

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462  
MINUTES, APRIL 18, 2002**

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 April 18, 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 Office/Treasurer and Fred Shipman, Director of Pupil Services, Jeffrey T. Sultanik, Solicitor; William Wells, President, Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation; Robert Slagle, President, CEA; Tracey Carney; Sherry Helmus and Cindy Petton.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Minutes:** Mr. Orlow requested Board action on 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, the Personnel Committee Meeting of 04/10/02 and the Curriculum Committee Meeting of 04/10/02, as shown in Enclosures #1 through #6, #35 and #36. Dr. Lipshutz moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the minutes. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Financial Reports:** Mr. Orlow requested Board action on the financial reports that were listed as Enclosures #7 through #18. 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. Davis moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the reports. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Public Comments on the Agenda:** None.

**Staff Report:** None.

**Old Business:** None.

**Correspondence:** George Gunning, Jr. was not present to discuss renaming the high school. See Enclosure #19.

Mr. Orlow recognized Mr. Wells of the Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation who introduced Sherry Helmus, a teacher at Ridge Park Elementary School. Ms. Helmus gave the Board an overview of her project on the life cycle of a frog, a butterfly and a chicken. She reported on the opportunity that the children had to observe the animals as they developed through the various stages of their life cycles. She thanked the foundation for funding the project.

**Superintendent's Report:** Dr. Cotter briefly summarized his Superintendent's Report, as shown in Enclosures #20 and #21. He noted a significant teacher retirement and the inclusion of additional information on the types of leave that various staff members were taking. Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the Superintendent's Report. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Note was taken that no Board action had been requested on the Petition for Unit Clarification shown in Enclosure #21. Mr. Orlow asked Mr. Sultanik to include it in his Solicitor's Report.

**Student Board Representatives Report:** Ms. Dougherty reported on the senior class trip, junior prom, freshman formal, soph hop, and distinguished graduates program. Ms. Kurtz highlighted the multimedia assembly, PSSA tests, talent show, college panel and spring concert.

**New Business:** Mr. Orlow summarized his Monday overview of the proposed preliminary operating budget for 2002-03 totaling \$63,225,000. He noted that the budget called for 9.85% or \$5.5 million in additional spending. He noted that \$4.4 million of that increase was for contracted or agreed upon salaries and benefits for district employees. Mr. Orlow reported that proposed real estate taxes would increase 4.48% and a real estate millage rate of 14.51 mils. Mr. Johnson announced that the preliminary budget would be the main topic at the Town Meeting scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on Monday, 04/22/02 in the gym of Conshohocken Elementary School. Dr. Cotter reported that the legislature had passed a measure that would limit the employer contribution to the PSERS retirement plan to an amount not to exceed 1.15% but noted that the governor had not yet signed that bill. Mr. Carroll received a confirmation that, if the bill were to become law, the district could reduce its budget by \$750,000. The solicitor and members of the board made several points.

