

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462**  
**MINUTES, JANUARY 15, 2009**

President Orlow convened the business meeting of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 7:02 p.m. in the Colonial Instructional Television (CITV) studios in Plymouth Whitemarsh High School (PWHS) on January 15, 2009.

**Board Members Present:** Lenore Bruno, Tom Davis, Gary Johnson, Susan Moore, Hope Luken, Marc Orlow, Dr. William Ryan, Steven Slutsky\* and Mitch Zimmer.

**Board Members Absent:** None.

**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; Andrew Boegly, Chief Information Officer; Terry Yemm, Director of Operations; Jeffrey T. Sultanik, Solicitor; John Quinn, Director of CITV; Kim Newell, Assistant Director of CITV; David M. Sherman, Community Relations Coordinator/Board Secretary; Scott Shearer, Public Financial Management; Megan Duryea, Bond Counselor; Jessica Piergiovanni, Sarah Corcoran and Simon Wong, Board Student Representatives; Jill Forster; Dana Coia; State Representative Kate Harper; State Representative Mike Gerber; Matt Bretzius; Judi Lipson; Jessica DiRenzo; Stephanie Kundtz; Terese Boegly; Jack Pinheiro; Hugh Lipshutz; Allan Hong; Amy Venkus; Karen Gebhardt; Bob Fahler; Bob Slagle; Joe Corcoran; Scott Shearer; Jennifer Klarman; Donn Drizin; Sergio Anaya and Chad Murray.

**Recognition/Awards:** Mr. Orlow led the Pledge of Allegiance and asked Dr. Cotter to facilitate the awards and recognition. Dr. Cotter noted that January was traditionally designated as School Director's Appreciation Month. He spoke to the long hours and time commitment volunteered by each Board member and played a video tribute to the Board. Dr. Cotter informed the Board Members that they each had a certificate from the Pennsylvania School Board's Association before them. Mr. Orlow announced that the Board had met in executive session on October 29, November 12 and November 17.

Mr. Orlow announced that the Board had met in executive session on December 15, 2008; December 30, 2008; January 7 and January 12 to discuss legal and personnel issues.

**Minutes:** Mr. Orlow asked Board members to act on the minutes of the Board Work Session of November 17, 2008; the General Meeting of November 20, 2008; the Finance Committee of November 24, 2008; the Safety and Wellness Committee, the Board Reorganization Meeting and the Special Meeting of the Board on December 1, 2008; the Human Resources Committee and the Community Relations and Student Life Committee of December 4, 2008; the Facilities Management and Transportation Committee of December 5, 2008 and the special meetings of the Board on December 15, 2008 and December 30, 2008; the Community Relations and Student Life Committee of January 7, the Facilities Management and Transportation Committee and the Human Resources Committee of January 8 and the Curriculum and Program Committee of January 12. See enclosures # 1 through #11 and #46 through #49.

Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the minutes. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

\* Mr. Slutsky joined the meeting at 7:06 p.m.

**Financial Reports:** Mr. Orlow sought Board action on the financial reports on the list for approval. He noted that all of the reports were for the months of November 2008 and December 2008. They 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 months ending November 30, 2008 and December 31, 2008 as shown in enclosures #12 through #23.

Dr. Cotter confirmed for Mr. Orlow that several changes from Monday's report were highlighted in the yellow pages.

Mr. Slutsky moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to approve the financial reports. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

**Public Comments on the Agenda:** Mr. Pinheiro wished to publicly thank Mr. Orlow for his lengthy service to the Colonial School Board. He noted that Mr. Orlow began attending Board meetings four years before becoming a Board member. Mr. Pinheiro stated that as President, Mr. Orlow united the School Board and led a tremendous improvement in the District to where Colonial is one of the best school districts in the Delaware Valley. He also commented that the District has accomplished this while maintaining a low tax burden.

