

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
MINUTES, MARCH 17, 2008**

President Orlow convened the combined work and general session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 7:33 p.m. in the Board Room of Colonial Elementary School on March 17, 2008.

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

Board Members Absent: Steven Slutsky.

Also Attending: Dr. Vincent F. Cotter, Superintendent; Dr. MaryEllen Gorodetzer, Assistant Superintendent; Joseph P. Bickleman, Chief Financial Officer/Board Treasurer; Cassandra DeLong, Director of Pupil Services; Terry Yemm, Director of Operations; Jeffrey T. Sultanik, Solicitor; John Quinn, Director of CITV; David M. Sherman, Community Relations Coordinator/Board Secretary and Donna Drizin.

Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance and announced that the Board had met in executive session on February 27, March 12 and March 17 to discuss informational, legal and personnel matters. He reminded everyone that the Board had cancelled its business meeting regularly scheduled for March 20 and that the Board would conduct business at this combined meeting.

Minutes: Mr. Orlow asked the Board to review and act on the minutes of the Work Session of February 19, the Business Meeting of February 21, the Human Resources Committee of March 4, the Facilities Management and Transportation (FMT) Committee and the Community Relations and Student Life (CRSL) Committee of March 6 and the Curriculum Committee of March 12. See enclosures #1 through #6.

Mr. Orlow questioned the reference to a change order related to the synthetic turf installation on Victory Field #1 in the FMT minutes. See enclosure #4. He asked if the committee had the authority to approve the order under the recently revised change order policy. Mr. Yemm explained that the policy change allowed the committee to approve up to five percent of the project value. Mr. Bickleman added that the policy enables the committee to approve moving forward with the change order so that work may continue before formal Board approval is given. He also noted that the Board will approve the change order as part of the Bills for Approval List included in the Bond Fund Report.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the minutes as presented. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Financial Reports: Mr. Orlow sought Board action on the financial reports. The reports include 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 February 29. See enclosures #7 through #18.

Mr. Orlow questioned a Budget Transfer of \$10,000 for LobbyGuard supplies. Mr. Bickleman noted that there was a purchase order to cover supply line items such as badges and other supplies. Dr. Cotter stated that the expense may be related to an upgrade recently implemented that allows parents to have easier access to the building by way of an "easy pass."

Mr. Bickleman stated that he would check the purchase order detail for the specifics. Mr. Bickleman reminded Mr. Orlow that he would like to have the change order for turf installation approved as part of

the Bills for Approval List. Mrs. Moore asked Mr. Yemm to explain the change order. Mr. Yemm explained that the size of the field needed to be expanded to accommodate a Whitmarsh Township request for a larger retention basin under the field. He stated that extra turf was required to cover the larger basin. Mr. Orlow explained that the District usually asks for a waiver of land development to save taxpayer's expense in completing construction projects with the caveat that the District agree to accommodate changes requested by the Township. He stated that this change order was an example of the process working.

Mrs. Moore asked if a \$5,000 escrow deposit for the lighting on Victory Fields will be returned by the Township if the District does not go ahead with the project. Mr. Yemm stated that the escrow covered engineering and legal fees for the project and that the District will receive an accounting of those costs. Any remaining money will be returned to the District.

Mr. Zimmer moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the Financial Reports. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Staff Report: Whitmarsh Elementary School Principal Donna Drizin spoke to the importance of morale and the sense of community that exists at the school. She discussed ways in which she promoted that positive environment to students, teachers, parents and community members at events such as Back to School Night, the third grade sleepover and more.

Public Comments on the Agenda: None.

Budget Presentations: Mr. Orlow explained the new budget process stipulated by Act I and reminded everyone that the Board had previously certified that it would not exceed the established budget index of 4.4 percent and would not make use of any exceptions provided for under the legislation. He added that the Board would approve a preliminary budget in April with approval of the final budget to come in May or June.

Mr. Davis discussed the curriculum budget and referred to the minutes of the March 12 committee meeting. See enclosure #6. He stated that the committee reviewed textbooks for approval and conference requests. Dr. Gorodetzer added that on-cycle curriculum resources reviewed included elementary social studies textbooks. Also reviewed were textbooks related to new initiatives at the high school, professional development, library resources, summer school programs, assessment programs and technology support. She noted that the \$475,000 request represents a 35 percent decrease from the current budget because some funds are being shifted to the technology budget. Mr. Davis emphasized that less money is dedicated to on-cycle textbooks and materials because the curriculum developed in-house is better than any textbooks or software the District could purchase.