The district might be better off delaying adoption of a final budget to see if the law came into effect because it contained a provision that district would have to reduce millage rates after budget adoption if the PSERS contributions were later lowered. The reduction in the PSERS contribution came from amortizing the cost over a longer period of time. Future increases in the contribution rate were likely. Part of any “windfall” in the district’s preliminary budget might well be used to wean the district off its annual dependence on the fund balance to fund the coming year’s budget. The “windfall” could also be used to reduce the taxpayer’s burden for the coming year if the Board addressed changes to the budget before final budget adoption. Dr. Lipshutz reported that Dr. Cotter had clarified the class sizes at the middle school and that they had been relatively stable over the past several years. Questions arose on funding a girls soccer program at the middle school. Mr. Carroll asked that records be checked. Dr. Cotter and board members discussed how information on the funding of the program had been shared with the Board. Dr. Cotter believed that the field issue had been resolved. Several board members noted that the program would be a feeder for the girls soccer program at the high school. Mr. Orlow noted that it was not practical to have 8<sup>th</sup> grade boys and girls on the same soccer team. Several board members noted that the process used in reviewing the budget was important. Mr. Carroll expressed his belief that the Board rarely removed items from the preliminary budget when it acted on the final budget. Mr. Orlow referred the review of the funding of the girls soccer program at the middle school to the Finance Committee. Note was taken that a number of budget issues were still under review by Board committees. Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the preliminary budget. On a roll call vote, all except Mr. Carroll voted in favor. Mr. Carroll abstained because he had not reviewed the detailed budget document. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow sought Board action on a number of trip requests discussed the previous Monday. These included requests 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, for 12 students in the World Affairs Club to attend the Model United Nations in Washington, D.C. on 04/21-22/02, for Mitchell Goldich to attend the American Regional Math League meet at Penn State University on 05/31/02 and 06/01/02 and for members of the AP Biology class to take an overnight field trip to the New Jersey Pinelands on 05/21-22/02. See Enclosures #22, #23, #24 and #37. Mr. Yunker requested that Enclosure #23 be considered separately. Ms. Glodek moved and Ms. Moore seconded a motion to approve the trips in Enclosures #22, #24 and #27. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried. Mr. Yunker noted that the World Affairs Club was not a class, just a club and that other clubs did not miss class for field trips. Dr. Cotter noted that the club was open to all and explained the strong educational component of the proposed field trip. Mr. Johnson moved and Dr. Lipshutz seconded a motion to approve the trip as shown in Enclosure #23. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow noted that action had been deferred on 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 to Plymouth Whitemarsh High School on 02/06-08/03. See Additional Comment at the end of these minutes for final disposition of this request.

Mr. Orlow asked for Board action on the routine request for a Certified Corporate Resolution for Depository Authorization/Food Service that the Board had discussed on Monday. See Enclosure #26. Mr. Johnson moved and Ms. Glodek seconded a motion to approve the resolution. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow sought Board action on the Assurance for Special Education Programs and Services for 2002-03. Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Carroll seconded a motion to approve the assurance. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow asked for Board action on bids for high school athletic supplies as shown in Enclosure #28 and discussed on Monday evening. Additional information had been requested and provided to the Board. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Marchozzi seconded a motion to approve the bid. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Solicitor's Report: Mr. Sultanik asked for Board ratification of a petition for unit clarification as discussed in executive session. He briefly outlined the timetable for considering the petition by the Labor Relations Board. That included a pre-hearing conference in June, a hearing in early July and a decision approximately 60 days thereafter. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Yunker seconded a motion to ratify the petition. On a roll call vote, all but Mr. Marchozzi voted in favor. Mr. Marchozzi abstained because of a possible conflict of interest. The motion was carried.

Mr. Sultanik asked for Board action on a proposed settlement of grievance #00-3 as reviewed in executive session. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Carroll seconded a motion to approve the settlement. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Sultanik sought Board approval a number of expulsion adjudications (#92526, #95212, #95538 and #88261). Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the adjudications. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Committee Reports: Intermediate Unit Board: No report. Mrs. Moore advised that the I.U. Board would be meeting the following week.

**CMCAVTS:** Mr. Yunker reviewed the information on the 2002-03 vo-tech budget that he had shared at the work session on Monday. See Enclosure #29. Board members had questions about the impact of the legislature's passage of the bill to reduce the employer's contributions to the PSERS retirement system. The solicitor noted that the questions were interesting. He pointed out that the structure of the vo-tech school was different from that of the member districts and the I. U. He expressed doubt that the legislature had considered the vo-tech schools when it passed its legislation. Board members sitting on the Joint Operating Committee felt that the sending districts would get refunds if the reduction in retirement contributions became law after the budget had been passed. Mr. Yunker moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the vo-tech budget for 2002-03. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Personnel:** No report.

**Finance:** Mr. Marchozzi reported that the committee was considering a general obligation bond and would soon need to determine a number of particulars related to the issue including the term of the bond and the timing of the sale. Mr. Yunker stated that the list of bond issue projects had not been discussed at the Board level. Mr. Johnson reported that the B&G committee had shared prioritized lists of potential projects on several occasions. He noted that over \$1,000,000 of projects had been slated for the summer of 2002 and that the remainder would be scheduled over the rest of the three-year period. The Board reached a consensus to have the Finance Committee review the priority list to confirm that the projects would meet the criteria for funding under the bond issue.

