

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
GENERAL SESSION MINUTES, JUNE 15, 2017**

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 June 15, 2017.

Board Members Present: Bernie Brady, Mel Brodsky, Leslie Finegold, Susan Moore, Kathleen Oxberry, Cathy Peduzzi, Felix Raimondo, 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 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; Jacalyn Auris; Mary Curly; Colleen DiFabio; Linda Turner; Robert Slagle; Gary Johnson; Christina D. Frangiosa; Marshall Gorodetzer; Kylene Phillips, Beth L. Miller; Donna Drizin; Terese Boegly; Nancy Aiken; Jason Bacani; Mike Azcona; Phil Chang; Michael Christian; Jill Forster; Eunice Franklin-Becker, Eileen Spector and Adam Schupack.

Mrs. Moore led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Executive Session Announcements: Mrs. Moore announced that the Board met in executive session on May 22 and May 23 to interview superintendent candidates. Those meetings lasted about three hours. She stated that the Board also met in executive session on June 8 to formalize the hiring of a new superintendent. That meeting lasted approximately one hour. And, Mrs. Moore said that the Board met in executive session prior to this meeting to review Board policy and discuss personnel actions, including legal contractual issues. That meeting also last approximately one hour.

Recognition: Mrs. Moore noted that this was the final meeting for Board member Alan Tabachnick, who is moving out of the District. She spoke highly of Mr. Tabachnick, who has served on the Board for more than seven years and who served as Board president for two years. She presented Mr. Tabachnick with a clock to commemorate the time he has devoted to the Colonial community. On behalf of the Colonial School District Education Foundation trustees, Dr. Gorodetzer thanked Mr. Tabachnick for his service to the Foundation. Mr. Tabachnick has served as the Board's liaison to the Foundation for more than seven years. Dr. Gorodetzer presented Mr. Tabachnick with a gift bag. Mrs. Suchsland also thanked Mr. Tabachnick for his service and for the friendship that has grown over the years. Mr. Tabachnick expressed gratitude for the recognition and stated that it has been a great ride and an honor to serve.

Approval of Minutes: Mrs. Moore sought Board action on the minutes of the Facilities Management and Transportation Committee meeting of May 11; the general meeting of May 18; The special meeting, the Finance Committee meeting and the Human Resources Committee meeting of June 5; and the Community Relations and Student Life/Safety and Wellness Committee (CRSL/SW) meeting of June 12. See enclosures #1 through #4 and #30 and #31.

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

Financial Reports: Mrs. Moore asked the Board to consider 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 May 31. See enclosures #5 through #16.

Mr. Tabachnick moved and Mr. Brodsky 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: Dr. Gorodetzer stated that Plymouth Elementary School Teacher Elizabeth Morris, Colonial Elementary School Teacher Rebecca Rigberg; Colonial Middle School (CMS) Math Teacher Michael Lyle and Special Education Teacher Maryellen Messina, and Plymouth Whitemarsh High School (PWHS) English Teacher Tom Rafferty, Spanish Teacher Katherine Geare and Special Education and Science Teacher Kate Garcia are newly appointed Master Teachers. Dr. Gorodetzer stated that they will serve as Master Teachers through 2020. She noted that the Master Teacher Program is a unique program that includes a rigorous selection process and provides a career ladder opportunity for teachers.

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 #17 and #18. She stated that the Personnel Report and Substitute List included one retirement which she noted was hers, one resignation, four leaves of absence, two changes of assignment and additions of substitute support staff and summer appointments. She added that the Extra Duty/Extra Pay List included one revised assignment. Dr. Gorodetzer stated that all items were reviewed in executive session.

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

Mrs. Moore commented that the Board would not hold a regular business meeting in July and this was Dr. Gorodetzer's last regular Board meeting. She stated that she had a great experience and working relationship with Dr. Gorodetzer and was highly complementary of her work for the District. Mrs. Finegold and Mr. Tabachnick also lauded Dr. Gorodetzer and her work. The Board presented Dr. Gorodetzer with flowers and Mrs. Moore invited the audience to stay for a reception in Dr. Gorodetzer's honor following the meeting.

New Business: Mr. Raimondo asked Board members to consider the Final Budget for 2017-2018. He noted that the budget totals \$124,090,000, which includes a real estate tax rate of 21.4040 mils, or an increase of 2.1 percent. He stated that the new real estate tax equates to an additional \$44.02 per year for each \$100,000 of taxable assessed value or an increase of \$66.08 on the District's median assessed value of \$150,105. Mr. Raimondo noted that the final budget uses \$3,250,000 of the District's fund balance. He added that the budget in the state required form PDE 2028, is available for public review in the administrative offices and on the District's website. See enclosure #32. Mrs. Peduzzi thanked the administration for its diligent work on the budget and praised Mr. Jackson for his leadership. She stated that building the budget was an interesting process.

