

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, MAY 20, 2004**

President Orlow convened the **GENERAL MEETING** of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:38 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on May 20, 2004.

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

Board Members Absent: None.

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 Secretary; Stephanie Cousounis and Ryan Moore, Board Student Representatives; Monica Sullivan, Principal, Plymouth Whitemarsh High School; Patricia Madeira, Principal, Conshohocken Elementary School; David Sherman; Administrative Assistant, Community Relations; Jim Muscarella, President, CEA; Jason Bacani; Chris Feiler; Robert Franz; Lauren Miller; Clint Rickert; Mitchell Zimmer and middle school students Andrea Kaplan, Brian Lipshutz and Kevin Minehan.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance and announced that the Board had met in Executive session to discuss personnel and legal matters on 05/20/04. Mr. Orlow recognized Chris Feiler, a teacher at Colonial Middle School, who introduced Andrea Kaplan, Brian Lipshutz and Kevin Minehan. The three students received certificates of achievement in recognition of their being named talented youth by the John Hopkins University Center for scoring exceptionally well in the SAT as middle school students. Brian Lipshutz was also recognized for his student involvement in NASA.

Minutes: Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the minutes of the Work Session of 04/12/04, the Buildings and Grounds Committee Meeting of 04/15/04, the General Meeting of 04/15/04, the Community Relations and Student Life Committee Meeting of 04/19/04, the Personnel Committee Meeting of 05/05/04, the Special Meeting of 05/05/04, the Finance Committee Meeting of 05/06/04, the Buildings and Grounds Committee Meeting of 05/11/04 and the Community Relations and Student Life Committee Meeting of 05/14/04, as shown in Enclosures #1 through #7 and #49 and #50 of the agenda. Mr. Johnson moved and Ms. Glodek seconded a motion to approve the minutes. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Financial Reports: Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the financial reports. They included the Budget Transfer Reports for 04/04; the Bond Fund Report, Capital Project Report; General Fund and Federal Program Bills, Capital Reserve Fund Report; Food Services Bills/Cafeteria Report, Outstanding Investment Report, Cash Flow Summary, Comparisons of Taxes Collected, Real Estate Escrow Report, Reconciliation of Cash

Accounts and the Budgetary/Deficit Status Report for the month ending 04/30/04; and Treasurer's Report for the month ending 04/30/04, as shown in Enclosures #8 through #19. Ms. Glodek moved and Dr. Lipshutz 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: Mr. Franz asked the Board to consider providing a pie chart on all unfunded mandates in the budget to assist taxpayers with understanding the impact of these costs. Mr. Franz and Mr. Orlow spoke about the decreasing state report for transportation and the increasing costs that the district experienced in transporting children to well over 100 schools. Mr. Orlow noted the district's efforts to get information to the public on the budget process and to solicit community input.

Staff Report: Dr. Madeira provided a brief report on balanced literacy initiatives at Conshohocken Elementary School. She highlighted efforts, shared data on guided reading, independent reading, word work and writing and illustrated the relationship of the curriculum to state standards.

Mr. Slutsky made a public presentation of the tentative 2004-05 operating budget of the district. He recapped his comments of Monday evening and noted the district's commitment to both its Above and Beyond initiatives and its taxpayers. He reported that the district built a zero-based budget that did not rely on the prior year's budget but started from scratch each budget year. Mr. Slutsky indicated that the district's taxes remained among the lowest in the county, reported that the state considered the district wealthy and provided little in the way of subsidies, and noted the increases in unfunded mandates that all districts faced. He reported on approximately \$3,000,000 in increased spending in the budget, much of it for items beyond Board control such as unfunded mandates for *No Child Left Behind* and transportation to many schools outside the district, as well as increases for retirement and health insurance. Mr. Slutsky also voiced the district's commitment to the all-day kindergarten program, noted the slow growth of the district's tax base and walked the Board and the community through a PowerPoint presentation that highlighted expenditures and revenues. The details of the budget data are attached to these minutes and Attachment #1. The preliminary budget of \$66,584,000 called for increased expenditures of \$3,184,701 or 4.78%. The estimated real estate tax rate to fund the budget was 15.01 mils, an increase of 5.33%. Mr. Slutsky noted the efforts of the Board and the Administration in preparing the budget. Mr. Orlow thanked Mr. Slutsky and Mr. Bickleman for the thorough presentation and reported that the district was at a crossroad where growth in the tax base had leveled off and legislation at the state level could bring both budget referendums and unfunded mandates to districts across the state. Mr. Slutsky noted the negative impact that referendums had on other states such as New York.

Old Business: None.

