

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, MAY 15, 2006.**

President Orlow convened the work session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:33 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on May 15, 2006.

Board Members Present: Marc Orlow, Gary Johnson, Tom Davis, Susan Moore, William Ryan, and Mitch Zimmer.

Board Members Absent: Hope Luken, Pascal Scoles and Steven Slutsky

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; Cassandra DeLong, Director of Pupil Services; Andrew Boegly, Chief Information Officer; David Sherman, Community Relations Coordinator; John Quinn, Director of CITV.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance and announced that the Board had met in executive session on 04/20/06, 04/26/06, 05/10/06 and 05/15/06 to discuss informational, legal and personnel matters.

Minutes: Mr. Orlow asked the Board Members to direct their attention to the minutes of the work session of 04/17/06, the general meeting of 04/20/06, the Facilities Management and Transportation Committee of 05/04/06, and the Community Relations and Student Life Committee of 05/08/06. See enclosures #1 through #3 and #60 of the agenda for Thursday evening. Mr. Orlow noted that the minutes of the Personnel Committee of 05/04/06 and the Curriculum Committee of 05/08/06 may be available for Board review and approval on Thursday evening as well. Board members had no questions on the minutes.

Financial Reports: Mr. Orlow reviewed the financial reports on the list for approval on Thursday Evening. 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 and the Treasurer's Report for the month ending 04/30/06, as shown in enclosures #4 through #15.

Mr. Orlow inquired as to the nature of a number of budget transfers for tuition payments to a charter school. Mr. Bickleman noted that the payments were for special education students who were receiving education from a cyber charter school. Mr. Orlow asked if the district placed special education students in charter schools. Mrs. DeLong clarified that the district does not place students in charter schools and that any such placement was the parent's decision. Mr. Orlow asked what benefit a cyber charter school provided to special education students. Mrs. DeLong stated she did not know what specific programs were provided but that a student could receive additional tutoring. Mr. Orlow asked if the district would be reimbursed for special education expenses. Mr. Bickleman noted that the state reimbursement rate was 30%, but because of intense competition for state funding, the district was likely to be reimbursed for only 19% of the cost.

Mr. Orlow inquired about a furniture purchase on the Bills for Approval List. Mr. Bickleman noted that the furniture was for Dr. Monica Sullivan's conference room and was a part of the main office renovation at Plymouth Whitmarsh High school (PWHS).

Public Comments on the Agenda: None.

Staff Report: Mr. Orlow announced that Mr. Robert Fahler, Colonial Middle School Principal, would report on programs and initiatives in that building during Thursday's meeting.

Old Business: Mr. Orlow called the Board's attention to two policies for review on a second reading. The first policy, #217, concerned the district's Diploma Policy. He noted that the policy was being adjusted to reflect the earning of college credit while in attendance at PWHS. The policy can be found in enclosure #16 of Thursday's agenda.

The second 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. Orlow noted that changes recommended at the last meeting had been made to the policy. See enclosure #17 of Thursday's agenda.

Correspondence: Mr. Orlow noted that an invoice for the Board's 2006-2007 dues to the Pennsylvania School Boards Association had been received. He stated that there was a small increase in the dues from the previous year. Mr. Orlow also spoke to the importance of belonging to the organization, especially given the current political climate of tax reform and referendum. The invoice and corresponding letter from Thomas J. Gentzel, Executive Director of the PSBA, can be found in enclosure #18 of Thursday's agenda.

Mr. Orlow informed the Board that the district was in receipt of a proposal from an anonymous donor to purchase a six-station Water Boy Drinking System for the PWHS Football Team at an approximate cost of \$900. The Board will take action on the proposed donation on Thursday evening.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Cotter outlined his report which included personnel actions, changes to the substitute list and staffing requests for Secondary Summer School and the Summer Elementary Reading Programs. See enclosures #19 through #21 on Thursday's agenda.

