

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

President Orlow convened the general meeting of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:04 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on October 16, 2003.

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

Board Members Absent: Thomas Yunker.

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; and Joseph P. Bickleman, Chief Financial Officer/Board Treasurer, Stephanie Cousounis and Ryan Moore, Student Board Representatives; David Sherman, Administrative Assistant, Community Relations; Jim Muscarela, President, CEA; John Quinn, Director CITV; Allan Berk, Teacher, PWHS; Kim Newell, Assistant Director, CITV; Steve Brown, Whitemarsh Township Environmental Advisory Board; Harriet Campbell, Whitemarsh Township Residents Association (WRTA); Dante Del Vecchio, Times Herald; Monica Drewniony, NLT; John J. Fleming, The Hill at Whitemarsh; Robert Franz; Dave Froelich, Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association; Nicole Fumo; Rob McMahon; Christine Marrone; Steven Nelson, Deputy Chief Operating Officer, Montgomery County; Pete Peterson, Bellevue Communications; Kim Sheppard, WRTA; Jeff Shields, Philadelphia Inquirer; and Katie Worrall, Chestnut Hill Local .

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance and recognized several staff members who introduced students who were receiving certificates of achievement from the Board. The Board recognized Joshua Rosen for academic achievement and Samantha Grala for excellence in poetry.

Minutes: Mr. Orlow sought Board action on the minutes of the Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting of 09/11/03, the Curriculum Committee Meeting of 09/18/03, the Work Session of 09/15/03, the General Meeting of 09/18/03, the Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting of 10/09/03, the Curriculum Committee Meeting of 10/13/03, the Buildings and Grounds Committee Meeting of 10/09/03 and the Curriculum Committee Meeting of 10/13/03, as shown in Enclosures #1 through #4, #33 and #34. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Davis 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. 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 09/30/03; the Budgetary/Deficit Status Report of 09/03; and Treasurer's Report for the month ending

09/30/03, as shown in Enclosures #5 through #16. Mr. Slutsky moved and Ms. Glodek 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 sought clarification of the conditions imposed on the open space land involved in the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Resolution on the agenda for Board action that evening. Mr. Orlow explained the open space guidelines for the land and noted the district's access to the land for educational purposes. Mr. Franz asked if there would be athletic fields on the property. Mr. Orlow reported that there was no intention to use the land for athletic fields. He indicated that the use of the space had not yet been spelled out in detail but that the intention was to use it much as it was used currently.

Mr. Orlow took that opportunity to move to a discussion of the TIF agreement on the agenda for Board action. He outlined the history of the project and explained the cooperative efforts that had gone into bringing the project to the point that the district would be the first of the taxing bodies to take action on the TIF Agreement. Mr. Orlow highlighted the benefits that the TIF offered to the community by preserving highly valued open space and avoiding the congestion that would come with development of the land. He also highlighted the economic benefits to the district. These included rising real estate revenues resulting from the construction of the Hill at Whitmarsh retirement community on land adjacent to the proposed open space and the long-term prospect of stable enrollment and open space for educational purposes that would come from preserving the land and preventing its development as residential properties. Mr. Orlow characterized the TIF project as a win for all involved. He noted that the district had pledged up to \$11,600,000 taxes (\$5,800,000 each for the sheep and Angus tracts) over the 20-year life of the TIF. He thanked members of the Board, the Administration and the community for their involvement and support.

Mr. Slutsky seconded Mr. Orlow's thanks and expressed how thrilled and honored he was to have been to be a part of the broad partnership that brought so many together in an unprecedented show of community support. Mr. Slutsky noted that the benefits of the TIF project would be felt for generations to come. He felt that the community partnership would serve as a model to the district students of what could be accomplished when people work together. Dr. Lipshutz asked Mr. Orlow to explain the other tax revenues that the district would realize by participating in the project. Mr. Orlow reported the \$60,000 in transfer taxes and the \$97,000 in roll-back taxes that the district would receive as the TIF project unfolded. He once again thanked all of the community groups for their support.

