

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, MAY 15, 2000**

President Kessler convened the general meeting of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:40 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on May 15, 2000.

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

Board Members Absent: Robert O'Neill.

Also Attending: Dr. Stanley Durtan, Superintendent; R. Scott Klinger, Assistant to the Superintendent for Administrative Services and Personnel; Dr. Ann Stormes, Director of Educational Services; James M. Bell, Director of Support Services/Board Secretary; Joseph P. Bickleman, Director of Financial Services/Treasurer; Fred Shipman, Director of Pupil Services; Thomas Davis and Susan Castle, Colonial Foundation of Educational Innovation; Bernadette Biasi and William English, PWHS Scholarship Fund; and Scott Helfand.

Mr. Kessler led the Pledge of Allegiance and announced that the Board had met in Executive session from before the meeting from 7:30 p. m. to discuss personnel and legal matters.

Minutes: Mr. Kessler directed Board attention to the minutes of the Finance and Audit Committee Meetings of 03/27/00, the Buildings and Grounds Committee Meeting of 04/03/00, the Special Meeting of 04/05/00, the Work Session of 04/10/00, the General Meeting of 04/13/00, and the Buildings & Grounds Committee Meetings of 05/25/00 and 05/05/00, as shown in Enclosures #1 through #7 on the agenda for the meeting the following Thursday. Mr. Yunker pointed out possible inconsistencies in two separate references in the minutes of the general meeting. Mr. Kessler asked Mr. Bell to check the tape of the meeting make any adjustments necessary.

Financial Reports: Mr. Kessler directed Board attention to the financial reports which were listed as Enclosures #8 through #19 in the agenda for the general meeting on Thursday. He noted that there were reports for two months. They included the Budget Transfer Reports for 04/00 and 05/00; the Bond Fund Reports, Capital Projects Reports, and Capital Reserve Fund Reports, for the months ending 03/31/00 and 04/30/00, the General Fund and Program Bills; the Food Service Report for 03/00; the Outstanding Investment Report, Cash Flow Summary, Comparison of Taxes, Real Estate Escrow Report and Reconciliation of Cash Accounts for the months ending 03/31/00 and 04/30/00; the Budget Analyses of

04/13/00 and 05/09/00; and the Treasurer's Reports, 03/31/00 and 04/30/00. Board members had no questions concerning the reports.

Staff Report: Mr. Kessler reported that Mr. Bickleman would be making the required formal presentation of the 2000-01 preliminary budget at the general meeting on Thursday evening.

Old Business: None.

Correspondence: There were six items of correspondence on the agenda, including Enclosures #11 through #14 and #25. He recognized Mr. Shipman who introduced Ms. Lupo, a recent mini-grant recipient. Ms. Lupo described and showed a video about her mini-grant project entitled "Rent Box of Insects". Her grant program focused on insects and their homes and included a number of hands on activities that allowed students to see what insects looked like and how they developed and lived. Her students seemed interested and involved in the activities. Ms. Lupo thanked the Colonial Foundation for Educational innovation and the Board for the opportunity to apply for the grant.

Mr. Kessler referred to correspondence from Gerald E. Depo, Town Administrator of Bloomsburg, PA, requesting Board support of an attempt to defeat Senate Bill 390. The Board took no action on the request.

Mr. Kessler raised two other pieces of correspondence that appeared to require or offer an opportunity for Board action. He asked if board members would like to respond to correspondence from Murray S. Toas, President of the Norristown Area School Board, requesting district support by communicating with local legislators on legislation dealing with special education funding for urban districts. Mr. Carroll moved and Mr. Marchozzi seconded a motion to send a letter of support to local legislators. Several board members questioned the impact of changing state funding for special education and specifically asked whether the proposed legislation would add or reallocate funds. Mr. Marchozzi said that he understood that it would do both. Some board members wondered whether the district would be better off or worse off as a result since the legislation was intended to benefit urban districts. They also felt that additional funding would mean additional taxes somewhere, most likely at the state level. Mr. Carroll felt that the legislation was a step in the right direction. In light of these concerns, Mr. Marchozzi suggested that a Board vote be deferred until more information was available. No further action was taken on the matter.