New Business: Mr. Orlow noted that May was the time of year that the Board makes a number of annual appointments. He noted that Section 404 of the Public School Code directed the Board to elect a Treasurer and a Board Secretary for the 2006-2007 school year. Mr. Orlow noted that Mr. Bickleman had ably served as Treasurer for a number of years and was again recommended for the position at an annual rate of \$8,848.

Mr. Orlow noted that Mr. Bell, who had served as the Board Secretary for many years, unfortunately was retiring. He stated that Mr. Sherman was recommended to assume the secretarial duties at an annual rate of \$3,500.

Mr. Orlow also noted that Board Policy required the appointment of Student Board Representatives. He stated that the Board had interviewed several candidates prior to the meeting.

Mr. Orlow stated that Section 621 of the Public School Code mandates that the School Board designate one or more banks or trust companies as depositories for its funds. He asked the Board to consider the following banking measures as one item on Thursday evening.

Mr. Orlow noted that Mr. Bickleman recommended approval of TD Banknorth, N.A. (Hudson Bank) as a public depository for “pass-through” wire deposits and account withdrawals as per enclosure #22 in Thursday’s agenda. He also called the Board’s attention to a list of investment banks, trusts and savings and loan institutions that are recommended for solicitation of interest rates for school investments during the 2006-2007 school year. The list can be found in enclosure #23 of Thursday’s agenda. Mr. Orlow asked Mr. Bickleman what information was provided by the banks before they were placed on the list for approval. Mr. Bickleman stated that the institutions were asked to provide a letter of compliance, a list of collateral, the market value of the collateral and the third-party bank where the collateral was kept.

Mr. Orlow stated that Tom Sigafos, Federal Programs Coordinator, was scheduled to present to the Board a list containing estimates of the 2006-2007 federal programs allocations at Thursday’s Meeting. He asked Dr. Cotter to provide background information on the programs. Dr. Cotter mentioned that the district was still waiting for the list of funding and that it may not arrive in time for action at Thursday’s meeting. Mr. Orlow asked if the monies were allocated for specific programs such as class size reduction. Dr. Gorodetzer noted that the district already had programs in place at the two schools which qualified for Title I funding. Mr. Bickleman added that class size reduction funds had been used for the reductions of class size in three classes at Ridge Park Elementary School. Mr. Orlow inquired how federal program money figured into the district’s preliminary budget. Dr. Cotter stated that information from the previous year was combined with student enrollment projections for the coming year. He also noted that federal funding did not account for a large portion of district funding.

Mr. Orlow informed board members that Dr. Gorodetzer had presented a list of textbooks recommended for adoption and utilization during the 2006-2007 year. Dr. Gorodetzer noted that in addition to the scheduled on-cycle replacement texts for the coming year, the list included resources for K-5 Health classes that would be purchased with funds for the current school year. See enclosure #24 of Thursday’s agenda.

Mr. Orlow called the Board’s attention to policy #217.1, a revision to the District Graduation Policy, which establishes the criteria for special education student participation in commencement ceremonies and was being brought before the members on a first-read basis. See enclosure # 25 of Thursday’s agenda. Dr. Ryan noted that he was pleased to see the district acting quickly to update the policy given that the legislation requiring the policy was only recently signed by the governor.

Mr. Orlow noted that there would be a series of contracts before the Board for approval at Thursday’s meeting. The first contract, found in enclosure #26 of Thursday’s agenda, was for trash disposal. Mr. Orlow stated that the bid represented a sizeable increase from the previous contract. Mr. Bickleman explained that the last bid was in 2003 and increases in fees and energy costs accounted for the rate hike. Responding to Mr. Orlow’s question regarding the number of bidders, Mr. Bickleman noted that there were four to five bids with Browning Ferris Industries submitting the low bid at a cost of \$141,299 and Waste Management submitting the high bid of more than \$184,000.

