

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, MAY 18, 2000**

President Kessler convened the general meeting of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:13 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on May 18, 2000.

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

Board Members Absent: None.

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; Michael Gordon and Alicia Fabricio, Student Board Representatives; Fred Shipman, Director of Pupil Services; Brian Gallagher, President – CEA; Melia Bowie, Allan Dovberg, President - Colonial United Taxpayers; Scott Helfand; Janet McGuire, Teacher – CMS; Gerald McTamney, Council President – Conshohocken Borough; Darilyn Moyer; Jennifer Ross; and William English, Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation.

Mr. Kessler led the Pledge of Allegiance. He then recognized and awarded certificates of appreciation to students who had distinguished themselves in visual arts, music and sports. A complete listing of those recognized is attached to these minutes as Attachment #1.

Minutes: Mr. Kessler directed Board attention to the minutes of the Finance and Audit Committee Meeting 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 04/25/00 and 05/05/00, as shown in Enclosures #1 through #7. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Carroll seconded a motion to approve the minutes, as amended. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Financial Reports: Mr. Kessler directed Board attention to the financial reports that were listed as Enclosures #8 through #19. 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; 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 for the months ending 03/31/00 and 04/30/00. Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the reports as presented. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Public Comments of the Agenda: Mr. English recapped his presentation the preceding Monday and requested that the Board authorize for one year only, an additional \$1.00 charge to be applied to each student picture package to support the PHWS Scholarship Fund. He also asked Mr. Bell to distribute a letter from the Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation expressing support for the request. Mr. Kessler noted that the topic would come up in the agenda under correspondence and would be addressed at that time.

Staff Report: Mr. Bickleman made the required formal presentation of the 2000-01 preliminary budget at the meeting. He noted that the preliminary budget called for a spending increase of \$2,789,407.00 or 5.38 percent and a real estate tax increase of 0.56 mills or 4.46 percent. He advised that the millage increase would add \$56.00 per \$100,000.00 of assessed value to each taxpayer's annual bill. An outline of the basic facts in Mr. Bickleman's presentation is attached to these minutes as Attachment #2.

Old Business: None.

Correspondence: Mr. Kessler briefly reviewed the eight items of correspondence on the agenda, including Enclosures #20 through #25 and #53. He noted the correspondence from Lawrence J. Gregan, Whitemarsh Township Manager, advising that the Whitemarsh Township Board of Supervisors had approved the Board's request for a waiver of the township's land development process for the district's portion of the WFIL Tract. Mr. Kessler noted that township cooperation would facilitate the construction work planned.

Mr. Kessler referred to correspondence from Ms. Bernadette Biasi, Chairperson of the Plymouth Whitemarsh Scholarship Fund, requesting that the Board reconsider its decision not to add an additional dollar to the 2000-01 student picture packages for the scholarship fund. Mr. Kessler recalled the presentations by Mr. English and asked if a board member wished to make a motion on the request to add an additional \$1.00 to the cost of student picture packets to make up for the failure to collect the approved fee during the current year. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Orlow seconded a motion to add the additional \$1.00 for the 2000-01 year only. Several board members stated that they had not fully understood the process or questioned the propriety of adding the fee. The solicitor was asked to confirm whether the district could impose the fee. Mr. Sultanik asked some questions of Mr. Bell and Dr. Durtan on how the district facilitated the access of the photographer to the students and their families for taking and offering portraits for sale. After hearing their explanation that the money involved in the direct sales never passed

through district accounts, he advised that the district could impose the fee. He noted that the Board could, but need not, act on the setting of the fee. He expressed his belief that the fee could also be handled administratively. Several board members noted that the Board had acted on similar requests in the past and should, perhaps, take action on the request at hand. Those questioning the fee assessment noted that they supported the efforts of the PWHHS Scholarship fund but were either not in favor of assessing a fee on sales of student pictures or were opposed to adding an additional dollar in the coming school year. On a roll call vote, all except Mr. Marchozzi and Mr. Yunker voted in favor. Mr. Marchozzi and Mr. Yunker voted in opposition. The motion was carried. The consensus of the Board was to place a statement on collection envelopes noting that the added fee was to support the scholarship fund at the high school. Mr. Bell took charge of this assignment.

Board members briefly discussed correspondence from Fred Citron, Executive Director of Montgomery County Early Learning Center, concerning an increase in center fees for the coming year and from Daryl Metcalf, State Representative, on Chapter 4 of State Board of Education Regulations. No Board action was required or taken on these items.