Ms. Campbell, Ms. Sheppard, Mr. Froelich, Ms. Drewniony, Mr. Nelson, Mr. Brown and Ms. Fumo all spoke on behalf of themselves and the organizations that they represented in favor of the TIF project and thanked the Board for its support. Mr. Slutsky moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the TIF resolution. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Staff Report: Mr. Quinn, Mr. Allen and Ms. Newell provided information on the development of CITV over the years, recent changes in course content, student achievement in the area television production, and current efforts at enhancing instruction and programming. Each speaker

provided highlights of improvements made in their areas of expertise and the team capped off its presentation with a video showcasing the quality of work that CITV now produces. Board members complimented the presenters on the caliber of recent productions and thanked them for their updates.

Mr. Slutsky stepped out of the room at approximately 8:45 p.m.

Old Business: None.

Correspondence: None.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Cotter updated the Board on his report as shown in Enclosures #17 through #19. He noted a custodial resignation and the new starting date for the incoming Principal of Conshohocken Elementary School. He also indicated that the substitute list was current as of 10/17/03 and that an assistant softball coach and a Lab Band Assistant had been added to the extra-duty/extra-pay list. He reiterated that an employee salary listing was available in the Human Resources Office for public review. Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the Superintendent's Report. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Student Board Representatives Report: Mr. Orlow welcomed the student representatives to their first meeting for the current school year. Mr. Moore told board members that he was honored to be serving as a board representative and provided his first report in that capacity. He highlighted a number of student activities at the high school including a special education field trip, the Renaissance Fair, the Principal's Advisory Committee, activities by Habitat for Humanity, and a student barbecue and concert. Ms. Cousounis reported on the activities of Homecoming Week, including the carnival, Powder Puff game, and the Homecoming game featuring the original colors of the first school team in 1953.

New Business: Mr. Orlow requested Board action on a request for approval of an annual ski trip for members of the high school ski club, as shown in Enclosure #20. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Lipshutz seconded a motion to approve the trip. On a roll call vote, all those present voted in favor. The motion was carried. Mr. Slutsky was not present for the vote.

Mr. Orlow sought Board action on a new request for approval for two middle school students to attend the ACDA Children's Honor Choir from 02/11/04 through 02/14/04 in Boston Massachusetts. See Enclosure #37. Dr. Cotter reported that the request had been received the preceding day and that the deadline for registration was 10/31/03. He also noted that the Friday and Monday of the event would be school days and that parents would serve as chaperones. Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the trip. On a roll call vote, all those present voted in favor. The motion was carried. Mr. Slutsky was not present for the vote.

Mr. Slutsky returned to the meeting at approximately 9:07 p.m.

Mr. Orlow recapped information presented on Monday evening on calendar options for the 2004-05 school year and the start date for the new school year. He noted that the Administration was seeking input from a variety of sources, including parent groups and the Colonial Education Association. He asked the Board Student Representatives for their input on starting school before or after Labor Day. Both preferred starting at the end of August to getting out of school at the end of June.

Mr. Orlow noted that the fundraising reports in Enclosure #22 were being provided for informational purposes only.

Mr. Orlow sought board action on the two conference requests contained in Enclosures #23 and #24. They were requests to attend the PMEA Conference in Erie, Pennsylvania from 04/21/04 through 04/24/04 and the International Metal Meet in Robinson, Illinois from 10/30/03 through 11/04/03. Mr. Orlow noted that the Board had reviewed the requests on Monday evening. Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the requests. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action on the bid for new light fixtures for the high school, as shown in Enclosure #25. Mr. Bell reported that the bid was for 104 fixtures and 300 tubes. Mr. Johnson advised that the new fixtures would increase the amount of light in the corridors and reduce the amount of energy being consumed to light them. Mr. Orlow noted that three samples had been installed for study and that a consensus had been reached on installing an attractive, efficient, cost-effective fixture that was the easy to maintain and service. Mr. Johnson moved and Ms. Glodek seconded a motion to approve the bid as recommended. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Solicitor's Report: No report.

