

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462**  
**WORK SESSION MINUTES, MAY 16, 2011**

President Johnson convened the work session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 7:31 p.m. in the District Office General Meeting Room on May 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. Vincent F. Cotter, Superintendent; Dr. MaryEllen Gorodetzer, Assistant Superintendent; Joseph P. Bickleman, Chief Financial Officer/Board Treasurer; 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; Scott Shearer; Nevena Simidjiyska; Tom Davis; Debra Bailey and Alan Fiermonte.

Mr. Johnson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Awards/Recognition:** Mr. Johnson introduced Tom Davis who presented Dr. Cotter with the Juran Medal awarded by the American Society for Quality.

Dr. Cotter introduced Colonial School District (CSD) Coordinator of Fine Arts and Plymouth Whitmarsh High School (PWHS) Band Director Tonia Kaufman who, with assistance from PWHS Orchestra Director Irene Guerriero and PWHS Chorus Director Amy LaRue, presented students who were selected to regional and/or state music festivals. She also presented Mr. Bobby Biddle, who recognized the PWHS Indoor Guard. For a complete list of students honored, see Attachment A.

Mr. Johnson reported that the Board met in executive session on May 16.

**Minutes:** Mr. Johnson asked Board members to review the minutes of the General Session of April 14; the Human Resources Committee and the Finance and Audit Committee of May 3; the Facilities Management and Transportation Committee of May 6; the Community Relations and Student Life Committee of May 9 and the Safety and Wellness Committee of May 11. See enclosures # 1 through #6. Mr. Johnson noted that the minutes of the Curriculum Committee of May 16 will be included in the yellow pages on Thursday evening.

**Financial Reports:** Mr. Johnson instructed Board members to examine the financial reports on the list for approval on Thursday evening. He noted that the financial reports are for both March and April. 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 months ending March 31 and April 30. See enclosures #7 through #19.

**Public Comments on the Agenda:** None.

Mr. Johnson stated that he was going to deviate from the agenda and ask the Board to act on a Bond Fund Parameters Resolution out of order. Mr. Bickleman introduced Scott Shearer of Public Financial Management, Inc, the CSD financial advisor. Mr. Shearer stated that he has been in discussion with the Board Finance and Audit Committee over the past month regarding the refinancing of the District's 2006 series bonds. He walked Board members through the parameters resolution and stated that the current bond market is volatile. He reported that the Board's net debt service savings target is \$200,000. He added that this was a rate sensitive transaction. Mr. Bickleman then introduced Nevena Simidjiyska,

bond counselor from Fox Rothschild, LLP. Ms. Simidjiyska explained the legal aspect of the parameters resolution. She confirmed for Mrs. Moore that the District will acquire no new debt as a result of this transaction.

Mr. Brodsky moved and Mrs. Jowett seconded a motion to approve the Bond Fund Parameters Resolution. Mr. Bickleman confirmed for Mr. Tabachnick that there was no down side to this transaction and reconfirmed the District's debt service savings target of \$200,000. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

**Staff Report:** Dr. Cotter reported that on Thursday evening PWHS Principal Heather Nuneviller will report on initiatives in the building and perhaps a future direction.

**Old Business:** None.

**Correspondence:** Mr. Johnson informed the Board that Thomas J. Gentzel, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania School Boards Association, has submitted a dues invoice for the 2011-2012 school year. See enclosure #20.

Mr. Johnson stated that the Board is asked to consider acceptance of a donation of \$600 from the Clayman Family Foundation on behalf of Colonial Middle School (CMS) Autistic Support Teacher Cheryl Rossini. See enclosure #21. Mr. Johnson noted that the funds are to be used for the purchase of materials for the CMS autistic support class.

**Superintendent's Report:** Dr. Cotter reviewed his report that includes the Personnel Report and Substitute List. See enclosure #22. He stated that the Personnel Report and Substitute List contains a number of actions including three resignations, eight leaves of absence and five other appointments. He stated the list also includes summer program appointments. Dr. Cotter stated that he will have a yellow page with one action regarding an Extra Duty/Extra Pay position on Thursday evening.

**New Business:** Mr. Johnson stated that on Thursday evening, in accordance with the Public School Code, the Board will act to appoint a treasurer and secretary for the 2011-2012 school year.

Mr. Johnson also stated that according to Board Policy #004 and Administrative Regulation #004.1, two students have been nominated for the position of student representative to the Board. He added that the Board has interviewed the candidates and will act on the nominations on Thursday.

