

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462  
MINUTES, APRIL 20, 2006.**

President Orlow convened the general meeting of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:08 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on April 20, 2006

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

**Board Members Absent:** William Ryan

**Also Attending:** Vincent F. Cotter, Superintendent, MaryEllen Gorodetzer, Assistant Superintendent; Gerald Berger, Director of Human Resources; James M. Bell, Director of Support Services/Board Secretary; Joseph P. Bickleman, Chief Financial Officer/Board Treasurer; Andrew Boegly, Chief Information Officer; Jeffrey T. Sultanik, Solicitor; Jessica Klein and Angela D'Alessandro, Board Student Representatives; David Sherman, Community Relations Coordinator; John Quinn, Director of CITV; Elizabeth McKeaney, Supervisor of Curriculum Development and Data Analysis; Judi Lipson, Principal, Plymouth Elementary School; Robert Franz; Marcia Wright-Soika; Ron Stoud; Chris Brunner; Toby Salmon; Simie Krieger; Peggy Smith; Annie Gubeno; Tom Kuestner; Linda Colantonio; Amy Venkus; Donna Sturm; Nina Miller; Lisa Watkins; Sandy Connelly; Lisa Palladino; Joy Bowman; Tracy O'Shea; Frith deKerillis; Michelle Weidamoyer; students receiving certificates of achievement, their families and friends.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance and announced that the Board had met in executive session prior to the meeting and on 03/29/2006, 04/12/2006 and 04/17/2006 to discuss informational, legal and personnel matters.

Mr. Orlow recognized Dr. Cotter who introduced the presenters of the student awards. Neal Rubin, Plymouth Whitmarsh High School Girls' Swimming Coach, introduced Kate Chialastri who earned Honorable Mention All-State honors in the 100 Butterfly at the PIAA State Swimming Championships. Candace Maggioncalda, PWHS art teacher, introduced students who had artwork accepted into regional competitions and Jim Donofrio, PWHS Boys' Basketball Coach, who introduced members of his Suburban One American Conference Championship team that also qualified for the PIAA District I and State Championships. A complete list of the students and coaches recognized is attached to these minutes as Attachment #1.

**Minutes:** Mr. Orlow directed the attention of the Board Members to the minutes of the work session of 03/13/2006, the general meeting of 03/16/2006, the Personnel Committee of 04/12/2006, the Community Relations and Student Life Committee of 04/06/2006 and the Curriculum Committee of 04/17/2006 found in enclosures #1 through #4, #42 and #43. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the minutes. All voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Financial Reports:** Mr. Orlow requested Board action on the financial reports for March 2006. The reports included the Budget Transfers, the Bond Fund Report, the Capital Projects Report, the General Fund/Federal Program Bills, the Capital Reserve Fund, the Food Service Bills/Cafeteria Report, the Outstanding Investment Report, the Cash Flow Summary, the Comparison of Taxes Collected, the Real Estate Tax Escrow Report, the Reconciliation of Cash Accounts and the Budgetary/Deficit Status Report for the month ending 03/31/2006, as shown in enclosures #5 through #15 of the agenda. Mr. Orlow inquired about a moving and storage expense for the District

Office move and renovation. Mr. Bickleman noted the bill was from the final stage of the move and the delay in receipt and payment was due, in part, to the passing of one of the principles in the business. Mr. Slutsky moved and Mr. Zimmer 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 suggested that “et cetera” in the high school handbook be changed to “not restricted to” as he felt it would be less nebulous. He was also pleased with proposed changes in the eligibility rule. Mr. Orlow noted that the wording change was a good one to consider.

Mrs. Sturm referred to enclosure #39 and specifically spoke about the first grade class sizes at Ridge Park Elementary School. She felt that class sizes of 22 to 25 students made it difficult to give students the attention they deserved, especially when autistic support students were part of the equation. She encouraged the Board to consider adding a second grade class at the school in the coming year. She also invited Board Members to Colwell Park on Friday morning, April 21, where second grade students would be cleaning the park as an Earth Day project.

Mr. Orlow stated that the Board pays close attention to class size and noted that, while 25 students in the class may have been the norm five years ago, it was now the exception to the rule. He reported that late registration of students and new students moving into the district during the school year skewed enrollment projections. Mr. Orlow also commented that Colonial’s class sizes were, on average, better than most districts in the county. Mr. Johnson said that the issue had been discussed in the Personnel Committee and that consideration was being given to delaying classroom assignments for the coming year to give time to adjust personnel needs.

