

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, AUGUST 19, 2004**

President Orlow convened the general meeting of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:00 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on August 19, 2004.

Board Members Present: Marc Orlow, Thomas Davis, Gary Johnson, Hope Luken, Susan Moore, Pascal Scoles, and Mitch Zimmer.

Board Members Absent: William Ryan and Steven Slutsky.

Also Attending: Vincent F. Cotter, Superintendent; MaryEllen Gorodetzer, Assistant Superintendent; Cassandra DeLong, Director of Pupil Services; Gerald Berger, Director of Human Resources; James M. Bell, Director of Support Services/Board Secretary; Joseph P. Bickleman, Chief Financial Officer/Board Treasurer; Jeffrey Sultanik, Board Solicitor; David Sherman, Administrative Assistant, Community Relations; John Quinn, Director of CITV; Scott Shearer, PFM; Randy Lawlace, Fox Rothschild; Mike Wolf, Dolphin and Bradbury; Rudolf J. Bartman; Kelly Brown; James and Carol Fazio; Kelly Frankhouser; Constance King; Pam McAnulty; Melinda Osmon-Roselli; Donna Van Busil and Joe Wylie.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes: Mr. Orlow directed Board attention to the minutes of the Work Session of 07/12/04, the General Meeting of 07/15/04, the Community Relations and Student Life Committee Meeting of 07/19/04, the Special Meeting of 07/20/04, the Finance Committee of 07/28/04, the Personnel Committee Meeting of 07/29/04, the Special Meeting of 08/12/04 and the Community Relations and Student Life Committee Meeting of 08/13/04. See Enclosures #1 through #6 and #39 and #40. Board members had no questions or comments. Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore 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 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, the Budgetary/Deficit Status Report and Treasurer's Report for the month ending 07/31/04, as shown in Enclosures #7 through #17. Board members had no questions or comments. Mr. Zimmer moved and Mr. Davis 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. Orlow indicated that, since there was an item of correspondence in the agenda on contract negotiations, the Board would hear comments on the negotiations at that time. No public comment was forthcoming.

Mr. Orlow noted the presence of several of the district's financial advisors and bond counsel and took Enclosure #47, the Incurred Debt Resolution, out of order for consideration at that time. Mr. Shearer walked the Board through the resolution before them. He explained the advantage of moving the planned borrowing for facilities projects forward so that it would be exempt from future back-end referendums on district budgets in Act 72. He noted that \$1,000,000 of the planned \$10,000,000 would provide debt service relief and \$9,000,000 would be available for capital projects. Mr. Shearer noted that the resolution would still give the Board the flexibility to capture the market at the most opportune time and reported that borrowing rates had been coming down. He advised the Board to act on the resolution contained in Enclosure #47 that evening. Mr. Lawlace and Mr. Wolf reaffirmed the information provided by Mr. Shearer. Mr. Orlow reinforced the advantage of moving forward with the resolution and the planned borrowing early in order to secure the exemption from a future referendum. He noted that the projects to be funded under the proposed sale of bonds had been reviewed by the Buildings and Grounds Committee. In response to a question from Mr. Orlow, Mr. Lawlace confirmed that the district would incur debt by adopting the resolution but would retain the right not to accept proposals and could rescind its action at some future date if necessary. Mr. Shearer reported that the financial team would work with district administrators to go out for funding between Labor Day and mid-October. Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the resolution. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Staff Report: Dr. Gorodetzer gave a report on the district's summer programs at both the elementary and secondary levels. She reported that reading programs at the elementary level had been held at three schools. She noted that 35 students had attended the Conshohocken Elementary program held this year at St. Marks and that 34% of these students had shown measurable growth. Dr. Gorodetzer also reported that 40 students had attended the Colonial Elementary program at the Fellowship House and that 50% had shown measurable growth and that 33 students had attended the Ridge Park Elementary program at the school and that 48% had demonstrated measurable growth. At the secondary level, Dr. Gorodetzer indicated that 95 students had attended remedial classes and that all had completed their programs successfully and been promoted. She also reported that 19 Colonial students had attended the Summer Consortium of the Arts and that 30 Colonial Elementary students, seven middle school students and one high school student had taken advantage of the summer music program at Colonial Elementary and all had showed growth in their skills. Mr. Orlow asked if the district would be tracking the progress of students in the summer reading programs during the course of the school year. Dr. Gorodetzer responded that it would.

Old Business: Mr. Orlow requested Board action on the proposed revision of Policy #715, Use of District Parking Lots, which had been reviewed on Monday evening. He noted that the policy had been updated to reflect current district practice and to permit commercial drivers education programs to use district lots in off-hours after filing a facility use application and receiving district authorization. Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the policy on second reading. On a roll call vote, all voted in

favor. The motion was carried. Mr. Orlow asked how the district would alert students to the change. Dr. Cotter indicated that a supplement would be issued to the student handbook and that an application process would be put in place and that Mr. Antal, Mr. Bell and the Community Relations/Student Life Committee had prepared a letter to local driving schools.

