

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462**  
**GENERAL SESSION MINUTES, SEPTEMBER 18, 2014**

President Moore convened the general session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 7:00 p.m. in the District Office General Meeting Room on September 18, 2014.

**Board Members Present:** Bernie Brady, Mel Brodsky, Leslie Finegold, Christina Frangiosa, Susan Moore, Kathleen Oxberry, Heather Palmer, Beth Suchsland and Alan Tabachnick.

**Board Members Absent:** None.

**Also Attending:** Dr. MaryEllen Gorodetzer, Superintendent; Jeffrey T. Sultanik, Solicitor; Karen Berk, Director of Pupil Services and Special Education; Andrew Boegly, Director of Technology; Trevor Jackson, Business Administrator/Board Treasurer; Dr. Elizabeth McKeaney, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; Dr. Leticia Rodríguez, Director of Human Resources; Terry Yemm, Director of Operations; John Quinn, Director of CITV; David M. Sherman, Community Relations Coordinator/Board Secretary; Michael Krone and Alexa Augustine, Board Student Representatives; Mike Morse; Kirsten Young; Carter M. Young; Gary Johnson; Mary Thiess; Jill Forster and Brendan Wills.

Mrs. Moore led the Pledge of Allegiance and announced that the Board met in executive session prior to the meeting.

**Recognition/Awards:** None.

**Approval of Minutes:** Mrs. Moore sought Board approval of the minutes of the general meeting of August 21; The Human Resources Committee and Finance Committee meetings of September 8 and the Community Relations and Student Life Committee meeting of September 15. See enclosures #1 through #3 and #26. It was noted that the agenda should list the general meeting as 8/21/14 and not 7/21/14.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mrs. Suchsland 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:** Mrs. Moore asked Board members to consider the financial reports on the list for approval. They include the Budget Transfers, 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 August 31. See enclosures #4 through #14.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mrs. Suchsland 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:** None.

**Staff report:** Mr. Yemm and Mr. Jackson presented an update on the Plymouth Whitmarsh High School (PWHS) renovation project and Plan Con. Mr. Yemm detailed programmatic changes including relocation of technology, art and physical education classrooms, as well as the counseling suite, administrative offices and construction of a centralized cafeteria. Mr. Jackson explained the Plan Con process where a school district undertakes a major building project and seeks reimbursement from the Commonwealth.

Responding to a question from Mr. Brodsky, Mr. Jackson confirmed that there was no guarantee that the District would recoup any money from the state. He noted that the District would go through the process but other statewide projects on hold would receive priority. Responding to a question from Mrs. Moore regarding displacement of students during the renovation, Mr. Yemm explained that there are currently 10-12 classrooms open at any one time. He noted that those rooms, located in the north west corner of the building, would be used as a staging area for classes under construction at a given time. He noted a similar procedure was used during the recent renovation of Colonial Elementary School (CES). Mr. Yemm confirmed for Mrs. Suchsland that all contractors will undergo the same background checks as school employees. In response to a question from Mrs. Oxberry, Mr. Jackson explained that the District would maximize savings by borrowing funds at optimal times to take advantage of favorable rates. He noted the borrowing will likely be in \$10 million increments. Mr. Jackson confirmed for Mrs. Moore that the District should receive favorable lending rates based on its low debt service, which is the third lowest in the area. Mr. Yemm explained that no other capital projects will be put on hold during the PWHS renovation. He also added that the project should go to bid in January and February with construction to begin in May or June. He noted that the entire project would take two and a half to three years to complete. Mrs. Moore encouraged everyone to attend a public meeting on the renovation project on Wednesday, October 22 at 7 p.m. in the District Office General Meeting Room.

**Old Business:** None.

**Correspondence:** Mr. Brodsky sought Board acceptance of a \$2,500 grant from the Quaker Chemical Foundation to support the Girls in Technology summer program. See enclosure #15.

