

COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
GENERAL SESSION MINUTES, JUNE 16, 2011

President Johnson convened the general session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 7:00 p.m. in the District Office General Meeting Room on June 16, 2011.

Board Members Present: Bernie Brady, Mel Brodsky, Gary Johnson, Kelly Jowett, Jodi Miscannon, Susan Moore, Kathleen Oxberry, Beth Suchsland and Alan Tabachnick.

Board Members Absent: None.

Also Attending: Dr. MaryEllen Gorodetzer, Assistant Superintendent; Jeffrey T. Sultanik, Solicitor; Karen Berk, Director of Pupil Services and Special Education; Andrew Boegly, Chief Information Officer; Terry Yemm, Director of Operations; Richard Hartz, Director of Human Resources; John Quinn, Director of CITV; David M. Sherman, Community Relations Coordinator/Board Secretary; Lenora Ciccolone; Kristi Sauder; Beth Miller; Nate Adams; Mary Thiess; Maxine Houtkin; Alex Chialastri; Trish Chialastri; Dan Carr; Kyle Lukens; Doug Sauder; Maureen Lukens; Bruce Lukens; Daniel Sharadin; Robert Franz; Julie Knudsen; Chris Taylor; Dara Nasatir and Leslie Finegold.

Mr. Johnson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Johnson introduced former Colonial School District Board member and current Montgomery County Common Pleas Court Judge Bernard Moore who administered the Oath of Office to incoming Superintendent Dr. MaryEllen Gorodetzer.

Mr. Johnson announced that the Board met in executive session on May 25, June 8 and June 13.

Minutes: Mr. Johnson sought Board action on the minutes of the Work Session of May 16; the General Session of May 19; the Human Resources Committee and the Finance and Audit Committee of June 1; the Facilities Management and Transportation Committee of June 3; the Community Relations and Student Life Committee of June 6; the Special Meeting of the Board of June 8 and the Curriculum Committee of June 13. See enclosures #1 through #7 and #43.

Mrs. Suchsland moved and Mrs. Oxberry seconded a motion to approve the minutes as presented. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Financial Reports: Mr. Johnson asked the Board to consider the financial reports on the list for approval. 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 Trust Fund Report, the Reconciliation of Cash Accounts, the Budgetary/Deficit Status Report and the Treasurer's Report for the month ending May 31. See enclosures #8 through #20.

Mrs. Oxberry moved and Mrs. Jowett 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. Robert Franz expressed disappointment over the final budget and its 2.50 percent real estate tax increase. He noted that a number of area school districts are passing budgets with no tax increases. He stated that senior citizens are not getting a social security increase. He stated that he felt the District is not trying hard enough to curb spending, and that other districts are faced with the same financial problems. He commented on the District's newsletter that showed property values are high as compared to other districts, but he stated that a poor stock market affects home values more than a poor school district. Mr. Franz stated that the District could have done a better job with the budget.

Mr. Johnson took an item of correspondence out of order and allowed Kristi Sauder to present a letter to the Board regarding the elimination of Plymouth Whitemarsh High School (PWHS) swimming coach Taren Igou's full-time permanent substitute position. Mrs. Sauder read the letter, which she also presented to the Board. See Attachment A.

Three members of the swimming team, Alex Chialastri, Kyle Lukens and Dan Carr also spoke highly of their coach.

Mr. Daniel Sheridan stated that he has worked in athletics more than a quarter of a century and has worked with a lot of coaches. He stated that Mr. Igou is a quality coach that the District cannot afford to lose.

Mr. Doug Sauder stated that he has coached basketball in the Philadelphia School District for 20 years and stated that it is hard to build a successful program when you are not in the building full time.

Mrs. Maxim Houtkin echoed positive comments about Mr. Igou and stated that she would rather see the District raise taxes in order to keep all permanent substitutes.

Mr. Johnson thanked the residents for their feedback.