Mr. Raimondo moved and Mr. Tabachnick seconded a motion to approve the following resolution. "Be it resolved that the Colonial Board of School Directors adopts the 2017-2018 Budget in the amount of \$124,090,000." On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Raimondo asked the Board to act on the following 2017-2018 tax rates in one motion:

- a Real Estate Tax mil rate of 21.4040,
- an Act 511 Earned Income Tax rate of one percent, 50 percent of which is to be shared with municipalities,
- a Real Estate Transfer Tax rate of one percent, 50 percent of which is to be shared with municipalities,
- an Amusement Tax rate of 10 percent, 50 percent of which is to be shared with Plymouth and Whitemarsh Townships,
- a Real Estate Tax Certification fee of \$25.00,
- and a billing date for 2017-2018 Real Estate Taxes of July 1, 2017.

Mr. Raimondo moved and Mr. Tabachnick seconded a motion to approve the 2017-2018 tax rates and billing date. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Raimondo sought Board action on the 2017 Homestead and Farmstead Exclusion Resolution to establish the level of funds provided for property tax relief. He stated that the resolution resolves “to set the maximum property tax reductions for its approved Homestead properties at \$303.70 and the maximum property tax reduction for its farmstead properties at \$303.70.” See enclosure #19.

Mr. Raimondo moved and Mr. Tabachnick seconded a motion to approve the 2017 Homestead and Farmstead Exclusion Resolution. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Raimondo sought Board approval of resolutions relating to the prior and future commitment of the District’s Fund Balance. The first is for PSERS Costs. See enclosure #20A. The second is for Capital Projects. See enclosure 20B. The third is for Assessment Appeals. See enclosure #20C. And, the final resolution is for Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPED). See enclosure #20D. Responding to a question from Mrs. Moore, Mr. Jackson explained that these were larger areas of expense that are expected to increase and the resolutions designate a large portion of fund balance to cover those future expenses.

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

Mrs. Finegold asked Board members to vote on two education service contracts in one motion. The first is with The Vanguard School for the 2017-2018 school year at \$57,505.00. See enclosure #21. The second is with Lakeside Educational Network to renew educational and counseling services for the next four school years. See enclosure #22.

Mrs. Finegold moved and Mr. Tabachnick 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 on the proposed breakfast and lunch pricing schedules for the 2017-2018 school year as set forth in enclosure #23. Mrs. Suchsland noted that there is no increase in prices from the current year.

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

Mr. Brodsky asked Board members to act on the 2017-2018 non-bargaining unit pay rates. See enclosure #24.

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

Mr. Brodsky sought Board approval to grant the superintendent the authority to appoint qualified personnel to vacant positions from the present time through the next regularly scheduled Board meeting in August. Appointments are to be contingent upon Board ratification at the August meeting.

Mr. Brodsky moved and Mr. Tabachnick seconded a motion to grant the approval as stated above. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Brodsky noted that Board authorization is requested for the administration to pay June bills during the month of July. He added that June and July financial reports will be provided for formal Board action in August.

Mr. Brodsky moved and Mr. Tabachnick seconded a motion to enable the administration to pay June bills during the month of July. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mrs. Peduzzi asked Board members to consider revisions to Board Policy #203 – Suspension and Expulsion on a first-read basis. See enclosure #33. At Mrs. Peduzzi's request, Mrs. Berk explained that the currently policy has not been updated in about 30 years. She noted that the revisions conform to the Pennsylvania School Boards Association template, make the policy clearer and allow less room for interpretation.

Mrs. Peduzzi moved and Mr. Tabachnick seconded a motion to approve the policy on a first-read basis. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 9-0.

Mr. Tabachnick sought Board action on a recommended bid from Rohrer Bus sales for a new 24-passenger bus in the amount of \$55,288, which includes a trade allowance. Mr. Tabachnick noted that the public bid opening was held on June 5.

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

Mr. Brodsky stated that it was not secret that the Board has been involved in an exhaustive search for a new superintendent. He stated that the search was a long, involved process that included reviewing and interviewing many candidates. He stated that in the end, the Board was unanimous in its choice of Dr. Michael Christian, who was in the audience. Mr. Brodsky stated that Dr. Christian would be in the District periodically over the summer and would become the substitute superintendent on August 14 before becoming superintendent on September 1.

Mr. Brodsky moved and Mr. Tabachnick seconded a motion for appointment of substitute superintendent and election of district superintendent in accordance with 24 P.S. Section 10-1071, 10-1073 and 10-1075; and motion to enter into a contract to establish salary and fringe benefits for the positions of substitute superintendent and district superintendent as set forth in the motion to elect prepared by the solicitor.

Mrs. Moore noted that the Board reviewed 34 applicants before beginning the interview process with 16 candidates. She noted that there was a lot of coordination and effort on the part of the Chester County Intermediate Unit and thanked them for the amazing job they did in leading the search. Mrs. Oxberry thanked Fox Rothschild for providing their work space to conduct the interviews.

