

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, APRIL 15, 2002**

President Orlow convened the work session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:35 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on April 15, 2002.

Board Members Present: Marc Orlow, Robert Carroll, Thomas Davis, Lynn Glodek, Gary Johnson, Hugh Lipshutz, Thomas Marchozzi, Susan Moore, and Thomas Yunker.

Board Members Absent: None.

Also Attending: Dr. Vincent F. Cotter, Superintendent; Gerald Berger, Director of Human Resources; Dr. MaryEllen Gorodetzer, Director of Educational Services – Elementary; Dr. Patricia Iannelli, Director of Educational Services - Secondary; James M. Bell, Director of Support Services/Board Secretary; Joseph Bickleman, Chief Financial Officer/ Treasurer and Fred Shipman, Director of Pupil Services.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes: Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the minutes of the Curriculum Committee Meeting of 03/18/02, the Work Session of 03/18/02, the Community Relations Committee Meeting of 03/20/02, the General Meeting of 03/21/02, and the Buildings and Grounds Committee Meetings of 03/26/02, and 04/04/02 as shown in Enclosures #1 through #6 of the agenda for the meeting the following Thursday. Board members had no questions or comments on the minutes.

Financial Reports: Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the financial reports that were listed as Enclosures #7 through #18 of the agenda for the general meeting on Thursday. They included Budget Transfers, the Bond Fund Report, Capital Projects Report, General Fund and Program Bills; and Capital Reserve Fund Report for the month ending 03/31/02; the Food Service Report for the period ending 03/31/02; Outstanding Investment Report, Cash Flow Summary, Comparison of Taxes, Real Estate Escrow Report and Reconciliation of Cash Accounts for the month ending 03/31/02; the Budget Analysis/Deficit Status Reports through 03/31/02; and the Treasurer's Report for the month ending 03/31/02. Mr. Orlow requested and received from Mr. Bell confirmation that the district was holding sufficient retainage to cover the cost of redoing fields on the WFIL Tract to meet specifications and district expectations.

Staff Report: No report.

Old Business: None.

Correspondence: Mr. Orlow noted that George Gunning, Jr. had requested the opportunity to discuss renaming the high school. He asked Dr. Cotter to seek confirmation of Mr. Gunning's attendance on Thursday evening. See Enclosure #19 of the agenda for Thursday evening. Mr. Orlow also noted that a representative of the Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation would be introducing Sherry Helmus, a teacher at Ridge Park Elementary School on Thursday evening. He advised that Ms. Helmus would discuss a current project that the foundation was funding.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Cotter briefly reviewed his Superintendent's Report, as shown in Enclosures #20 and #21 of the agenda for Thursday evening. The report contained normal information on personnel actions and a Petition for Unit Clarification that would have the district's Head Cooks withdraw from the bargaining unit so that they could properly fulfill their supervisory responsibilities. Dr. Cotter also reported on recommendations to adjust the salaries of the district's Technology Specialist and Chief Financial Officer.

New Business: Mr. Orlow provided an overview of the proposed preliminary operating budget for 2002-03. He noted that the budget called for \$5.5 million in additional spending, an increase of 9.85%. He stated that \$4.4 million of that increase was for salaries and benefits as called for in the district's contracts with its employees. Mr. Orlow noted that proposed real estate taxes would increase 4.48%, an amount less than the increase in expenditures because the district's budget anticipated increases in revenues as well. He also reported that proposed budget currently called for using a projected \$1,895,000 fund balance as funding and advised the public that the Board would be carefully considering that idea. Mr. Orlow noted that uncertainty about the ongoing level of transfer taxes and assessment increases would have an impact as the Board began its deliberation of the budget. He advised the community that the preliminary budget totaled \$63,225,000 and called for a real estate millage rate of 14.51 mils.

Mr. Yunker asked why the proposed budget called for using the entire fund balance to fund the upcoming budget. Mr. Marchozzi reported that the district needed to cover two years of salary increases for the professional staff. He noted that he would not be recommending such a step in later years and would be recommending that the district set aside 25% of the fund balance each year to build a reserve account. Mr. Yunker asked why the Board should not take that step for the upcoming budget. Mr. Orlow noted that the Board could also consider budget cuts. Dr. Lipshutz asked about legislative relief for the increasing cost of retirement. Dr. Cotter noted that nothing definite was coming out of the capitol but noted that state-wide pressure may lead legislators to consider amortizing retirement costs over 20 years rather than 10 years with the result that annual costs for the new retirement program would decrease. He also noted that Colonial School District was far better

off as it considered the budget for the coming year than most other districts in the county. He reported that many local districts were anticipating higher tax increases than Colonial. Dr. Lipshutz asked about increasing class size at the middle school, particularly in 7th and 8th grade. Dr. Cotter said that he would look into the projections and get back to the Board. He noted, however, that administration had been frugal as it dealt with staffing for the upcoming year. Mr. Davis had some questions about the location of retirement funding in the budget document. Mr. Bickleman reported that it was spread across many accounts but could be clearly seen in the benefits section of the budget document.

