

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462  
MINUTES, February 12, 2007.**

President Orlow convened the work session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 7:31 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on February 12, 2007.

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

**Board Members Absent:** Steven Slutsky.

**Also Attending:** Vincent F. Cotter, Superintendent; MaryEllen Gorodetzer, Assistant Superintendent; Gerald E. Berger, Director of Human Resources; Joseph P. Bickleman, Chief Financial Officer/Board Treasurer; Cassandra DeLong, Director of Pupil Services; Andrew Boegly, Chief Information Officer; Terry Yemm, Director of Operations; John Quinn, Director of CITV and David M. Sherman, Community Relations Coordinator/Board Secretary.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance and announced that the Board had met in executive session on 01/18/2007, 02/07/2007 and 02/12/2007 to discuss informational, legal and personnel matters.

**Minutes:** Mr. Orlow asked Board members to review the minutes of the Curriculum Committee and the Work Session of 01/16/2007 and the General Meeting of 01/18/2007. See enclosures #1 through #3. He noted that the minutes of the Finance Committee of 01/16/2007, the Finance Committee and Personnel Committee of 02/07/2007 and the Community Relations and Student Life Committee (CRSL) of 02/08/2007 were expected to be available for review on Thursday.

**Financial Reports:** Mr. Orlow asked if Board members had any questions regarding 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, the Budgetary/Deficit Status Report and the Treasurer's Report for the month ending 01/31/2007, as shown in enclosures #4 through #15.

Mr. Davis inquired as to the amount of interest that the Bond Fund had accrued. Mr. Bickleman reported that approximately \$1.5 million of interest had been earned with another \$120,000 expected by the end of the fiscal year.

Mr. Orlow questioned a transaction of more than \$40,000 attributed to Classrooms for the Future for a teacher's salary. Mr. Bickleman explained that the item referenced Title IID funds from the Classrooms for the Future grant that were to establish a technology staff developer position. He confirmed for Mr. Orlow that the position was filled internally.

**Public Comments on the Agenda:** None.

**Staff Report:** Mr. Orlow noted that Ridge Park Elementary School (RP) Principal Tom Sigafos will provide a report on that building's initiatives at Thursday's meeting.

**Old Business:** Mr. Orlow directed the members' attention to three policies that were before the Board on a second-read basis. He stated that the key amendment to the first policy, By-Laws, #001 and

Committee Functions, #004, included the creation of a new Board-level committee on Safety and Wellness. See enclosure #16. Mr. Orlow stated that if the policy was approved by the Board on Thursday, he would appoint committee members at that time. He also suggested that it may be prudent for the Board to appoint a student representative and a community member to the committee.

The second policy is District Wide Parental Involvement, #121. See enclosure #17. Mr. Orlow noted that the policy was required by the No Child Left Behind Act for those schools accepting Title I funding.

The third policy is School Facilities and Equipment, #707. See enclosure #18. Mr. Orlow reported that the policy updated the applicable timeframe and inserts a provision regarding municipality utilization of district facilities. He noted that the administration had conducted a survey into usage time and asked Mr. Yemm to explain the results. Mr. Yemm stated that 11,639 hours of usage by community groups had been logged over the past year and that amount of time was consistent over the past five years. He reported that Whitemarsh Township groups used the majority of time or more than 6,000 hours. He stated the Plymouth Township groups were second with Conshohocken groups accounting for only 219 hours. Mr. Yemm said that the administration would conduct further analysis to determine the cost to the district in scheduling, billing and custodial work for those hours. He confirmed for Mr. Orlow that there were also grounds keeping expenses for field utilization.

Mr. Orlow questioned how the Board should incorporate those costs into the policy. He stated that perhaps the policy should be returned to the Facilities Management and Transportation (FMT) Committee for revisions. He said that the members wanted to be certain that costs were shared equally but they also understood the need to be sensitive to municipality budgets. He noted that there was not an immediate need for the Board to act on the policy since it will not go into effect until next year.

Mr. Orlow noted that Dr. Jerry Shively, Montgomery County Intermediate Unit (MCIU) Executive Director, was requesting Board action on the MCIU 2007-2008 General Operating Budget. See enclosure #19. He asked Mr. Zimmer to review the budget. Mr. Zimmer reported that the budget consists of departmental budgets for general administrative services; curriculum, instruction and professional development services; state and federal legislative services and instructional materials services. Mr. Zimmer also noted that the solicitor had confirmed that the IU budget is not subject to Act 1 because the majority of the revenue comes from contracts and service fees. Mr. Zimmer moved and Dr. Scoles seconded a motion to approve the MCIU 2007-2008 General Operating Budget. On a roll call vote, all but Dr. Ryan voted in favor. The motion was carried, 7-1. The members also filled out and signed individual ballots.

**Correspondence:** Mr. Orlow stated that Robert J. Wentz, Jr., Secretary of the Trustees Under the Deed of Trust of Joshua Morris, is providing a check in the amount of \$2,300 to the district for utilization in the education of students. See enclosure #20. He noted that this was an annual gift and that the amount was slightly higher than last year.

Mr. Orlow noted that Mr. Bickleman was requesting Board acceptance of the independent audit report for June 30, 2006 prepared by Barbacane Thornton and Company. See enclosure #21. He noted that the report was reviewed by the Finance Committee and cited the outstanding work of the Finance Office. Mr. Bickleman added that the audit found no weaknesses on internal controls.

Mr. Orlow stated that Plymouth Whitemarsh High School science teacher Sabina McNally is requesting Board approval of a donation by Wyeth Laboratories of several pieces of equipment. The equipment includes a floor shaker incubator, a spectrophotometer, a PCR machine and a bench top incubator. He noted that the request had been reviewed by the CRSL Committee.