**Staff Report:** Mrs. Lipson, Mrs. deKerillis, Miss Palladino and Mrs. Bowman gave a report on multicultural activities at Plymouth Elementary School. Featured were the Plymouth Pride Partners Program, an addition of \$2,000 of multicultural themed books for the school’s library, two school-wide assemblies featuring themes of tolerance, respect and diversity and a series of multicultural festivals in which parents shared the traditions and customs of their native cultures and foods from a variety of cultures was sampled. Mrs. O’Shea showed a Power Point featuring photos of all activities covered in the report. Mrs. Lipson added she could see in the actions and demeanor of students that the program was having a positive affect on behavior.

**Correspondence:** Mrs. McKeane asked the board to accept a Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation grant to fund the purchase of graphic novels at Colonial Middle School. She explained that the novels were similar to comic books and were used in reading support classes in grades six through eight. Mr. Orlow noted that the foundation had been in existence for nearly 14 years and that its board was comprised mainly of community members. He urged community members who were looking for a way to become involved with the district to consider the foundation board. Dr. Cotter stated that interested persons could contact his office or the Community Relations Office. Mr. Davis moved and Mrs. Luken seconded a motion to accept the grant. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Budget Reports:** Mr. Orlow recognized Mr. Slutsky who reported on the 2006-07 preliminary budget. Mr. Slutsky spoke out against proposed property tax legislation which included back-end referendum. He stated that the majority of the budget was out of the Board’s control because of under funded state and federal mandates. Despite the obstacles, he stated that the district had compiled a fabulous budget that enabled the district to continue its outstanding “Above and Beyond” academic enrichment programs and be good stewards of taxpayer money. He stated that the budget

totaled \$80,238,000 which was an increase of \$4,800,000 from the previous year. The real estate tax mil rate was set at 15.47, which represented a 3.84% increase in real estate taxes. The annual increase is \$57 on every \$100,000 of property assessment or \$85.50 on the median assessed value of \$150,000. Mr. Slutsky noted that salaries, benefits and contracted educational services accounted for two-thirds of the budget. He also stated that the original tax increase was projected to be 13.64% but, by prioritizing projects and using a portion of the projected fund balance, the district was able to keep the increase to a minimum. Mr. Slutsky moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to approve the 2006-07 preliminary budget as presented. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow lauded Mr. Slutsky for his presentation and reiterated the difficulty in dealing with under funded mandates such as transportation and special education. He encouraged the community to contact their legislators and ask them to rectify the situation.

**Superintendent's Report:** Dr. Cotter walked members through his report outlining personnel actions, changes to the substitute list, proposed extra duty/extra pay assignments and plans for a summer music lesson program which were included as enclosures #18 through #21 on the agenda. 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.

**Board Student Representative's Report:** Ms. D'Alessandro reported that the Academic Awards Dinner had been held on April 19 and that the Freshman Fling would be held in Cafeteria 100 of the high school at 7:30 p.m. on April 21. Ms. Klein reported the district Blood Drive on March 27 was well attended and that parent conferences were also held in March. She said the senior class trip to Florida was a success despite some delay associated with the return trip.

**New Business:** Mr. Orlow requested Board action on the proposal to extend the attendance area of Conshohocken Elementary School. He asked Dr. Cotter to explain the new boundaries. Dr. Cotter said the new attendance area would stretch from 9th Avenue to the south side of 12th Avenue and all of the homes along Pleasant Valley Drive and Lenape Lane, to the river - and - from the east side of Colwell Lane to Righter Street and all of the homes on Hector Street to Righter Street and Elm Street to Walnut Street. He stated that the expansion would create a true borough school. Mr. Orlow asked Dr. Cotter if any parents who had expressed an interest at the town meeting had actually taken a tour of the school. Dr. Cotter stated he expected parents to do so and felt that they will be impressed with what he termed the closest thing to a private school that anyone would find in public education given the very small class sizes and attractive teacher-student ratio. Dr. Cotter also mentioned that the district was attempting to work with area realtors to spread the positive word about the school. Mr. Davis moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the expansion proposal. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion carried.