Mr. Kessler asked Mr. Bell to elaborate on correspondence from Bernadette Biasi, Chair of the PWHS Scholarship Fund, requesting authorization to add \$1.00 to the cost of student picture packages to support the scholarship fund. Mr. Bell recapped information that he had originally presented at the work session the preceding Monday. He asked that the Board consider authorizing the collection of \$2.00 per photo package in the coming year to address the shortfall caused by failure to collect

the authorized fee earlier in the current school year. Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. Orlow seconded a motion to approve a \$1.00 fee to benefit the PW Scholarship Fund. Each expressed a reluctance to increase the fee. In response to a question from Mr. Kessler, Mr. Bell confirmed that the \$2.00 fee that he had suggested would be for one year only. Mr. Marchozzi indicated that, while he supported the efforts of those working on the scholarship fund, he was opposed to the funding mechanism being discussed. On a roll call vote, all except Mr. Marchozzi, Mr. Johnson and Mr. O'Neill voted in favor. Mr. Marchozzi, Mr. Johnson and Mr. O'Neill voted in opposition. The motion was carried. Mr. Kessler asked if there was any interest in a motion to add another dollar. There was none.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Durtan briefly reviewed his Superintendent's Report, as shown in Enclosure #15. He recapped his comments on Monday evening concerning the pending retirement of Dr. Stormes, the resignation of Teresa Woodin, and the retirements of Bob Thompson, Bill Keller, and Mary Jane Himmelreich. He again thanked the three teachers for their many years of dedicated service and for their consideration in advising the district early about their retirement. Dr. Durtan noted that the Board had received a letter from Dr. Stormes. He also indicated that his revised report included a recommendation to appoint Pat Iannelli to replace Dr. Stormes as Director of Educational Services, effective 06/21/00 at her current annual salary of \$102,506.00. Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the superintendent's report, as presented. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Board Student Representatives Report: Ms. Fabricio provided information on the successes of the high school orchestra, band and chorus as well as the successful run of the Colonial Player's production of *The Music Man*. Mr. Gordon provided an update on the *Four Bands for a Buck* fundraiser and the senior trip to Florida.

New Business: Mr. Kessler asked Mr. O'Neill to recap briefly the process which led to the development of the preliminary budget on which the Board would be acting that evening. Mr. O'Neill summarized his comments first made at the work session the preceding Monday. He noted that the preliminary budget listed total expenditures of \$54,596,268.00 and a real estate tax milage of 13.12. Mr. O'Neill moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the preliminary budget as highlighted in Enclosure #16. Mr. Yunker asked why the fund balance was projected at \$2,100,000.00 rather than at \$2,500,000.00, as earlier reported. He also asked why the budget did not reflect a reserve of \$500,000.00 rather than one of \$100,000.00. Mr. Bickleman answered that the budget contained an undesignated fund balance of \$400,000.00. Mr. Yunker suggested that the \$400,000.00 fund balance be reflected in the preliminary budget. Mr. Marchozzi sought clarification of budget transfer procedures. Mr. Orlow noted that interim activity on the proposed budget had meaning only when the final budget was adopted. Mr. O'Neill emphasized that the purpose of passing the preliminary budget was to create a working document upon which the community could comment and which board