Mr. Kessler noted correspondence from Joseph V. Oravitz, Executive Director of PSBA, which contained an invoice for the district's annual PSBA dues for the 2000-01 school year. Dr. Lipshutz moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the payment of the annual dues in the amount \$10,575.00. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

The Board took no action on correspondence from Murray S. Toas, President of the Board of the Norristown Area School District, on the subject of the state budget for education.

Mr. Kessler recognized Mr. Well who introduced Janet McGuire, the librarian at the middle school who gave a presentation on her mini-grant program in which Carolyn Cooney, a noted children's author, visited the school and spoke with students about the writing process. She reported that the children had found the author accessible and fun to be with.

The Board took no immediate action on correspondence from Fred H. Endrikat and Frank A. Mayer, Jr. of the Montgomery County Shrine Club inviting board members to participate in a program on 06/11/00.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Durtan briefly recapped his Superintendent's Report, as shown in Enclosures #26 through #28 on the agenda. He recognized Scott Brown who would be retiring in June after 34 years with the district. He also noted that he had provided the additional information that had been requested on substitute teachers. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to

approve the report as presented. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Dr. Durtan provided information on a class at the high school that had 29 students and was oversubscribed by one student. In response to a query from the Board, he confirmed that this sometimes occurred with single classes in a subject and that scheduling the class in the first place had allowed the students to pursue a subject in which they were interested.

Board Student Representatives Report: Mr. Gordon spoke about the end of the year activities, including the academic awards dinner, Colonial Players' honors, senior awards assembly, senior picnic and prom. He thanked the Board for the good times that he had had and the good education that he had received. Ms. Fabricio provided a report on the spring concerts, junior prom, student elections, SAT's and upcoming graduation. She also provided a warm tribute to Mr. Gordon who would be graduating and leaving his position as a Board Student Representative. Mr. Kessler presented Mr. Gordon a plaque expressing the Board's appreciation for his service. Board members thanked him for his efforts.

New Business: Mr. Kessler noted the agenda item concerning a requested increase in school lunch prices, as outlined in Enclosure #30 on the agenda for the general meeting the following Thursday. Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. Orlow seconded a motion to approve a \$0.10 increase in the price of all meals for the 2000-01 school year. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Kessler noted a requirement that the Board appoint a board member to the Act 48 Committee, as outlined in Enclosure #31. Mr. Orlow moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to appoint Mr. Yunker to the committee. On a roll call vote, all but Mr. Yunker voted in favor. Mr. Yunker abstained. The motion was carried.

Mr. Kessler asked for a board motion on the proposed Board Policy #209 – Medical Management of Pupil Health Conditions, which was on the agenda for action on second reading. Mr. Shipman confirmed that the definition in the policy had been rephrased in a more positive fashion. See Enclosure #32. Dr. Lipshutz moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the policy, as revised, on second reading. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Kessler moved on to a series of bid items requiring Board action. He noted that the CMS piano was on the agenda and reminded the Board that it would have to reject the bids for restoration of the middle school piano if it wished to move forward with the purchase of a more suitable instrument and trade in the 1884 Steinway. Various board members briefly discussed options for replacing the piano, raised questions about the value of the current Steinway, expressed doubt that an antique was an appropriate instrument for everyday middle school use, and suggested that a suitable replacement could be found. Dr. Lipshutz moved and Mr.

Carroll seconded a motion to reject the current bid, as outlined in Enclosure #33, to restore the Steinway piano at the middle school. On a roll call vote, all but Mr. O'Neill voted in favor. Mr. O'Neill voted in opposition. The motion was carried. The Board subsequently reached a consensus to bid a suitable replacement instrument using generic specifications and including an option to trade in the current piano.

Mr. O'Neill moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to accept the bid of Waste Management of PA as the lowest responsible bidder for trash removal for the years 2001, 2002, and 2003 at a cost of \$13,319.25 for annual basic services. See Enclosure #34. Mr. Carroll commented on the impact of the trash-to-steam plant on the cost of waste disposal services. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. O'Neill moved and Mr. Pinheiro seconded a motion to approve the bids, as listed in Enclosure #35, for secondary and elementary art supplies, general supplies, industrial arts supplies and science supplies. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the bids for janitorial supplies as outlined in Enclosure # 36. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. O'Neill moved and Mr. Carroll seconded a motion to approve data cabling bids for Whitemarsh and Plymouth Elementary Schools, as shown in Enclosures #54 and #55 in the agenda. Board members sought and received confirmation that the cabling was for the installation of new computers, that the costs were at or below estimates and would be covered by bond funds, and that work was scheduled to be completed by the start of the new school year. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Kessler noted that the annual election of a treasurer was on the agenda for action and that Mr. Bickleman was recommended to continue serving in the position at an annual rate of \$6,632.00, a three-percent increase over the current year. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Orlow seconded a motion to approve the election of Mr. Bickleman at the amount indicated. On a roll call vote, all in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Kessler again noted that Barbacane, Thornton & Co. had been appointed as the district's independent auditor for a three year period, starting with the 1998-99 school year, and would be serving in that capacity in the coming school year.

