

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC WORK SESSION MINUTES
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
February 9, 2010

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public work session on February 9, 2010 in the Harry M. Dengler, Jr. Performing Arts Center at the Maple Point Middle School. The following persons were in attendance:

BOARD MEMBERS:

Mr. Ritchie Webb, President
Mr. Kim Koutsouradis, Vice President
Ms. Irene Boyle
Mr. Scott E. Congdon
Mrs. Susan Cummings
Mr. Richard M. Eccles
Mr. Mike Morris
Mr. William Oettinger

ADMINISTRATORS:

Dr. Louis T. Muenker
Mr. Joseph V. Paradise
Dr. Jacqueline Rattigan
Dr. Geeta Heble
Mrs. Patricia Boylan
Mr. Kevin Kane

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mr. William D. O'Connor

OTHERS: Approximately 40 persons from the public, staff and press

SECRETARY: Mrs. Jennifer Burns

SOLICITOR: Thomas J. Profy, III, Esquire

Mr. Webb announced that prior to the meeting an Executive Session was held from 6:00 p.m. until 7:03 p.m. for Board members regarding legal issues.

1. Call to Order

Mr. Webb called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Webb requested those in attendance join in the salute to the flag.

3. Announcements

None

4. Public Comment

Mr. Steve Rodos, Villages of Flowers Mill, Langhorne, PA, addressed the issue of keeping and/or improving certain programs in the school district. In Mr. Rodos's opinion, he feels the computer education in elementary schools should be increased and taught by certified staff. He also believes the reading center in the high school should be retained because of the high importance of this program. Other programs that Mr. Rodos voiced his support for were the middle schools opportunities programs, reading specialists, librarians, and guidance counselors.

5. Items for Discussion

a) **Budget Development**

Mr. Paradise advised that the Board is required make a formal motion to adopt a preliminary budget in accordance with the Pennsylvania School Code and Act 1, on or before February 17, 2010. Additionally, he asked the Board to familiarize themselves with the 72 items that were proposed for cost reduction, and the actual cost cuts that Dr. Muenker and Mr. Paradise recommended in April, 2009 resulting in a budget savings of \$10,000,000. Mr. Paradise noted that the proposed budget is currently 7.6 million dollars out of balance. Mr. Paradise acknowledged that the Board will continue to

review these and other changes as part of our budget development process until the budget is approved in June, 2010.

Mr. Eccles asked for an update on the forming of groups from the support staff and certified staff regarding recommendations for cutting programs as a cost savings.

Dr. Muenker responded that he is not in favor of forming a group of support and certified staff for the purpose of discussing program cuts. He further stated that he plans to form a smaller committee comprised of various levels of our buildings for the purpose of these discussions.

Mr. Eccles respectfully disagreed with Dr. Muenker's proposal of a smaller committee made up of lay people rather than professionals.

Dr. Muenker agreed to revisit the question.

6. Items for Approval Tonight

a) Approval of the 2010 -11 Preliminary Budget

Motion was presented by Mr. Webb

WHEREAS, in accordance with Act 1 of 2006, the Board of School Directors has received a proposed Preliminary Budget for the 2010 -11 fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, the Proposed Preliminary Budget was made available for public inspection on form PDE - 2028 effective January 20, 2010; and

WHEREAS, in order to further comply with Act 1, the Preliminary Budget must be adopted by the Board of School Directors on or before February 17, 2010; and

WHEREAS, Act 1 further provides for "referendum exceptions", which must be submitted to and approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education on or before March 4, 2010.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the 2010 - 11 Preliminary Budget is adopted in accordance with Act 1 of 2006 and it shall be made available for public inspection as required by law.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the School District shall apply to the Pennsylvania Department of Education for exceptions, specified under Act 1 as per the attached summary.

Mr. Webb made a motion for the approval of the 2010 - 11 Preliminary Budget and Mrs. Cummings seconded the motion.

Mr. Morris wanted it clarified that the budget is a working budget at this time.