**Staff Report:** Plymouth Elementary School (PE) Principal Judi Lipson and teachers Jessica DiRenzo and Stephanie Kundtz presented a video and spoke to the integration of technology in their building and other K-3 classrooms. Colonial Middle School (CMS) Principal Bob Fahler made a PowerPoint presentation and discussed special education and inclusion efforts in the school. He thanked the Board for its support of the programs.

**Old Business:** None

**Correspondence:** Mr. Orlow reminded the Board that on Monday he had displayed a plaque from the board and staff of Family Services. The organization recognized the Colonial School District as an Outstanding School Partner. See enclosure #24.

Mr. Orlow asked the Board to consider the acceptance of a \$10,000 grant to Conshohocken Elementary School (CE) from the Morgan Stanley Foundation. See enclosure #25. He noted that this was a recurring gift and added that the school has formed a committee to discuss the best use of the money.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to accept the gift. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

State Representatives Kate Harper and Mike Gerber presented Mr. Orlow with a Pennsylvania House of Representatives Citation for his distinguished and exemplary service to the School Board. They also thanked Mr. Orlow for his professionalism and his ability to bring people together.

**Superintendent's Report:** Dr. Cotter led Board members through his report that included the Personnel Report and Substitute List, the Extra Duty/Extra Pay List and a list of Adult Evening School instructors for the spring semester. See enclosures #26 through #28. He stated that the Personnel Report and Substitute list included 13 additional transactions since Monday's report. They include two resignations, three assignments completed, two extensions of assignment, two replacements and four returns from leave. He added that Board members had a blue page before them that includes and additional resignation. Dr. Cotter noted that one individual had been added to the Substitute List. He report that one name had been removed from the Extra Duty/Extra Pay list because clearances were not met. He also added that Board members had a blue page before them with a recommendation for an assistant track coach at CMS. Dr. Cotter stated that approximately fifty Adult Evening School classes were listed. He reminded Board members that the classes are self sustaining.

Mr. Orlow sought and received clarification from Mr. Hartz regarding a teacher who completed a portion of a teaching assignment.

Mr. Johnson asked if the Board could act on the Substitute List as a separate item.

Mr. Zimmer moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve all of the Superintendent's report except for the Substitute List. On a roll call vote, all but Dr. Ryan voted in favor. Dr. Ryan abstained. The motion was carried, 8-0-1. Dr. Ryan stated that he needed to abstain since a relative was on the Extra Duty/Extra Pay list. Dr. Ryan was provided the appropriate abstention form to fill out.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to approve the Substitute List. On a roll call vote, all but Mr. Johnson voted in favor. Mr. Johnson abstained. The motion was carried, 8-0-1. Mr. Johnson stated that he needed to abstain since his sister-in-law was on the Substitute List. Mr. Johnson was provided the appropriate abstention form to fill out.

**Board Student Representatives Report:** Ms. Corcoran reported that the Senior Citizens Winter Concert held on December 12 was a success. She added that the Spanish Exchange students were leaving for their trip abroad, social studies teacher Mr. Culp and his family were leaving for a year in Australia and Dr. Mikey Fowlin presented an assembly for students. Ms. Piergiovanni reported that the Gay and Straight Alliance held its annual open microphone event, course planning night was held and the National Art Honor Society had its induction ceremony. Mr. Wong reported on the College Financial Aid Night, the end of the first semester, the beginning of spring sports practice and time capsules presented to members of the senior class who had attended PE.

**New Business:** Mr. Orlow asked the Board to consider a resolution authorizing the refinancing of Series 2002A and 2003 bonds. Mr. Shearer reminded the Board that they could realize up to \$150,000 in savings by refinancing the bonds at this time. He stated that the open-bid sale would take place on January 20 between 1:00 p.m. and 1:15 p.m.

