

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462  
MINUTES, OCTOBER 19, 2000**

Vice President Orlow convened the general meeting of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:00 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on October 19, 2000.

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

**Board Members Absent:** Stuart Kessler and Robert Carroll.

**Also Attending:** Dr. Stanley Durtan, Superintendent; R. Scott Klinger, Assistant to the Superintendent for Administrative Services and Personnel; Patricia Iannelli, Director of Educational Services; James M. Bell, Director of Support Services/Board Secretary; Joseph P. Bickleman, Director of Financial Services/Treasurer; Jeffrey T. Sultanik, Solicitor; Alicia Fabricio and Ashley Kurtz, Student Board Representatives; Fred Shipman, Director of Pupil Services; Dr. Vincent F. Cotter, Incoming Superintendent; Brian Gallagher, CEA President; Theresa Bloom; Dan Deany; Tom Gibson; Scott Helfand; Janet Rosa and Manuela Sabato.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Minutes:** Mr. Orlow asked board members if they had any comments on the minutes of the Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting of 09/13/00, Work Session of 09/18/00, the General Meeting of 09/21/00, the Personnel Committee Meeting of 09/25/00, the Special Meeting of 09/25/00, the Personnel Committee Meeting of 10/05/00, the Curriculum Committee Meeting of 10/04/00, and the Community Relations Committee Meeting of 10/10/00, shown in Enclosures #1 through #6, #31 and #32. Board members had no questions or comments. Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. Johnson 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. Orlow directed Board attention to the financial reports that were listed as Enclosures #7 through #17 on the agenda. They included the Budget Transfers for 10/00, amended Bond Fund Report, Capital Projects Report, and Capital Reserve Fund Report, the Outstanding Investment Report, Cash Flow Summary, Comparison of Taxes, Real Estate Escrow Report and amended Reconciliation of Cash Accounts for the month ending 09/30/00; the Budget Analyses of 10/10/00; and the Treasurer's Report for the month ending 09/30/00. Mr. Pinheiro asked what had changed on the Bond Fund Report, and Mr. Orlow noted that a bill for work on the high school track had been added. Mr. Orlow asked Mr. Bickleman if he had been able to confirm that the architect had approved the payment of contractor invoices for work on the track. Mr. Bickleman reported

that he had spoken to Mr. Bell about the approval procedures and learned that the architect/engineer, contractor and Mr. Morcombe, the district's Facilities Engineer all reviewed bills prior to Mr. Morcombe's processing them for payment. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the financial reports, as amended. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Public Comments on the Agenda:** None

**Old Business:** Mr. Orlow directed the attention of board members to a revision of Board Policy #230 – Public Performances by Students that had come before the Board for action on second reading. See Enclosure #18. Mr. Orlow and Mr. Pinheiro advised their fellow board members and the community that the updated policy would codify and clarify procedures to be followed when community groups wished to arrange student performances at community events. They noted that it had been designed to offer a blueprint for processing requests in a timely fashion. Dr. Durtan reported that the district would post the revised policy on the internet and CITV and send copies of it to the district's three municipalities and to all organizations that had requested student performances over the past five years. Dr. Lipshutz moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the policy on second reading. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Correspondence:** Mr. Orlow asked the solicitor to comment on correspondence from Joel S. Jaspen and Donald R. Berger requesting that the Board accept the discount amount of taxes on their properties as payment in full. See Enclosure #19. Mr. Sultanik advised that the district had no legal authority to grant the request. Mr. Orlow suggested that, in light of Mr. Sultanik's counsel, the Board needed to take no action on the request. However, he agreed with Mr. Yunker's recommendation that administration communicate the position of the solicitor and the Board to the correspondents. Dr. Durtan agreed to see that Mr. Jaspen and Mr. Berger were properly notified.

**Superintendent's Report:** Dr. Durtan reviewed his Superintendent's Report, as shown in Enclosures #20 and #21 on the agenda for Thursday evening. He noted that there had been no changes to the enclosures since the work session on Monday. Mr. Klinger reported that the annual salary figure listed for Rosanna Costa should read \$25,365.00. Mr. Marchozzi sought clarification that no new positions had been added since the adoption of the budget, and Dr. Durtan assured him that none had. He also noted that one budgeted teaching position had not yet been filled. Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. Yunker seconded a motion to approve the Superintendent's Report. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Dr. Durtan reported that the annual employee listing, including annual salaries, had been distributed to board members and was available in the Personnel Office. He noted that the Board had grappled annually in recent years with the question of whether the list required formal Board action or not. Mr. Sultanik advised the