Mr. Paradise confirmed that it is a preliminary working draft budget.

Mr. Eccles recommends that the Board not vote in favor for the approval of the 2010 - 11 Preliminary Budget unless it is a zero budget.

The motion passed by a vote of seven ayes and one nay (Mr. Eccles). Mr. O'Connor was not present.

Mr. Webb made a motion for a zero percent increase in the final budget; however, in the event the tax increase is mandated and only as a last resort the 2.9 inflationary rates will be the maximum increase and the exceptions specified under Act 1 will not be used. Mr. Eccles seconded the motion.

The motion passed by a vote of 8 – 0. Mr. O'Connor was not present.

7. Items for Approval at the February 23, 2010 Public Board Meeting

a) Acceptance of the 2008 – 09 Audit

Mr. Paradise stated that at the February 23, 2010 Public Board Meeting there will be a motion for the acceptance of the 2008 – 09 Audit Report.

b) BCIU #22 2010 -2011 Programs & Services and Instructional Material & Research Budget

Dr. Muenker stated that at the February 23, 2010 Public Board Meeting there will be a motion for the approval for the BCIU #22 2010- 2011 Programs & Services and Instructional Material & Research Budget.

Mr. Eccles inquired if the expenditure decreased by 1.86%.

Mr. Paradise clarified that the costs of the BCIU have decreased but the allocations have increased to \$730.

Mr. Eccles further questioned whether there was a 4.49% decrease in salaries.

Mr. Paradise stated that the answer to Mr. Eccles' question was uncertain; however, he would seek further clarification of the matter.

There was a Board consensus to have the BCIU #22 2010 -2011 Programs and Services and Instructional Material & Research Budget be an agenda item at the February 23, 2010 Public Board Meeting.

c) Approval of Revised Board Policies and Guidelines

Dr. Rattigan presented the following revisions for approval at the next Public Board Meeting:

- Policy #227 – Work Regulations and Guidelines (Administrative & Supervisory Personnel)
- Policy #327 – Work Regulations and Guidelines (Certified Staff)
- Policy #427 – Work Regulations and Guidelines (Non-certified Staff)
- Guideline to Policy #102 – Selection and Election of Administrative Personnel

There was a Board consensus to have these policies be voted upon at the next Public Board Meeting.

d) Appointment of Deputy Tax Collector

Mr. Paradise stated that at the February 23, 2010 Public Board Meeting there will be a motion for the approval for the appointment of a Deputy Tax Collector.

Mr. Webb advised the Board that in his opinion the Deputy Tax Collector should be bonded.

Mr. Profy and Mr. Paradise both agreed with Mr. Webb that the Deputy Tax Collector should be, and indeed, will be bonded upon the Board's approval.

Mr. Webb questioned why the Board is voting for an employee of the Tax Collector who has already been elected.

Mr. Profy explained that the code requires it because the Deputy Tax Collector has the same authority and authorization as the Tax Collector.

Mr. Webb inquired if the bond is paid by the Tax Collector.

Mr. Paradise stated that the township does assume the responsibility of the cost for the bonding; however, to his knowledge there is no additional cost for the approval of the Deputy.

Mr. Webb reiterated that he feels the township should bear no additional cost in the hiring of the Deputy Tax Collector.

There was a Board consensus for the appointment of Deputy Tax Collector as an agenda item at the next Public Board Meeting.

e) Bids/Budget Transfers

Mr. Paradise noted that there is one Budget Transfer Report (Working Copy 10 - 3), with two transactions and sub transactions. The first is to cover equipment replacement and the second is with the parameters of Federal programs. Mr. Paradise stated that the Budget Transfer (Working Copy 10 -3) will be on the Public agenda meeting at the end of the month.

8. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Muenker advised the Board on the following:

- Neshaminy students continue to do an outstanding job in raising funds for the Haitian earthquake victims.
- Neshaminy's High School Family and Consumer Science Majors donated over 138 soup meals for Aid for Friends. Aid for Friends delivers meals to shut-ins in the Philadelphia area who cannot provide their own meals.
- During the week of February 8 through the 12th, Herbert Hoover and Ferderbar Elementary Schools will be participating in the "Jump Rope for Heart." This is a national fundraising event sponsored by the American Heart Association to raise funds to help others.
- Ashley Shaffer, a 12th grader, was recognized for winning second place, "Best in Show", and was awarded \$150 for her art work which will be exhibited in the 23rd Annual "Touch the Future" exhibit at the Lansdale Center for Performing Arts February 6th through the 28th.
- "Willie Wonka" the musical will be held this week, February 10th through the 13th. Tickets are \$7.00.
- Poquessing Middle School will be presenting the musical Oklahoma on February 17th, 18th and 19th at 7 p.m., and February 20th, will be at 1 p.m. Tickets for Adults are \$7.00, and children and seniors are \$5.00.
- A new vaccination is required for the 2010 - 2011 school year from the Pennsylvania Department of Health. Further information can be found on Neshaminy's web site.

9. Committee Reports

a) Board Policies

Ms. Boyle advised the Board that the next meeting will take place on March 3, 2010 at 6:30 p.m.

b) Educational Development

Mr. Webb presented Mr. O'Connor's committee report in his absence. The findings of the Educational Development Committee reflects that a survey was taken of the elementary school teachers and it was found that the computer labs are not occurring with regularity and in some cases not at all. Dr. Heble has been asked for a recommendation regarding the problem. The primary concern is that the Neshaminy School District is significantly behind in computer education compared to other school districts. The Educational Committee will be further examining the issue at future meetings.

c) Finance/Facilities

Mr. Webb advised the Board that the next meeting will be held on February 17, 2010.

d) IU Board

Mrs. Cummings informed the Board of four programs within the IU called the Wow Program. Each of these programs are designed to help students develop skills needed for work such as, staying with a job until completed, working in a timely manner, working independently, or working as part of a team. The Wow Program is presented functionally within the work environment. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 16th.

e) Education Foundation

Dr. Muenker commented on the success of the Murder Mystery dinner, which was held on January 23rd. He also asked for the continued support in donations towards the Phillies basket containing Phillies tickets and Phillies memorabilia. The next meeting will be held on March 8, 2010.

f) Technical School

Mr. Koutsouradis informed the Board that the School Board Recognition Dinner was held at the last meeting. The next meeting will be February, 22nd at 7:30 p.m.

g) Technology

Mr. Congdon welcomed everyone to attend their first meeting which is scheduled for February 23, 2010 at 6:00 p.m.

10. Public Comment

Mr. Larry Pastor, Business Executive of Middletown, recognized the Board's resolution for a zero tax increase on behalf of the taxpayers in the township. Mr. Pastor also acknowledged Dr. Muenker's comments about the efficiency of the organization. He recognizes that while the Board has a hard job ahead, he further urges the Board to follow through on the resolution for a zero tax increase. Additionally, he stated that he would like more transparency on the labor cost increase in the budget.

Mr. Steve Rodos, Villages of Flowers Mill, Langhorne, PA, asked if the changes in the instructional and special education program are due to the cost of health insurance.

Mr. Paradise responded that it is the cost of health insurance, social security, Pennsylvania School Employees Retirement System, worker's compensation, unemployment compensation. He further clarified that the cost for the township was increased because the percentage has doubled for next year.

11. Future Topics

None

12. Agenda Development for the February 23, 2010 Public Board Meeting

None

13. Other Board Business

Mr. Koutsouradis announced to the public that Thursday, February 11, 2010, the Board will be meeting with the support staff officials for the first meeting of the New Year.

14. Adjournment of Meeting

Mr. Morris moved that the meeting be adjourned, and Mrs. Cummings seconded it. Mr. Webb adjourned the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Jennifer Burns
Board Secretary