Correspondence: Mr. Orlow recapped his report of the previous Monday indicating that the district had received a clean report from its independent auditor for the 2002-03 fiscal year and provided the timetable of audit process. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the audit report. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow sought Board action on a donation of \$100 from the Odyssey Soft-ball Organization that was offered in appreciation of district cooperation in making fields available for the NSA 14U Eastern State Championships in May. See Enclosure #19. Mr. Zimmer moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to accept the donation. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow noted that Melissa Nyce, a district resident and parent, had shared her perspective on contract negotiations with the Colonial Education Association (CEA). The Board took no action on the correspondence but Mr. Orlow noted that the Board was receiving emails from district residents and responding to them individually. He recommended that individuals wishing to share their perspectives send their comments to both the Board and the CEA.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Cotter updated his report from Monday evening and reviewed with the Board and the community the personnel actions listed in Enclosures #20 through #23 of the agenda. He noted an additional resignation, the hiring of additional highly qualified instructional aides, a new long-term substitute in math and an additional child-rearing leave. He also reported two additions to the current annual list of extra-duty/extra-pay assignments for 2004-05, reiterated earlier comments on classes and instructors for the Adult Evening School for Fall 2004, and provided a revised enrollment update. In the enrollment update, Dr. Cotter reported that average class sizes as of Monday evening were 11-22.4 at the kindergarten level, 15-19 for 1st and 2nd grade and 17-19 for 3rd grade. He indicated that the increased range in enrollment at the kindergarten level had been referred to the Personnel Committee for review and action. Information was provided on kindergarten enrollment last year and previous years. Data showed that 263 students were enrolled two years ago and 298 were enrolled at the time of the meeting. Dr. Cotter also provided information on funding for the coach of the high school Mock Trial Team, as discussed on Monday evening, and an updated organizational chart for the district administrative team. See Enclosures #42 and #43. Dr. Cotter noted that the organization chart had one cabinet level position fewer with the retirement of Dr. Iannelli and the reassignment of duties to other staff.

Board Student Representatives Report: None.

New Business: Mr. Orlow requested Board action on the committee assignments contained in Enclosure #24 and reviewed on Monday evening. Mr. Davis moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the assignments. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action on proposed updates to Board Policy #004, Board Committee Functions, to reflect current committee/liaison responsibilities and to change the name of the Buildings and Grounds Committee to the Facilities Management Committee. He noted that the proposed changes had been reviewed by the Community Relations and Student Life Committee and by the Board on Monday evening. See Enclosure #25. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to approve the changes on a first reading. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow sought Board action on a revision of Board Policy #225, Student Activities. See Enclosure # 26. He noted that the revision updated the level of funding allocated for the purchase of student awards, such as plaques and certificates and had been reviewed on Monday evening. Dr. Scoles moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to approve the amended policy on first reading. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action on three transportation contracts that were reviewed Monday evening. They included a contract for transporting two students to Devon Preparatory School at a cost of \$11.00 per student per day and another for transporting 21 students to St. Joseph's Preparatory School for \$5.50 per student per day. These renewal contracts represented modest increases over the prior year. The third contract was for an unnamed student that was to be transported at the IRS rate of \$0.375 per mile from home to Harrisburg and back once each week to pick up transportation to and from the Pittsburgh School of the Deaf. Mr. Orlow noted that only the service to the Pittsburgh School of the Deaf involved a special needs accommodation based on an IEP and that all three contracts provided the most efficient and cost effective method of meeting the students' transportation needs. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to approve all three contracts. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow sought Board action on a recommendation of the high school principal to approve a request from an exchange student for the opportunity to attend the high school during the 2004-05 school year in 11th grade. He again noted that board members had received information on the student and sponsoring organization on Monday. Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the student's request. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action on a request from Dr. Sullivan, PWHS Principal, for two students to become delegates to the PA School Boards Association Conference in Hershey from 09/29/04 through 10/01/04. See Enclosure #29. He noted that one student was a Board representative and the other was not. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to approve the request. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action on the annual list of professional conferences requests from Cabinet and CASEA members. See Enclosure #30. The list had been reviewed on Monday evening. Mr. Zimmer moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the list. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow and Dr. Cotter sought Board action on an initiative that involved the Pupil Services Department negotiating a tuition contract with the Martin Luther School/Silver Springs to provide programs for students admitted to the residential facility during the 2004-05 school year. Dr. Cotter reported that the solicitor had reviewed the contract and had recommended a slight change in the language on service delivery. Key points of the contract were highlighted. Board members were reminded that the district had the responsibility of securing reimbursements from the School District of Philadelphia for their students. Note was taken that there was an average of 18 temporary students that would be covered by the contract in the school at any one time. See Enclosure #44. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the contract. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow sought Board action on a proposed contract with the Educator's Clearinghouse – PA~Educator.net for services that would supplement the district's other efforts to locate suitable candidates to fill professional vacancies in the district. He noted that the contract would cast a wider net for quality applicants, provide greater information online and supplement the district's current service. See Enclosure #31. Mr. Zimmer moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the contract. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow reported that an RFP and three bids were on the agenda for Board action. All of the items were reviewed on Monday evening. He requested Board action on the milk and ice cream bids (Enclosures # 32 and #33) together and the latte bid (Enclosure #46) and point-of-sale RFP (Enclosure # 45) separately. Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to award the ice cream bid to Nelson's Ice Cream and the milk bid to Rosenberger's Dairies in the amounts shown in the enclosures. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried. Mr. Zimmer moved and Dr. Scoles seconded a motion to award the bid for the latte to Forest Scientific Corp in the amount of \$14,999. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried. Mr. Sultanik requested that the board go into executive session to discuss legal issues related to the point-of-sale RFP. Mr. Orlow asked that the Board complete the remaining agenda items prior to going into executive session.

