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:15 p.m. in the auditorium of Colonial Elementary School on January 21, 1999.

Board Members Present: Marc Orlow, Beverly Brown, Robert Carroll, Gary Johnson, Robert O'Neill, Jack Pinheiro, Thomas Yunker.

Board Members Absent: Stuart Kessler, Rich Connolly.

Also Attending: Dr. Stanley Durtan, Superintendent; James M. Bell, Director of Support Services/Board Secretary; Joseph Bickleman, Director of Financial Services/Treasurer; R. Scott Klinger, Director of Personnel; Fred Shipman, Director of Pupil Services; Frank O'Hara, Solicitor; John Lukens and Michael Gordon, Student Board Representatives; Carol Cohen, CEA; Allan Dovberg; Bart Fried; Tom Gibson; A. J. DauleRio; Sharon Jensen; Dr. Hugh Lipshutz; Donald Newmeyer; Yayati Patel; David Rowland; George and Phyllis Rumpp; Ron Schwebel; Steven Sloan; and family and friends of students receiving certificates of achievement.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance and advised that the Board had met in executive session just prior to the meeting to discuss legal matters.

Mr. Orlow and Dr. Durtan presented certificates of achievement to district students who distinguished themselves for their academic and extra-curricular accomplishments, staff members who had received recognition for their work in their fields and their involvement in the local community, and board members for their service and training accomplishments. A complete list of those recognized is contained in Attachment #1 to these minutes.

Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the minutes of the Community Relations meetings of 11/10/98, the Work Session of 11/16/98, the General Meeting of 11/19/98, the Community Relations Committee Meeting of 11/25/98, the Reorganization Meeting of 12/07/98 and the Buildings & Grounds Committee Meetings of 12/14/98, 12/21/98, and 01/05/99 as shown in Enclosures #1 through #8. Mr. O'Neill moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the minutes, as amended. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Financial Reports: Mr. Orlow referred board members to the Budget Transfers Reports of 12/98 and 01/99; Bond Fund Reports for the months ending 11/30/98 and 12/31/98; the Capital Project Report for the month ending 12/31/98; General Fund/Federal Program Bills, Capital Reserve Fund Reports for the months ending

11/30/98 and 12/31/98; Food Service Bills/Cafeteria Report of 09/30/98; Outstanding Investment Reports, Cash Flow Summaries, Comparisons of Taxes Collected, Real Estate Tax Escrow Reports, and Reconciliations of Cash Accounts for the months ending 11/30/98 and 12/31/98; the Budget Analyses of 12/14/98 and 01/11/99; and the Treasurer's Reports for the months ending 11/30/98 and 12/31/98, as shown in Enclosures #9 through #19. Mr. Pinheiro sought clarification of the change in Enclosure #10, the Capital Projects Report. Mr. Bickleman responded that the chiller for Colonial Middle School had been moved up to priority #3 in recognition of the change that the Buildings & Grounds Committee had made in the priority listing. Mr. Pinheiro also requested more timely submission of the food service reports. Ms. Brown moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the financial reports, as presented. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Public Comments on the Agenda: Mr. Patel, community resident and parent of a high school student, requested that the Board provide financial support for his son's attendance at a math course at Villanova University. He noted that his son had twice achieved perfect scores in the SAT math tests, had completed the math curriculum offered by the high school, and had gone to Villanova to take a course appropriate to his level. Mr. Patel also expressed his view that it was incumbent upon the district to address the curricular needs of all students, from those with special needs to those who are gifted. Board members commented on the district's obligation to provide reasonable educational opportunities for all the district students and to adhere to the educational goals outlined in the district's strategic plan. They also noted that the district had long helped arrange, under the Clasp Program, college-level opportunities for students in similar situations. They noted, however, that these opportunities never required Board funding. Mr. Orlow advised Mr. Patel that his request would be addressed later in the meeting when his letter to the Board was discussed.

Mrs. Johnson, community resident and a parent of student at Colonial Middle School, spoke in support of a girls soccer program at the high school and asked about the status of board deliberations on the issue. Board members spoke about the current lack of an available field, possible improvement to the WFIL tract to support a girls soccer program, and efforts by administration to clarify whether there was a local municipal field available for team use until a district field could be made available. Several board members suggested that residents interested in a girls soccer program at the high school should advise their local municipalities of their interest in having them cooperate with the district in securing dedicated afternoon access to practice and playing fields for a high school team until a district field is ready. Board members reiterated their support for a girls soccer program and outlined again the district's systematic attempts to deal with the logistics involved in starting one. Mr. Orlow suggested that interested parties continue to interact with Mr. Forster at the high school as program implementation moves forward.

