

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

President Orlow convened the general session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 8:02 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on November 16, 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; Jeffrey T. Sultanik, Solicitor; David M. Sherman, Community Relations Coordinator/Board Secretary; John Quinn, Director of CITV; Lawrence Ogunkua, Board Student Representative; Bob Fahler, Colonial Middle School Principal; Ken Grimes; Sophie Davidson; Dana Moyer; Alinda Wood; Amy Norman; Jackie Ranch; Marianne Johnston; Faith Jones; Marcy Lipner; Jill Forster; Donelle Brotz; Susan Kohler; Susan Hope; David Caplan; Julia Campbell; Jim Carr and Marianne Paparone.

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 the Facilities Management and Transportation Committee of 11/01/2006, 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. See enclosures #1 through #3 and #30 through #33. Mr. Bickleman informed the Board that an updated copy of the Finance Committee minutes was before them as a blue sheet. Mr. Zimmer moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the minutes. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Financial Reports:** Mr. Orlow sought Board action on the financial reports on the list for approval. 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. Responding to a question from Mr. Orlow, Mr. Boegly explained that transactions for Eplus Technologies on the Bills for Approval List referenced work done as part of the Facilities Management Center (FMC) renovation. Dr. Scoles moved and Mr. Slutsky seconded a motion to approve the Financial Reports. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Public Comments on the Agenda:** Mr. Caplan questioned the Local Tax Study Commission (LTSC) report given on November 13 which recommended a 0.6 percent earned income tax

(EIT) increase rather than a personal income tax (PIT). Mr. Caplan stated that a PIT would spread the tax over more people. He also stated that misconceptions existed regarding the difficulty in collecting a PIT and its adverse affect on senior citizens. Mr. Orlow recounted the history of the LTSC and its recommendation to the Board. He reiterated that the LTSC opted for the lowest possible tax. He also noted that the timing of the LTSC recommendation allowed more time for public input. Considerable discussion ensued on the merits of a PIT versus and EIT, the difficulties in collecting both taxes and the amount of leeway the School Board had with the wording of the question to be placed on the May primary ballot. Mr. Caplan explained his history in working with the state and county to facilitate a county-wide or state-wide collection of EIT taxes and asked the Board if they had any questions for him. He did not have an answer for Mr. Orlow on whether or not Sterling tax reimbursements should be figured into the Act 1 tax rate compilation. Mr. Orlow stated, and Mr. Sultanik confirmed, that the Board would hold a public hearing prior to submitting a ballot question to the county election board in March.

**Staff Report:** Mr. Fahler demonstrated recent upgrades to the Colonial Middle School (CMS) Web site that facilitate increased communication with families. The upgrades include the addition of the school phone number on every page, interactive team pages, a staff directory and an activities calendar. He showed how parents can now access student assignments and grades. Mr. Slutsky stated that the new Web site was fabulous and more user-friendly than before. He added that all teachers he visited during open house showed their individual Web site to parents. Mr. Fahler thanked board members for their compliments and lauded the efforts of Jerome Joyce, Debra Harris and all of the teachers for their hard work.

**Old Business:** Dr. Cotter stated that the administration had met with the Colonial Education Association leadership and after discussion on the draft calendars for the 2007-2008 school year, reached agreement to endorse draft #3. See enclosure #16. Dr. Cotter noted that the only change from Monday's work session was the addition of induction days for new teachers in August. Dr. Cotter confirmed for Mr. Orlow that make-up days built into the calendar were consistent with those in years past and that there were five days built into the calendar before scheduled days off needed to be used. Dr. Ryan moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to adopt draft #3 as the calendar for the 2007-2008 school year. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Correspondence:** Mr. Orlow commented that when giving their report, the members of the LTSC expressed the opinion that the recommended tax would not be good for the school district. He asked Mr. Sultanik whether or not the commission's viewpoint could be worked into the ballot question. Mr. Sultanik stated that ultimately the decision rested with the county election board but that it was his opinion that there was some latitude in drafting a question. He suggested that the School Board hold its public hearing in February to allow enough time to draft an interpretive statement and have it approved by the Election Board. Mr. Sultanik added that there was considerable confusion among the authorities as to what their responsibilities were in regards to Act 1. Responding to a question from Mr. Slutsky, Mr. Sultanik stated that he did not think there would be enough time for an appeal in the event the School Board's ballot question was rejected. Mr. Sultanik also stated that his firm was researching whether or not the district would receive gaming money to offset property taxes if the Act I EIT is voted down.

Mr. Orlow sought Board acceptance of monetary gifts from the Colonial Foundation for Educational Innovation to fund two grant proposals totaling \$5,390.00. See enclosure #17. He noted that the grants were reviewed on Monday and added 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. Mr. Davis moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to accept the grants. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow asked for Board action on a request by Joseph P. Corcoran III, Board of Supervisors of Whitemarsh Township, for the Board to approve 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. He stated the amount was approximately \$5,000 and that the properties would be exempt from taxes in future years. Responding to a question from Mr. Orlow, Dr. Cotter stated that the administration had yet to receive an answer as to whether or not the township could reap future income from renting the properties. Responding to another question from Mr. Orlow, Mr. Sultanik stated that the board could approve the request contingent upon administration and solicitor review and approval of the purpose of use. Mrs. Luken moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the request for the tax exemption and rescission subject to administration and solicitor review and approval of the purpose of use. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow asked the Board to consider acceptance of a \$100 gift from the William Jeanes Memorial Library to the Plymouth Whitemarsh High School (PWHS) Orchestra. See enclosure #34. He added that Ms. Adele Boyd of the library noted that the gift is in appreciation of a violin and harp ensemble performance on October 20. Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to accept the gift. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Superintendent's Report:** Dr. Cotter updated his report from Monday evening 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 eight additional action from the 14 listed on Monday. Mr. Orlow noted that one of the new actions included the appointment of Mr. Joyce to a technology staff development position in the district office. He noted that Mr. Joyce had received praise for his work on the CMS Web site and asked who would be replacing him at the school. Mr. Berger stated that he expected to hold interviews for Mr. Joyce's vacated position after the Thanksgiving holiday. Mr. Zimmer moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the Superintendent's Report. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