Mr. Orlow sought Board action on two policies before the Board on a first-read basis. The policies were found in enclosures #22 and #23. He noted that policy #217 involving the district's Diploma Policy allowed for students to receive credit for college-level classes taken. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to approve the policy as presented. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow noted policy #816 on Cellular Telephone Utilization was necessary given the size of the district and the number of individuals now using cellular phones and other electronic communication devices. Mr. Zimmer moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the policy as presented. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action on several contracts up for Board review and approval. The first contract for Solicitor's Services for 2006-2007 was found in enclosure #24 of the agenda and provided for a 2.3% increase over last year's retainer of \$22,103. Mr. Orlow mentioned the contract also called for separate costs for two different types of litigation fees. Mrs. Luken 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 stated the second series of contracts, found in enclosures #25 through #27, referred to Child Care Leases for office space for the Montgomery Early Learning Centers. Mr. Bell stated, in response to a question from Mr. Slutsky, that the wording in the contracts remained basically unchanged. Mr. Bell noted, however, that the contracts called for a 5% increase in lease payments to cover higher energy and administrative costs. Mr. Johns moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to approve the contracts. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow called for Board action on the revisions to the PWHs Student Handbook found in enclosure #28 of the agenda. They were in the areas of Eligibility, Health & Medical and Discipline. Dr. Scoles moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the changes. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow asked the Board to act on two conference requests from the high school as a single item. He noted the requests, found in enclosures #29 and #30 in the agenda, have the support of the high school and district administration. The first request was for Assistant Principal Karen Gebhardt to attend a summer institute for administrators in Florida from June 28-30, 2006. The second request was from science teacher Jim Muscarella to attend a Science Olympiad Summer Institute in Arizona from July 17-21, 2006. Mr. Zimmer moved and Mr. Johnson 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 a series of bids. The first bid, found in enclosure #32, was for a complete roof replacement at Ridge Park Elementary School. He noted that the low bidder was ARC Roofing Corporation with a total cost of \$690,000.00. Mr. Orlow stated that the district received six bids with costs ranging from \$690,000.00 to \$897,000.00. He mentioned that the \$690,000.00 was lower than the budgeted amount. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to award the bid to ARC Roofing Corporation. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow noted that bids for athletic and physical education equipment, found in enclosures #33 and #44 of the agenda, were from a variety of vendors. He stated that the athletic equipment would be purchased from the 2006-2007 budget but needed Board action in April given the timing of the purchases. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to approve both equipment bids. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Solicitor's Report:** Mr. Sultanik sought Board action on Disciplinary Stipulation #97023 as presented to Board Members. Dr. Scoles moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the stipulation. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Committee Reports:** CMCAVTS: Mr. Johnson requested Board approval of the Center for Technical Studies Budget found in enclosure #34 of the agenda. He noted the budget shows an overall increase of 3.67% to \$8,369,885. More than \$7.5 million of the budget came from member district contributions and that Colonial contributed 35% or \$2,195,750. Mr. Johnson noted

Colonial's share of the budget increased slightly because of increased enrollment. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the CMCAVTS budget. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Personnel: Mr. Johnson asked for Board approval of a grievance settlement and accompanying memo of understanding as presented to the board members. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to approve the two documents as presented. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Finance: Mr. Slutsky indicated that the preliminary budget presentation also served as the finance committee report.

Curriculum and Program: Mr. Davis called the Board's attention to the minutes of the 04/17/2006 Curriculum Committee meeting found in enclosure #43 of the agenda. He noted that Dr. Sullivan shared with the committee a World Language Survey developed by Adam Bailey, World Language Department Head. The survey sought feedback from students as to their interest and perceptions regarding World Language course offerings. Mr. Davis touched on efforts to improve the PSSA performance of those students attending the Center for Technical Studies, and he noted that Dr. Sullivan provided an overview of the plans for new 9th grade reading courses, English 9 Workshop and Reading Rock and Roll. Mr. Davis asked Dr. Gorodetzer to report on the BEST program. She noted that the Arcadia University BEST Program was initially funded with IDEA funds, was primarily used at Colonial Middle School but had expanded to Plymouth Whitemarsh High School in the current year. She noted the program focused on improving classroom management, effective behavior management, and developing positive behavioral supports for parents and teachers.

Facilities Management and Transportation: Mrs. Moore provided an update of the district's application for a land development waiver from Whitemarsh Township for the Facilities Management Center construction. She also spoke of planned improvements to the playground at Conshohocken Elementary School as well as the curbs and sidewalks around the building on Third and Harry Streets. Mrs. Moore mentioned that the district would work with the borough to construct bus drop off zones for students. She also stated that the committee had made adjustments to the Bond Issue Building Priority List but that projects remained unchanged for 2006.

Community Relations and Student Life: Dr. Scoles reminded everyone that the district would have a presence at Whitemarsh Township Day on April 29 at Miles Park. He also noted that the district's spring newsletter would be printed next week and mailed to district residents by the middle of May.

**Additional Public Comment:** None

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 9:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James M. Bell  
Board Secretary

(Sherman)