

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, JUNE 16, 2003**

President Orlow convened the work session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:38 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on June 16, 2003.

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

Board Members Absent: William Ryan.

Also Attending: Vincent F. Cotter, Superintendent; MaryEllen Gorodetzer, Assistant Superintendent; Patricia Iannelli, Director of Accountability and Compliance; Gerald Berger, Director of Human Resources; Fred Shipman, Director of Pupil Services; James M. Bell, Director of Support Services/Board Secretary; Joseph P. Bickleman, Chief Financial Officer/Board Treasurer; Monica Sullivan, Principal, Plymouth Whitemarsh High School; Sue Castle, Chairperson, Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation; Roe Overcash and Wendy Kleckner, teachers, Colonial Elementary School; Glen Williard and Kristen Kilker, Public Financial Management; Nancy Mortimer O'Brien; Pascal Scoles; students receiving certificates of achievement and participating in a presentation to the Board, their families and friends.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance. He then recognized Ms. Overcash who introduced students from Colonial Elementary School and presented them, on behalf of the Board, with certificates of achievement for their work in poetry. See Attachment #1.

Mr. Orlow recognized Ms. Castle who asked Ms. Overcash to provide the Board with an overview of a major grant from the foundation. Ms. Overcash and 4th grade students described their work on a butterfly garden in the center courtyard of the elementary school. She and the students described how the garden offered them the opportunity to work across the curriculum in math, science and language arts while doing the research and reporting involved in the project. Students had the opportunity to discuss their work with small groups of board members and administrators.

Mr. Orlow announced that the Board had met in executive sessions on 05/21/03 for informational purposes and 06/02/03 and 06/16/03 for personnel and legal matters.

Minutes: Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the minutes the Work Session of 05/12/03, the Buildings and Grounds Committee Meeting of 05/14/03, the Special Meeting of 05/15/03, the General Meeting of 05/15/03, the Special Meeting of 05/28/03, the Personnel Committee Meeting of 06/03/03, the Finance Committee Meeting of 06/09/03 and the Community Relations and Student Life Committee Meeting of 06/09/03, as shown in Enclosures #1 through #8 and an enclosure to be provided for Thursday evening. Mr. Bell,

Dr. Lipshutz and Mr. Yunker reported the need for changes in pages 4215, 4182 and 4189 of the enclosures.

Financial Reports: Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the financial reports that were listed as Enclosures #9 through #20 of Thursday's agenda. They included the Budget Transfer Report for 06/03, the Bond Fund Report, Capital Projects Report; General Fund and Program Bills, Capital Reserve Fund Report; Food Services Bills/Cafeteria Report, Outstanding Investment Report, Cash Flow Summary, Comparison of Taxes Collected, Real Estate Escrow Report and Reconciliation of Cash Accounts for the month ending 05/31/03; the Budgetary/Deficit Status Report of 06/03; and Treasurer's Report for the month ending 05/31/03. Mr. Orlow inquired about the status of escrowed funds for which the district had requested release from Whitmarsh Township. Mr. Bickleman reported that the funds had just been received and would be reflected in the financial reports for the July meeting.

Public Comments on the Agenda: None.

Staff Report: None.

Adjustment of the Agenda: Mr. Orlow advised that he would be taking an item on the agenda out of order. He moved to item "D" under *New Business* and recognized Mr. Williard of PFM who gave an overview of a financial update and proposal to refund a portion of the district's 1999 bonds to realize savings of approximately \$500,000 and qualify for approximately \$310,000 of bank-qualified new money for capital projects. Mr. Williard's report and proposal are attached to these minutes as Attachment #1. Mr. Williard asked for Board approval on Thursday evening to proceed with the refinancing process and advised that he would come back at the July meeting for final approval of the refinancing itself. Board members had a number of questions about the details of the refinancing proposal. Mr. Williard responded. He indicated that the refinancing had been specifically structured to provide all of the savings up front and an additional cash benefit to support the district's planned capital improvement. Mr. Slutsky suggested that the Board set the threshold for refinancing the 1999 bonds at a minimum of \$320,000 in savings.

