

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462  
GENERAL SESSION MINUTES, FEBRUARY 16, 2017**

President Moore convened the general session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 7 p.m. in the District Office General Meeting Room on February 16, 2017.

**Board Members Present:** Bernie Brady, Mel Brodsky, Leslie Finegold, Susan Moore, Cathy Peduzzi, Felix Raimondo, Beth Suchsland and Alan Tabachnick.

**Board Members Absent:** Kathleen Oxberry.

**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 McKeane, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; Dr. Leticia Rodríguez, Director of Human Resources; Terry Yemm, Director of Operations; David M. Sherman, Community Relations Coordinator/Board Secretary; Tom Peeler, Audio Visual Technician; Raquel Dunoff and Chris Johnson, Board Student Representatives; Megan Penrice; Gary Johnson; Beth Miller; Robert Slagle; Catherine Panzerella-Tse; Caitlin Watson; Patrice Bobyock; Marshall Gorodetzer; Barry Bostick.

Mrs. Moore led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Recognition:** None.

**Executive Session Announcements:** Mrs. Moore announced that the Board met in executive session prior to the meeting. She noted that discussion centered on the hiring of new employees, legal issues related to special education appeals and amendments to Board policies. Mrs. Moore stated that the meeting lasted one hour.

**Approval of Minutes:** Mrs. Moore sought Board approval of the minutes of the general meeting of January 19; the Facilities Management and Transportation Committee meeting of January 12 and the Human Resources Committee meeting of February 10. See enclosures #1, #2, and #23.

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

**Financial Reports:** Mrs. Moore directed the Board to act on the financial reports on the list for approval. They included 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, the Bond Fund Report and the Treasurer's Report for the month ending January 31. See enclosures #24 and #3 through #13.

Mr. Brodsky moved and Mrs. Peduzzi seconded a motion to approve the financial reports. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

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

**Staff Report:** Dr. Gorodetzer noted that Plymouth Whitmarsh High School (PWHS) and Colonial Middle School (CMS) students were busy preparing for their upcoming spring musicals. She noted that members of the high school's Colonial Players were on hand to preview their production of RENT. The students performed two songs.

**Correspondence:** None.

**Superintendent's Report:** Dr. Gorodetzer reviewed her report that included the Personnel Report and Substitute List and the Extra Duty/Extra Pay List. See enclosures #14 and #15. She noted that the Personnel Report and Substitute List included one retirement, eleven leaves of absence, four changes of assignment and six appointments. Dr. Gorodetzer added that the Extra Duty/Extra Pay List included appointments for spring positions. She stated that all items were reviewed in executive session.

Mr. Tabachnick moved and Mrs. Finegold 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:** Ms. Dunoff noted that the second semester had started. She also reported on the opening of gym north, rehearsal for the spring musical, the second semester open house and the cheerleaders' eighth place finish at a national competition. Mr. Johnson spoke to the success of the boys' and girls' basketball teams, which both won conference championships and the Cupid's Cuties campaign that sold over 1,200 roses at the high school.

**New Business:** Mrs. Peduzzi asked Board members to consider a request for PWHS Future Business Leaders of America regional competition winners to attend the state leadership conference and competition in Hershey, Pa., from April 3-5. See enclosure #16.

Mrs. Peduzzi moved and Mrs. Suchsland seconded a motion to approve the student trip request. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Mrs. Finegold asked the Board to act on three professional conference requests in one motion. The first request is for PWHS Assistant Principal Heather King to attend the AVID District Director Training in Columbia, S.C., from March 15-17. See enclosure #17. The second is for Dr. McKeane to attend the Education Week Leaders to Learn From Conference in Washington, D.C., from March 30-April 1. See enclosure #18. The third request is for Curriculum Supervisor Sergio Anya, PWHS Assistant Principal Steve Price; PWHS teachers Bethany Rickard, Paul Marro, Anthony Musumeci and Jeff Yeagle and CMS teachers Brooke Carpenter and Tom Pierantozzi to make site visits to the Carnegie Mellon Create a Lab and the Pittsburgh School District. See enclosure #25.

Mrs. Finegold moved and Mrs. Suchsland seconded a motion to approve the three professional conference requests. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Mr. Brodsky sought Board action on the Agreement and Release settlement between the Board and former employee #102538 effective January 11, 2017.

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

Mr. Raimondo asked Board members to consider a \$100 salary increase for the elected tax collector in Conshohocken. He noted that the new salary of \$6,400 would be effective January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2022 with payment made each year in February.

