

Colonial School District
District Operations
Facilities Management/Transportation Committee
Meeting Minutes
4/7/2010

Committee Chair Bernie Brady called the meeting to order at 8:40 AM.

Other Committee Members Present: Sue Moore, Alan Tabachnick, Kathleen Oxberry

Other Board Members Present: Gary Johnson, Beth Suchsland, Mitch Zimmer

Also Attending: Dr. Vincent Cotter, Superintendent; Dr. Maryellen Gorodetzer, Assistant Superintendent; Terry R. Yemm, Director of Operations; Linda Doll, Community Resident; Tom Davis, Community Resident

Public Comment on the Agenda: None

The Committee discussed a potential safety concern related to the afternoon pick-up of students at the Whitemarsh Elementary School. The concern is that the line of cars waiting in the pick-up line that extends into the parking lanes on the north side of the lot prohibits the ability for anyone to exit the parking spaces. This is a problem for any parents that arrive early to pick up their children and park on the north side of the lot. They are unable to exit the parking spaces due to the line of cars waiting in the pick-up line. Ms. Doll suggested that a possible solution would be to require that teacher's park in the spaces on the north side of the lot leaving the spaces on the south side of the lot open for parents that need to pick up their children early. The Committee agreed that this was a good suggestion. Accordingly, a plan will be investigated to determine the feasibility of requiring that teacher's park in these spaces or assigning parking spaces.

The Committee discussed the District's current practice regarding the transportation of students that live in two different homes within the community based on custody agreements. Currently the Transportation Department, based on certain situations, may allow two stop locations for a student(s) whose parents have a custody agreement, one stop at the mother's home and one stop at the father's home. In addition, once the stop locations are determined and agreed upon there can be no changes or deviations in the schedule for the year. Upon review it was determined that this practice would not be able to be used for any students that require transportation to non-public schools. As the law mandates that the District is required to provide "like" transportation services to non-public and public schools, the Committee is considering revising the practice of allowing more than one stop for students whose parents have custody agreements. The Committee requested additional information which will be provided at a future meeting. If any decision is made regarding a change in the current practice, said change will not become effective until the 2010-2011 school year.

The Committee reviewed an analysis of the afternoon activity bus runs at the Plymouth Whitmarsh High School and Colonial Middle School. The analysis detailed the various reasons that students stayed after school causing them to use the 4:15/4:30 PM and 5:15/5:30 PM bus runs at each school. The purpose of the review and analysis was to determine if there was any potential for cost savings that may be achieved. The District pays First Student a fixed amount per day for each bus run. This amount is charged regardless of the number of students riding the bus or the distance that the bus needs to travel to transport the students to their homes. The Committee requested that additional information be provided for review at the next meeting. Accordingly, the information will be provided at the May meeting.

A brief discussion took place regarding a grant that was awarded to the District from the Montgomery County Conservation District. The grant is the second phase of the TreeVitalize Watershed project. The first phase, comprised of the planting of three-hundred (300) trees and eighty (80) shrubs, was completed in the spring of 2009. The second phase includes the planting of an additional four-hundred (400) trees and twenty (20) shrubs and the installation of a "biodiversity" garden on the west side of the Victory Fields complex. The intent was to plant the majority of the trees in the wooded area on the south side of the berm bordering Victory Fields 3 and 4. Based on the fact that the District is required to plant approximately eighty (80) trees in the wooded area by the berm to act as a buffer as a requirement of the proposed athletic field lighting project and the desire to have any/all new gardens that have an educational component at the District's farmhouse on the Angus tract, the Committee opted to not participate in the second phase of the grant.

An update was provided on the energy initiatives currently being considered for the Colonial Middle School and the Plymouth Whitmarsh High School. Under consideration are the installation of solar panels and the installation of micro-turbine generators. Both processes would provide electricity for our needs, however, the micro-turbine generators provide a thermal benefit that can be used to heat and cool our buildings. The solar process, as presented, does not provide that benefit. However, based on the potential to qualify for a substantial amount of grant funding for solar energy, an energy company has provided a proposal that would save the District between \$1,850,000 and \$2,050,000 in electricity costs over a twenty year period. In addition, the proposal includes a fixed cost for the electricity eliminating concerns with the fluctuations in electricity costs over the twenty year period. The investment of the capital is paid back over a period of years from the electric line item in the operating budget. A detailed proposal for the solar project will be provided to the Committee for review and consideration in the near future.

A proposal for the purchase and installation of new playground equipment for the Ridge Park Elementary School was provided for Committee review. The cost for the equipment will be funded entirely by the PTO of Ridge Park. The timber required to border the new playground area and the wood chips will be purchased through the operating budget. The installation of the equipment will be performed by the support staff. The installation of the equipment will be consistent with the equipment in place at the Conshohocken,

Plymouth, Whitemarsh and Colonial Elementary Schools. The Committee provided approval to move forward with the project.

A list of obsolete equipment was provided to the Committee for review. The equipment is comprised of old cell phones and computers and monitors. The intent is to donate the cell phones to the "Cell Phones for Soldiers" program. The computers, the majority of which are no longer functioning or have minimal memory, will be provided to a company that will dispose of them at no charge to the District. The Committee agreed to proceed with the donation of the cell phones and the disposal of the obsolete computers/monitors.

Mr. Yemm provided an update on the approval process for the proposed installation of the athletic field lighting planned for Victory Fields. On Wednesday June 3, 2009, the Zoning Hearing Board (ZHB) of Whitemarsh Township voted in favor of our request for a special exception to the zoning ordinance to allow the installation of athletic field lighting on Victory Fields #1 and #3. An application for land development was submitted to Whitemarsh Township in late July. The District appeared in front of the Whitemarsh Township Planning Commission (WTPC) in early October. The WTPC reviewed the project and did not make any recommendation requesting that the District consider alternate locations for a proposed comfort station. An alternate location was reviewed by the Committee. The District presented the revised location to the WTPC on Tuesday March 25, 2010 and received a unanimous approval on the plan. The District is scheduled to appear in front of the Whitemarsh Township Board of Supervisors on Thursday April 8, 2010. Plans will be presented at that meeting in anticipation of receiving final approval to move forward with the project.

Additional Public Comment on the Agenda: None.

There being no further business before the committee, Mr. Brady adjourned the meeting at approximately 10:14 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry R. Yemm
Director of Operations