Mr. Orlow called the Board's attention to the contract for Connect Ed, a communications service, which would allow the district to contact parents and staff in a matter of minutes should the need arise. The agreement can be found in enclosure #37 of Thursday's agenda. Dr. Cotter noted, for clarification purposes, that the amount of the contract was \$15,500 per year for installation and software and that the contract would be changed prior to Thursday's meeting to reflect the cost clearly. Mr. Orlow questioned wording in paragraph five of the contract concerning sponsorship and noted that he had a problem with the district allowing its messages to be sponsored by commercial businesses. Mr. Boegly noted that there were no present sponsors and any sponsorship had to be approved by the district. Dr. Cotter noted that the solicitor would be asked to double check the wording and to provide verification at Thursday's meeting. Mr. Orlow also questioned the "terms of use" in paragraph six of the agreement. He noted that the contract referred to policies in place on the company's website and asked if those policies had been reviewed. He requested that the policies be printed and reviewed by the solicitor and that wording be added to stipulate that only policies in place at the time the contract was signed would be binding on the district. Dr. Ryan questioned the usefulness of the product stating it relied heavily on technology which not everyone has or uses. Dr. Cotter noted that the product was being used to support current labor intensive practices and not necessarily to replace any current practice. He also noted that it allowed the district to communicate a controlled message by several means to a large audience on a timely basis and also allowed for communication on a building-to-building basis. Mr. Johnson added that the system provides feedback on the number of messages that were actually received. Mr. Ryan asked if the product was tied to the recent upgrading of the district phone system. Mr. Boegly said it was not.

Mr. Orlow directed the Board's attention to a contract with Carbon Lehigh Intermediate Unit for contracted data processing services. See enclosure #28 of Thursday's agenda. He noted that the contract called for a 1.4% increase from the previous year. Mr. Orlow asked if the district was capable of moving any of the services provided by the IU in-house. Mr. Boegly noted that some services formerly being provided by the IU were now being performed by the district but that Carbon Lehigh still maintained the main database for the district. Mr. Orlow asked if the IU was still used for scheduling purposes. Dr. Cotter stated that it was. He also reported that the high school and middle school were doing a better job of scheduling and cited the work of Assistant Principal Mike Azcona at the middle school.

Mr. Orlow noted that the final contract scheduled for Board action was for Barbacane and Thornton to provide auditing services for a three-year period. The proposal can be found in enclosure #39 of Thursday's agenda. He noted that the firm had done a superb job for the district in the past.

Mr. Orlow asked the Board to consider a series of education programming agreements as one item on Thursday evening. Programs included special education services by the MCIU, alternative education services at Glen Mills Schools, extended school year services at Plymouth Elementary School, a pilot reading program for special education students in grades five or six and the alternative education services at Delaware Valley Health Foundations, Inc. Dr. Cotter mentioned that the MCIU agreement had just been received by the district and was in front of Board Members. The other agreements can be found in enclosures #30 through #33 of Thursday's agenda. Mrs. DeLong noted that a contract with the Mill Creek School, listed as enclosure #34 of the agenda for Thursday evening, had been withdrawn.

Mr. Orlow asked if the MCIU contract involved the purchase of slots. Mrs. DeLong stated that the services included occupational therapy and programs for IEP students provided outside of the

district and that the contract represented an anticipated need based on current enrollment. Dr. Cotter noted that the contract represented a 3% increase from the previous year.

Mr. Orlow inquired as to the services provided by the Delaware Valley Health Foundations, Inc. and the Glen Mills School. Mrs. DeLong stated that the Delaware Valley Health Foundations, Inc. represented an IEP placement and that two regular education students had been referred to the Glen Mills School. She noted that the solicitor had reviewed the Delaware Valley Health Foundations, Inc. contract. Mr. Orlow asked that the solicitor review the indemnification clause again.

Mr. Orlow brought to the attention of the Board a request for PWHS students to participate in a smoking study, details of which can be found in enclosure #35 of Thursday's agenda. He asked Dr. Cotter to explain the request. Dr. Cotter stated that the University of Pennsylvania had contacted PWHS to participate in a longitudinal smoking study. The study would involve the Class of 2010, freshman new to the high school in September, and would be open to all students in the class. He reported that the building principal viewed the study as a supplement to the health curriculum. He noted that monetary incentives were built into the agreement and that the gathering of data would be conducted in school, most likely in health classes. In response to a question from Mr. Orlow, Dr. Cotter stated he did not know what other districts had agreed to participate in the study.