Solicitor's Report: No report.

Committee Reports: Intermediate Unit Board: No report.

CMCAVTS: No report.

Personnel: Mr. Johnson noted that the district had handled 135 personnel transactions during the summer, including hiring 58 new teachers (32 from outside the district, 24 from the substitute pool and 2 who had served the district as aides).

Finance: No report.

Curriculum and Program: Mr. Davis reminded the group that he had given his report Monday evening.

Buildings and Grounds/Transportation: Mrs. Moore provided a current update on major facilities projects underway in the district during the summer. She noted that the new kindergarten classrooms at Whitmarsh Elementary School would open to students on time, the roofing project at the high school would be substantially completed before the start of school and the curtain-wall replacement at Conshohocken Elementary School was ahead of schedule. Mrs. Moore reported that students from Conshohocken Elementary would be housed in their own section of Colonial Elementary until the end of the year and would then return to their newly renovated building. She also reported that the kindergarten classrooms at Ridge Park Elementary would be delayed in opening because of construction delays involving the late arrival of structural steel for the building but noted that kindergarten students would be placed in full-size classrooms in the school until their new classrooms were available about the end of September.

Community Relations: Dr. Scoles reported that the district had participated in Plymouth Township's annual Plymouth Day and would be hosting Whitmarsh Township's Heritage Day (Whitmarsh 300) at Victory Fields.

Legislative: Mr. Orlow asked Mr. Sultanik to comment on some of the requirements levied on districts under Act 72, the new law on school funding, tax relief and gaming. Mr. Sultanik briefly covered the requirement that districts notify residents of the opportunity to apply for homestead exclusions on their properties through a series of mailings and the need to decide by 05/30/05 whether or not they would opt to receive gaming funds after enacting a 0.01% earned income tax. He noted that a number of issues remained unclear and that the I.U. would present a program on the subject on 10/13/05.

Additional Public Comment: Ms. King raised some questions about the financial impact of salaries for new teachers. Dr. Cotter noted that salaries for new teachers were generally below those of the teachers who were retiring. Mr. Bickleman indicated that he could do a report on the impact of replacement teachers. Mr. Sultanik noted that the cost of the early retirement incentive would have to be factored into the equation. Ms. King also asked about college placement services in the event of a teacher's strike. Mr. Orlow reported that there was information available on contracted services that would be provided by Francine Block, a recognized authority in the field. He noted that the service program would be administered by the high school administrative team and that the team would send notices to the parent's of seniors.

Mr. Fazio asked how the district was funded. Mr. Orlow indicated that Colonial School district was funded by local property taxes (86%), state subsidies (12%) and the federal government (2%). Mr. Fazio asked if the district had considered optional sources of funding. Mr. Orlow responded that districts have taxing authority from the state to fund public schools. He noted that Act 72 was an attempt to move districts away from their heavy dependency on local real estate taxes and addressed briefly the move to local earned income taxes. He noted that Colonial School District did not levy earned income taxes at this time, although its local municipalities did. Mr. Fazio inquired about corporate sponsorships. Mr. Orlow advised that the district did not look favorably on them because they often left the district with little or no control over aspects of their operations.

Mr. Wiley noted his role as a frequent writer of letters to the editors of local newspapers on a wide variety of issues, including public schools. He congratulated Hope Luken on her appointment to the Board.

Return to Business: Mr. Orlow recessed the meeting at 9:22 p.m. and the Board went into executive session to receive legal advice from its solicitor on the point-of-sale RFP still on the Board agenda. The Board returned from executive session at 9:40 p.m. Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to reject the proposal of Food Service Solutions and accept the proposal of Schoolhouse as the lowest responsible bidder at a total price of \$28,008. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 9:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**James M. Bell
Board Secretary**