**Curriculum and Program:** Dr. Lipshutz reported that the committee had met to discuss kindergarten. He noted that the committee had a strong feeling that the district could not get children ready for all that the district expects of them within the time available in a half-day program. Dr. Lipshutz reported that the committee considered all aspects of the issue, including the issue of space. He noted that the district would have to use all available space to house an all-day program. He advised that the committee did not want to take that step now but would look at the issue in the future. He reported that the committee had looked at some stopgap measures, including the assignment of aides, but thought that they would not be of much help. He felt that the district needed time to deliver the curriculum.

Dr. Lipshutz advised that the committee had looked at changes to the handbooks at the high school and middle school. He noted the committee's intent to complete this review prior to 04/01/02 but reported that the committee had sent some questions back to the schools. They sought confirmation of their intent behind provisions governing exams and the weight applied to honors and AP courses. Dr Lipshutz felt that AP courses should have greater weight. He reported that committee members agreed that they needed additional information from high school administrators. He reported that any changes might have to be deferred for another year. Mr. Orlow

asked when they might become effective. Dr. Lipshutz indicated that the idea was to have the changes effective with the current freshman class.

Dr. Lipshutz reported that the committee was making progress with data warehousing. He advised that the committee had met with a vendor and had a demonstration of EDSMART. He noted that one of the advantages of the program was that data files could be added later at no added cost. He suggested, however, that the vendor had to be more realistic about training key people. Dr. Lipshutz also reported that Colonial Elementary School had been a winner in KYW News Radio's Computer Tuesday Program and would be receiving ten computers and a year of Comcast cable internet access for its computer room. Mr. Carroll suggested that the preliminary budget be adjusted accordingly. Mr. Bickleman advised that he had already taken that step.

**Buildings & Grounds/Transportation:** Mr. Johnson advised that the committee had completed walks through all district schools. He asked Mr. Bell to give a brief update on the development of the WFIL Tract. Mr. Bell covered the steps that the district and the project architect had taken to make sure that the contractor would meet the specifications for field preparation. Mr. Orlow asked the solicitor what protection the district had in regard to this issue. Mr. Sultanik advised that the architect was the only party that could say that the contractor was in default. He indicated that, if the architect took that step, the district could go to the bonding company to seek remedies. Mr. Bell suggested that he have the architect come to the next Buildings & Grounds Committee meeting to review the history of the development of the fields and review the steps being taken to get them ready for play by the spring of 2003.

**Community Relations:** Mrs. Moore reminded the Board and the community of the Town Meeting to be held at Conshohocken Elementary School at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, 04/22/02. She noted that the topic of the meeting would be the preliminary budget and that the bell choir would be present to provide some entertainment. She also reported that the committee would be looking into the Senior Citizen Gold Card in an effort to revive and update the program that allowed seniors to attend certain school events for free. Mrs. Moore also reported that the committee had suggested some changes to CITV and had passed them along to the Personnel Committee.

**Legislative:** Mr. Carroll announced that the annual Legislative Breakfast would be held at the William Penn Inn on 05/02/02 and that board members were welcome to attend. He also reported on a number of bills including several related to tax reform. These included a bill mandating integrated pest management (IPM) in public schools, one that would put the matter of what could be attached to high school diplomas in hands of local school boards, and one that dealt with fairness in educational funding and proposed reductions in real estate taxes and increases in earned income taxes. Dr. Lipshutz asked if the state would be rescinding legislation

on seals on diplomas. Dr. Cotter advised that the sense of the education community was that districts would be given some measure of control in this area.

**Public Comments:** None.

**Announcements:** Mr. Orlow advised that the Board would be meeting briefly in executive session following the meeting to receive a negotiations update.

**Additional Comment:** Mr. Yunker asked why the Board had deferred action on Enclosure #25, a request for permission for the high school to host the Pennsylvania Music Educators, Association District 11 Festival on 02/6-8/03. Dr. Cotter noted that the minimal costs had been clarified and that custodial services would be provided. The Board reached a consensus to handle the request as a routine facilities approval and to handle it administratively.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**James M. Bell**  
**Board Secretary**