Mr. Orlow stressed that by refinancing the bonds, the District was not stretching out or increasing its debt burden. Dr. Ryan stated that he would prefer that the District investigate other refinancing options or pay down debt with the fund balance. Mr. Shearer stated that using a large portion of the fund balance could affect the District's credit rating. He also explained that the bid process was a nationwide process and was not a pre-arranged sale with a particular vendor. Mr. Slutsky stated that the Board does its due diligence each time a bond refinancing issue comes up and stated that they needed to continue to do so to ensure that they are comfortable with the advice they are receiving.

Ms. Duryea then led Board members through the entire resolution.

Mr. Slutsky moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to approve the bond resolution. On a roll call vote, all but Dr. Ryan voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-1.

Mr. Orlow directed the Board to act on two negotiated special education tuition and settlement agreements. He noted that the agreements had been reviewed in executive session.

Mr. Ryan moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to approve the agreements. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Orlow asked the Board to consider two professional conference requests as one item. The first is for two PWHS teachers to attend the National Council of History Educators National Conference in Boston, Mass., from March 12-14. See enclosure #29. The second is for two PWHS teachers to attend the International Reading Association's Annual Convention in Phoenix, Ariz., from February 20-24. See enclosure #30. Mr. Orlow stated that both requests had been reviewed in committee.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mrs. Luken seconded a motion to approve the requests. On a roll call vote, all

voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Orlow asked the Board to act on a series of student field trip requests as one item. The first concerns the annual PWHS Senior Class Trip to Disney World from April 8-12, 2010. See enclosure #31. The second is for 16 PWHS students to attend the Annual State DECA Competition in Hershey, Pa., from February 18-20. See enclosure #32. The third is for the Colonial Players to attend a Broadway show in New York City on April 26. See enclosure #33. The fourth concerns Ridge Park Elementary School students traveling to the Adventure Aquarium in Camden, N.J., on January 30. See enclosure #34. The final request is for 16 PWHS Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) students to participate in a tour of Lehigh Valley colleges on March 30 and 31. See enclosure #35. Mr. Orlow noted that the AIVD trip is the only new trip among the requests.

Mr. Zimmer moved and Mrs. Luken seconded a motion to approve the requests. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Orlow sought Board action on a bid for a new mobile van for CITV. He noted that the low recommended bid is for Gerling and Associates at a cost of \$95,727.00. He stated that the new van will replace an existing van that is over 20 years old. Mr. Yemm confirmed that delivery will be between 90 and 120 days from the time the bid is awarded.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Johnson seconded a motion to award the bid to Gerling and Associates. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

**Solicitor's Report:** Mr. Sultanik asked the Board to consider three assessment agreements in one motion. They are for parcel numbers 65-00-09754-00-9, 49-00-01288-00-4 and 49-00-04171-00-1. Mr. Orlow stated that the agreements were reviewed in committee. Mr. Slutsky moved and Mrs. Luken seconded a motion to approve the agreements. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

**Committee Reports:** Intermediate Unit: No Report

CMTHS: Mr. Johnson reported that the CMTHS 2009-2010 preliminary budget included a 14.8 percent decrease in the District's share. See enclosure #37. He noted that the District will save approximately \$356,000.

Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the Fifth Amendment to Improvement Agreement which extends the completion date for construction at CMTHS. See enclosure #38. Mr. Johnson noted specifically that the extension is for the installation of exterior lights. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0

Human Resources: Mrs. Luken stated that the committee reviewed a detailed K-5 special education staffing and enrollment report provided by Mrs. DeLong. She thanked Mrs. DeLong for the report and stated that the committee wished to see similar reports twice a year. Mrs. Luken stated that the committee reviewed requests for an additional reading teacher and a career counselor at PWHS as well as a science curriculum supervisor. She added that the committee reviewed the Family and Medical Leave Act and asked Mr. Hartz to discuss the issue with the CEA leadership. She also noted that a review of the overall 2009-2010 enrollment report projects a light overall increase.

