

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462  
MINUTES, May 14, 2007.**

President Orlow convened the work session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 7:39 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on May 14, 2007.

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

**Board Members Absent:** Pascal Scoles and 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 04/25/2007, 05/09/2007 and 05/14/2007 to discuss informational, legal and personnel matters.

**Minutes:** Mr. Orlow asked Board members to review the minutes of the Work Session of 04/16/2007, the General Meeting of 04/19/2007, the Finance Committee of 04/23/2007 and the Community Relations and Student Life (CRSL) Committee and the Safety and Wellness Committee of 05/03/2007. See enclosures #1 through #5. He noted that minutes of the Facilities Management and Transportation Committee and the Human Resources Committee of 05/03/2007 were before members as separate attachments. He also reported that minutes of the Curriculum Committee of 05/14/2007 should be available for review on Thursday.

**Financial Reports:** Mr. Orlow asked Board members to review 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 04/30/2007, as shown in enclosures #6 through #17.

Dr. Ryan noted that on the Comparison of Taxes Collected, 100 percent of the real estate taxes had been collected but only 80 percent of the Earned Income Taxes (EIT) had been received. Mr. Bickleman explained that a number of people wait until the April 15 deadline to file their taxes and that it takes up to four months for taxes to be collected from various municipalities and distributed to the district.

Mr. Orlow questioned whether a Capital Reserve Fund payment for the Curtain Replacement on the Plymouth Whitmarsh High School (PWHS) stage was a repeat expense. Mr. Yemm noted that previous work had been completed underneath the stage and was not related to the curtain. Dr. Ryan questioned if the curtain was a capital item. Mr. Orlow noted that it had a useful life of several years.

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

**Staff Report:** Mr. Orlow stated that Julie Pustilnick, Conshohocken Elementary School Principal, would present a report on her building's programs and initiatives on Thursday.

**Old Business:** None.

**Correspondence:** Mr. Orlow said that Thomas J. Gentzel, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania School Boards Association, has submitted a notification for dues and an invoice for the 2007-2008 school year. See enclosure #18. Mr. Bickleman confirmed for Mr. Orlow that the \$12,275.00 fee is based on a formula of \$9.00 per every million dollars of certified real estate market value. Mr. Orlow stated that he was curious to know the percent increase from last year.

Mr. Orlow reported that Thomas M. Kuestner, Elementary Vice-President of the Colonial Education Association, would speak to the Board on Thursday to celebrate the accomplishments of teacher efforts and accomplishments with the intent of collaboratively establishing a fair, professional contract. See enclosure #19. Mr. Orlow stated that the Board had the same goal. Mr. Orlow asked if the Board should move the location of the Thursday meeting to a larger room given that a large number of students are to be recognized and a large teacher turnout is expected. He stated that he would prefer not to move the meeting but left open that possibility if the administration believes the audience will be too large for the Board Room.

Mr. Orlow noted that the Board would take action Thursday on a request from Dr. Monica Sullivan, PWHS Principal, to accept a \$1,000 donation from the Wal-Mart Foundation in honor of PWHS science teacher Sandra Grigas, recently named a Wal-Mart Teacher of the Year. See enclosure #20. Dr. Cotter reported that the award nomination process was open to any member of the committee and that Ms. Grigas was a deserving recipient. Mr. Orlow stated that he would like to see the parameters for the award.

**Superintendent's Report:** Dr. Cotter led Board members through his report which includes the Personnel Report and Substitute List. See enclosure #21. He noted that there are four retirements, one childrearing leave and two substitutes. He added that a list of summer employees was included.

Dr. Cotter confirmed for Mr. Orlow that the administration was in the process of interviewing new teacher candidates. Mr. Orlow stated that the district liked to do so early to get better candidates. Mr. Berger noted that other districts are also beginning to interview early and the process is becoming more competitive.

**New Business:** Mr. Orlow reminded the Board that May was the time of year for a number of annual appointments and among those, as required by Section 404 of the Public School Code, are the appointment of a Treasurer and a Secretary to one-year terms. He noted recommendations that Mr. Bickleman be reappointed as Treasurer and Mr. Sherman be reappointed as Secretary.

Mr. Orlow reported that in accordance with Board Policy #004.1 and Administrative Regulation #004.1 several students are nominated for the position of student representative to the Board. He noted that the Board would interview the candidates, Sarah Corcoran and Simon Wong, prior to Thursday's meeting. Dr. Cotter reported that the new students would replace the two students who are graduating. He added that one student had been attending the Board meetings while the other student attended the CRSL meetings. Both students will be recognized at the meetings they generally attend.

Mr. Orlow informed the Board that they are requested to adopt a resolution to establish installment payments for property taxes. See enclosure #22. Mr. Bickleman confirmed for Mr. Orlow that the installment payment option is only available to homeowners who applied for and were approved to receive the homestead exemption. He stated that they will receive a four-part bill, which includes options for installment payments due on August 15, September 30 and October 31. Mr. Bickleman confirmed for Mr. Davis that the district does have a list of approved homesteads and farmsteads and the number was more than 9,000. Responding to a question from Mr. Orlow, Mr. Bickleman reported

that the resolution establishes penalties for late installment payments. Mr. Orlow asked that instructions for making the tax payments be placed on the web. Mr. Bickleman stated that his department was working on producing a tax FAQ.