Mrs. Moore stated that the Board will consider on Thursday evening a tentative agreement with the Colonial Education Support Professionals effective July 1 through June 30, 2013. She stated that the agreement is subject to: (1) finalizing the wording for a final Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Association and the District; and (2) District Solicitor – Fox Rothschild LLP, and the District Administration approving the final wording of the successor Collective Bargaining Agreement; and (3) subject to the Association approving the Tentative Agreement and the final wording of the successor Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Mr. Johnson stated that the Board will consider the alteration/curtailment of the academic program in the delivery of transition programming for special needs students and career counseling on Thursday evening. See enclosure #23. Dr. Cotter explained that the program and counseling are primarily at the high school and had been funded by stimulus funds which are no longer available. He added that the program and service will be delivered in a different manner.

Mrs. Oxberry said that the Board will consider a 2011-2012 Proposed Final Budget on Thursday evening. See enclosure #25. She added that Mr. Bickleman has requested that the previously approved preliminary budget and subsequent revisions be utilized as the proposed final budget. Mrs. Oxberry reported that the budget totals \$94,498,732 which is an increase of \$439,732 or .47% over the 2010-2011 spending plan. She added that the proposed final budget includes a real estate tax of 18.547 mils, an increase of 2.9%. The new real estate tax equates to an additional \$52.00 per year for each \$100,000

of taxable assessed value or an increase of \$77 on the District's median assessed value of \$147,120. Mrs. Oxberry informed the public that the proposed final budget is available on the CSD Web site in the state required format. Mrs. Suchsland stated that this isn't the actual final budget and that the Board and administration are still working on the document. Mr. Bickleman confirmed that and stated that the final budget will be approved on June 16.

Mrs. Oxberry reported that in accordance with Section 621 of the Public School Code, the Board of School Directors will act on Thursday to designate one or more banks or trust companies as depositories for school funds. She noted that Wells Fargo Bank is interested in continuing to serve as the District depository.

Mrs. Oxberry also referred Board members to a list of investment banks, savings and loans and trusts that are recommended for solicitation of interest rates on school investments during the 2011-2012 school year. See enclosure #26. She added that the investments are subject to confirmation of bank maintenance and legally required collateral.

Mr. Johnson stated that the board is asked to consider a contract to reappoint Jeffrey T. Sultanik, Esquire, of Fox Rothschild LLP as Colonial School District Solicitor effective July 1, 2011. See enclosure #27. He stated that the annual rate for retainer services of \$24,823.00 remains the same from 2009-2010. Mr. Johnson added that the agreement provides for a base rate of \$180.00 per hour on items not covered under the school retainer.

Mr. Johnson reported that the Board will act on a consultant agreement with Sweet, Stevens, Katz and Williams, LLP on Thursday evening. See enclosure #28. He noted that the agreement is for designated services and commitments in the amount of \$8,000. Mrs. Berk explained that the agreement covers procedural questions, unlimited phone calls and some staff training related to special education.

Mr. Johnson stated that the Board will take action Thursday on two special education renewal contracts with the Lincoln Center at a cost of \$860,428 for the 2011-2012 school year. See enclosure #40. He noted that there is no rate increase from the current year.

Mr. Johnson noted that the Board is asked to accept an annual agreement with Carbon Lehigh Intermediate Unit Data Processing Services at a cost of \$43,347. See enclosure #30. Mr. Bickleman explained that the service includes the District's purchasing, vendor bidding, personnel and tax collecting data bases. Mr. Bickleman confirmed for Mr. Tabachnick that the rate represents a reduction of \$718 from the current year cost.

Mr. Johnson stated that Board authorization is requested to renew the license with My Learning Plan for instruction users at a cost of \$7,170. See attachment #31. Mr. Hartz reported that the service is an online program used to track required Act 48 professional development hours. He added that there is no rate increase. He stated, in fact, that there is an overall reduction of \$315 because the District has fewer users this year.

Mr. Johnson said that the Board will act Thursday on an agreement with EduPlanet for professional development at an annual cost of \$2,000. See enclosure #32. Mr. Boegly reported that the service is an online professional development tool that provides a secure environment for teachers to upload work and to connect with other educators.