Mr. Kessler reported that the annual appointment of the district's solicitor was on the agenda for Board action. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Orlow seconded a motion to reappoint Jeffrey T. Sultanik, Esq. of Fox, Rothschild, O'Brien & Frankel

as solicitor, in accordance with the terms outlined in Enclosure #37, under an annual retainer of \$18,750.00/year plus out-of-pocket expenses and litigation fees at \$135.00/hour.

Mr. Kessler reported that the district would be naming a depository for district funds during the 2000-01 school year and that First Union had been recommended. He followed up on questions asked at the work session on Monday about the fees charged by First Union and the possibility of soliciting bids for the depository. Mr. Marchozzi suggested that the Board explore the issue further and seek bids for the school district's depository the following year. Mr. Marchozzi and Mr. Bickleman agreed to explore the issue in the interim. Mr. O'Neill moved and Mr. Orlow seconded a motion to approve First Union as the district's depository for school funds for the year 2000-01.

Mr. Orlow moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the list of investment banks, trusts and savings and loan associations for solicitation of interest rates for the 2000-01 school year, as outlined in Enclosure #38. Notice was taken that investments would be subject to bank confirmation of legally required collateral. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Kessler advised that the Board had interviewed two candidates for a position as Student Board Representative to replace Mr. Gordon who was graduating. Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to name Ashley Kurtz Board Student Representative for the next two years and to name Michael Fazzini alternate. Mr. Pinheiro noted that the voting on the two candidates had been very close. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. O'Neill moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to set Mr. Bell's compensation as Board Secretary at \$5,305.00 for the 2000-01 school year, an increase of three percent. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Pinheiro provided a brief recap of the 2000-01 MCIU Special Education Services Agreement that was an action item on the agenda. He noted that the contract, as outlined in Enclosure #39, called for \$402,496.00 in special education services from the intermediate unit but that the actual figure would rise or fall based on the actual services delivered. Mr. Bickleman noted that the figure include in the preliminary budget for these services was somewhat higher to allow for contingencies. Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the agreement as presented. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. O'Neill moved and Mr. Yunker seconded a motion to approve the annual Allocation for Federal Programs as shown in Enclosure #40. Mr. Marchozzi asked for a definition of Title I services. Dr. Durtan confirmed that the bulk of the funds

were allocated to the school-wide program at Conshohocken Elementary School but indicated that some funds were also available for a reading specialist at Colonial Elementary School. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to name Francis P. O'Hara as the district's legal representative on a tax appeal case that represented a conflict of interest for the district's solicitor. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Lipshutz moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the textbook titles in Enclosure #56. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the disposition of older technology equipment listed in Enclosure #57. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Solicitor's Report: Mr. Sultanik asked for Board approval of a tax settlement agreement showing an assessment of \$600,000.00 for 619 Harts Ridge Rd., as presented to the Board. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the settlement. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Committee Reports: Intermediate Unit: Mr. Pinheiro reported on the awarding of mini-grants, summer camp scholarships and post-secondary school scholarships by the I. U. foundation. He provided information of the foundations successful fundraising efforts and expressed his hope that the district's counselors were aware of the scholarships and were encouraging eligible district students to apply. Dr. Durtan assured him that that was the case.

CMCAVTS: Mr. Johnson reported that Mr. Schramm was the new Assistant Director of the Center for Technical Studies.

