

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, NOVEMBER 15, 2001**

President Orlow convened the general meeting of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:02 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on November 15, 2001.

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

Board Members Absent: Stuart Kessler.

Also Attending: Dr. Vincent F. Cotter, Superintendent; R. Scott Klinger, Assistant to the Superintendent for Administrative Services and Personnel; Dr. MaryEllen Gorodetzer, Director of Educational Services - Elementary; Patricia Iannelli, Director of Educational Services - Secondary; James M. Bell, Director of Support Services/Board Secretary; Joseph Bickleman, Director of Financial Services/Treasurer; Fred Shipman, Director of Pupil Services; Jeffrey T. Sultanik, Solicitor; Principal, Darlene Davis, Conshohocken Elementary School; Ashley Kurtz and Colleen Dougherty, Student Board Representatives; Gerhard P. Dietrich, Vice Chair, Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation; David and Valerie Aston; Maria Conway; Christine Donovan; Tom Gibson; Rebecca Lowenstein; Michelle Mowad; Julie Pustilnick; Lisa Rhodarmer; and John and Betty Storti.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes: Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the minutes of the Work Session of 10/15/01, the General Meeting of 10/18/01, the Personnel Committee Meeting of 10/25/01 and the Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting of 10/26/01, as shown in Enclosures #1 through #4. Dr. Lipshutz moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the minutes. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was approved.

Financial Reports: Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the financial reports that were listed as Enclosures #5 through #16. 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 10/31/01; the Food Service Report for the month ending 08/31/01; Outstanding Investment Report, Cash Flow Summary, Comparison of Taxes, Real Estate Escrow Report and Reconciliation of Cash Accounts for the month ending 10/31/01; the Budget Analysis/Deficit Status Report through 10/31/01; and the Treasurer's Report for the month ending 10/31/01. Mr. Bickleman advised that the Bond Fund Report had been distributed as a yellow page. Mr. Orlow noted that board members had requested and received information on the district's contract with Scott Contractors, the work in progress

and planned remediation of conditions on the four multi-use fields. He advised that the balance outstanding on the project plus retainage totaled approximately \$468,000.00. Board members briefly discussed the data provided and asked Gilbane to outline the fieldwork needed and administration to seek the professional judgment of a reputable turf contractor on the cost of having the work done. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the financial reports. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Staff Report: Mr. Orlow introduced Darlene Davis, Principal, Conshohocken Elementary School, who led a presentation on instruction programs and initiatives at the school. She and Ms. Conway, Ms. Donovan and Ms. Rhodarmer, teachers at Conshohocken, presented information on components of the school-wide program, especially all-day kindergarten. The speakers noted the progress that had been made under the program. Ms. Davis highlighted the groundwork that had been laid and the impact of the after-school program, community partnerships, the behavioral program, and parental involvement. The teachers outlined the key components of the all-day kindergarten program. These included assured readiness for learning, balanced literacy through reading and writing, and integrated reading and math, as well as a curriculum geared to PA standards, problem-solving programs, technology support and parent-teacher partnerships. The presenters believed that these initiatives, taken together, produced the remarkable results that they shared with the Board. Ms. Davis thanked the Board and district administrators for their on-going support of the initiatives.

Old Business: None.

Correspondence: Mr. Orlow recognized Gerhard P. Dietrich, Vice Chair, Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation. Mr. Dietrich proposed awards of mini-grants, as shown in Enclosure #17, and asked for Board approval. Mr. Pinheiro moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the grant proposals. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Dietrich introduced Ms. Lowenstein and Ms. Pustilnick who gave a brief presentation on their mini-grant project, a program supporting multi-cultural awareness in the 5th grade through the reading of historical fiction. They highlighted the buddy reading, group discussion and interdisciplinary teamwork that were part of their program and thanked the foundation for its support.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Cotter briefly recapped his earlier remarks on the routine report shown in Enclosures #18 and #19. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Yunker seconded a motion to approve the report. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Student Board Representative Report: Ms. Dougherty thanked Mr. Orlow for speaking at Student Council earlier in the month. She went on to provide

information on a school beautification project to support anti-vandalism, a SADD program to demonstrate to students the effects of drug and alcohol use. Ms. Kurtz provided an update on events at the high school, including the Halloween and sophomore dances, the fall theater production of *Fame*, National Honor Society Induction, and the Miss PW program. Mr. Yunker asked the representatives about student reaction to the possibility of making final exams mandatory so that the district could collect data on student performance. He raised a couple of possibilities: Students with grades of 93 or above remaining exempt while students below had to take them, students with grades of 93 or above having to take exams but not having their grades counted, and all students having to take finals that count as part of their final grade. The representatives thought that students with grades of 93 or above would prefer to be exempt from exams but would take the exams seriously if they had to take them.