Mr. Dovberg, community resident, stated that fiscal constraints limited what the district could spend to provide regular public education for its students, but he also felt that meeting the educational needs of the students was more important than funding extra-school activities for students and staff. He cited several examples of district funding for extra and co-curricular activities and administrative travel to illustrate his point. Mr. Dovberg also suggested that funding the tuition for a student who needed a college-level math course to continue his education in high school beyond the program offered by the district might be a worthy investment for the Colonial Foundation for Education Innovation. He urged the Board to develop a universal policy for funding district events that was equitable to all.

Mr. Sloan, community resident, referenced his correspondence to the Board offering his suggestions on how a girls soccer program might be established and coached. He raised many of the same issues raised by Mrs. Johnson, and board members briefly reiterated the suggestions contained in their responses to Mrs. Johnson.

Old Business: Mr. Orlow noted that the Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation had recommended that the Board approve eight mini-grants and two major projects, as outlined in Mr. Davis presentation at the work session the previous Monday. Ms. Brown moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the eight mini-grants and two major projects, as outlined. A copy of the titles of these grants is included with the minutes of the work session of 1/18/99 as Attachment #2. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Correspondence: Mr. Orlow noted that there were four pieces of correspondence on the agenda. The Board took no action on Enclosure #20, Mr. Sloan's proposal for establishing a girls soccer program at the high school for the 1998-99 season. (See Public Comments on the Agenda above.) Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to provide \$2,000.00 of additional support to the Association of School Districts In Support of Excellence and Equity as requested in correspondence from Mr. John DeFlaminis, President of the association. Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to provide the additional support in the amount of \$2,000.00. (See Enclosure #21.) On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried. No action was required or requested on Enclosure #22, Senator Richard Tilghman's letter providing positive feedback on the recent Town Meeting held by the Board. Mr. Orlow asked if any board member had a motion to address Mr. Patel's letter requesting that the Board consider financial assistance for his son's enrollment in a college course. (See Enclosure #23.) Ms. Brown moved to take no action on the request but received no second. Board members noted that a motion was not needed if the Board intended to take no action. No further motions were offered. Mr. Orlow asked Dr. Durtan to advise Mr. Patel that the Board had taken no action on his requests and to suggest that he explore other options.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Durtan briefly reviewed his personnel report, and some changes thereto, containing recommendations on additions, terminations,

suspensions, demotions, leaves of absence, promotions, suspensions, transfers and resignations of staff and changes to the substitute lists, as shown in Enclosures #24 through #25. Dr. Durtan also pointed out that the appointment of adult school instructors, as recommended in Enclosure #26, was dependent on sufficient class enrollment. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the actions recommended in the superintendent's report, as presented. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Student Board Representatives Report: Mr. Lukens gave an update on the girls and boys basketball teams and the wrestling team, reminded the Board that mid-terms were in progress, highlighted the recent financial aid workshop, and provided information on a volleyball night to support the scholarship fund in memory of Judith Gillespie, a well-regarded high school teacher who passed away last fall. Mr. Gordon showcased the activities of the Colonial Players, the concert choir and concert band. He also reported on students' selection of courses for the first semester of block scheduling and an assembly for parents on the topic of block scheduling.

New Business: Mr. Orlow reviewed five agenda items of new business, all student trip requests, as shown in Enclosures #27 through #29, #35 and #36. The trips include a high school band trip, the participation of three high school students in the PMEA District 11 Orchestra Festival, a trip to Vermont by the high school ski club, the participation of several DECA students in the state competition, and the Class of 2000 senior class trip. He asked that the Board consider the requests collectively, noted that all met district guidelines and were supported by administration, and advised that none required funding by the district. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the trip requests. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Pinheiro noted that the Buildings & Grounds Committee had discussed the poor condition of the football field and the need for an improved irrigation system. He suggested that part of the problem was overuse of the field because it was used not only by other district activities but rented to outside organizations. He noted that two or three football games could be played on the field on certain weekends. Mr. Pinheiro moved that no more than one game per weekend be scheduled on the stadium field and that rental games be scheduled only when they would fall within the one game per weekend limitation. Several board members asked clarifying questions, and Mr. Bell provided information on the basic soundness of the field (i.e. the intact crown, appropriate soil, and adequate aeration and fertilization schedules), the lack of an efficient irrigation system, and the fall schedule of games. Some board members suggested further investigation of the problem before limiting field use. Mr. Pinheiro withdrew his motion but requested that Mr. Forster come to the February meeting to provide additional information on field use. Mr. O'Neill asked that that information include data on the use of the field over the past several years and the timing of district commitments to outside users of the field.