Old Business: Mrs. Oxberry sought Board action on the 2011-2012 Final Budget. See enclosure #21. She stated that the budget totals \$93,938,760, a decrease of \$120,240 or 0.13 percent from the 2010-2011 spending plan. She stated that the budget includes a real estate tax millage rate of 18.476 mils. Mrs. Oxberry explained that the new rate means a real estate tax increase of 2.50 percent, which translates to an additional \$45 per year for each \$100,000 of taxable assessed value, or an increase of \$66 on the district's median taxable assessed value of \$147,120. She added that the final budget also uses slightly more than \$4.2 million of fund balance. Mrs. Oxberry noted several unique things about the budget. She stated that while attending an area business meeting she learned that this was the most challenging budget year for school districts in 50 years. She stated that thanks to the astute business acumen of Chief Financial Officer Joe Bickleman, the District realized \$614,000 in savings through bond refinancing. The budget was also helped by the unexpected retirement of Dr. Cotter and the Board's decision not to fill the assistant superintendent position. Mrs. Oxberry added that a 10-year study by the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit showed that Colonial has the third lowest tax rate among 21 county school districts.

Mrs. Oxberry moved and Mr. Brodsky seconded a motion to approve the 2011-2012 budget. On a roll call vote, all but Mrs. Jowett voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-1.

Mrs. Oxberry asked the Board to consider the following taxation rates, fees and billing date: A 2011-2012 Real Estate Tax Millage rate of 18.476; an Act 511 Earned Income Tax Rate of 1.0 percent, to be shared equally with local municipalities; a Real Estate Transfer Tax rate of 1.0 percent, to be shared equally with local municipalities; an Amusement Tax Rate of 10 percent, to be shared equally with Plymouth and Whitemarsh Townships; a Real Estate Tax Certification Fee of \$25 and a billing date for 2011-2012 Real Estate Taxes of July 1, 2011.

Mrs. Oxberry moved and Mrs. Suchsland seconded a motion to approve the rates, fees and billing date as presented. On a roll call vote, all but Mrs. Jowett voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-1.

Mrs. Oxberry directed the Board to act on a 2011 Homestead and Farmstead Exclusion Resolution. See enclosure #22. She stated that pursuant to Special Session Act 1 of 2006, the Pennsylvania Department of Education has certified that it would distribute funds during the 2011-2012 school year to the Colonial School District for property tax relief. The resolution establishes the maximum property tax reductions for its approved Homestead properties at \$232.13 and the maximum property tax reduction for its farmstead properties at \$232.13. Mrs. Oxberry noted that the reductions are about \$23 less than last year.

Mrs. Oxberry moved and Mrs. Suchsland seconded a motion to approve the Homestead and Farmstead Exclusion Resolution. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Correspondence: Mr. Johnson sought Board action on a \$500 Grant from the United States Tennis Association Middle States Section to Plymouth Elementary School. See enclosure #23. Dr. Gorodetzer explained for Mrs. Moore that the funds are to be used to purchase tennis equipment for the physical education program.

Mrs. Suchsland moved and Mrs. Jowett seconded a motion to accept the grant. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Gorodetzer reviewed the report that includes the Personnel Report and Substitute List, a list of Long Term Substitutes and Master Teacher Designation. See enclosures #24 through #26. She stated that the Personnel Report and Substitute List contains a number of actions including five furloughs, four retirements, six leaves of absence, four other appointments, 15 changes a list of positions eliminated and extended school year additions. Dr. Gorodetzer added that the Long Term Substitute List contains individuals who will have completed their assignments at the end of the current school year. She stated that those individuals are recommended for placement on the Per Diem Substitute List. Dr. Gorodetzer stated that enclosures #24 and #25 need Board approval. She also read the list of seven Master Teachers and congratulated the special educators on their achievement. She added that they will be invited to the September Board meeting for recognition.