Mrs. Moore spoke to the facilities budget. She stated that an increase in water and sewer rates is expected as is a 12.1 percent increase in fuel oil despite a five percent reduction in fuel oil usage. She noted that the budget included \$150,000 for the purchase of a new truck for CITV and \$110,000 for the purchase of a trailer for the Plymouth Whitmarsh High School (PWHS) band to haul and store equipment. Mr. Yemm added that there is a 40 percent increase in the plumbing material line item to cover repair and maintenance of equipment. He also stated that there is an increase in HVAC expenses. At the request of Mr. Orlow, Mr. Yemm explained that the CITV truck needed replacing because it was no longer safe and efficient. He stated that it was hard to keep the vehicle in working order. Mr. Yemm added that \$90,000 was budgeted for the truck and \$60,000 was budgeted for equipment. He stated that the truck should last 15 years.

Mrs. Luken reported on the personnel budget. She noted that additional staffing needs include two K-3 teachers, one elementary specialist, one reading specialist to be shared between two schools, two special

education instructors and two instructional aides at Colonial Middle School (CMS), part-time math and part-time social studies instructors at PWHS, four unassigned positions, a technology staff developer, two technology technicians and an elementary Language Arts Department head. She stated that the staffing request is for \$1,137,000. Mrs. Luken reported that an 8.96 percent increase in the District's health care contribution and a 7.2 rate for the District's retirement contribution is budgeted. She added these items exceeded \$1.7 million.

Mr. Orlow reiterated that the Board will approve a preliminary budget in April at which time the public will have 30 days to inspect the entire document. Dr. Cotter confirmed for Mr. Orlow that the only other committee budget report will be the finance committee report in April.

Old Business: Mr. Orlow asked Board members to consider an update of the Early Admission to Kindergarten Policy, #201 before them on a second-read basis. See enclosure #19. Mr. Orlow noted that the revision sets July 31 as the deadline for early admission applications.

Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Luken seconded a motion to approve the policy revision. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Correspondence: Mr. Orlow sought Board action on a request by Bernadette Biasi, chair of the PWHS Scholarship Fund, to continue the practice of adding one dollar to the cost of school picture packages to benefit the scholarship fund. See enclosure #20. Mr. Orlow noted that the PWHS Scholarship Fund awarded nearly \$35,000 to seniors last year and over \$386,000 since its inception.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to approve the request. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Mr. Orlow requested that the Board review a request from Ridge Park Elementary School Principal Jason Bacani to accept a \$2,000 grant as part of the Best Buy Teach Program. See enclosure #21. Dr. Cotter confirmed for Mr. Orlow that the grant has not yet been received. He added that the award is in the form of a gift card that Chief Information Officer Drew Boegly will manage.

Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to accept the grant. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Cotter noted that his report included the Personnel Report and Substitute List. See enclosure #22. He reported there are two resignations and 13 replacements. He said it was important to note that six long-term substitutes were transferred to temporary professional employees. He added that three substitutes are listed. Mr. Orlow noted that the Board reviewed the report in executive session.

Mrs. Luken moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to approve the Superintendent's Report. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Board Student Representatives Report: None.

New Business: Mr. Orlow sought Board action on three contracts with the Montgomery Early Learning Centers. See enclosure #23 through #25. Mr. Yemm confirmed for Mr. Orlow that the District is not seeking an increase in rental fees for the coming year. He also confirmed that the contracts are updates from prior year agreements. Dr. Cotter noted that the only exception is the addition of a security deposit for the summer program. Mr. Yemm noted that there is an increase in the amount of lease space in the new contracts. He confirmed for Mr. Orlow that the space is available. He expressed confidence that the District's maintenance costs are covered in the agreements.

Mr. Zimmer moved and Mrs. Luken seconded a motion to approve the contracts. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Mr. Orlow asked Board members to consider a request to approve the District's participation in the Summer Consortium for the Arts held at Upper Merion High School (UMHS) in association with Norristown High School and UMHS. See enclosure #26. He noted that the District's contribution of \$6,300 is the same as last year. Mr. Orlow added that the CRSL committee reviewed the issue.

