

**COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA 19462
GENERAL SESSION MINUTES, FEBRUARY 15, 2018**

Vice President Finegold convened the General Session of the Colonial Board of School Directors at 7:00 p.m. in the District Office General Meeting Room on February 15, 2018.

Board Members Present: Mel Brodsky, Jennifer Dow, Leslie Finegold, Eunice Franklin-Becker, Susan Moore, Rosemary Northcutt and Adam Schupack.

Board Members Absent: Cathy Peduzzi and Felix Raimondo.

Also Attending: Dr. Michael L. Christian, Superintendent of Schools; Peter C. Amuso, Solicitor; Andrew Boegly, Director of Technology; Dr. Liz McKeaney, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; Dr. Leticia Rodríguez, Director of Human Resources; David Szablowski, Business Administrator/Board Treasurer; David M. Sherman, Community Relations Coordinator/Board Secretary; Tom Peeler, Audio Visual Technician; Tim McDonald, School Safety Officer; Derek Nam and Maggie Coyle, Board Student Representatives; Erin Saulino; Kevin Willson; Chris Epstein; Mark S. Craitin; Deanna Durante; Megan Penrice; Gary Johnson; Lisa Dresnin; Marsha Turner; Cayce Becker; Beth Patruno; Channa Cohen; Mindi Parisi; Robert Slagle; Linda Doll; Susan Hope; Lauren Taverna; Beth Miller; Maureen Peters; Geoffrey E. Bram; Erica Bracchi; Rob Reed; Joy Bowman; Ryan Daufenback; Ofelia D'Aulerio; April Litwin, Deb Quaco and Bernie Brady.

Mrs. Finegold asked for a moment of silence for victims of the Parkland, Florida school shooting and then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Recognition/Awards: Dr. Christian noted that three Plymouth Whitmarsh High School (PWHS) students were finalists for the 2018 Montgomery County Overdose Awareness Billboard Contest. There were unable to attend the meeting, however.

Executive Session Announcements: Mrs. Finegold announced that the Board had met in executive session prior to the meeting. She noted that they reviewed the personnel report, real estate assessment appeals, a separation agreement and a confidential student placement. She said the meeting lasted about 50 minutes.

Approval of Minutes: Mrs. Finegold moved and Mr. Brodsky seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the Facilities Management and Transportation (FMT) Committee meeting of January 10; the Curriculum Committee meeting and Community Relations and Student Life/Safety and Wellness Committee meeting of January 16; and the General Session of January 18 as shown in enclosures #1 through #4

On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 7-0.

Financial Reports: Mrs. Finegold moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the financial reports on the list for approval. The reports 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 and the Bond Fund Report shown in enclosures #5 through #15.

On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 7-0.

Mrs. Finegold moved and Mrs. Dow seconded a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report for January 31, 2018 found in enclosure #16

On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 7-0.

Public Comments on the Agenda: Linda Doll of Lafayette Hill commented on item D under New Business regarding approval for Godshall, Kane O'Rourke (GKO) Architects to compile base plans for work on Colonial Middle School (CMS). She encouraged the Board to approve the item. Mrs. Doll spoke to GKO's familiarity with the school district and the quality of work the company has performed for a reasonable price. She also complimented the work of District Operations Director Terry Yemm and his diligence in seeking and working with the best vendors. Mrs. Doll stated that she trusted Mr. Yemm and asked the Board to trust Mr. Yemm's judgement with regard to GKO architects, as well. She spoke for 3:26.

Staff Report: Dr. Christian stated that there are many ways the Colonial School District teaches students to respect the differences and value the diversity of the many cultures that make up our district. He said the students take part in many projects, activities and assemblies that are embedded throughout the curriculum. Whitemarsh Elementary School Principal Donna Drizin, teachers Susan Hope and April Litwin, and CMS Principal Bob Fahler and Assistant Principal Phil Chang presented PowerPoints and discussed a number of initiatives in their building.

Old Business: None.

