

**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 8:3 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; R. Scott Klinger, Assistant to the Superintendent for Administrative Services and Personnel; 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, Director of Financial Services/ 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 02/26/02, 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 allow the district's Head Cooks to withdraw from the bargaining unit so that they could properly fulfill their supervisory responsibilities.

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 called for in the district's contracts with its employees. Mr. Orlow noted that proposed real estate taxes would be going up 4.48%, an amount much less than 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. He 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. Mr. Orlow 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 the proposed budget accled 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. Mr. 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 Colonail Schol

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 districts were anticipating higher tax increases and 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 but also reported 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 and 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.

and Irene Guerriero at the middle and high schools for

Mr. Orlow noted that the Board would be acting on a trip request for the Marching Colonials to travel to Toronto from 05/16/02 to 05/20/02. He advised that there would be no cost to the district other than substitute coverage. See Enclosure #29 of the Thursday agenda. Mr. Carroll expressed concern about the number of class days that the students would miss. Several board members commented on the possibility that some seniors could miss many classes if they happened to be participating in any of the trips on the agenda as well as the senior class trip to Florida.

Mr. Orlow reported that the Board would be considering approval of an agreement between the district and Central Montgomery County MH/MR on the provision of

services by psychiatric social workers. The agreement is contained in Enclosure #30 of the Thursday agenda. Dr. Cotter confirmed that the agreement was a matter of routine and that the district has gotten these services in the past.

Mr. Orlow reported that administration was requesting approval of a contract with Professional Roof Services for the development of specifications and the provision of construction management services for a new roof at Colonial Elementary School. He advised that the cost of the services would be \$9,500. Mr. Bell confirmed that the solicitor had reviewed the contract and that the specifications would include non-technical specifications that conform to those recommended by the solicitor. See Enclosure # 31 of Thursday's agenda.

Solicitor's Report: None.

Committee Reports: None.

Public Comments: None.

Announcements: Mr. Orlow advised that the Board would briefly meet in executive session after the meeting to discuss issues related to negotiations.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 9:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James M. Bell
Board Secretary