Mr. Tabachnick moved and Mrs. Oxberry seconded a motion to approve the Superintendent's Report. On a roll call vote, all but Mr. Johnson and Mrs. Miscannon voted in favor. Mr. Johnson abstained because his daughter is on the Personnel Report and Substitute List. The motion was carried, 7-1.

New Business: Mrs. Moore asked the Board to act on a Meet and Discuss Agreement with the Colonial Administrators and Supervisors Association (CASEA). She noted that the agreement is to become effective on July 1, 2011 and run through June 30, 2015 subject to approval of final wording by the solicitor. She added that the new agreement will rescind the current CASEA agreement, which was to run through June 30, 2012.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mrs. Jowett seconded a motion to approve the CASEA Meet and Discuss Agreement. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mrs. Moore sought Board action on an agreement with the Colonial Administrative Assistants effective July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2014.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mrs. Jowett seconded a motion to approve the Colonial Administrative Assistants agreement. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Johnson asked the Board to consider an agreement for general physicals, dental examinations, sports physicals and physician services for home football games. See enclosure #27.

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

Mr. Johnson asked the Board to act on an agreement with East Norriton Physician Services for Physical Examination Services for the 2011-2012 school year. See enclosure #44.

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

Mr. Johnson sought Board action on a consulting services contract with Cathy Grayson at a rate of \$120 per hour. See enclosure #28. Mrs. Berk explained for Mr. Brodsky that Ms. Grayson is an autism consultant who also provides training for teachers and parents.

Mrs. Jowett moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the consulting services contract. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Johnson directed the Board to consider a contract with C&K Therapy Associates, LLC to provide occupational and physical therapy services at a rate of \$73 per hour. See enclosure #29.

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

Mr. Johnson asked the Board to act on a series of education services contracts. The first is with The Academy at \$120 per student, per day. The second is with Ambler Day School at \$121.54 per student, per day. The third is with Comprehensive Learning Center for tuition for three students at a cost of \$82,250 each. The fourth is with The Vanguard School for tuition for four students at a cost of \$45,185 each. See enclosure #30.

Mr. Brodsky moved and Mrs. Miscannon seconded a motion to approve the education service contracts. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Johnson asked the Board to consider the next three contracts in one motion. The first is for regular and special education slots with the Lakeside Educational Network for the 2011-2012 school year at a cost of \$51,714. See enclosure #45. The second is for one student to attend the Woodlynde School for the 2011-2012 school year with tuition set at \$29,150. See enclosure #46. The third is with the Wyncote Academy at a tuition rate of \$26,600. See enclosure #47.

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

Mr. Tabachnick sought Board action to purchase and adopt textbooks for the Advanced Placement French program. See enclosure #31.

Mr. Tabachnick moved and Mrs. Jowett seconded a motion to purchase and adopt the textbooks. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Johnson asked the Board to act on a Special Education Placement and Release Agreement that was reviewed in Executive Session.

Mrs. Oxberry moved and Mr. Tabachnick seconded a motion to approve the Special Education Placement and Release Agreement. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Johnson directed the Board to consider the food service pricing schedule for the coming school year. See enclosure #32. Mr. Johnson noted that costs will remain the same.

Mrs. Suchsland moved and Mr. Brodsky seconded a motion to approve the pricing schedule. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Johnson sought Board action on a Student Accident Insurance Agreement with ACE American Insurance Company for the full package of all sports coverage and the voluntary coverage for school-day and full-day coverage. See enclosure #33. Mr. Yemm confirmed for Mr. Johnson that the District has contracted with the same insurance group the District has contracted within the past.

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

Mr. Johnson asked the Board to act on a copier contract with Cannon. See enclosure #34. Mr. Boegly confirmed that the new contract represents a reduction in cost of \$800 to \$1,000 per month.

Mrs. Oxberry moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the copier contract. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Tabachnick directed the Board to consider a request for two elementary math coaches to attend the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics “Algebra Readiness for Every Student” Conference in Baltimore, Md., August 9-12. See enclosure #35.