Mr. Brodsky moved and Mrs. Frangiosa 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 her report which included the Personnel Report and Substitute List and the Extra Duty/Extra Pay List. See enclosures #16 and #17. She stated that the Personnel Report and Substitute List includes two retirements, one resignation, one termination, three leaves of absence, three changes of assignment, five appointments and a list of substitute cafeteria aides, support staff and secretaries. She noted that the Extra Duty/Extra Pay List includes appointments and changes for fall sports and annual activities.

Mrs. Suchsland moved and Mrs. Palmer seconded a motion to approve the Superintendent's Report. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

**Board Student Representatives Report:** Mr. Krone reported on the band flea market and ACT exams. Ms. Augustine commented on the senior class Florida trip meeting and Open House. Mr. Krone also provided information on the ninth grade class election, fall sports and the fall theater production.

**New Business:** Mr. Brady asked Board members to consider a resolution providing Board authorization to proceed with the preparation of required financial documents for the funding the PWHS renovation project. Mr. Brady read the resolution.

Resolved: The Board of School Directors of the Colonial School District does hereby authorize the Administration to work with Public Financial Management Inc., as independent Financial Advisor, Fox Rothschild LLP as Bond Counsel, RBC Capital Markets LLC as Underwriter, and the Solicitor to proceed with the issuance of General Obligation bonds, to be issued as part of a multi-step plan with one or more issuances, the proceeds of which will be used towards various capital improvements, including additions and renovations to the high school, and the current refunding of all of the District's Series A of 2009 bonds at a minimum net savings target of \$192,000.

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

Mrs. Palmer sought Board action on a request for PWHs Spanish students to participate in the foreign exchange program and travel to Spain from January 16, 2015 through February 3, 2015. She noted that students will cover their own expenses. See enclosure #19.

Mrs. Palmer moved and Mrs. Finegold seconded a motion to approve the student trip request. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Brodsky asked Board members to consider three special education agreements in lieu of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). He noted that the agreements were reviewed in executive session.

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

Mrs. Moore noted that the Board likes to establish the start date for the next school year as soon as possible so that parents may plan vacation schedules. At her request, Dr. Gorodetzer explained that Labor Day falls later than usual, on September 7, 2015. She also noted that the winter break is also longer than usual, which poses challenges to ending school during the second week of June. As a result, Dr. Gorodetzer stated that the administration's recommendation is to begin the school year on Tuesday, September 1, 2015.

After receiving confirmation from Mr. Sultanik that no vote was needed since the entire calendar was not being approved, Board members agreed with the recommendation and established Tuesday, September 1 as the start date of the 2015 school year.

**Solicitor's Report:** None

**Committee Reports:** MCIU: Mrs. Finegold stated that the IU Board met on September 17. She reported that Dr. John George was the unanimous choice to serve as the IU's Executive Director. She noted that Dr. George comes from the Berks County IU.

CMTHS: No Report.

Human Resources: No Report.

Finance: No Report.

Curriculum: Mr. Brodsky stated that the committee heard about an exciting project at the high school where students created a prosthetic hand for a District third grader. He encouraged community members to attend the next meeting on October 13.

Facilities Management and Transportation: Mr. Tabachnick reported on the District's tree maintenance program, a grant received by the Food Services Department and the possibility that the Food Services Department will provide meals to an additional private school. Mr. Tabachnick also commented on a fire prevention program to be held at CES on October 9.

Community Relations and Student Life: Mrs. Palmer stated that the Colonial Challenge 5K and Colonial Community Day held on September 13 were successful despite the weather. She also encouraged community members to attend the first Parents Council meeting of the school year on September 30 and the public meeting on the PWHs renovation on October 22.

Safety and Wellness: No Report.

Legislative: Mrs. Frangiosa stated that the next meeting of the Montgomery County School Directors Legislative Committee is scheduled for September 23.

Municipal Liaisons: No Report.

**Public Comment:** None.

Mr. Tabachnick encouraged the public to attend Facilities Committee meetings as a way to keep up to date with the PWHS renovation project. Mrs. Suchsland reminded community members about the Conshohocken Funfest to be held on September 20.

There being no further business before the Board, Mrs. Moore adjourned the meeting at 7:39 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



David M. Sherman  
Board Secretary