Correspondence: None.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Christian stated that his report includes the Personnel Report and Substitute List and the Extra Duty/Extra Pay List. See enclosures #17 and #18. He noted that all appointments for promotion, employment or transfer are subject to the presentation of valid credentials, employment verification documentation and state mandated requirements.

Mrs. Northcutt moved and Mr. Schupack seconded a motion to approve the Superintendent's Report. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 7-0.

Dr. Christian stated that the District had contracted with the Pennsylvania School Boards Association to review all District policies. He noted that the first site visit had occurred. Dr. Christian stated that in a related move the Board will be moving to the electronic BoardDocs system in an effort to streamline board minutes, documents and polices and reduce the District's carbon footprint.

Board Student Representatives Report: Mr. Nam noted that the high school was three weeks into its second semester. He stated that students in the Technology Student Association (TSA) and DECA had qualified to compete in their respective state competitions. He also noted that practice for the spring musical was well underway. Ms. Coyle reported on the Student Council's Cupid's Cuties fundraiser and the success of the winter sports teams entering the playoffs. She also stated that the students were excited about the new gymnasium.

New Business: Mrs. Northcutt called the Board's attention to eight student trip requests on the agenda for approval. They included PWHS DECA students attending the DECA State Career Development Conference in Hershey from February 21-23 (see enclosure #19), PWHS Future Business Leaders of America regional winners attending their state leadership conference in Hershey on April 9-11 (see enclosure #20), PWHS UNICEF Club members traveling to the UNICEF Student Summit in Washington, DC on March 10 (see enclosure #21), PWHS students visiting the Museum of Modern Art in New York City on May 22 (see enclosure #22), the PWHS Indoor Guard participating in competitions in New Jersey on March 3, March 17 and April 21 (see enclosure #23), PWHS and CMS students attending the TSA State Conference in Champion, Pa. from April 18-21 and the TSA National Conference in Atlanta, Ga. from June 22-26 (see enclosure #24), the CMS Oceanography Club visiting the Chincoteague Bay Field Station in Wallops Island, Va., from May 14-18 see

(enclosure #25) and seventh grade students traveling to the Adventure Aquarium in Camden, N.J. on April 27 (see enclosure #26).

Mrs. Northcutt moved and Mrs. Franklin-Becker seconded a motion to approve the student trip requests. On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 7-0.

Mrs. Finegold moved and Mrs. Dow seconded a motion to approve Mr. Boegly's attendance at the COSN conference in Washington, DC from March 12-15 as noted in enclosure #27. Responding to a question from Mrs. Finegold, Mr. Boegly stated that the subject of the conference was computer networking.

On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 7-0.

Mrs. Franklin-Becker moved and Mr. Schupack seconded a motion to approve a list of school bus drivers employed by First Student and Sague for the 2017-2018 school year.

On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 7-0.

Mrs. Franklin-Becker moved and Mr. Brodsky seconded a motion to approve Godshall Kane O'Rourke Architects, LLC to conduct a site survey at CMS, prepare technical base plans of the existing building, prepare preliminary HVAC designs, provide a scope of underground sanitary piping and create an auditorium seating layout with the cost of the work not to exceed \$50,000.

On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 7-0.

Mr. Schupack moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to accept the Real Estate Assessment Appeal Settlements from Parcel #49-00-00000-60-8 and Parcel #49-00-04509-03-2, both in Plymouth Township. At Mr. Brodsky's request, Mr. Szablowski noted that both settlements were successful and should net a profit of approximately \$283,000.

On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 7-0.

Mr. Brodsky moved and Mrs. Moore seconded a motion to approve the Agreement and Release between the Colonial Board of School Directors and Employee #100539 effective February 15, 2018.

On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 7-0.

Mrs. Finegold moved and Mrs. Franklin-Becker seconded a motion to approve the placement of one student at TLC Leadership Academy of Audubon. Mrs. Finegold noted that because of student confidentiality and privacy the placement agreement was discussed in executive session.