Mr. Orlow directed Board members' attention to the 2007-2008 Proposed Final Budget. Mr. Bickleman explained that the Board needed to act on this budget at Thursday's meeting. He explained that this was a new third step in the budgeting process set forth in the Act 1 legislation. The budget will be available for public inspection for 30 days before final Board approval. The budget totals \$84,599,000, which is an increase of \$4,342,000 or 5.41-percent over the 2006-2007 budget. It includes a millage rate of 15.99 mils and a real estate tax increase of 3.4 percent.

Mr. Orlow reported that Section 621 of the Public School Code directs that the Board shall designate one or more banks or trust companies as depositories for school funds. Wachovia is the present depository for the District. Additionally, he noted that the Board will consider a request to change the signatures on the Colonial Middle School (CMS) Activity Account (see enclosure #23) and the annual list of investment banks, savings and loans and trusts for solicitation of rates on school investments during the 2007-2008 school year (see enclosure #24).

Mr. Orlow noted that the Board will take action Thursday on a list containing estimates of 2007-2008 federal program allocations. See enclosure #25. Dr. Gorodetzer confirmed for Mr. Orlow that the list contained funding from both federal and state programs.

Mr. Orlow asked Board members to review leases for space occupied by the Montgomery County Head Start Program housed in District buildings. See enclosure #26. A 4.0 percent increase in rental charges is requested. Mr. Orlow noted that the leases are consistent with others recently approved by the Board.

Mr. Orlow directed Board members' attention to a list of textbooks recommended for adoption and utilization during the 2007-2008 school year. See enclosure #27. He noted that this is an annual request to approve titles. The books have gone through the five year curriculum review cycle and were also examined recently by the Curriculum Committee. Mr. Orlow noted that the District had begun to utilize Web sites and electronic resources and inquired if those resources underwent the same type of review process. Dr. Gorodetzer noted that there are extensive policies and guidelines in place to assure quality control. She also noted that the state law of approving book titles had been in place for some time.

Mr. Orlow asked Board members to review special education proposals for extended school year services at both Plymouth Elementary School and CMS as well as a proposal for a summer reading program for students in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades. See enclosures #28 and #29. Mrs. DeLong explained that the CMS program was new and intends to continue serving students in their neighborhood schools. She stated that she expects 8-10 students to participate based upon determinations made by their Individual Education Plan (IEP) team. She confirmed for Mr. Orlow that there is a cost savings to having the program in-house rather than paying to send students out of the district. Mrs. DeLong stated that the summer reading program is a continuation of the program begun last year. She expects 10-15 students to participate. Students are identified based upon their PSSA scores and not their IEP. Parents determine if students will participate.

Mr. Orlow stated that the Board will take action Thursday on a series of settlement agreements and placement contracts involving special education students. They are renewal agreements with Foundations Behavioral Health, the Eagle Hill School and Austill's Rehabilitation Services, Inc. Mr.

Davis inquired as to the location of Foundation Behavioral Health and was informed that it was in Doylestown, Pa.

Mr. Orlow referred to two professional conference requests before the Board. The first is for Ridge Park Elementary autism teacher Tracy Quinn to attend the annual COSAC Conference in Atlantic City, N.J., May 18-19, 2007. See enclosure #30. The second request is for a number of PWHS and CMS administrators and teachers to attend the AVID Implementation Summer Institute in Atlanta, Ga., July 22-26, 2007. See Enclosure #31. Mr. Orlow commented that this request was significant in that the size of the group attending the conference is large. Dr. Gorodetzer reported that 17 people, nine from PWHS and eight from CMS plan to attend. She noted that the AVID program requires attendance at the institute.

Mr. Orlow asked Board members to review three field trip requests. The first for CMS students to travel to the National Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., the second for CMS students to go to the Adventure Aquarium in Camden, N.J., on May 21, 2007 and the third request is to change the departure and return dates for the previously approved PWHS Class of 2008 trip to Florida. See enclosures #32 through #34. Dr. Cotter stated that the CMS trip to the Holocaust Museum had already occurred. He stated that five members of the Board reviewed the trip during an executive session prior to its taking place. He noted that by acting on the trip now, the Board was simply making it part of the official record.

Mr. Orlow directed Board members' attention to a series of bid recommendations for instructional and athletic supplies. See enclosures #35 through #41. Instructional bids include elementary art supplies, secondary art supplies, custodial supplies, general supplies, technology education supplies and science supplies. The athletic supplies are for PWHS and CMS. Mr. Orlow noted that the bid forms are lengthy and includes hundreds of small items. He noted that the Board approves the bids now to allow plenty of time for items to be ordered and received in time for the new school year.

**Solicitor's Report:** None.

**Committee Reports:** Legislative: Dr. Ryan reminded everyone to exercise their right to vote on May 15. He reminded all community members that they will be affected by the outcome of the Act 1 ballot question. Mr. Orlow reminded everyone that the district had mailed a flier to the community in an attempt to explain the issue. He stated that a member of the District's Local Tax Study Commission had mailed his own post card to the community urging them to vote "No" on the question. He reminded the community that the Board and School District's position on the issue was neutral.

**Public Comment:** None.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 8:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



David M. Sherman  
Board Secretary