**Superintendent's Report:** Dr. Cotter outlined his report which included the Personnel Report and Substitute List, the proposed Extra Duty/Extra Pay List, a report on Secondary Summer School for 2007 and a report on the Elementary Literacy Summer Program for 2007. See enclosures #22 through #25. He noted that the Personnel Report included 14 actions, including one new position. He added that the Extra Duty/Extra Pay List included two additions and five changes. Dr. Cotter asked Dr. Gorodetzer to report on the summer programs.

Dr. Gorodetzer stated that a series of elementary literacy programs would be held including: the Primary Grade Community Summer Reading Program held at RP for students entering grades 1-3; the Intermediate Summer Reading Program held at Conshohocken Elementary (CE) for students entering grades 4-6; and the Primary Grades Summer Reading Program also held at CE for students entering grades 1-3. She noted that the program at RP was open to all district residents and is designed for students who want to maintain their reading skills. She stated that the programs at CE were for district students based upon the recommendation of the reading teacher, their classroom teacher or the building principal. The fee for each program is \$150, though Title I funding is available to students in the CE programs if needed. Dr. Gorodetzer reported that the secondary program will run from June 25 through July 26, 2007. Courses offered will be identified as student needs are evaluated. A reading specialist may also be included in the positions posted to address reading and basics skills that may be woven into courses.

**New Business:** Mr. Orlow noted that Mr. Yemm is submitting a policy for revision, Testing for Controlled Substances and Alcohol, #451.1, and the policy is before the members on a first-read basis. See enclosure #26. Mr. Orlow noted that the policy had been reviewed by the FMT Committee. Mr. Yemm stated that the changes update names of individuals authorized to ask for a test and reflect a realignment of responsibilities. No expansion on the scope of testing is sought.

Mr. Orlow stated that the Act 1 legislation required the Board to approve a preliminary budget prior to Thursday's meeting and asked Mr. Bickleman to review the district's 2007-2008 General Operating Preliminary Budget. Mr. Bickleman reported that the preliminary budget totals \$84,214,000 which represents an increase of 4.93 percent or \$3,957,000 over the previous year's budget. The real estate tax mil rate is established at 16.00. This represents a 3.4 percent increase in real estate taxes to district taxpayers. District property owners will see an annual increase of \$53 for every \$100,000 of property assessment or \$74 on the median assessed value of \$140,000. He stated that Employee's salaries and fringe benefits account for the greatest portion of the budget. He also noted that employee benefits will increase \$1,063,239 or 8.18%. The medical premiums portion of employee benefits has increased \$521,067 or 7.89%. Mr. Bickleman added that contracted professional services are projected to increase \$91,717 or 1.64%. Included in this category are out-of-state student placements for special education services and contracted intermediate unit services for special education students. He noted that local revenues continue to be the primary source of funding for the budget and that the budget also utilizes \$2,976,976 of the projected June 30, 2007 fund balance of \$5,591,820.

Mr. Orlow noted that the budget fell within the Act 1 index of 3.4 percent. He also noted that the district qualified for exceptions under the law which would enable the budget to be raised an additional \$800,000 to 4.9 percent.

Mr. Johnson moved and Dr. Ryan seconded a motion to approve the preliminary budget. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow asked Board members to direct their attention to the request for funding of the Summer Consortium for the Arts Program. See enclosure #27. The program provides opportunities for students

who are talented in the arts and who have completed grades 5-12. Mr. Orlow noted that the requested funding of \$6,300 was consistent with years past. He also noted that the district had provided transportation in the past but, given the new financial climate under Act 1, he stated that the district would not do so this year.

Mr. Orlow stated that on Thursday the Board will act on a recommended settlement agreement involving a special education student and an alternative placement for a regular education student. He noted that both cases had been reviewed in executive session.

Mr. Orlow noted that the Board is asked to approve a Professional Conference Request for PWHS Social Studies teacher Brian Costello to attend the National Council for History Education in Williamsburg, Va., from April 12-14, 2007. He noted that the high school administration supports the request and that professional development funds will be used.

Mr. Orlow asked the members to review five trip requests as one item. The trips are for the Marching Colonials to perform at Busch Gardens in Williamsburg, Va., from May 19-21, 2007; Colonial Middle School students to participate in the Marine Science Consortium in Wallops Island, Va., from May 2-5, 2007; two PWHS students to attend the PMEA Regional Choral Festival at Springfield High School from Feb. 22-24, 2007; PWHS students to attend the Future Business Leaders of America state competition in Hershey, Pa., from April 30 to May 2, 2007 and the PWHS girls' lacrosse team to train in Florida over spring break from March 30 to April 5, 2007.

Dr. Cotter stated that all trips were of an annual nature. He noted that the location of the Marching Colonials trip and the regional chorus are at different locations each year.

**Solicitor's Report:** In the absence of the solicitor, Dr. Cotter asked the Board to act on a time sensitive disciplinary stipulation. He noted that Disciplinary Stipulation #97310 had been reviewed in executive session. Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to approve the disciplinary stipulation. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Committee Reports:** Intermediate Unit: Mr. Zimmer reported that the IU Board accepted the resignation of Dr. Lorie Stout and that former Pottsgrove School District Superintendent Dr. Sharon Richardson had been named to replace Dr. Stout.

Legislative: Dr. Ryan noted that in his budget address, the Governor proposed to raised the state sales tax 1.0 percent to 7.0 and that half of the increase would be earmarked for educational spending. Dr. Ryan also noted that he would be attending the PSBA conference in Hershey, Pa., at the end of March and that most of the Pennsylvania Department of Education was expected to be in attendance. He also reported on a cyber schools initiative.

**Public Comment:** None.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 8:28 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David M. Sherman". The signature is stylized and cursive.

David M. Sherman  
Board Secretary