New Business: Mr. Orlow asked for Board action on the request from the high school Ski Club advisors for an overnight trip to Killington, Vermont from 01/04/02 to 01/06/02. Mr. O'Neill noted a typographical error in Enclosure #20. Dr. Cotter confirmed that the request was listed correctly in the agenda. Mr. O'Neill moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the request. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow asked Mr. Bell if he had talked with the Whitemarsh Township Manager about correspondence from Whitemarsh Township requesting permission to place a sign dedicating the township's open space adjacent to the district's new playing fields to former Township Supervisor John P. McCarthy. See Enclosure #21. Mr. Bell reported that he had spoken with Mr. Gregan and that Mr. Gregan had confirmed that the township preferred the site at the end of Franklin Way. He also briefly discussed the other locations where township roads passed near the property and suggested that the end of Fairway Road might be the best alternative. Mr. Orlow reiterated Board concern that signage not mislead local residents. Mr. Bell reported that he had advised Mr. Gregan that the district was willing to work with the township on resolving the sign issue, perhaps by installing a joint township and district sign at several locations around the perimeter of the property. Dr. Lipshutz advised that the township might already have purchased its sign. Mr. Bell advised that Mr. Gregan would be going back to the Township Board of Supervisors for their reaction and input.

Mr. Orlow asked for Board action on a contract for a mother to transport her child to the Pathway School at the rate of \$0.345 per mile, as Enclosure #22. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to approve the contract. On a roll call vote, all voted on favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow sought Board action on the anti-vandalism programs at the middle school and the high school. Dr. Lipshutz moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to give the student councils at the high school and middle school \$2,237.00 and

\$1,125.00 respectively and to reauthorize the program at the current levels of **\$5,000.00** and **\$3,000.00** respectively for 2001-02 school year. See Enclosure #23. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow and Dr. Cotter reminded the community that Board had received several calendar scenarios for the coming school year and would be considering the calendar after the district had received formal input from the CEA. Dr. Cotter also shared with the Board information on the timing of Jewish holidays in the coming school year. Mr. Pinheiro reminded the community that the Board had already decided that the start of classes for the coming year would be on 09/03/02, the day after Labor Day. Dr. Cotter noted that Board consideration of the calendar would be based on two parameters - preserving spring break and finishing classes by the end of the second week in June. He also noted interest in making Election Day an in-service day when students would not be in school.

Solicitor's Report: Mr. Sultanik sought Board authorization to appeal the assessments of five properties: Parcel numbers 050011848108, 490000000959, 650001336102, 650010699009, and 650008197009. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. O'Neill seconded a motion to provide the necessary authorization. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Committee Reports: Intermediate Unit: Mr. Pinheiro reported that the I.U. had recognized him for his years of service. He also advised the Board that it would have the opportunity to nominate a representative to the Board.

CMCAVTS: Mr. Johnson reported that the Joint Operating Committee had honored Mr. O'Neill for his 14 years of service.

Personnel: Mr. Pinheiro reported that the committee would be meeting the following Monday evening.

Finance: Mr. O'Neill reported that the committee would be meeting at 6:30 p.m. on 11/28/01.

Curriculum and Program: Mr. Yunker advised that the committee had met earlier in the evening to discuss social studies textbooks and the policy on final exams. He recapped earlier comments on the policy and noted that Ms. Campbell had been tasked to provide more information on the data that was being lost when students were exempt from the exams.

Buildings & Grounds/Transportation: No report.

Community Relations: Mr. Johnson reminded the Board and the community that the next town meeting would be on the subject of the district's "Above and Beyond" program and would be held at the Plymouth Township Building on 12/04/01.

Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Marchozzi seconded a motion to approve a contract with Massey Powell to provide services in communicating with the public on the district's "Above and Beyond" program. Mr. Yunker suggested that there was no clear need for the service. Mr. Orlow suggested that the firm had expertise in the area and would serve as a resource to Mr. Sherman and the committee as well. Mr. Yunker suggested seeing what the district could do on its own and look at the contract idea again in the spring. Mr. Johnson noted that Massey Powell would also be providing the district with support in upgrading CITV programming. Dr. Cotter noted that the company had political access in Harrisburg and could be helpful in the capital. On a roll call vote, all but Mr. Yunker and Mr. Carroll voted in favor. Mr. Yunker and Mr. Carroll voted in opposition. The motion was carried.

Legislative: Mr. Carroll provided an update on bills under consideration in the PA Legislature, some information on cyber-schools in the commonwealth, and some concepts being considered in Harrisburg on what it takes to create successful school budgets. The latter included cost and educational factors, a 75%-25% local-state split in funding support, and taxpayer referendums when funding exceed a cap of 20 equalized mills.

Public Comments: None.

Additional Board Comments: Mr. Marchozzi asked that someone monitor the construction of the stage planned in the courtyard of the high school under a mini-grant approved that evening. Mr. Yunker asked for an update on long-distance field trips already approved. Dr. Cotter reported that the band would not be going to the Outback Bowl because of parental concerns about the current situation in the country. He also reported that the basketball team was still planning on going to the holiday tournament in Arizona, that the district would be looking at the spring trip to Spain in the next several weeks, and that not much discussion was going on about the senior class trip. Board members asked Dr. Cotter to look into the deadlines for making decisions so that participants do not lose money.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**James M. Bell
Board Secretary**