**Board Student Representatives Report:** Mr. Ogunkua reported that the PWHS football and field hockey teams participated in district playoffs, the high school held its traditional homecoming week activities, the Habitat for Humanity Club held a barbecue, parent teacher conferences were held, a cap and gown assembly was held for seniors, the marching band participated in a state competition, a health care career day was held, the School Board student town meeting was held, a junior parent college counseling seminar was provided and the student fall production *Winners* was being presented through the weekend.

**New Business:** Mr. Orlow asked for Board action on 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 payment amounts had been adjusted since Monday's meeting. The high school payment is recommended to be \$2,184 and the middle school payment is recommended to be \$1,167.50. 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. Mr. Johnson

moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the funding. On roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow sought Board 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. He stated that information was not attached to the agenda for privacy reasons. Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Luken seconded a motion to approve the agreement. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Mr. Orlow asked the Board members to direct their attention to a recommendation to approve a bid for the purchase of eight video camera units to be installed in school buses. See enclosure #24. Mrs. Luken moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to approve the bid. On a roll call vote all voted in favor. The motion was carried.

Dr. Cotter noted that the bid for lighting on Victory Fields would be deferred until December as the administration was still waiting on Chestnut Hill College (CHC) to complete its review of the bids. Responding to a question from Mr. Orlow, Mr. Yemm stated that the lighting costs were included in the agreement with CHC but that the turf field installation was not contingent upon the installation of lights. Mr. Yemm also noted that the lighting costs were treated in the same manner as the turf installation costs. Responding to another question from Mr. Orlow regarding the timetable to begin the turf installation, Mr. Yemm stated that he expected to have the NPDES, or grading, permit from the Montgomery County Conservation District next week.

**Committee Reports:** Intermediate Unit: Mr. Zimmer reported that the IU Board approved the four administrative budgets totaling \$6.4 million that he referenced during Monday's meeting. He noted that the budgets would be on the Colonial School Board's agenda for review and approval in December or January. He stated that the IU Board will be on hiatus for the holidays and his next report would be given at the February meeting.

CMCAVTS: No Report

Personnel: No Report

Finance: Mr. Slutsky stated that the Board would like to hear opinions from the public regarding their preference of a EIT or PIT to fulfill the Act 1 mandate. Mr. Slutsky referenced the Finance Committee meeting minutes found in enclosure #31 and reported that the vocational-technical school may refinance some of its debt to a lower interest rate which could save money. He also said that the final fund balance for the 2005-2006 budget was \$9.1 million, of which \$3.6 million was returned to tax payers in the 2006-2007 budget. Mr. Slutsky was pleased to report that the district food services operation was running close to budget and better than expected. He also noted that under Act 1, the district was now required to offer taxpayers the option of paying property taxes in installments which will cost the district the use of money and put further pressure on the budget.

Curriculum: Mr. Davis asked Dr. Gorodetzer to report on the November 13 Curriculum Committee meeting. Dr. Gorodetzer stated that the meeting focused on secondary curriculum and program topics. She referenced the PW PrEP meeting on November 7 where committees shared their initial recommendations. She stated that the administration was impressed with the quality and content of the discussions. Dr. Gorodetzer stated that PWHS physics teacher Jim Muscarella presented a proposal to create a tiered engineering course involving the Technology Education and Science Departments. It is hoped that the course can be offered during the 2007-2008 school

year. Dr. Gorodetzer added that Mr. Muscarella's presentation included an update on the Science Olympiad and robotics program. Dr. Gorodetzer stated that Dr. Monica Sullivan provided an overview of PWHS course offerings, which included enhancements to the gifted and APOGEE programs. She also noted that the committee received an overview of Advanced Placement exam results which included global averages.

Mr. Davis added that he was impressed with the PW PrEP update. Mr. Orlow explained for the public that PW PrEP was a significant reform movement at the high school that began last spring. He noted that the effort involved most of the high school staff, community members, School Board members and members of the district and building administrations.

Facilities Management and Transportation: Mrs. Moore reported that the copy center was now fully operational in the FMC and that work was being completed on the new trainer's room at PWHS. She stated that the custodial offices had been relocated and that the new team locker rooms were ready for use. Mrs. Moore noted that new kitchen equipment was also being installed at the high school. She reported that the district had entered into a recycling agreement and that the initial phase would include office paper, catalogs, magazines and newspapers. She stated that the new playground equipment had been installed at Colonial Elementary School (CES) and that the lighting retrofit in the CES gym had been completed. She said that the new lighting system was amazing and that the intensity and direction of the lights can be adjusted depending on the needs of the event being staged.

Community Relations: Dr. Scoles reported that the district's Annual Report was in the mail and spoke to the quality of the publication. He also noted that the next Parents' Council meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, November 28. Mr. Orlow commended the administration on the Annual Report and noted that 19,000 copies of the publication were produced at a cost of just 40 to 50 cents each.

Legislation: Dr. Ryan spoke to the proposed legislation that would require physical exams for students and a report on the consolidation of school districts in Pennsylvania. He noted that the recent election resulted in 102 seats for Republicans and 101 seats for Democrats with two seats still undecided. He reported that the legislature's Education Committee would have a new chairman in January. He also stated that there were seven new elected officials in Montgomery County.

**Public Comment:** None.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 9:23 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



David M. Sherman