

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, NOVEMBER 13, 2006.**

President Orlow convened the work session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:37 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on November 13, 2006.

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

Board Members Absent: None.

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; David M. Sherman, Community Relations Coordinator/Board Secretary; John Quinn, Director of CITV and members of the Local Tax Study Commission: Jack Pinheiro, Chairman; Claire Meashey, Vice Chairman; Leslie Finegold, Secretary; Dominic Aprile, Tom Flynn, Robert Franz, Stanley Rosenau and Craig San Pietro.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance and announced that the Board had met in executive session on 10/25/2006, 11/08/2006 and 11/13/2006 to discuss informational, legal and personnel matters.

Minutes: Mr. Orlow directed Board members' attention to the minutes of the Work Session of 10/16/2006, the General Meeting of 10/19/2006 and the Facilities Management and Transportation Committee of 11/01/2006. See enclosures #1 through #3. He noted that the minutes of the Personnel Committee of 11/08/2006, the Finance Committee of 11/08/2006, the Community Relations and Student Life Committee (CRSL) of 11/09/2006 and the Curriculum Committee of 11/13/2006 would be available for review on Thursday.

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, the Budgetary/Deficit Status Report and the Treasurer's Report for the month ending 10/31/2006, as shown in enclosures #4 through #15.

Mr. Orlow referred to the Budget Transfer list and questioned large special education and regular education tuition payments. Mr. Bickleman explained that the special education transfer amounts were for two students at the special education tuition rate. He explained that the regular education rate was approximately \$11,000 and the special education rate was approximately \$21,000. Mrs. DeLong responded to a question from Mr. Orlow by stating that the placement was not an Individual Education Plan (IEP) but rather parent choice. She also explained for Mr. Orlow that in such a case the district did not have any responsibility over the student's IEP but rather that the accountability rested with the charter school. Mrs. DeLong and Mr. Bickleman clarified that a student's residency and IEP are verified before the district pays a special education tuition rate. Mr. Orlow also sought and received confirmation that the district was not responsible for any additional costs over and above the tuition fee.

Public Comments on the Agenda: None.

Old Business: Mr. Orlow noted that the Board would forgo discussing an item of old business until later in the meeting in order to hear from the Local Tax Study Commission (LTSC).

Correspondence: Mr. Orlow stated that the district's LTSC was on hand to make its mandated recommendation of an earned income tax (EIT) or Personal Income Tax (PIT) to the Board. Mr. Orlow explained that Act 1 requires school boards to place on the 2007 primary election ballot a question of whether the voters want to increase the EIT to generate revenues for homestead/farmstead exclusions or levy a local PIT for the same purpose. Act 1 also requires school boards to appoint a LTSC to advise them as to which tax to propose as well as provide a recommendation for a tax rate within the mandated guidelines. Mr. Orlow explained that the rate must provide property tax relief of no less than 25 percent, and no more than 50 percent, of the median assessed value of a home in the district.

LTSC Chairman Pinheiro had members of the commission introduce themselves to the Board. Mr. Pinheiro stated that the Commission's recommendation was difficult to reach and was a collaborative effort that involved many hours of individual research. After providing background on Act 1, he stated that the Commission voted 6-3 to recommend the lowest possible EIT, which would be a 0.6 percent rate without taking into consideration possible gaming money from the state, or 0.4 percent if the gaming money is included. Mr. Pinheiro added that the LTSC unanimously voted to urge the Board to take all of the time allotted to try and discern if the gaming money should be included in the tax rate consideration. Mr. Pinheiro concluded by stating that the LTSC unanimously agreed that the district would be better off without the EIT. A complete copy of the LTSC report is included as Attachment #1.

Mr. Orlow thanked the LTSC members and noted that many had served on the district's Citizen's Advisory Committee, which was voluntarily formed in 2004 to study Act 72. He stated that the LTSC had helped sort out a very complicated issue. He said that the Board would continue to research the ballot question until March 13 when they are obligated to act on it.

Mr. Slutsky thanked the LTSC members for their hard work and stated that he was looking forward to reading the substantial information that they had compiled.

Mr. San Pietro stated that the EIT was not a tax break but rather a tax shift and would hurt the district's cash flow. He added that if enacted, the EIT would make Colonial a less attractive place to live for renters. San Pietro concluded by stating that the Commission included senior citizens who would benefit from the proposed tax increase, but even they understand that they may want to sell their homes in a few years and an increased EIT could have a negative effect on property values.

Mr. Franz also expressed concerns about the Act 1 legislation and concerns over security of individual financial data. He also stated that the EIT, if enacted, would not fund under-funded state and federal mandates.

Mr. Orlow stated that the back end referendum that accompanies Act 1 was also a negative to the district. He stated that a lot more guesswork will go into preparing the budget and gave the example that the budget needed to be completed in January or February, but the district won't know if it will need to replace retiring teachers until May or June.

Mr. Orlow asked Board members to redirect their attention to the three draft calendars for the 2007-2008 school year listed under Old Business. See enclosure #16. Dr. Cotter reviewed the calendars and explained that the goal was to end the school year in the second week of June. He mentioned that the calendars were reviewed by the CRSL Committee, and forwarded to the Colonial Education Association for its 60-day review as required by contract. Mr. Slutsky asked if it was preferable to have the last in-service day before or after the school year. Dr. Cotter explained that building administrators felt there would be plenty of time to wrap up the school year on June 13. Considerable discussion ensued revolving around the number of teacher work days, where in-service days would fall and the scheduling of half-days for in-service. Dr. Gorodetzer explained that it was beneficial to have an extra in-service day at the beginning of the school year to support the roll-out of new programs. Dr. Cotter and Dr. Gorodetzer explained that the calendar is usually finalized by March.