On a roll call vote, all voted in favor of to appoint Dr. Christian as substitute superintendent and District Superintendent. The motion was approved, 9-0.

Solicitor's Report: No report.

Committee Reports: Intermediate Unit (MCIU): Mrs. Finegold stated that the IU Board met on May 24 in Norristown. She highlighted a \$799,950 Montgomery County grant for employment and skills development that will enable the IU to launch a new college and career readiness program.

CMTHS: Mr. Brodsky reported that Cental Montco Technical High School (CMTHS) Assistant Director Angela Kern announced she is leaving for a position in Berks County, and Director Walt Slauch has indicated he will retire at the end of the coming school year. As a result the CMTHS Joint Operating Committee will begin a search for both positions.

Human Resources: No report.

Finance: Mr. Raimondo stated that the committee had a healthy discussion on the budget at its June 5 meeting. He noted that District's fund balance is still at a level to maintain the Aaa ration from Moody's Investors Services. He thanked Mr. Jackson for all of his work on the budget.

Curriculum: Mrs. Finegold recapped the June 12 meeting which featured a presentation on the Master teacher Genius Hour. She also highlighted a new STEAM elective course at CMS.

Facilities Management and Transportation: Mr. Tabachnick stated that all renovation projects are on schedule and proceeding nicely. He added that work on the new west gym at the high school will begin by the end of June with a scheduled completion date of late next spring. He also added that work on the new turf baseball field has begun as has the resurfacing of Colonial Field. He noted that the track will also be resurfaced this summer. Mr. Tabachnick thanked Mr. Yemm for working with him on the committee and for all of the work that the facilities and operations staffs have done.

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

Legislative: Mrs. Peduzzi stated that the legislature continues to work on a state budget and that HB1213 regarding real estate tax assessment appeals is still pending. She noted the approval of HB202 which changes graduation requirements for Career Technical Education students. At Mrs. Peduzzi's request, Dr. Gorodetzer explained that the senate also passed the bill and the Governor is expected to sign it. She said it was a positive that CMTHS students would be able to meet graduation requirements by showing proficiency on the NOCTI exams, which are career related assessments. Mr. Brodsky also stated that the bill was a positive for CMTHS students.

Municipal/Community Liaisons: No Report.

Public Comment: Christina Frangiosa of Plymouth Meeting, a former Board member, thanked Dr. Gorodetzer for her service to the District and for their positive working relationship while she served on the Board.

CMS Principal Bob Fahler thanked Dr. Gorodetzer for her support of the middle school and stated that he learned a lot from her leadership and counsel.

Director of Pupil Services 6-12 Eileen Spector thanked Dr. Gorodetzer for her service and for her the inspiration she provided as a mentor and role model.

PWHS Principal Dr. Jason Bacani thanked Dr. Gorodetzer for her leadership and for seeing potential in him and sparking an interest in him to pursue a leadership path.

Whitemarsh Elementary School Principal Donna Drizin spoke to Dr. Gorodetzer's leadership in establishing full-day kindergarten throughout the District. Mrs. Drizin said she has a passion for full-day kindergarten because of Dr. Gorodetzer and believes Colonial has one of the best kindergarten programs in the state. She noted that Dr. Gorodetzer has had a positive influence on a countless number of lives.

Colonial Elementary School Principal Dr. Terese Boegly thanked Dr. Gorodetzer for bringing her to the District and stated that she has learned so much from Dr. Gorodetzer over the years.

PWHS Assistant Principal Mike Azcona thanked Dr. Gorodetzer for allowing and encouraging all administrators to make decisions on their own and for supporting and cultivating administrative talent.

CMS Assistant Principal Phil Chang stated that Dr. Gorodetzer's influence will continue to impact the District for years to come.

Curriculum Supervisor Maria Wileczek thanked Dr. Gorodetzer for including her as part of a fantastic curriculum team and for her willingness to explore new opportunities.

Mr. Brodsky stated that through the superintendent interview process he felt that Colonial was far ahead of other school districts throughout the state. He reiterated comments made at a previous meeting when he stated that he has worked for eight superintendents over the years but none better than Dr. Gorodetzer.

Mrs. Moore introduced a video tribute to Dr. Gorodetzer.

Mrs. Moore noted that the Board had one other action item to address that was not on the agenda. Mrs. Moore moved and Mr. Brodsky seconded a motion to accept the resignation of Mr. Tabachnick from the School Board. One a roll call vote, all but Mr. Tabachnick voted in favor. Mr. Tabachnick abstained. The motion was carried, 8-0-1.

Mrs. Oxberry thanked Mr. Yemm and his staff for a beautiful graduation ceremony.

There being no other comment of business before the Board, Mrs. Moore adjourned the meeting at 7:51 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



David M. Sherman
Board Secretary