Mr. Orlow reported that the Board would be considering a number of trip requests on Thursday evening. These included requests from sponsors Amy LaRue at the high school, for a student to attend the All State Ensembles from 04/17/02 through 04/20/02 at the Valley Forge Hilton in King of Prussia, Sergio Anaya at the high school for 12 students in the World Affairs Club to attend the Model United Nations in Washington, D.C. on 04/21-22/02, and Mitchell Goldich to attend the American Regional Math League meet at Penn State University on 05/31/02 and 06/01/02. See Enclosures #22 through #24 on Thursday's agenda. Dr. Cotter advised that the student attending the All-State Ensembles was a junior and would be unaffected by the senior class trip. Board members asked questions about the scheduling of chaperones for the trip to the Model United Nations and more broadly about the steps that the district was taking to address liability issues surrounding student trips. They spoke of measures to prepare students for such trips in an age when anything could happen anywhere. Dr. Cotter noted that the district's insurance policies provided the district liability coverage for trips. He suggested that it might be a good idea to have Mr. Antal, the district's Safety Officer, give students some pointers on how to stay safe while traveling. Dr. Cotter also responded to questions from board members about how students were chosen to participate in the Model United Nations and their preparation for participation. He noted that the students were members of the World Affairs Club and that their sponsor had an extensive background in international issues.

Mr. Orlow directed the attention of board members to a request from Irene Guerriero, music teacher at the middle and high schools, for permission to host the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association District 11 Festival at Plymouth Whitemarsh High School on 02/06-08/03. He reported that the high school administration supported the request and that costs were anticipated to be minimal. Board members discussed processing the request as a normal facility use request. Dr. Cotter spoke briefly of the costs. Dr. Iannelli noted that district families would host out-of-town participants. Mr. Orlow asked that the request be deferred until the Board received some additional data on the costs. Mr. Yunker noted that these costs would be off-set somewhat by the fact that district students who would normally be traveling to such an event would be staying home to participate in 2003.

Mr. Orlow referred to an additional trip request received that day. He reported that Dwight Stozfus, AP Biology teacher at the high school, had requested permission for an overnight field trip to the New Jersey Pinelands on 05/21-22/02. It was noted that the trip would fall after the AP Biology exam. Board members had questions about the admission fee to the pinelands, the number of chaperones, and their experience in biology. It was reported that there could be up to 20 students and four chaperones.

Mr. Orlow reported that a routine request for a Certified Corporate Resolution for Depository Authorization/Food Service would be on Thursday's agenda. It would adjust signatories following the retirement of Mr. Klinger. See Enclosure #26 of Thursday's agenda. He also reported that a routine Assurance Regarding Operations covering the types and sizes of special education classes in the district would be on Thursday's agenda. Dr. Cotter and Mr. Shipman noted that the districts Special Education Plan covered a three-year period but the Assurance Regarding Operations was required annually. See Enclosure #27 for Thursday evening.

Mr. Orlow advised the Board that administration would be seeking Board action on bids for high school athletic supplies at the general meeting on Thursday evening. He explained that the Board historically took action on these supplies early because of the long lead time required to get them delivered prior to the start of training for the fall sports programs in mid-August. Dr. Cotter indicated that he would provide additional information to the Board on a question raised about the many items included under the proposed bid award to Kelly Sports. See Enclosure #28 of Thursday's agenda.

Solicitor's Report: Mr. Orlow advised that Board action would be requested for a proposed settlement of grievance #00-3 and for approval a number of expulsion resolutions (#92526, #95212, and #95538). The Board had no questions on these matters.

Committee Reports: CMCAVTS: Mr. Yunker reported that the Joint Operating Committee had approved the 2002-03 budget for the tech school. He directed the attention of the board members to a budget summary that they had received. He indicated that page #4 showed that the financial impact to the district would be \$1,462,427 based on an average three-year district enrollment of approximately 186 students. There was no word on whether or not other sending districts had taken action on the budget. Mr. Yunker also reported that the Joint Operating Committee was taking a look at how the Center for Technical Studies funded capital projects. He indicated that there was not much of a difference to the district between funding based on enrollment and funding based on real estate values.

Finance: Mr. Orlow announced that the committee would be reporting Thursday evening on the district's proposed general obligation bond. Mr. Carroll asked if the

proposed bond was considered in the preliminary operating budget for the coming year. Mr. Bickleman reported that the interest payment had been included in anticipated debt service.

Public Comments: None.

Announcements: Mr. Orlow advised that the Board had met in executive session before the meeting to discuss legal, personnel and real estate issues.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 9:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James M. Bell
Board Secretary