Mr. Tabachnick moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the professional conference request. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Solicitor’s Report: Mr. Sultanik stated that on May 2, Whitmarsh Township acquired 22.83 acres adjacent to Cedar Grove Park with intent to preserve the land as open space. He stated that they will be exempt from property taxes beginning on July 1. Mr. Sultanik added that the township is requesting a refund of taxes in the amount of \$2,371.24 for the period of May 2 through June 30.

Mrs. Oxberry moved and Mrs. Jowett seconded a motion to approve Real Estate Settlement Stipulation #65-00-01804-00-3 as presented by Mr. Sultanik. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Committee Reports: Intermediate Unit: No report.

CMTHS: No report.

Human Resources: Mrs. Moore asked the Board to consider the list of salaries for administrators, administrative assistants and non-bargaining groups. She stated that all salaries are available in the District Office upon request.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mrs. Jowett seconded a motion to approve all salaries. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Finance: Mrs. Oxberry reviewed the minutes of the June 1 meeting in which several tax increase proposals were discussed. Mrs. Oxberry commended Director of Food Services Lori McCoy for her 2011-2012 budget which projects increased revenue. She noted that Mrs. McCoy has done a good job of reversing the financial trend in the Food Services Department. Mrs. Suchsland also stated that she was impressed with the changes implemented by Mrs. McCoy. Dr. Gorodetzer said that the nutritional changes are appealing to the students. Mrs. Suchsland added that parents are also taking notice.

Curriculum: Mr. Tabachnick stated that the committee was informed about a change in the Colonial Elementary School (CES) team teaching structure. There will be teams of two teachers, one for language arts and one for math, science and social studies. He also stated that, and Dr. Gorodetzer confirmed, the nutrition and wellness curriculum was being integrated into the Health and Physical Education curriculum. Mr. Tabachnick added that Latin was still a viable program at the high school, and that the District will continue to build and grow the program. He also stated that the music department strings program would also continue despite the retirement of Mrs. Guerriero at the PWHS. Finally Mr. Tabachnick stated that 18 girls began participating in the Girls in Technology Summer Academy this past week.

Facilities Management and Transportation: Mr. Brady sought Board action on the disposal of a 1995 Chevrolet dump truck that will not pass inspection and costs more to fix than it is worth. Mr. Brady moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to dispose of the vehicle. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Brady also stated that four summer projects were in progress. They include the Ridge Park Elementary School window replacement, the “T” corridor in CES, the solar energy installation and the construction of the all-purpose field behind CES. Mr. Brady noted that the District was awaiting one final approval for the all-purpose field.

Community Relations and Student Life: Mrs. Suchsland stated that the committee reviewed a proposal from the Whitmarsh Art Center regarding the center presenting after school art classes in District buildings.

Safety and Wellness: Mrs. Jowett stated that the committee did not meet in June. She noted that the committee will meet before the start of the school year. She added that the District's Memorandum of Understanding with local municipalities has been updated and is ready to be signed by the District Attorney.

Legislative: Mrs. Suchsland reported that the state legislature still has not approved a budget. She also noted that House Bill #1326, which eliminates all Act 1 exceptions, is expected to be passed next week. Mrs. Suchsland also commented on a June 15 *Philadelphia Inquirer* article that detailed problems school districts are encountering with re-assessment appeals. She noted that Upper Merion School District and Spring-Ford School District will owe GlaxoSmithKline between \$5.7 million and \$10.3 million in real estate tax refunds. She stated that Upper Merion is raising taxes 9.0 percent, Spring-Ford is raising taxes 3.2 percent and both districts are laying off dozens of teachers and cutting programs. She stated that Colonial is one assessment appeal away from major layoffs. She wanted the community to know that the Board and administration are trying to be cognizant of tax payers' concerns, while also trying to do the right thing for the financial future of the district and avoid layoffs and cutting programs.

Municipal Liaisons: None.

Public Comment: None.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Johnson adjourned the meeting at 7:52 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



David M. Sherman
Board Secretary