Finance: Mr. Slutsky reported that the District's fund balance as of June 30, 2008 was more than \$13 million. He stated that the committee would keep an eye on the balance to ensure that it does not exceed the limit imposed by the state of eight percent of the overall budget.

Curriculum and Program: Mr. Davis stated that the committee reviewed a textbook request to bring an accounting text in line with today's accounting technology. He added that PWHS Principal Dr. Monica Sullivan reported on a post graduate survey so that the District can begin to collect data on how students performed after graduating from high school. He also commented on the Pennsylvania Value Added

Assessment System (PVAAS) which measures school and district growth. Dr. Gorodetzer noted that the committee received updates on the AVID and Summer Bridge programs from PWHS Assistant Principal Dan Balek. The AVID program has seen increased enrollment and more students taking honors level classes. She also noted that the committee heard a proposal to change the grading scale at PWHS.

Facilities Management and Transportation: Mrs. Moore reported on the Colonial Elementary School renovation project. She stated that the first phase was completed and the second phase would be finished by the end of the month. She added that the first phase included eight classrooms and the second phase includes seven classrooms. She also noted that the committee is discussing use of the Angus Tract, part of the Hill at Whitmarsh TIF project, that is now the property of the District. Mr. Orlow then explained how the District obtained the property.

Community Relations and Student Life: Mr. Zimmer asked parents to be on the look out for the Emergency Guide for Parents. He noted that the brochure is being mailed with a magnet that includes important phone numbers and contact information.

Safety and Wellness: Mr. Zimmer reiterated his report from Monday evening expressing a concern of the non-compliance of the 15 mile-per-hour speed limit on Harry and Third Streets in Conshohocken adjacent to CE. He stated that the Conshohocken Police have agreed to step up enforcement in that area.

Legislative: Dr. Ryan stated that Governor Rendell will present his budget to a joint session of the legislature on February 3. He thanked Representative Gerber for extending invitations for the public to participate in the budget process through his work on the House Appropriations Committee. Dr. Ryan added that the State Board of Education will hold a planning meeting next week. He added that the House Appropriations Committee will discuss its education budget on March 3.

Mr. Orlow announced his resignation from the Board so that he may address a recurring health issue. He commented that he appreciated his time on the Board and the many friendships that he has made through his community service.

With regret, Mr. Johnson moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to accept Mr. Orlow's resignation. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Dr. Cotter introduced a District video tribute to Mr. Orlow prepared by CITV.

Mr. Johnson called for nominations for Board President. Mr. Davis nominated Mr. Johnson to serve as Board President through December 2009. Dr. Ryan moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to close the nominations. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor of Mr. Johnson as President. The motion was carried, 8-0. Mr. Johnson thanked Mr. Orlow for his service to the Board and expressed that he wished he was accepting the Presidency under other circumstances.

Mr. Johnson then resigned from his position as Vice President. Mr. Slutsky moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded a motion to accept the resignation. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Mr. Johnson then called for nominations for Vice President. Mr. Davis nominated Mrs. Moore to serve as Vice President through December 2009. Mrs. Luken moved and Mr. Davis seconded a motion to close the nominations. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor of Mrs. Moore as Vice President. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Mr. Johnson then asked the Board to authorize the use of existing signature plates until plates reflecting the new officers can be made. Mrs. Moore so moved and Mr. Zimmer seconded. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

**Public Comment:** Dr. Lipshutz congratulated Mr. Johnson and Mrs. Moore on their new positions and

wished them the best of luck. He then thanked Mr. Orlow for his service to the District. He credited Mr. Orlow for bringing change to the Board, which he said used to feature contentious meetings. He credited Mr. Orlow for bringing people together and making Colonial an example for other districts throughout the county and state to follow.

Mr. Johnson directed Mr. Sherman to advertise the vacant Board position with an application deadline of January 30. There being no further business to be brought before the Board, Mr. Orlow adjourned the meeting at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David M. Sherman". The signature is stylized and cursive.

David M. Sherman  
Board Secretary