Committee Reports: Dr. Ryan announced that the I.U. had issued its annual report and reported on the TOFPS dinner and the payment of \$9,000,000 in bills. He reminded all that the I.U. would be holding a Monte Carlo Night at the West Conshohocken Marriott on 10/17/03 to benefit summer programs for special needs students.

CMCAVTS: Mr. Johnson referred his fellow Board members to Enclosure #36 on a revision of the Articles of Agreement and a handout that contained a proposed sequence of actions to be taken by the Board on issues related to the funding of a planned renovation of the facility housing the Center for Technical Studies. The solicitor raised concerns about the impact on the district of some of the items on the agenda for action that evening, especially a possible negative impact on the district's ability to borrow. The Board reached a consensus to act on amending the Articles of Agreement but to table action on authorizing the Area Vocational-Technical Board to act on behalf of the district and represent the district in regard to financing the renovation and to enter into agreements with the Pennsylvania State Public School Building Authority or another authority for financing the renovation. Mr. Johnson reported that action would come later on approving the renovation project, entering agreements with consultants and appointing the Renovation Committee. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to

approve the Amended Articles of Agreement. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Personnel: Mr. Davis reported that the committee had met that evening to review the status of pending grievances.

Finance: Mr. Slutsky advised that the committee would be meeting soon to set the parameters for the 2004-05 budget and review the new GASB rules.

Curriculum and Program: Dr. Lipshutz reported that the committee had met the previous Monday evening and had reviewed current levels of student achievement at the high school, discussed making some changes in courses in response to data that indicated that some semester courses should be full-year courses. The committee had also looked at the probable need to make several AP course full-year opportunities that students might take in the place of regular courses and the possibility of requiring 30 rather than 28 credits to graduate. Dr. Lipshutz noted that many of these ideas would be going to Curriculum Council and back to the committee for review and additional input. He also advised that a number of them would require changes to the student handbook and district policy. He assured listeners that there would be ample opportunity for public comment during the process. Dr. Lipshutz also reported that the committee was looking into the weighting of AP courses and the new K-5 report card. Mr. Davis noted that data would be driving the tentative recommendations coming from the committee.

Building and Grounds/Transportation: Mr. Johnson advised that the committee was looking into parking and traffic safety issues at Whitmarsh Elementary School and that the all-day kindergarten, high school library, and Conshohocken curtain-wall projects were on schedule.

Community Relations and Student Life: Ms. Glodek announced that the new look of the district website would be on view the following day and that the Annual Report would be mailed the following week. She also advised that information shared at the Conshohocken Fun Fest of 10/04/03 was on display in the lobby of Conshohocken Elementary School. Ms. Glodek commented on what a great public relations tool the upgraded programming at CITV had become.

Legislative: Dr. Ryan reported that the most recent meeting had been cancelled. He also predicted that the legislature would finally pass the state budget before the election on 11/04/03 and that it would contain a 2.5% increase in the state sales tax.

Additional Public Comment: Mr. Franz questioned district expenditures for sports facilities when reports of standardized testing seemed to indicate that the district had much to do in the area of curriculum and instruction. Mr. Orlow noted that facility upgrades were easy to see while data on student performance was not. Dr. Gorodetzer reported that the district was making steady progress on student achievement, that proficiency levels on standardized tests were on the rise, and that the district had met standardized test goals under the *Above and Beyond* program early. She also noted that the district had received \$43,000 in state rewards for improved levels of achievement and that, while there was more to do, the district was pleased

with its level of growth. Dr. Cotter noted that the district was pushing hard in the area of student achievement and had the most comprehensive reform program in the region and probably in the state and mid-Atlantic area. He reported that the district's program was a model for other districts. Mr. Orlow indicated that it was good to question student achievement and that the district was using data on achievement to drive its decision-making. Mr. Franz noted, with approval, the fine efforts that were being made by the School Board to improve and similar efforts being made by the Township Board of Supervisors. He told the Board that he appreciated its efforts. Dr. Lipshutz said that he valued both the efforts of the Board and the Administration in the area of enhanced student achievement.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James M. Bell
Board Secretary