Mr. Orlow noted that Board approval was requested for an exchange student from Belgium to attend PWHS for the 2006-2007 school year under the sponsorship of the ERDT/SHARE High School Exchange Program. See enclosure #36 of Thursday's agenda. Mr. Orlow asked if the district had any experience with the sponsoring organization. Dr. Cotter said that the district had no prior experience with the particular exchange program but was familiar with the family with whom the student would be staying.

Mr. Orlow stated that Board approval was requested for several students to participate in the National Technology Student Association competition held in Dallas, Texas from June 21 through 25. Dr. Cotter noted that the participants were paying their own expenses for the trip.

Mr. Orlow directed the Board's attention to a professional conference request for three psychologists to attend a conference in Atlantic City on July 18 and 19. The request can be found in enclosure #37 of Thursday's agenda. Dr. Cotter confirmed that professional development funds would be utilized per the CASEA Meet & Discuss Agreement and noted that the expense would be charged to the 2006-2007 budget.

Mr. Orlow stated that the final item of new business before the Board was the approval of a series of bid requests. He noted that the first three items referred to ordering annual supplies for instructional purposes, physical education and athletic supplies for the middle school and computer supplies and copy paper. See enclosures #38 through #45 of Thursday's agenda. He asked board members to consider the items together. Mr. Bell clarified that the copy paper was bid through the MCIU and that the district would be ordering far less paper next year than it had in the current year.

Mr. Orlow noted that that next bid up for approval was for a lighting retrofit in cafeteria 100 at PWHS and lighting and lighting control equipment for installation in the CES gymnasium. The bid can be found in enclosure #46 of Thursday's agenda. Mr. Bell noted that the lighting control equipment for CES was part of a larger renovation of the building and that the equipment would

allow the district to more efficiently control lighting specific to events and need. He noted that the cost savings derived from the installation would pay for the equipment in approximately six years.

Mr. Orlow asked that the next two bids, found in enclosures # 47 and #48, for enclosing and air conditioning the libraries at Plymouth Elementary and Whitemarsh Elementary schools be considered together. Mr. Orlow noted that the bids were higher than anticipated and asked, given the current budget climate, if the money totaling more than \$200,000 was best spent in this manner. Mr. Bell noted that other projects scheduled to be completed over the summer would cost less than anticipated and that those summer building projects, when considered as a whole, would be under budget. Dr. Cotter informed board members that the two schools were the only ones in the district that did not have large air conditioned areas available for group instructional purposes.

Mr. Orlow asked the Board to consider the bids for boiler replacement at Plymouth Elementary and Colonial Elementary as one item. See enclosures #49 and #50 of Thursday's agenda. Mr. Bell stated that the CES boiler replacement was part of the larger building renovation and that two boilers were being replaced with three to provide for a more efficient use of energy. He stated the projects would quickly pay for themselves.

Mr. Orlow noted that the final bid up for approval was for the purchase of a grand piano for the high school. The bid can be found in enclosure #51 of Thursday's agenda. Mr. Bell noted that the piano to be replaced was not the concert grand piano but rather the piano that sits in the audition at PWHS. He noted that the current piano had a cracked sound board but that the vendor was taking it as a trade-in to use the outer shell. If the bid is approved, the district will receive nearly \$7,000 off of the price of the new piano. Mr. Orlow asked if there was a concern over the fact that only one company bid on the job. Mr. Bell stated that he was not concerned as there were not that many vendors in the area and that the request for bids had been publicly advertised.

Committee Reports: Mr. Orlow asked if any committee chairmen wished to present their reports. None responded.

Public Comment: None.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James M. Bell
Board Secretary

(Sherman)