On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 7-0.

Mrs. Franklin-Becker moved and Mr. Schupack seconded a motion to approve the administration's bid recommendation for the PWS and Colonial Elementary School (CES) campus electric service upgrade as shown in enclosure #33.

On a roll call vote, all voted in favor. The motion was carried, 7-0.

Solicitor's Report: Mr. Amuso introduced himself, and stated that his partner Michael Clarke would normally attend the meetings but was unable to be present this evening. He added that his firm is looking forward to working with the District and earning the Board's trust. He noted they already had several positive meetings with the Superintendent.

Committee Reports: MCIU: Mrs. Finegold stated that the IU Board met on January 24 in Norristown. She stated that she had been elected treasurer. Mrs. Finegold explained the services received by the District were from three departments, Government Relations, Professional Learning

and Technology. She noted that the cost to the District is \$82,819, or just slightly higher than the previous year.

CMTHS: Mr. Brodsky noted that several PWS students qualified for the state SkillsUSA competition based on results of a county-wide event. He added that this was Director Walt Slauch's last year at the school and stated that Assistant Director Seth Schram had impressive plans for the program moving forward. Mr. Brodsky stated that a new assistant director should be named in the coming weeks.

Human Resources: No report.

Finance: Mr. Schupack spoke to the fiscal challenges facing the District with regards to increases in fixed costs, necessary projects to complete and increased enrollment. Mr. Szablowski reported on the early stages of the state budget, including an expected \$100 million increase in the basic education subsidy.

Curriculum: Mrs. Finegold stated that the committee met on Monday at Plymouth Elementary School and heard a presentation on the GAIN initiative in classrooms. She explained that GAIN is a growth and intervention network that supports all K-5 students in the District.

Facilities Management and Transportation: Mrs. Franklin-Becker stated that the committee met on February 5 at CMS and heard comprehensive options from GKO Architects to renovate that building and to accommodate it for the expected enrollment expansion. She also noted that options smaller in scope to renovate CES were also presented. Mrs. Finegold announced that it was the Board's intention to direct the Superintendent to put out a request for proposals (RFP) for architectural services for the CMS project. She noted it was prudent to seek other opinions given the high cost of the project. Mr. Schupack noted that previous time constraints on the project due to a deadline related to a PlanCon submission no longer applied since that deadline had been pushed back two years by the state. Dr. Christian confirmed the new deadline. He added that seeking other proposals could be beneficial but that the Board needed to remember there are still time constraints with regards to enrollment and the project needs to keep moving.

There was some discussion as to whether or not the RFP needed a Board vote, but Mr. Amuso stated no vote was needed, only Board consensus for the Superintendent to proceed with the RFP.

Mrs. Moore inquired as to when the Board made the decision to issue an RFP. She noted there was no discussion in any meeting, including the February 5 Facilities Committee meeting. Mrs. Finegold stated that she thought of it after the meeting was over and contacted Mr. Raimondo, which led to phone discussions. Mrs. Moore stated that she received a phone call from Mr. Raimondo who said the decision had been made. She reiterated that she had no input into the decision and no discussion among all nine Board members took place. Mr. Brodsky stated that he received a similar phone call was told that "we" had made the decision. He said he asked who the "we" was and did not get an answer. Mrs. Moore questioned the timing of the RFP and asked if the Board would not be paying to have the same work completed that GKO had already performed and was approved to undertake earlier in the meeting. There was considerable discussion among Board members as to the manner in which the RFP decision transpired.

Community Relations and Student Life/Safety and Wellness: Mrs. Northcutt stated that the committee met on February 12 and heard a report on CUSP, an effort to communicate Special Education programming to community members. She noted that the first meeting was scheduled for March 22. She also stated that the committee preliminarily reviewed revisions to Policy #916 Volunteers and reported the policy would be placed before the Board for a first read in March. Mrs. Northcutt also noted that there was an update on preparations for the senior citizen matinee and work to make the District website ADA compliant.