Personnel: Mr. Pinheiro recapped his recent report on the proposed agreement with CASEA for the 2000-01 and 2001-02 school years. See the minutes of the work session of 05/15/00 for details. Mr. Carroll moved a motion to add a clause to the proposed agreement to call for meet and discuss sessions prior to the beginning of the second year of the agreement to discuss having administrators absorb any increase in costs for their medical benefits in the second year. The motion failed for lack of a second. After some discussion, Mr. Marchozzi moved and Mr. Carroll seconded a motion to reopen the agreement at the end of the first year to discuss any increase in the cost of health benefits and take whatever action the Board deemed appropriate. Several board members expressed concern about changing the terms of the agreement after the meet and discuss process was completed. In response to Board queries, Mr. Sultanik advised that the Board had the authority to approve or

disapprove an agreement and noted that the agreement had the force of a contract once it had been approved. He confirmed that it would not be illegal to change a tentative agreement prior to approving it but advised that taking that step could adversely impact on the Board's credibility. On a roll call vote, Mr. Carroll and Mr. Marchozzi voted in favor of the amendment. All other board members voted in opposition. The motion was defeated. Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the agreement that resulted from the meet and discuss process. On a roll call vote, all except Mr. Carroll voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Finance: Mr. O'Neill reported on the on-going work on the budget and announced that the committee would be meeting within two weeks. He asked that board members raise their questions and concerns about the budget with Mr. Bickleman.

Curriculum and Program: Mr. O'Neill reported on the last committee meeting because Mr. Yunker had been unable to attend. Mr. O'Neill advised that the committee had met and discussed the proposed language lab at the high school. He noted that the committee would be recommending that the language lab be included in the upcoming budget and funded in the amount of \$210,000.00. He advised that the exact configuration of the lab had not yet been decided but reported that the disposition of old equipment had been recommended by the committee and approved by the Board earlier in the evening.

Buildings & Grounds/Transportation: Mr. Orlow quickly recapped five design proposals on that night's agenda. These included design services for wall and floor treatments during the renovation of the high school auditorium, lighting in the same facility, an expansion of the PWHS weight room, a power upgrade at Conshohocken Elementary School to handle new technology and air conditioning, and additional work for an eight-lane all-weather track at the high school. The Board voted on each project separately. In each case Mr. Orlow moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the proposal. In each case, when a roll call vote was taken, all board members voted in favor of the proposal and the motion was carried.

Community Relations: Mr. Johnson reported on a successful town meeting to discuss the special programs going on at Conshohocken Elementary School and the fine presentation by building principal, Darlene Davis.

Legislative Committee: Mr. Carroll reported on the Omnibus Education Bill and Act 16 on educational empowerment. He urged his fellow board members to acquaint themselves with the act. He also noted that Chapter 16 had been recalled and submitted to committee.

Public Comments: Mr. McTamney challenged the Board to explain why the high school band had not been part of the celebration of Conshohocken Borough's 150th birthday and strongly questioned why the band and the district seemed to him to be

ignoring the borough. He expressed his frustration at never being able to get a solid answer on the band's availability for community events in Conshohocken and his determination to keep raising the issue. Dr. Durtan and Mr. Kessler agreed that he had raised some legitimate questions and indicated that the district would look into them. Dr. Durtan reported that neither he nor the building principal had received an invitation for the district to participate in the birthday celebration for the borough.

Mr. Dovberg questioned the appropriateness of the Colonial Foundation providing a mini-grant to fund an author's opportunity to plug her books. He asked if the foundation ever funded community events. Dr. Durtan responded that it had. Mr. Dovberg provided a brief report on the success of Technology 2000 and announced that an updated report on the event could be viewed on the internet at www.mciu.org.

Mr. Dovberg reported that a private showing of pianos at Rowen College had been announced in the press and wondered if the district might be able to take advantage of an auction. Mr. Sultanik noted that it could do so only if the price fell below \$4,000.00. Mr. Dovberg noted that members of the Act 50 Committee had received notice that the committee would meet between June and August and expressed concern that a group with its own particular perspective had been asked to make a presentation at the meeting. He noted that five school districts had gone through Act 50 implementations and that it would be a good idea to hear about these actual case studies. He felt that it would be an act of fairness to get the committee together, talk, elect officers, create an atmosphere of inquiry and allow the committee to decide what information it needed to meet its charge. Mr. Dovberg stated his belief that the committee had the right to make its own decisions. He concluded his remarks by complimenting Mr. Kessler for allowing people to speak at Board meetings but expressed concern that the Board did not dialog with the community.

Mr. Gallagher responded to Mr. Dovberg's comment on the foundation providing a mini-grant to let an author plug her book. He noted that the presentation by the author had served an educational purpose and had been very worthwhile. He thanked board members, Mr. Klinger and Dr. Durtan for their help during his first year as CEA President.

Mr. Marchozzi asked Dr. Durtan to keep the Board informed as he gathers information on the issue of band participation in events in Conshohocken Borough.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Kessler adjourned the meeting at 10:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James M. Bell
Board Secretary

