

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462  
MINUTES, FEBRUARY 16, 2006**

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 February 16, 2006.

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

**Board Members Absent:** None.

**Also Attending:** Vincent F. Cotter, Superintendent; MaryEllen Gorodetzer, Assistant Superintendent; Gerald Berger, Director of Human Resources; Cassandra DeLong, Director of Pupil Services; James M. Bell, Director of Support Services/Board Secretary; Joseph P. Bickleman, Chief Financial Officer/Board Treasurer; Andrew Boegly, Chief Information Officer; Angela D'Alessandro, Board Student Representative; David Sherman, Community Relations Coordinator; John Quinn, Director of CITV; Tom Sigafos, Principal, RP; Robert Franz; Jill Forster; Helene Klein; Tom Kuestner; Mike McKenna; Marjorie Stein; Marcia Wright Soika; students being recognized by the Board, their families and friends.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Sherman presented to the Board high school senior Adrienne Schultz (artist) and middle school student Brittany Clemens (poet), contributors to the district's annual holiday card and middle school student Jessica Knudsen, winner of Arrow's National Book Report Contest. The Board awarded certificates of achievement to the students and congratulated them on their success.

Mr. Orlow announced that the Board had met in Executive session on 01/25/06, 02/08/06 and 02/16/06 to discuss legal and personnel matters and informational purposes.

**Minutes:** Mr. Orlow noted that the Board work session scheduled for Monday, 02/12/06 had been cancelled due to inclement weather. He requested Board review of and action on the minutes of the Board Work Session of 01/17/06, the General Meeting of 01/19/06, the Facilities Management - Transportation Committee Meeting of 02/02/06, and the Personnel Committee Meeting of 02/09/06. See Enclosures #1 through #3 and #34. Mr. Orlow asked if listing the cost to issue bonds on the bond project list had been a topic of discussion at the Facilities Management meeting. Mr. Bell and Mrs. Moore reported that it had not. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to approve the minutes. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried. Mr. Orlow noted that the Curriculum Committee had met before the meeting that evening and that minutes would be available at the general Board meeting in March.

**Financial Reports:** Mr. Orlow requested Board action on the financial reports for January 2006. The reports included the Budget Transfers, Bond Fund Report, the Capital Project

Report, General Fund/Federal Program Bills, the Capital Reserve Fund Report, the Food Services Bills/Cafeteria Report, the Outstanding Investment Report, the Cash Flow Summary, the Comparison of Taxes Collected, the Real Estate Escrow Report, the Reconciliation of Cash Accounts, the Budgetary/Deficit Status Report and the Treasurer's Report for the month ending 01/31/06, as shown in Enclosures #4 through #15. Mr. Orlow inquired about the outstanding escrow funds being retained by Whitemarsh Township for capital projects. Dr. Cotter and Mr. Bickleman reported that one small item remained on the punch list, a camera pole at the tennis courts. Action on that item had been delayed by poor ground conditions. Mr. Slutsky 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. Franz spoke in opposition to the district spending in excess of \$400,000 on the renovation of the building on Victory Fields to house the Facilities Management Center. He felt that the costs to renovate the building were out of line since the building was already in place. Mr. Orlow, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Moore and Mr. Johnson explained the nature of the project, the economies of scale involved in combining the renovation with other projects in the PWHS-CES complex, and the impact of the other projects in opening up additional instruction space in the high school at a cost far below that for adding additional classrooms to the building. The responding officials also commented on the role that the expanded trainer's rooms will play in increasing safety for student athletes and in meeting the requirements of Title IX for equal extra-curricular opportunities and facilities for male and female students. Mrs. Moore noted that demolishing the building would cost the district more than \$200,000. She also commented on the safety and security benefits that the community would receive as a result of the district occupying the vacant building. She stressed community support for the project. Mr. Bell reported on the increased cost of construction materials following the weather-related disasters in the U.S. during the summer of 2005. He and Mr. Slutsky commented on the adverse economic impact that state requirements for bidding multiple prime contractors had on school districts state-wide.

**Staff Report:** Mr. Sigafos gave a report on Family Academic Night, an opportunity on Wednesday, 03/01/06 to participate in fun activities that show parents what and how their children learn in school. A flyer outlining the program is attached to these minutes as Attachment #1.