members could continue to review and refine. Mr. Yunker asked for the percentage increase in expenditures and taxes for the preliminary budget over the current budget. Mr. Bickleman reported those increases as 5.38% and 4.46% respectively. On a roll call vote on the motion to adopt the preliminary budget as presented, all except Mr. Yunker voted in favor. Mr. Yunker voted in opposition. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow sought confirmation that funding for a foreign language lab had not been included in the preliminary budget, and Mr. Bickleman reported that it had not. Dr. Durtan noted that the curriculum committee was still considering the lab and that funding could be added to the budget at a later date. Mr. Carroll had questions concerning the substitute rate for teachers and concerns about the impact of teacher absences on learning. Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. Orlow seconded a motion to put the new foreign language lab at the high school back into the preliminary budget at \$200,000.00 and to fund it from the fund balance. Mr. Bickleman said that he could show the lab equipment under instructional equipment. Mr. Carroll asked about the number of computers involved and Mr. Yunker indicated the number was in the mid-thirties. Mr. Kessler noted that he was not yet ready to make a decision on the foreign language lab and would prefer to do that within the context of a clearer picture of projected revenues and expenditures. Mr. Orlow responded that he could not recall another occasion when a major initiative such as the language lab had been removed from the preliminary budget so early in the budget process. Mr. Yunker expressed concern that district past practice had generally involved removing proposed expenditures from the preliminary budget as the budget review moved forward and not adding them. He felt that it might be difficult to include the lab later in the budget process. Mr. O'Neill advised that the Finance Committee would keep a running list of all committee recommendations as supplements to the preliminary budget and that the preliminary budget would be updated periodically to reflect current Board thinking. On a roll call vote on the motion before the Board, Mr. Yunker, Mr. Orlow and Mr. Johnson voted in favor. Mr. Kessler, Dr. Lipshutz, Mr. Marchozzi, Mr. O'Neill and Mr. Pinheiro voted in opposition. Mr. Carroll abstained. The motion was defeated. There was general Board consensus to continue to look at outstanding issues, including the foreign language lab, and to make necessary adjustments to it before adopting the final budget in June. Mr. Yunker asked for additional data on the projected increase in the transportation budget. Mr. Bickleman gave some preliminary data on the need for additional buses on the runs and increases in transportation for special education and non-public schools. Mr. Klinger and Mr. Bickleman planned to share additional information at a later date.

Mr. Kessler referred to a series of Board Policies (#311, #411, #511, and #911) on firearms, ammunition and other weapons, and Board Policy #116 on tutorial instruction on the agenda for Board action on second reading. Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. Marchozzi seconded a motion to approve the draft policies with the revised definition of a firearm but without the exception for weapons displayed by faculty

members for instructional purposes with the permission of the building principal. Mr. Kessler noted that a minor grammatical change needed to be made to the definition of a firearm. He also asked about the origin of the original definition of a firearm in the policy. Ms. Rothstein believed that it had originally come from the criminal code. Mr. Orlow explained his position that the change in the draft to include exception merely codified what was already happening in the schools. Mr. Marchozzi referred to language earlier in the policy that left exceptions to the policy up to the School Board and stated his preference for that arrangement. Mr. Johnson voiced his opposition to the motion and expressed his opinion that it was good to have faculty share artifacts with their students. Mr. Kessler asked Dr. Durtan if the motion as presented would impede the sharing of artifacts of weapons in class, and Dr. Durtan responded that it would. He noted the time that it would normally take for a teacher to plan ahead to get Board approval but also acknowledged that the Board might wish to weigh the potential risks involved in permitting a building principal to allow an exception. On a roll call vote of the original motion, Mr. Yunker, Mr. Marchozzi, Mr. Carroll and Dr. Lipshutz voted in favor. All others voted in opposition. The motion was defeated. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Orlow seconded a motion to approve the policies as shown in Enclosure #17. On a roll call vote, all except Mr. Yunker, Mr. Marchozzi and Dr. Lipshutz voted in favor. Mr. Yunker, Mr. Marchozzi and Dr. Lipshutz voted in opposition. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow moved and Dr. Lipshutz seconded a motion to approve Board Policy #116 as presented in Enclosure #18. On a roll call vote, all except Mr. O'Neill voted in favor. Mr. O'Neill abstained. The motion was carried.