Legislative: Mrs. Franklin-Becker stated the county legislative committee did not meet this month. She did provide updates on the Governor's budget, Senate Bill #2 and HB1213, and noted that both pieces of legislation could be harmful to the District.

Municipal/Community Liaisons: Mrs. Northcutt commented on several Conshohocken Borough summer programs including a free program for borough youth offered by the rowing center.

Public Comment: Erin Saulino of Plymouth Township stated that she was disappointed upon hearing the discussion of the architect RFP. She said she had attended the Facilities Committee meeting and was impressed with the plans presented by GKO. She added that she was impressed by the detailed knowledge the architect had of the building and class sizes. She stated that she felt deceived by the Board. She told Board members that they had spoken of transparency and of wanting public comment. She said there isn't even transparency on the Board. She asked if the decision to seek an RFP was made prior to the knowledge that the PlanCon deadline had been extended. She told Board members they needed to get their stories straight. Mrs. Saulino spoke for 4:54.

Beth Patrino of Plymouth Township said she was blown away. She said the public wanted a Board it could trust. She stated that she was disappointed because there was no mention of an RFP at the Facilities meeting. And, she noted that there was no change made to the agenda. Mrs. Patrino said that the District teaches children to be respectful, responsible and to work together. She said that the Board needed to learn those skills. She added that it was unacceptable that things still appear to be happening outside of public meetings and even outside the knowledge of other Board members. Mrs. Patrino spoke for 1:10.

Chris Epstein of Plymouth Township thanked Dr. Christian for his leadership. She stated that the District taught collaboration in its classrooms. She reminded Board members that they are leaders and they need to model that behavior for students. She stated that obviously something happened after the Facilities Committee meeting out of the view of the public and apparently some Board members to prompt the architect RFP. She asked how much the District had already paid GKO, and how many hours the architect had spent on the project. Mrs. Epstein spoke for 3:27.

Deanna Durante of Whitemarsh Township commented that the minutes of the last meeting were paraphrased because they did not reflect that her questions to Mr. Raimondo regarding minutes of meetings where certain conversations had taken place were not answered. She commented to Mr. Schupack that he had told the public they could ask him questions. She asked Mr. Schupack about the RFP phone calls, who received calls, who didn't, who was the "we" that decide there would be an RFP? Mr. Amuso stated that this was a time for public comment and that it was not a question and answer session. Mrs. Durante asked when the Board would answer the questions. Mrs. Durante spoke for 3:20.

Mark Epstein of Plymouth Township stated that the solicitor is not a moderator. He added that whether or not every comment was included in the minutes they are being recorded by the cameras. He encouraged the public to watch the meetings. He also said everyone knew where the RFP came from based on comments made at the last Board meeting about the architecture at the high school. Mr. Epstein spoke for 1:10.

Ryan Daufenbach of Plymouth Township stated that he has lived in the District for a number of years and was thrilled with the education his children have received. He said he had never attended a Board meeting until recently. He thanked the Board for waking up a lot of apathetic parents who had become complacent because they didn't feel a need to attend Board meetings. He stated that there seemed to be a lot of back room dealing and he wasn't expecting that. Mr. Daufenbach said it needs to stop. He encouraged the Board to find ways to collaborate because he says it clearly isn't happening. He said that kids notice that and it's embarrassing. Mr. Daufenbach spoke for 2:20.

Beth Suchsland of Whitemarsh Township stated that she had been a Board member for eight years. She said she was very frustrated but was trying to be respectful to the new Board members. She explained that the Board holds a retreat each year with administrators and principals and gets detailed reviews of District issues. She stated that the Board has known of the current enrollment increase for several years and has had detailed discussions with how to address it. Mrs. Suchsland said she felt the Board's current actions with regards to RFPs for solicitor and architectural services were disgusting. She encouraged the public to watch what's happening and warned this isn't the last of it.

There being no other comment or business before the Board, Mrs. Finegold adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



David M. Sherman
Board Secretary