Dr. Scoles moved and Mrs. Luken seconded a motion to approve participation in the event. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Mr. Orlow requested Board action on tuition agreements for two students to attend the Crefeld School at \$25,600 each per year and one student to attend the Quaker School at \$26,880 per year. He noted that these were renewal agreements and that they were reviewed in executive session.

Mr. Zimmer moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the agreements. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Mr. Orlow asked the Board to consider a contract for a one-on-one behavioral assistant for a student attending the Elwin School. The cost for the assistant is \$150 per day. Mr. Orlow stated that the contract was reviewed in executive session.

Mr. Davis moved and Dr. Ryan seconded a motion to approve the contract. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Mr. Orlow asked Board members to act on three professional conference requests as one item. See enclosures #27 through #29. The first is for Kim Newell and Dave Sherman to attend the National School Public Relations Association workshop in Washington, D.C. from July 6-9. The second is for PWHS teacher Pam Tice to attend the national Council of Supervisor of Mathematics Program in Salt Lake City, Utah from April 6-9. The third is for CMS teacher Ansley Dawidziuk to attend the Council for Exceptional Children in Boston, Mass., from April 2-5. Mr. Orlow asked if principals rotate teachers selected to attend professional development programs. Dr. Cotter stated that the teacher selected depends upon goals in a particular curricular area. He noted that those selected are usually teacher leaders who are best suited to share what they've learned with other teachers when they return. Dr. Ryan requested that Ms. Dawidziuk visit a District student placed in a school in the Boston area while attending the conference. Dr. Cotter said the visitation was already planned.

Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the requests. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Mr. Orlow requested that the Board consider a request for a PWHS student to attend the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association regional competition at William Tennent High School from March 26-29. See enclosure #30.

Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to approve the trip request. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Solicitor's Report: None.

Committee Reports: Intermediate Unit: No report.

CMTHS: Mr. Johnson reported on the Central Montco Technical High School 2008-2009 Budget and stated that the District realizes an actual decrease of 1.82 percent in its contribution based on three-year

cost averaging. See enclosure #32. He moved for the Board to approve the budget. Mr. Davis seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Human Resources: Mrs. Luken stated that the committee reviewed current staffing needs and reviewed the 2008-2009 budget as reported earlier.

Finance: No report.

Curriculum and Instruction: Mr. Davis stated that he covered his report in the budget presentation. Mr. Orlow noted that the Best Practices Fair received positive media coverage and asked Dr. Gorodetzer to report on the event. Dr. Gorodetzer stated that 94 presenters shared material at more than 64 sessions. She stated that technology integration and differentiated instruction were areas of focus. Responding to a question from Mr. Orlow, Dr. Cotter stated that he was not aware of any other area district that sponsored such a program. Dr. Gorodetzer added that the Curriculum Committee reviewed a CMS proposal to have early dismissals for teacher professional learning and collaboration time similar to what the high school implemented this year. She noted that there may be one to two early dismissals per month with no noticeable loss of instruction time.

Facilities Management and Transportation: Mrs. Moore noted that the stage curtains at PWHS are being replaced this week while students are on break. She added that the fire alarm upgrade is taking place at Conshohocken Elementary. Mr. Yemm noted that Ridge Park and Colonial Elementary Schools will follow and then all schools will have ADA compliant alarm systems. Mrs. Moore reported that Mr. Yemm held a community meeting to discuss lighting on Victory Fields. She also stated that the committee heard a proposal for an initiative that would enable the District to generate its own electricity but that further investigation is needed.

Community Relations: Dr. Scoles mentioned the CITV truck and the Summer Consortium for the Arts. He also stated that the committee listened to a proposal for a District-wide fundraiser to benefit Simon's Fund, details of which are to be worked out. Dr. Scoles praised the Colonial Cares public service announcements now airing on CITV. Mr. Zimmer added that the PWHS production of Les Miserables was phenomenal and among the best he had seen in many years.

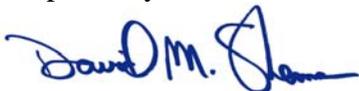
Safety and Wellness: No report.

Legislation: Dr. Ryan noted that many districts have adopted resolutions opposing the graduation testing legislation recently enacted by the state legislature. He stated that he hopes to have the resolution for Board action in April.

Public Comment: None.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 8:51 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



David M. Sherman
Board Secretary