**Old Business:** Mr. Orlow sought Board action on two new Board policies on a second reading. They were Policy #118, Participation in Extra-curricular Activities by Home Education Students and Policy #220, Student Wellness. See Enclosures #16 and #17. Mr. Orlow noted that the policies had been reviewed and approved on a first reading in January. He asked how the families of home-schooled students would learn of the policy. Dr. Cotter reported that the district would send letters home to the few students in the district that were being home schooled.

- Dr. Scoles moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the Policy #118 on a second reading. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried
- Mr. Zimmer moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve Policy #220 on a second reading. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Correspondence: None.**

**Superintendent's Report:** Dr. Cotter walked board members through his report outlining personnel actions, changes to substitute lists, proposed extra-duty/extra-pay assignments and a proposal for a boys' lacrosse club at the middle school. See Enclosures #18 through #20 and #35. Mr. Orlow raised a series of questions about the proposed CMS Lacrosse Club. He and fellow board members discussed the nature of a club sport, the degree of financial support provided, and the probability that a club sport might eventually become a PIAA sport, among other issues. Dr. Cotter noted the difference between club sports that received limited district funding and were played on district premises and the ice hockey club that received no district funding and played in leased facilities. Dr. Scoles, Ms. Luken, Mr. Zimmer and Mrs. Moore reported that the CMS Lacrosse Club had the support of the Community Relations – Student Life Committee, especially as a feeder program for the high school lacrosse program. They also noted that the committee had discussed ways in which students without sufficient financial resources to purchase appropriate equipment themselves could gain access to it. Mr. Orlow asked the Administration to confirm that the CMS Lacrosse Club would be covered by district insurance. All board members understood that the CMS Lacrosse Club could, in time, become a regular CMS sports team. Moving to other issues, Mr. Zimmer asked if Dr. Neiberg had served the whole district prior to his resignation to enter the military. Dr. Cotter confirmed that he had and reported that Dr. Stallkamp would fill that same role for the remainder of the current school year. Mr. Zimmer moved and Dr. Scoles seconded a motion to approve the report. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Board Student Representatives Report:** Ms. D'Alessandro provided an update on the open house for the second semester, the expanded student use of the renovated library, the Valentine's Day dance, Bingo Night, Senior Trip meetings, the spring musical and the post season playoffs for the boys' and girls' basketball and swim teams.

**New Business:** Mr. Orlow requested Board action on a Reimbursement Resolution in which the district declared its intention to reimburse the general fund or capital reserve fund for such amounts paid for expenditures connected to renovation of the Facilities Management Center and associated projects. He noted that the Board was actively considering a new bond to cover the cost of capital projects and explained that the resolution would allow the district to reimburse itself for capital project expenditures that took place before bond proceeds became available. Dr. Ryan expressed his intention to vote in opposition to the resolution and voiced his opposition to the bond as well. He felt that the district had other options for funding capital projects and should adopt a pay-as-we-go policy and avoid additional debt. Mr. Orlow requested Board action on Bond Funding Resolution that involved the issuance of General Obligation Bonds in the amount of \$10,000,000 and the appointment of Public Financial Management as financial advisor and Fox Rothschild as bond and local counsel in connection with the bonds. He expressed his belief that the district would be planning poorly if it paid for capital projects with operating budget funds. He noted that using bond funds allowed the district to pay for the projects over the course of their useful life. Mr. Orlow also reported that the district had a low level of debt compared to other districts and managed that debt well. Mr. Slutsky felt that Mr. Orlow had made some good points, suggested that the Board should remember

the likelihood of future constraints on borrowing to meet capital needs and should take advantage of a good opportunity to borrow the money now. Mr. Slutsky moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the resolutions outlined in Enclosure #21 and #22. On a roll call vote, all except Dr. Ryan voted in favor. Dr. Ryan voted in opposition. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow sought Board action on district participation in the annual Summer Consortium of the Arts. He noted that the program was open to students from Colonial, Norristown Area and Upper Merion Area School Districts who are talented in the arts. Dr. Scoles reported that the Community Relations – Student Life Committee supported the program and the funding for the program in the summer of 2006 at \$6,300, the same as in prior years. Dr. Scoles moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to approve participation as outlined in Enclosure #23. On a roll call vote, all present voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action on a professional conference request for two teachers to attend the International Association for Technology Conference in Baltimore, MD on 03/23/06 and 03/24/06. See Enclosure #24. Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the request. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow sought Board action on several student trips outlined in Enclosures #25 through #27, #36 and #37. He noted that all but the Academic Competition Team were annual trips approved each year. The enclosures outlined:

- A trip for the PWHS Marching Colonials to perform at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Cedar Point Amusement Park in the Cleveland, Ohio area between 05/20/06 and 05/22/06. Fundraising, parents and students were to cover all costs of the trip.
- A trip for eight to ten PWHS students to attend the FBLA State Competition in Hershey, PA from 04/19/06 through 04/21/06. The cost of participating in the trip was to be covered by the FBLA organization and the participants.
- An educational trip for middle school students to the Marine Science Consortium in Wallops Island, VA from 05/03/06 through 05/06/06. District costs were to be limited to the cost for securing substitutes. Student participants were to assume responsibility for all costs and fees for the trip itself.
- A trip by four high school students to the Regional Chorus competition at Palisades High School from 03/16/06 through 03/18/06.
- A trip by six high school students and two chaperones to the State Academic Competition in Harrisburg on 04/20-21/06.

Ms. Luken moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the trips. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Solicitor's Report:** No report.

**Committee Reports:** Intermediate Unit Board: Dr. Ryan reported on the arrival of seven new board members and the focus on the administrative budgets for the coming school year. He noted that local school boards should be acting on the budgets in March or April.

**Dr. Ryan expressed concerns about administrative leadership at the IU. Mr. Orlow expressed concern about the IU's priorities and the Executive Director's lack of response to requests for assistance in dealing with the issue of back-end budget referendums. Mr. Orlow indicated that he would vote no on the annual administrative budgets. Dr. Scoles nominated and Mr. Davis seconded the nomination of Dr. Ryan as the district's candidate for a vacancy on the IU Board. On a roll call vote, all except Dr. Ryan voted in favor. Dr. Ryan abstained. The motion was carried.**

**CMCAVTS: Mr. Johnson reported that he and Mr. Davis had toured the renovations at the Center for Technical Studies. He reported that the project was delayed and that students would not return to the school until 04/17/06. In response to a question about student transportation to outlying facilities while construction was underway, Dr. Cotter reported that the district transported the student to the Center from which they were then transported to their temporary program sites.**

**Personnel: Mr. Johnson reported that the committee had been looking at enrollment and staffing in connection with the budget for the coming school year.**

**Finance: Mr. Slutsky spoke about legislation in Harrisburg on the issue of tax reform. He noted that all of the options under discussion merely shifted taxes away from real estate to another form of taxation and did not address the central issue of the state's decreasing contribution to educational funding. He noted that back-end referendums would likely result in district's eliminating value-added programs if local voters failed to approve district budgets. He asked community members to contact their state legislators and ask them to oppose legislation mandating back-end referendums. Mr. Sultanik noted that the need for public input was immediate since legislation when passed would affect the budget for the 2006-07 school year. Mr. Zimmer supported an initiative to have Mr. Slutsky cover the issues on CITV. Mr. Orlow noted that the tax reform initiatives would affect all property owners since the quality of a school district affected the property values in the district. He labeled the legislation a move to mediocrity.**

**Curriculum and Program: Mr. Davis reported that the committee had met before the board meeting and that minutes would be available at the March board meeting.**

**Facilities Management and Transportation: Mrs. Moore reported that work would begin on the Facilities Management Center in early spring. She indicated that the committee had approved a prioritized list of capital projects for the coming three years that included work in all district buildings. Mrs. Moore noted that the committee supported a new \$10,000,000 bond to fund the capital projects and supported the purchase of AED's (defibrillators) for the district's K-3 elementary schools.**

**Community Relations – Student Life: Dr. Scoles reported that the committee supported the Summer Consortium of the Arts and reminded the district's senior citizens of the Senior Luncheon and Matinee that were scheduled for 03/11/06. Dr. Scoles also announced that the district's panel discussion and presentations on high risk behaviors by students was scheduled for the following Thursday evening. Dr. Cotter provided some information of the agenda for that evening.**

**Legislative:** Dr. Ryan advised the community that the governor had proposed an increase in the basic education subsidy but noted that the district could expect an additional \$51,000. Mr. Slutsky noted that the annual increase in the district's pension contribution alone would far exceed that amount. Board members again asked residents to contact their legislators and urge them not to support the current legislative proposals on tax reform.

**Additional Public Comment:** None.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 9:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**James M. Bell**  
Board Secretary