Solicitor's Report: None.

Committee Reports:

Intermediate Unit Board: No report.

CMCAVTS: Mr. Johnson noted that the Joint Committee would not be meeting in January but reminded board members that the annual dinner would be held on 4/20/99 and that an open house was scheduled for 1/30/99.

Personnel: Mr. Pinheiro reported that a committee meeting was scheduled for 1/25/99 to review progress in negotiations with the bargaining units representing support staff and to prepare counter offers.

Finance: Ms. Brown reported on a 1/15/99 committee meeting at which the group considered financing for potential capital projects under review and consideration by the Buildings & Grounds Committee. Ms. Brown moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve a resolution to adopt a financing plan that recognized a revised debt structure and was worded in a general way to permit the Board to work out later the details of the bond-funded capital projects it would ultimately undertake. (See Enclosure #38.) Mr. Yunker spoke about using the bond issue to pay for performance contracting for the CMS chiller and lighting at all district schools except Ridge Park Elementary School. He noted that money earned from energy savings could be used later for other capital projects. Mr. O'Neill noted that the Board had been advised that the district could not use a lease arrangement to undertake performance contracting because additional debt could adversely affect the proposed plan for financing capital projects through two bonds on \$10,000,000 each. Ms. Brown reminded the board members that there could be no new debt in 1999 or 2000 if they passed the new debt plan. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Ms. Brown advised the Board that PFM had a tax reform service that could do the statistical analysis that was part of local tax reform. (See Enclosure #37.) She noted that the Board had only received four applications from individuals who wished to serve on the district's Local Tax Reform Study Group and suggested that the Board look for more volunteers and wait until next month to appoint members to the group. Ms. Brown moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to secure PFM's tax reform services under a joint program undertaken by the I. U. at reduced cost to participating districts. She reported that a three-phase program which included a generic study, customized statistics for the district, and analyses of possible scenarios of what the district and its residents could expect under local tax reform would cost approximately \$13,000.00. Mr. Bickleman noted that the district could undertake each of the three steps one at a time. Ms. Brown noted that not only did the I. U. program represent a good value for the district but that it would also

provide the district's study group with the statistical analyses that it needed to make meaningful recommendations to the Board. She indicated that the framework of the PFM service would allow the study group to be involved in the process. Mr. Dovberg suggested that the Board look at other options before it made a decision on securing PFM services. Ms. Brown expressed her desire to move forward with the initiative. On a roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Carroll reported that forms allowing taxpayers to apply for possible tax rebates under farmstead/homestead legislation were available through the county.

Ms. Brown advised that the state had completed its audit of the district for the 1994-95 and 1995-96 school years, that the formal report would come directly to each board member personally and that the Board would then have the opportunity to respond. She noted that the auditor's exit interview had been brief, that the report had been basically good news, and that several good recommendations had been made.

Curriculum and Program: Mr. Yunker provided a brief summary of a committee meeting held earlier that night. He noted that the committee had taken a look at several topics, including foreign language studies at the elementary level, ILS replacements, and course changes and technology needs for block scheduling.

Buildings & Grounds/Transportation: Mr. Orlow advised that the Buildings & Grounds Committee was recommending the acceptance of a proposal from DePallo Design and Planning for design and engineering services relating to site enhancements for the PWHS-CES campus, particularly those improvements being considered for the former WFIL tract, as outlined in Enclosure #39. He indicated that the fee for the work would be \$10,000.00 plus reimbursables. Mr. Orlow moved and Mr. Pinheiro seconded a motion to approve the agreement. Ms. Brown noted that the Board was not committed at that point to any decision on the priorities for possible projects on the site. Mr. O'Hara suggested that the wording of the agreement with the firm be revised to include a cost stated as "a maximum sum of \$10,000.00." Mr. Orlow and Mr. Pinheiro accepted the amendment to their motion. Mr. Yunker suggested delaying action for one month to see what objections might be filed to the Declaration of Taking. Mr. Orlow expressed confidence that the district could meet the standards for overcoming any objections. Mr. Pinheiro suggested that there was a need to start planning now. On a roll call vote, all in favor except Mr. Yunker. Mr. Yunker opposed. Motion carried.

Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to a proposal from Schiller and Hersh for a study and economic analysis of air conditioning at Colonial and Conshohocken Elementary School and the east wing of the high school, as outlined in Enclosure #40. Mr. Orlow moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the study and analysis provided that more than one option and analysis were presented for Board consideration. Ms. Brown asked if the study would be more complete than

that prepared by the architect, and Mr. Orlow noted that the HVAC study requested of the architect had specifically excluded the air conditioning option. Mr. Yunker asked if it would be possible to do a pilot study, and Mr. Orlow noted that code issues made such a study difficult. Ms Brown asked from where the money to pay for the study would come. In the discussion that followed board members identified the proposed bonds as the source for bond-funded projects. On a roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried. Mr. Orlow indicated that he would hold a second proposal from Mr. Hersh on drafting performance-based bid specification until next month so that the committee could first consider Mr. Hersh's initial proposal.

Mr. Orlow further advised the Board that the committee was recommending the acceptance of a bid for a production truck for CITV. He reported that the committee had received additional information on the mechanical soundness of the reconditioned vehicle and that the design represented an upgrade over the van currently in use. He advised that the new truck would allow CITV to create a mobile studio. He indicated that the vehicle was priced somewhat higher than what had been budgeted but that Mr. Quinn was prepared to under-spend in other areas of the CITV budget so as to stay within the total amount budgeted for CITV for the 1998-99 school year. Mr. Orlow moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the purchase as outlined in Enclosure #41. On roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Orlow directed the Board's attention to Enclosure #42, a recommendation from Suburban Energy and Environmental Associates on the recent RFP for a performance contract on energy savings resulting from the placement of a new air-cooled chiller at Colonial Middle School and revamped lighting at all schools except Ridge Park Elementary School, which already had newer, energy efficient lights. Mr. Orlow recognized Mr. Schwebel who provided an overview of the RFP and the responses received. He noted that the RFP was governed by Act 29 legislation requiring that savings pay back investments within 10 years. During interaction with board members, Mr. Schwebel made the following points: The CMS chiller or its own would not meet the payback requirements. The proposals that generated the most savings provided the best payback. The chiller could not be broken out of the RFP and done separately from the proposed lighting upgrades. The Board had to accept or reject a complete package. NORESO offered the greatest savings and best payback, as well as a 5/1/99-completion date. Work would be done outside regular school hours. Differences between the savings offered by various vendors depended on how aggressive each had been in pursuing energy efficiencies. That savings had been calculated after considering the lower energy rates that the district would be receiving as part of the I. U. energy consortium and were in addition to those savings. Mr. Schwebel indicated that he was under contract to verify that the guaranteed savings goals were met and that these savings should be evident within one year of installing energy efficient lights and within two years of installing the new chiller. He expressed confidence in all of the vendors, and gave a brief history of NORESO. Mr. Orlow noted that Board action on responses to the RFP was not

required until 2/15/98. He suggested that action be postponed until all board members were present to take part in deliberations, even if a special meeting had to be called. Mr. O'Hara suggested that the Board contact bond counsel to see if leases under Act 29 were considered new debt for the purpose of issuing new bonds. He thought that they were not. Board members offered some possibilities for when a special meeting could be called, but no decision was reached.

Community Relations: Mr. Johnson announced a Town Meeting scheduled for Wednesday, January 27th to review the results of the American Drug and Alcohol Survey taken by students at Colonial Middle School and Plymouth Whitemarsh High School. All students in 7th, 9th, 10th and 11th grades participated in the survey. The town meeting was scheduled as a joint effort of the Hands on the Future Task Force and the district. Students, parents, teachers, law enforcement personnel, religious and business leaders, government officials and local citizens were urged to attend. The goal of the effort was to get the community to work together to establish a drug and substance free environment for our youth.

Legislative: Mr. Carroll reported on recent legislative efforts in the areas of professional development, school violence prevention, parent's rights, and school vouchers.

Public Comment: Mr. Dovberg felt that there had been delays in recent months in getting agenda material distributed before the work sessions and suggested more timely distribution. He also reported that Technology 2000 was scheduled for 3/13/99 at Norristown Area High School and that the event would include more features and involve more participants than the previous year. Mr. Dovberg announced the attendance by the Phillie Phanatic and the awarding of prizes, and he expressed the hope that members of the Board would attend.

Dr. Lipshutz agreed with the Board's decision not to fund the attendance of Mr. Patel's son at a college-level math program at Villanova University but voiced dismay at addressing a student's curricular needs at a public board meeting. He also stated his belief that the district could do more in providing educational opportunities for its gifted students. He noted that there was only one gifted teacher for all of the district's K-3 schools.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 11.21 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

James M. Bell
Board Secretary