Correspondence: Mr. Orlow requested Board action on an invoice for annual dues of \$11,250 for membership in the Pennsylvania School Boards Association (PSBA). See Enclosure # 20. He noted the value in having a voice in Harrisburg representing the state's

501 school districts. Dr. Ryan moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the payment of the invoice. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Cotter recapped his remarks on Monday on Enclosures #21 and #25 of the agenda. He updated the listed personnel actions and advised that the information on the summer reading staff had been restructured to make it easier for the Board to understand the appointments being recommended. He specifically noted staffing levels in each summer program category. Mr. Orlow noted that Mr. Berger would be busy during the summer seeking replacements for retiring teachers. He also noted that the retirements would have an impact on the preliminary budget and that the Board would be taking a close look at that. Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve Enclosures #21 through #23, #51 and #52. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Dr. Cotter reported that Dr. Sullivan, with the support of the district office, recommended a reduction of one full-time Technology Education teacher, one full-time art teacher and one full-time Family and Consumer Science teacher at the high school, effective 06/30/04. He explained that changes in required courses at the high school had impacted on the students' abilities to schedule electives and reported on the high school's efforts to balance class sizes. Dr. Cotter advised that the reductions in Family and Consumer Science and Technology were driven by class sizes smaller than ten students and that the reduction in Art was based on a decline of enrollment of more than 25% over a five-year period. Mr. Orlow reminded the Board and the community that the resolution was the first step in a process that would require the approval of the PA Department of Education. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the Staff Reduction Resolution in Enclosure #24. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Dr. Cotter also reported on a request from an English teacher at the high school for professional development leave during the second semester of 2004-05. He confirmed that the teacher was proposing a nine-credit program. He noted, however, that a thorough review of the courses did not indicate that the staff member needed to take leave for the semester to take them. Dr. Cotter did not recommend approval of the request in Enclosure #25. Mr. Orlow noted that denial of the leave request did not mean denial of the courses. Dr. Scoles moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to deny the leave request. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Board Student Representatives Report: Ms. Cousounis reported on the senior class trip, the senior prom, the formal dances for other classes, the distinguished graduate induction program, the anti-vandalism program, commencement speakers and the senior awards assembly. She also thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve as a student Board representative for two years. Mr. Moore highlighted the Asian Awareness Concert, the middle school program for incoming freshmen at the high school, spring concerts, AP exams, the VICA Club dance, and student elections. He thanked Ms. Cousounis, on behalf of the student body, for her service on the Board and wished her good luck as she started her college years. Mr. Orlow thanked and congratulated Ms. Cousounis on her service to the Board and the district, gave her a plaque commemorating that service, and asked for

her comments on the upcoming post prom party. Ms. Cousounis reported that many students were talking about attending the first post prom party scheduled for the high school.

New Business: Mr. Orlow reported that May was the month that the Board made a number of annual appointments and approvals. He noted that all of the appointment recommendations had been reviewed on Monday evening and sought Board action on the annual appointment of the Board Treasurer. He noted that Mr. Bickleman had served ably in this position for 20 years and was recommended to continue in the position for the coming school year at an annual rate of \$8,206.00. Mr. Slutsky moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the appointment. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried. Mr. Bickleman thanked the Board for its support.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action on the annual appointment of the District Solicitor. He reported that the recommendation was to reappoint Jeffrey T. Sultanik, Esq. of Fox Rothschild at an annual retainer rate of \$21,403.00 plus out of pocket expenses and a litigation rate of \$155.00/hour, as outlined in Enclosure #26. Mr. Slutsky moved and Ms. Glodek seconded a motion to approve the appointment. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow sought Board action on the appointment of Wachovia Bank as the district's depository in the coming school year and on a list of investment banks, trusts and savings and loan institutions to be solicited for interest rates during the 2004-05 school year. See Enclosure #27. Mr. Slutsky moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the appointment and the list. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow reported that the Board had interviewed candidates for Student Board Representative and alternate that evening and reminded the community that the alternate served on the Community Relations and Student Life Committee and that the representative and the alternate served as alternates for each other. Ms. Glodek moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to appoint Jessica Klein as Student Board Representative for a two-year term and Steven Das as alternate and representative to the Community Relations and Student Life Committee. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow sought Board action on Mr. Bell's annual compensation for serving as Board Secretary. He noted that Mr. Bell had been elected to the four-year position in May 2001 and that the proposed compensation rate was \$6,420.00 for the coming year. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the compensation. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor.