Old Business: Mr. Orlow noted that the Board would be taking action on Thursday evening on the second reading of a revision of Policy #227.1 – *Activities Code of Ethics*. See Enclosure #21 of Thursday's agenda. This proposed revision would eliminate the pledge/signature page. Board members had no questions on the revision.

Dr. Sullivan reviewed with the Board the substantive changes proposed in the high school handbook, as shown in Enclosure #59 of Thursday's agenda. She noted that page #39 stated that signing for the handbook indicated that the recipient acknowledged receipt of the book and had reviewed the *Activities Code of Ethics* contained therein. She also reported that page #4 contained new language that stated that class rank would be based only on courses taken by students while they were enrolled at the high school. Mr. Orlow

asked if any change had been made in the signature page. Dr. Sullivan reported that there had been no change in the language but noted that both students and their parent(s) would be signing the page.

Correspondence: Mr. Orlow noted that the Thursday agenda included a letter from John J. Heleniak, Conshohocken Borough Manager requesting Board approval for sharing the cost of a new crossing guard at East Elm and Poplar Streets. See Enclosure #22.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Cotter briefly recapped his report as it was shown in Enclosures #23 through #28 of the agenda for the meeting the following Thursday. He noted that the report contained both personnel actions, changes to the district's substitute list, reassignment of long-term substitutes who had completed their assignments to the per diem substitute list, staffing recommendations for summer school and the summer reading program and a request for approval of nine Master Teachers. He walked board members through the key elements of the enclosures and highlighted, in particular, the district's expectations for its Master Teachers, the professional learning community that they would help to create, and the high profile events in which they would participate. Dr. Cotter noted that the teacher's would be appointed for two years and would be reimbursed in two installments. Mr. Orlow noted that the educational pathways that had been put in place a couple of years ago were now coming to fruition.

New Business: Mr. Orlow noted that the Board would be acting on the 2003-04 budget on Thursday evening. He advised that the budget would total \$66,584,000.00 and would call for no real estate tax increase. He reported that the budget would keep the tax rate at 14.25 mils, set the real estate transfer tax at 1%, the amusement tax at 10%, charge \$20.00 for a real estate tax certificate and set the billing date for 2003-04 taxes on 07/01/03. See Enclosure #29 of the agenda for Thursday evening.

Mr. Orlow advised that the Board would be acting on Thursday evening on recommendations to reappoint Dr. Marc H. Neiberg, D.O. and Dr. Glenn Miller, D.O. school physicians with annual retainers of \$1,524.20 and hourly salaries of \$106.25 for the 2003-04 school year. He also reported that Dr. Neiberg would receive \$40.65 for new employee exams and that Dr. Arnold, DMD was recommended for reappointment as School Dentist at an hourly clinic rate of \$51.15 and a rate of \$2.15 per mandated student for the coming year. Mr. Orlow advised that all fees represented 3% increases over the current school year.

Mr. Orlow advised that the Board would be acting on Thursday evening on a series of contract renewals for 2003-04. Enclosures from Thursday's agenda are listed where applicable.

- **Progressions Group – Enclosure #30:** The proposed agreement would establish the rate for services for homebound education services at \$23.70 per hour. The rate for the current year was \$23.00. Mr. Orlow asked where the school was and if the costs were for non-residents. Mr. Shipman advised that the group was

located in the former Northwestern facility in Fort Washington. He also reported that the students came from outside the district and that the district billed home districts for the costs of the services.