Mr. Raimondo moved and Mr. Brady seconded a motion to approve the salary increase. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Mr. Brodsky noted that Board approval of two independent contracts to provide additional support to conduct early interventions had been requested. At his request, Mrs. Berk explained that the District has 63 students moving to school from early intervention services. She stated that the District had 60

days to conduct evaluations and needs assessments. Mrs. Berk added that the requested contracts were for two highly qualified former employees to assist in those evaluations.

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

Mrs. Moore stated that Dr. Gorodetzer had submitted her retirement notice effective in August. Mrs. Moore spoke highly of Dr. Gorodetzer's service to the District and community over the past 19 years. She highlighted the District's continued success during Dr. Gorodetzer's term as Superintendent. Dr. Gorodetzer stated that it has been a pleasure to serve the communities in the District and work with amazing educators and school board members. Mrs. Moore assured the audience that the Board would move quickly to find a Superintendent of the same high quality as Dr. Gorodetzer. The hope was to have some overlap to assure a smooth transition. Mr. Brodsky stated that in 42 years of education he worked for or with eight different superintendents. He placed Dr. Gorodetzer at the top of that list.

Mrs. Moore moved and Mrs. Suchsland seconded a motion to accept Dr. Gorodetzer's retirement notice. On a roll call vote, all reluctantly voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

Mrs. Suchsland sought Board approval for the addition of Policy #102 – Academic Standards and the recommended revisions to Policy – 101 Philosophy of Education and Policy 105 – Curriculum. She noted that the existing policies had not been updated in decades and that the revisions reflect current practice. In response to a question from Mrs. Peduzzi, Dr. McKeaney noted that all of the policies follow PSBA templates and school code.

Mrs. Suchsland moved and Mr. Brodsky seconded a motion to approve the policy addition and revisions. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 8-0.

**Solicitor's Report:** None

**Committee Reports:** Intermediate Unit (MCIU): Mrs. Finegold stated that the IU Board met on January 25. She highlighted the March 21 kickoff to the Reading Olympics, which has been sponsored by the IU for 18 years. She also touched on summer camp scholarships for Free and Reduced Lunch students.

CMTHS: No Report.

Human Resources: Mr. Brodsky noted that the committee has meetings scheduled with consultants to plot the best way to move forward with the Superintendent search.

Finance: Mr. Raimondo stated that the next meeting will be on March 6.

Curriculum: Mrs. Finegold reviewed the February 14 meeting. She highlighted an expanded partnership with Drexel University and school climate goals.

Facilities Management and Transportation: Mr. Tabachnick stated that the high school renovation was now in stage five of eight and progressing nicely. He added that planning for the renovation of the west gymnasium is moving forward, as are plans to build additions on to Plymouth Elementary School and Ridge Park Elementary School. Mr. Tabachnick also stated that work on a new baseball field will begin in late spring.

Community Relations and Student Life/Safety and Wellness: No Report.

Legislative: Mrs. Peduzzi touched on the Governor's \$3.2 billion state budget proposal, which includes an increase of \$200 million in education spending. She noted that talk of eliminating the school property tax seems to have died down for the time being with emphasis being placed on finding other ways to provide direct tax relief to senior citizens.

Municipal/Community Liaisons: Mrs. Peduzzi stated that Whitemarsh Township received a \$200,000 grant to upgrade Miles Park.

**Public Comment:** Catherine Panzerella-Tse of Lafayette Hill noted that her family chose the Colonial School District for its excellent reputation. She stated, however, that she felt the District could do a better job of teaching and modeling multiculturalism. She noted some strengths in the area such as work with the Anti-Defamation League and the Intersectional Feminism Club (IFC). Mrs. Panzerella-Tse detailed negative reaction to an incident involving the IFC. She stated that she hoped the reaction to the incident would serve as a wake-up call to teach respect for multiculturalism, diversity and inclusion. She encouraged the Board to place an emphasis on educating citizens who can offer inclusive and promising solutions to problems and to ensure that the District's hiring practices reflect the diversity of the region.

Barry Bostick of Plymouth Meeting wanted to be sure that the Board and administration were aware of the Pennsylvania Department of Health's development of Safe Harbor temporary guidelines to address the specific requirements that must be followed when a parent, legal guardian, caregiver, or spouse is applying to obtain medical marijuana to administer to minors who have a physician-documented serious medical condition. He received assurance that the District is aware.

There being no further business before the Board, Mrs. Moore adjourned the meeting at 7:43 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



David M. Sherman  
Board Secretary