Mr. Orlow requested Board approval of the annual Allocation for Federal Programs for 2004-05, as outlined in Enclosure #28. Dr. Cotter advised that the enclosure had been updated to reflect mandated decreases in Title II and Title IV funding that adversely affected staff development. Mr. Slutsky moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the allocation. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action to adopt textbooks for the 2004-05 school year. See Enclosure #29. Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the list. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow sought Board action on proposed changes to the student and parent handbooks at the middle school and high school, as outlined in Enclosure #30. Dr. Sullivan recapped her comments of Monday evening. Dr. Cotter noted that the yellow page changes contained language slightly different from Monday evening. Dr. Sullivan reported on language to make honors more meaningful and move from weighted to un-weighted averages for honor roll and graduation honors. She also indicated that finals would be eliminated in certain electives and that there would be no exemptions for finals in the remaining courses. Ms. Cousounis thought that exemption from exams was an incentive for students to do better during the semester. Mr. Orlow noted that the downside of students not taking exams was a problem with collecting reliable data on student achievement. Dr. Sullivan recapped changes in the school's drug and alcohol policy to include anabolic steroids. Mr. Johnson moved and Dr. Scoles seconded a motion to approve the changes. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow summarized comments on Monday evening on the 2004-05 MCIU Special Education Services agreement in Enclosure #31. Dr. Ryan moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the agreement. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow noted that the Board would be taking action that evening on first reading of a new policy required by *No Child Left Behind* legislation, Policy #107.1, Assessment of Education Program. See Enclosure #32. He indicated that the Administration had inserted references to residents in one paragraph but not in another and that language in paragraph 5 of page 1 should match that in paragraph 4. Dr. Lipshutz moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the policy on first reading with the suggested changes included. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action on a request to take five students to a national conference in Nashville Tennessee from 06/20/04 through 06/24/04. Costs were to be paid by the students' families, as outlined in Enclosure #33. Ms. Glodek noted that the Community Relations and Student Life Committee had reviewed the request. She moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the trip. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow sought Board action on Thursday evening on seven bids for supplies, as shown in Enclosures #34 through #40. He noted that the bids had been reviewed on Monday and sought approval of all of them in a single motion. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Slutsky seconded a motion to approve the bids. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Solicitor's Report: Mr. Sultanik sought Board approval of disciplinary stipulation #95162, a violation of the district's drug and alcohol policy. Dr. Scoles moved and Dr. Lipshutz seconded a motion to approve the stipulation. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Committee Reports: Intermediate Unit: Dr. Ryan reported that the I.U. had allocated \$8,500,000 for non-public services in the coming year. He also reported on the reappointment of Fox Rothschild as solicitor and the setting of the salary for the new executive director. He also provided some background information on the new director.

CMCAVTS: Mr. Johnson sought Board approval of the vo-tech budget outlined in Enclosure #41. He noted that the Board had received and reviewed a copy of the budget the previous month. Mr. Johnson reported that the cost to the district would be \$1,850,689. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the budget. On a roll call vote all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Personnel: No report.

Finance: No report.

Curriculum and Program: No report.

Buildings and Grounds/Transportation: Mr. Johnson outlined for the Board the Change Order Request for caisson installation at Ridge Park Elementary School. Mr. Bell provided details on the test borings that the engineers had performed prior to the work, outlined the history of the caisson foundation under the original building, and explained the assumptions and the logic behind the specifications that were developed for caisson installation under the new classroom wing. Mr. Bell also noted that additional change orders would result in savings to the district that would partially offset the added cost of the caisson change order. Mr. Sultanik noted that, while his office had not reviewed the technical specifications for the project, the Change Order Request fell within the guidelines set in the specifications. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the request. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Community Relations and Student Life: Ms. Glodek reported that the committee had met earlier in the month. She outlined efforts by Sue Castle and the Colonial Foundation in the area of fundraising and asked for Board support. She also asked for Board input on future projects to be funded by the foundation.

Ms. Glodek provided an update on a number of issues that had come before the committee. She announced the upcoming dedication of the High School Academic Hall of Fame in the science wing and reported on program schedules on CITV for Board Updates following Board meetings and on features covering district news and special initiatives. Ms. Glodek also sought Board consideration of a request to make district facilities available for filming a commercial feature film at Plymouth Elementary School. Board members discussed the request, expressed concerns about the eventual rating of the film and the potential adverse

impact that an “R” rated film might have on the district’s image. Ultimately, the Board reached consensus that it had no interest in making the school available for the film and asked Mr. Sherman to relay its position to the film company.

Legislative: Dr. Ryan advised that the committee had met with State Representative Larry Curry and been told that the Board would have to meet personally with state legislatures to have any impact on them.

Additional Public Comment: Mr. Franz sought some clarification of salaries in several categories of the preliminary budget. Mr. Bickleman provided the supporting information. He also provided information on some of the revenue sources in the budget.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James M. Bell
Board Secretary