Mr. Johnson reported that the Board is asked to consider the purchase and adoption of textbooks for the Spanish Program. See enclosure #33

Mr. Johnson noted that the Board will act on a special education settlement agreement on Thursday evening. He added that the agreement was reviewed in executive session.

Mrs. Suchsland stated that the Board is asked to consider the attendance of one PWHS student at the Best Buddies Conference held in Indianapolis, Ind. She added that the parents of the student will sign all

of the appropriate permission and waiver forms. Mrs. Suchsland noted that there was no enclosure. Dr. Cotter stated that the document was not available when the agenda was printed. He added that there is no cost to the District and that the organization's president attends. Dr. Cotter stated that Best Buddies pairs a regular education student with an educationally challenged student for activities throughout the year.

Mr. Johnson stated that on Thursday evening the Board will consider bids for elementary art supplies, secondary art supplies, general instruction supplies, technology education supplies, science supplies, CMS athletic and physical education supplies and custodial supplies. See enclosures #34 through #40.

**Solicitor's Report:** None.

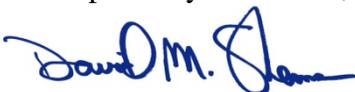
**Committee Reports:** Human Resources: Mrs. Moore stated that on Thursday evening the Board will consider the election of a District Superintendent in accordance with 24P.S. Sections 10-1071, 10-1073, and 10-1075 and a motion to enter into contract to establish salary and fringe benefits for the position.

**Public Comment:** Mr. Fiermonte thanked Dr. Cotter for his service to the District. He then asked a number of budget-related questions to which Board members and administrators responded. Mr. Bickleman corrected Mr. Fiermonte's assertion that the District has raised taxes 11 straight years. Mr. Bickleman noted that there was one year with no tax increase and one year with a tax refund. Mr. Bickleman also stated that the District is aggressively pursuing and fighting assessment appeals. He added that with approved budget exceptions, the District is able to raise taxes as much as 4.9 percent but that the Board is sympathetic with tax payers concerns. Mr. Johnson stated that the District has identified over \$2 million in budget cuts across the board. Dr. Cotter explained that the goal is to maintain the core instructional program and that cuts are on the periphery of core instruction. Mr. Johnson stated that the assistant superintendent position will not be filled. Responding to Mr. Fiermonte's inquiry as to what specific cuts were, Dr. Cotter noted the career guidance and transition programs addressed earlier in the meeting. Mr. Hartz added that 4.5 support staff positions are included in the cuts, as are reductions in stipends. Mr. Fiermonte stated that there are five School Board positions up for election. Mr. Tabachnick noted that the District is faced with a challenging fiscal situation, and he has seen the administration go through the budget line by line and department by department. He added that the administration has done a good job of limiting expenditures and maintaining high quality programming. Mr. Fiermonte stated that he was not against tax increases as long as they are geared toward core instruction and student achievement. He lamented the closing of the planetarium.

Mr. Tabachnick noted that the Cappy Awards were held the previous evening. He stated that the PWHS Colonial Players had 10 nominations for their production of Titanic, the most ever for them. Mr. Tabachnick stated that the PWHS students won Cappy Awards for sound and for stage crew.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Johnson adjourned the meeting at 8:41 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



David M. Sherman  
Board Secretary

**Students receiving music awards**

PMEA Region VI Orchestra - Julia Campbell, Ajibola Rivers (assistant principal cellist)  
PMEA All-State Orchestra – Julia Campbell, Ajibola Rivers  
Irene Guerriero, director

PMEA Region VI Chorus - Ajibola Rivers, Joshua Rosen  
PMEA All-State Chorus - Joshua Rosen  
Amy LaRue, director

PMEA Region VI Band - Julia Campbell, Charlie Tabachnick  
PMEA All-State Band - Charlie Tabachnick  
MENC All-East Band - Julia Campbell  
Tonia Kaufman, conductor

**\*Tournament Indoor All-Chapter Intermediate Guard Champions**

Lauren Babillis  
Allyssa Conner  
Carly Cumens  
Amelia Ellinger  
Jocelyn Gadd  
Becca Johnson  
Sami Kessler  
Faith Mohnke  
Taylor Pantano  
Gaby Peel  
Tony Schultz  
Nick Walker  
Lindsay Walters  
Andrew Rexroth, manager  
Sean Bailey, manager  
Bobbey Biddle, director  
Amber Franko, instructor  
Danielle Dilks, instructor  
Chris Tascione, designer  
Joe Heininger, designer