Mr. Orlow said the Board would take action Thursday on the Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation recommendation to accept funding for two grant proposals totaling \$5,390.00. See enclosure #17 on Thursday's agenda. He stated that \$1,000 was to fund upgrades to the Science Olympiad program at the high school and \$4,390 was to support a mosaic mural project at Ridge Park Elementary School. Dr. Cotter stated that the programs had been reviewed internally to be sure they are in sync with district initiatives. Mr. Orlow commented that it was good to see that the Foundation was still supporting district programs.

Mr. Orlow announced that Joseph P. Corcoran III, Board of Supervisors of Whitemarsh Township, is seeking Board approval to support a tax exemption and rescission for 2389 and 2391 Harts Lane which have been designated for utilization in the township's Parks and Recreation Program. See enclosure #18. Mr. Orlow explained that if approved, the district would issue a check to refund a portion of taxes already paid for the current year. Mr. Orlow asked if the lots were vacant. Mrs. Luken stated that there were two abandoned buildings and the township is now evaluating the use of the properties. Considerable discussion ensued on whether or not the township had potential to make money by renting the buildings now or in the future. Mr. Bickleman stated that any future change in the property status would be hard to ascertain as the exempt status is determined at the county level. Mr. Orlow asked for further examination of the issue prior to Thursday's meeting.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Cotter outlined his report which included the Personnel Report and Substitute List, the Enrollment Report, the proposed Extra Duty/Extra Pay List, and an Independent Contractor's Agreement. See enclosures #19 through #22. He stated that the Personnel Report contained 14 actions and that the Enrollment Report indicated average class sizes of 13-23 for grades K-3, 21-22 for grades 4-5 and 18-24 for the middle school. He noted that the middle school numbers were for English and social studies classes. Dr. Cotter stated that the Extra Duty/Extra Pay List included six appointments and one resignation. He reported that the Individual Contractor's Agreement was for an individual who was providing services to the district as a coach for new teachers and coordinator of the new Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program at Plymouth Whitemarsh High School (PWHS).

Mr. Orlow inquired if there were any hot spots the administration was watching. Mr. Berger reported that the district was still looking to fill a half-time special education position at the high school. He noted that the need for a dual certification and the fact that the position was only half-time was making it difficult to fill.

New Business: Mr. Orlow called the Board's attention to a request that payments be made to the PWHS and Colonial Middle School (CMS) student councils equal to one-half of the unspent

2005-2006 Anti-Vandalism Program funds. See enclosure #23. He noted that the high school payment is recommended to be \$4,368 and the middle school payment is recommended to be \$2,325. He explained that the program had been in affect for 20 years and that half of any budgeted funds not needed to repair acts of vandalism were returned to the students. He noted that it is further recommended that the Board re-establish the program for the 2006-2007 school year with the same level of funding, \$5,000 for the high school and \$3,000 for the middle school, provided the evidence of an anti-vandalism effort is submitted by each student council. Responding to a question from Mr. Slutsky, Dr. Cotter stated that the amount of vandalism was very minimal and similar to the previous year. Responding to a question from Mr. Davis, Mr. Yemm explained that the vandalism was mainly in bathrooms and related to broken doors and fixtures.

Mr. Orlow said that the Board was requested to take action on a special education placement/settlement agreement with the Oasis School in Coatesville, Pa. He noted the agreement covered both educational and transportation services and was reviewed in executive session.

Mr. Orlow stated that the Board would take action Thursday on two bid requests. One of the bids was for the purchase of eight video camera units to be installed in school buses. See enclosure #24. Mr. Yemm confirmed for Mr. Orlow that the cameras would be installed on eight different buses. Dr. Cotter stated that the camera purchase was an ongoing effort to have cameras installed on all buses. Mr. Yemm stated that with this purchase there would be cameras on 31 of 97 buses employed by the district. Responding to a question from Mrs. Luken, Mr. Yemm stated that the cameras would last at least 10 years.

Mr. Yemm noted that bids for the lighting installation scheduled for Victory Fields #1 would be included as yellow pages at Thursday's meeting. He stated that the bids needed to be reviewed by Chestnut Hill College.

Committee Reports: Intermediate Unit: Mr. Zimmer reported that the IU presented its budget on a first read at the October 25 meeting. He referenced four administrative budgets within the overall \$112 million operating budget. The four administrative budgets total \$6.4 million, which translates to only a .23% increase for Colonial. He stated that, like school district budgets, the IU budget process has been accelerated by Act 1. Mr. Zimmer noted that the IU held its first meeting for Special Education Coordinators in September and that the contract for the Homeless Children's Initiative has been approved. Mr. Orlow asked if, in light of Act 1, the IU was now going to charge districts for services they have not charged for in the past and what outcome that may have on the IU budget. Dr. Cotter stated that Superintendents had raised that issue with the IU. He noted that in the past districts had paid for a package of services for special education and technology and from now on may separate services and pay for only what they need.

Public Comment: None.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 10:03 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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

David M. Sherman