- **Central Montgomery MH/MR – Enclosure #31:** Mr. Shipman reported that the agreement covered services by psychiatric social workers licensed by the state. The cost to the district would be for a total of 816 hours at \$41,208.00. In response to questions from Mr. Orlow, Mr. Shipman reported that the budget was based on past experience and that some grant and Safe Schools funds were available to cover some of the costs. He noted that the social workers provided links to services.
- **Physical Therapy – Enclosure #32:** Mr. Orlow noted that the Administration was recommending that Carol Scheuerman, PT continue to provide services at \$59.45 per hour, a cost that reflects a 3% increase over the prior year.
- **Occupational Therapy – Enclosure #33:** Mr. Orlow noted that the Administration was recommending that Kim Hartranft, OT continue to provide services at \$59.45 per hour, a cost that reflects a 3% increase over the prior year.
- **Extended School Year (ESY) Contract – Enclosure #34:** Mr. Orlow reported that the services would be funded by IDEA.
- **Carbon Lehigh IU (Data Processing) – Enclosure #35:** Mr. Orlow advised that the Administration was recommending renewal of its data processing contract. He asked if the district still had concerns about services from Carbon Lehigh. Dr. Cotter advised that there had been some issues with processing year-end student grades, probably because of the volume of work coming in from all of the schools that Carbon Lehigh serves. Mr. Orlow asked if the district planned to take advantage of the business services offered by Carbon Lehigh. Dr. Cotter noted that the district had been using some business services. He confirmed that data from the intermediate unit was being integrated with data from Tetra Data after the district had taken steps to cleanse the data from Tetra Data.
- **Montgomery County Head Start – Enclosure #37:** Mr. Orlow reported that the Board would be acting on a recommendation to renew its lease with Head Start at an annual rent to the program of \$3,605.00, a 3% increase over the previous year.

Mr. Orlow advised that the Board would be acting on a recommendation to raise lunch prices at the district's elementary schools and middle school by \$0.20 and to raise selected ala cart prices at the high school and the price of adult lunches by the same amount. See Enclosure #37 of Thursday evening's agenda. He noted that the increases would be necessary to have the program be self-supporting. Mr. Yunker asked Mr. Bell why the Food Service Department had moved away from keeping adult lunch prices double the price of lunches at the middle school. Mr. Bell reported that he was unaware of a linkage

between the prices but would check with the department and report back to the Board. Mr. Orlow asked if staff were able to leave their schools at lunch time. Dr. Cotter reported that they were able to do so but had to notify their principal and sign out.

Mr. Orlow noted that the Board would be acting on a recommendation from the Administration to approve a proposal from its independent auditor for audit service for 2003-04. Mr. Bickleman reported that representatives from the firm would be meeting with the Finance Committee of the Board on Tuesday morning to discuss the proposal and the new audit guidelines that required more work from the auditors. Mr. Orlow asked Mr. Bickleman to circulate the proposal to all board members prior to the action meeting on Thursday.

Mr. Orlow indicated that the Administration would be seeking Board approval on Thursday of a resolution establishing a Colonial School District Trust Fund Checking Account to be used for receipts and disbursements associated with high school memorial funds and senior award donations. He noted that the account would require the signatures of high school administrators and would limit the use of activity funds in accordance with sound accounting practices. See Enclosure #38 for Thursday evening.

Mr. Orlow advised that the Board would take action on Thursday evening on Enclosure #29, a request for authorization for a student to attend the Future Business Leaders of America National Conference in Dallas, Texas from 06/22/03 through 06/28/03. Mr. Orlow asked if the trip was new. Dr. Cotter noted that it was a trip to a national event that arose because the district had someone who qualified at that level. He reported that the club and the student would cover the costs of the trip. Mr. Davis asked why the matter had come before the Board. Dr. Cotter indicated that it was being presented for Board consideration and action because it involved a student taking an overnight trip on district business.