Board that, although it was common practice on some Boards to approve the list, the Board could handle the list simply as an item of information. He noted that the Board had negotiated a labor contract covering the professional staff and was bound to handle salaries under the terms of the contract. Mr. Orlow asked if the district audited the list. Mr. Klinger indicated that he compared his salary list against the payroll list. Mr. Bickleman reported that he did not personally verify the entries beyond Mr. Klinger's review. Mr. Klinger advised that he had sufficient data to do a salary audit and would undertake an audit of a random sampling of teachers if the Board wished him to do so. Mr. Pinheiro suggested that the Personnel Committee annually select the sample to be audited. Dr. Lipshutz felt that this would be a prudent course of action given the fact that some errors had been found in the past in data received from Carbon-Lehigh I. U. The consensus of the Board was to pursue this option and have Mr. Klinger do an audit of a random sample selected by the Personnel Committee.

**Board Student Representatives Report:** Ms. Fabricio thanked the grounds and maintenance crews for all of the work that they had done in the stadium and on other projects in and around the high school. She gave an update of the sports teams that were or might be entering post-season play, highlighted team-building activities undertaken by the freshmen class, and gave an overview of back-to-school night, senior fund raising efforts, Spirit Week and Homecoming activities. Ms. Kurtz highlighted the recent activities of the sophomore and junior classes. She spotlighted recent testing programs, the Renaissance Fair, Mr. & Mrs. PW activities, a recent flea market, and the upcoming production of *Small Wonder* by the Colonial Players. She also spoke of the great spirit of the students supporting the varsity football team this year. Mr. Orlow asked the students for their reaction to the new grading system. The representatives felt that students were a bit more competitive this year, but they also noted changes in the classroom – teachers relating their courses to real life and students working harder, liking classes more and getting better grades.

**New Business:** Mr. Orlow directed the attention of board members to Enclosure #22, a request from Olga Sominina, a CMS language teacher, for Board authorization of a student trip to Greece during spring break. Dr. Durtan recapped his comments at the work session the previous Monday. He noted that the Board would be endorsing the potential educational value of the trip if it authorized it but would not be providing any funding. Mr. Sultanik noted that Board action to authorize the trip was important because authorization was the trigger that put the district's insurance carrier on notice. Mr. Pinheiro revisited the issues that board members had raised during the work session about checking State Department Travel Advisories for warnings on travel abroad, sharing any pertinent posted warnings with parents, and securing signed copies of the advisories from parents before students could take overseas trips. Dr. Durtan responded that the agenda item had been re-written to include these items in any action that the Board might take on the issue. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to

authorize the trip subject to the conditions listed in the agenda. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow noted on that three draft calendars for the 2001-02 school year that illustrated the impact of starting school before and after Labor Day were on the agenda. He canvassed the Board to see if there was a consensus for considering a calendar that had school starting after Labor Day and ending the second week in June, if that were possible. Board members provided some input. They noted the difficulty in both starting later and finishing earlier, expressed concern about shortening spring break, sought and received confirmation on the sequencing of snow make-up days and commented on the late summer scheduling for fall sports set by PIAA. The Student Board Representatives preferred a start late in August over an end late in June. They cited some of the same reasons that prompted the Board to adopt an early start date in recent years – hot weather in June and a more focused approach to class work earlier in the school year. The Board reached consensus on asking administration to take a close look at the issue and to develop several options for a school calendar starting after Labor Day. The Board advised that it would revisit the issue at its November meeting.

Mr. Orlow referred to the two transportation contracts contained in Enclosures #24 and #25. Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the contracts as presented. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow noted that board members had received fund raising budgets for 2000-01 in Enclosure #26 and commented on the remarkable amount of funds being collected. Dr. Durtan reported that he had followed up on questions raised by board members at the Monday work session. He advised that figures for the cheerleaders' competition and the band trip had not been included in the report in prior years, that Mr. Forster was then gathering the information and that it would be included in all future reports. Mr. Pinheiro explained the history behind the Board's request for the information and its desire to keep track of the extent to which school organizations were approaching local residents with requests for contributions. He noted that school related organizations had collected well over \$600,000.00 last year.

Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the revised professional development plan contained in Enclosure #27. He asked Ms. Iannelli to highlight the most recent changes to the draft. Ms. Iannelli noted that Act 48 replaced Act 178 and that it defined the necessary steps for teachers to maintain their certifications. She advised that the district plan established a record-keeping process that would meet Department of Education needs. She noted that the plan included a list of committee members and a big change in teacher portfolios. It included workshop hours, and it was research-based, linked to school needs and basic competencies, and focused on continuous school improvement. Ms. Iannelli also indicated that the plan had a paragraph explaining program providers rather than a list of them and

that it contained specific timelines for reviewing the plan twice a year. Mr. Marchozzi asked if the money needed to finance the plan had been included in the budget for the current year, and Ms. Iannelli reported that it had. Mr. Orlow asked if the plan covered the use of in-service days. Dr. Durtan responded that there was a relationship between the plan and in-service activities but reported that it did not totally cover them. He noted that the plan did not limit the district's choices for in-service activities but required the documentation of those that were plan components. Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the plan as presented. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Solicitor's Report:** None.

**Committee Reports:** Intermediate Unit Board: No report.

**CMCAVTS:** Mr. Johnson announced that Seth Schram had been named Vocational Educator of the Year in Pennsylvania and would be moving on to the national level.

**Personnel:** Mr. Pinheiro announced that the committee had met several times in recent weeks to discuss bargaining strategy for negotiations that were to begin in January with the CEA and working conditions for administrators in CASEA.

**Finance:** No report.

**Curriculum and Program:** Mr. Yunker advised that the committee had met with Linda Romano, CMS Principal, on issues surrounding the number of students on the honor roll. He noted that there had been some reporting errors out of Carbon-Lehigh and some changes in middle school programs which impacted on the totals. He also reported that the committee minutes approved earlier in the evening contained additional information on the issue.

**Buildings & Grounds:** Mr. Orlow advised that the township Zoning Board had given final approval of the construction of a modest addition to the high school to house an expanded fitness center. He indicated that the bids would be coming back in November and that equipment purchase orders, which had been on hold pending township approval, had been released. He felt that there was little danger that the equipment would arrive before the facility was finished because there was a long lead-time for manufacturing and delivering the equipment.

Mr. Orlow also gave an update on the all-weather track. He noted that the asphalt base and wear coats were down and that the laying of the topcoats was scheduled to begin November 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup>, if weather conditions were favorable. Mr. Bell provided a brief update on progress on the new fields on the WFIL Tract. He noted that two fields were being readied for seeding, grading was continuing for the additional parking planned for the site and for the remaining playing fields. He also noted that

work was not slated to begin on the tennis courts until spring and that the new parking would not be accessible until next summer when work would be completed on rerouting Colonial Drive and upgrading parking at Colonial Elementary School.

**Community Relations:** Mr. Johnson reminded all viewers that the Board's Town Meeting on the subject of student achievement would on be Monday, October 30<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 in the Whitmarsh Township Building. He also reported that there had already been many hits on the new district web site.

**Additional Comment:** Mr. Pinheiro asked when the updated PEL study could be expected. Mr. Klinger indicated that it should be in district hands by the end of December.

**Public Comment:** Mr. Gallagher thanked Ms. Iannelli and Mr. Yunker for their Act 48 work. He encouraged Mr. Johnson to work hard on resolving contract issues at the Center for Technical Studies and expressed a belief that Dr. Durtan would make sense of the outstanding school calendar issues. Mr. Gallagher also recognized that school buses operated by the Romano firm were on a tight schedule but expressed concern that some buses left school in too great a hurry. He suggested the district install speed bumps in the bus lane and correspond with the bus company to request that the drivers slow down. Mr. Orlow requested that Mrs. Johns, the district's Transportation Coordinator, follow up on the issue. Mr. Pinheiro and Mr. Klinger advised that construction work on Ridge Pike between Butler Pike and Joshua Road would slow traffic and probably delay buses from November 1<sup>st</sup> through the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Mr. Marchozzi asked Mr. Orlow to place speed bumps on the agenda of the next Buildings & Grounds Committee meeting.

Theresa Bloom told the board that senior citizens were upset about the rise in local real estate taxes. She asked that the Board review its options under Act 50 and consider a tax discount of 10% for senior citizens. Mr. Sultanik noted that a special committee was looking into its options under Act 50 and would bring back its findings and recommendations to the Board in the future. Mr. O'Neill noted that the committee had had a couple of meetings and would be meeting again soon. He told Ms. Bloom that he would send her an advance notice of the meeting so that she could attend if she wished. Mr. Sultanik advised that the district had no authority to give discounts beyond that provided in state law for early payment of taxes. He suggested the Ms. Bloom raise her issues with her local state representative as well.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James M. Bell  
Board Secretary