Mr. Kessler directed Board attention to proposed Board Policy #209 on medical management of pupil health conditions. Mr. Marchozzi moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the policy on first reading, as shown in Enclosure #19. Dr. Lipshutz raised a recent concern with protecting student rights. He asked whom the policy would affect and if all students with medical conditions would get treatment plans. Mr. Shipman responded that it would be difficult to fashion a policy that would cover all situations. He stated that the proposed policy would leave the final decision in the hands of the building principals and the medical professionals on staff and on retainer with the district. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Kessler referred board members to the field trip request shown in Enclosure #20. The request involved a trip by the lacrosse team to Sea Isle City. Mr. O'Neill moved and Mr. Orlow seconded a motion to approve the trip. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Kessler directed Board attention to the bids for athletic, health and physical education supplies, as shown in Enclosures #21, #26 and #27. Mr. Yunker moved

and Mr. Orlow seconded a motion to approve the bids, as presented. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Kessler directed Board attention to a bid for restoring the Steinway grand piano at the middle school. Board members had a variety of questions about the present value of the piano, its value after restoration, the use to which the piano was put at the middle school, the need for a professional quality piano at the middle school, and the possibility of trading in the piano for a new one at little or no additional cost to the district. Mr. Bell and Dr. Durtan reported that a less expensive piano would not have the same quality of sound as a Steinway but indicated that they would have to get additional information to answer in depth the other questions raised by the Board. Mr. Gordon provided additional information about the quality of sound in older musical instruments. Mr. Kessler asked administration to provide the other information that board members had requested to the Board at its May meeting.

Solicitor's Report: Ms. Rothstein outlined a proposed assessment of a tax appeal made by Karya Associates on a property in Plymouth Township. She noted that she had appealed the assessment on behalf of the district because its sales price exceeded its assessed price by almost \$2,000,000.00. She reported that the owner accepted an unfinished assessment at the sale price and that the assessment would increase as improvements were made to the property. Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. Carroll seconded a motion to approve the settlement, as presented to the Board, in the amount of \$4,625,000.00. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Committee Reports: Intermediate Unit Board: No report.

CMCAVTS: Mr. Yunker recapped briefly the comments that he had made on the 2000-01 operating budget at the March Board meeting. In response to a query from the Board, he reported that the Upper Merion School Board had already passed the budget. Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the v-tech budget, as presented. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Personnel: Mr. Pinheiro reported that the Hay point committee had met to review the need for a lead computer technician and was recommending the creation of the position with a mid-point value of \$45,056.00 and a Hay Point total of 406 points. He indicated that the committee was also recommending the appointment of Jane Olley to fill the slot at 95% of the mid-point. Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. Orlow seconded a motion to approve these two committee recommendations. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Finance Committee: No report. Budget information was presented earlier in the meeting.

Curriculum and Program: No Report.

Buildings & Grounds/Transportation: Mr. Orlow noted that E. I. Associates was working hard on plans to develop the WFIL Tract. He also reported that the district would be making settlement on the property on 04/26/00 and would be making its just compensation payment and taking possession of the property on that date. Mr. Orlow advised that the district and E. I. Associates would be meeting with the Board of Supervisors of Whitemarsh Township on Thursday, 04/27/00 at 8:00 p.m. when the supervisors would be reviewing the proposed development of the property.

Community Relations Committee: Mr. Johnson reminded the Board and the community that the next town meeting would be held at the Conshohocken Municipal Building on 05/02/00 from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. and that Ms. Davis, Principal of Conshohocken Elementary School, would provide an update on the special programs in progress at Conshohocken Elementary.

Legislative Committee: No report. Mr. Carroll noted that the committee would be meeting the following week.

Other Comments: Mr. Marchozzi reported that the Plymouth Community Center was open and recommended that board members and local residents take the opportunity to visit the new facility.

Public Comments: None.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Kessler adjourned the meeting at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James M. Bell
Board Secretary