Mr. Orlow reported that the Board would be acting on a revision of rental fees for selected facilities in 2003-04. Mr. Bell provided an update on the recommendation of the Buildings & Grounds Committee to increase rental fees for the district's large auditoriums and for the high school stadium and athletic fields. He noted that the increases would cover district costs and keep district fees from falling too low in relation to other districts and encourage facility users rely too heavily on district fields and explore other options. Mr. Johnson noted that the Buildings and Grounds Committee recommended that the district not make its tennis courts available for use by outside groups other than its local municipalities and keep the courts free for use by residents when not in use by the district. Mr. Yunker asked that the tennis courts be added to the list of facilities but show them as unavailable in the top three categories.

Mr. Orlow advised that the Board would be providing direction to the Administration on the issue of planning for and implementing an all-day kindergarten program for the fall of the 2004-05 school year. He provided a brief history of the district's deliberation of the issues over the past few years. Mr. Orlow noted the district had held a special meeting of the Board on 05/28/03 for the purposed of pulling into a single report all of the efforts by

different administrative departments to identify the pros and cons of implementing a full-day program and the associated costs for doing so. He asked board members who still had questions to contact the appropriate administrators prior the Thursday's meeting.

Mr. Orlow noted that the district would be taking action on Thursday evening on two bids through the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit. The first was for trash disposal for the following three years (Enclosure #42) and the second was for oil, fuel and gasoline for the 2003-04 school year (Enclosure #43). Mr. Orlow asked if participation in the IU bids was voluntary. Mr. Bickleman replied that it was voluntary but reported that most districts in the county participated. He and Mr. Bell provided a brief description of the process. Mr. Bickleman reported that he had adjusted the budget to reflect the bid prices. He also advised that the fuel bid was for only a single year because of the volatility of the market. Mr. Yunker asked if the district had looked into bidding on its own. Mr. Bell reported that Mr. Yemm had looked into the possibility and discovered that prices would be lower this year by participating in the IU bid.

Mr. Orlow announced that the Board would be acting on a strategy and communications services proposal from Massey Powell Enterprises on Thursday evening. See Enclosure #44 of Thursday's agenda. He advised that the proposal was for providing information to the Board on an as-needed basis on issues that it would be facing in the years ahead. These issues included an earned income tax, tax increment financing and the rising cost of health care.

Mr. Orlow advised that the Board would be taking action of a request from the PWHS trainer to attend an annual conference in St. Louis from 06/24/03 through 06/28/03. Mr. Yunker referred to the request form and asked if teachers were responsible for securing their own substitutes. Dr. Cotter reported that they were not responsible for securing a substitute but were encouraged to state their preference for a substitute if they were aware of one that would be well qualified to cover their classes.

Mr. Orlow reported that the Board would be acting on Thursday evening on a series of bids shown as Enclosures #46 through #49 on Thursday's agenda. He briefly recapped the information on the bid for student insurance coverage, the re-bid of HVAC work at Colonial Elementary School Office, and bids for an air handler at the Plymouth Elementary School Office and the scoreboard at the PWHS pool. Mr. Bell responded to the questions of board members. He confirmed that the HVAC and air handler were for the office suites in the schools and stated his belief that the cost for the scoreboard included installation.

Solicitor's Report: No report.

Committee Reports: Finance: Mr. Slutsky advised that the committee would be meeting with representatives of Barbacane Thornton, the district's independent auditor, the following morning to review the firm's audit proposal.

Curriculum and Program: Dr. Lipshutz advised that the committee had reviewed information on all-day kindergarten, including student achievement information shared by Darlene Davis, Principal at Conshohocken Elementary School on the all-day program there. Dr. Lipshutz also reported that the committee had reviewed the revised student handbook at the high school, discussed programs for students with special needs at Colonial Middle School, and received updates on the summer math and music programs. He advised that the committee would be discussing the new K-5 program next month as well as taking a look at the results of testing for 6th graders in standardized tests following the implementation of the updated curriculum.

Buildings and Grounds/Transportation: Mr. Johnson advised that the committee was recommending the 12-year renewal of its transportation contract with Sague Auto Service at an annual increase of 3% except for rate freezes in the second and eighth years.

Additional Public Comment: None.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 10:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James M. Bell
Board Secretary