

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC BOARD MEETING MINUTES
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
June 13, 2013

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public session on June 13, 2013, in the District Offices Board Room at Maple Point Middle School. The following persons were in attendance:

BOARD MEMBERS:

Mr. Ritchie Webb, President
Mr. Scott Congdon, Vice President
Ms. Irene Boyle
Mr. Kim Koutsouradis
Mrs. Susan Cummings
Mr. Mike Morris
Mr. William Oettinger
Mr. Mark Shubin
Mr. Anthony Sposato

ADMINISTRATORS:

Mr. Robert L. Copeland
Dr. Jacqueline Rattigan
Mrs. Barbara Markowitz
Mr. Anthony Devlin

BOARD MEMBER ABSENT:

OTHERS: Approximately 70 persons from the public, staff and press

SECRETARY: Mrs. Jennifer Burns

SOLICITOR: Thomas J. Profy, III, Esquire
Charles N. Sweet, Esquire

Mr. Webb announced that prior to the meeting an Executive Session was held where negotiation and personnel issues were discussed.

Call to Order

Mr. Webb called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

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

Announcements

None

Mr. Webb gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Neshaminy School District Collective Bargaining Agreement for Certified Staff Final Proposal. Mr. Webb also thanked Ann Schmidt, members of the negotiating committee, Mike Morris, William Oettinger, Irene Boyle and the rest of the members of the Board, Mr. Chuck Sweet, members of the Neshaminy Community, and William O'Connor who kept the community informed, and Mr. Gulla.

Public Comment

Ed Kern, retired, resident of Levittown, commended the Board for their efforts to bring closure to the teacher's contract. He stated that it has been a long road and thanked them for a job well done.

William O'Connor, resident of Middletown Township, thanked the Board for their efforts over the past five years and especially to Mr. Webb who did an outstanding job as Board president. Mr. O'Connor said the Board has set an example of how government can and should work. He also gave special thanks to Mr. Sweet for his patience and wisdom during the negotiations. Mr. O'Connor thanked the rank and file members of the NFT for ratifying the contract and he concluded by stating that the community must set an example of how to move forward for the sake of the children of Neshaminy.

Larry Pastor, business executive, resident of Middletown Township, thanked the members of the Board for standing up for the students and the community with full transparency. Mr. Pastor also thanked the citizens of the community for their support and for making their voices heard and to William O'Connor who helped to unite the community. He expressed his thanks to those few teachers who had the courage to disagree with the NFT leadership for their extreme tactics. Mr. Pastor thanked Mr. Webb for his leadership on the Board and for his outstanding negotiating skills and to Mr. Sweet for his exceptional counsel. He remarked that he believes that Mr. Copeland is the right school superintendent to take Neshaminy forward and make it the great school district that it should be.

Q. Stephen Pirritano, self-employed, resident of Feasterville, asked for a further explanation about the language in the contract pertaining to the NFT members being allowed to use inter-school mail.

A. Mr. Sweet noted that as of yet it is not a set policy, but there is room for a policy to be developed about any restrictions in regard to the NFT using inter-school mail.

A. Mr. Webb added that the question is very specific, which makes it hard to answer at this time; however, he assured that if there should be any inappropriate use of the mail, it will be addressed at that time.

Q. Mr. Pirritano asked if the clause regarding criticism of employees will prohibit the Board from addressing issues publicly when appropriate.

A. Mr. Webb stated that he does not think it prohibits the Board from discussing an issue when it is related to the public.

Q. Mr. Pirritano asked if a student's grade, which is in dispute, will be decided upon by the administration.

A. Mr. Copeland said that the language states that the administrator will have the power to make a final decision about a student's grade should it be in question.

Q. Mr. Pirritano asked for assurance that previous contract language will not apply under the new contract.

A. Mr. Sweet confirmed that the old contract and any status quo will cease to exist when the new contract is ratified.

Q. Mr. Pirritano asked is there a possibility that there are any more MOU's existing that the Board will be faced with in the future.

A. Mr. Sweet answered no, it is not possible.

Q. Mr. Pirritano asked what is the purpose of the no reprisal clause.

A. Mr. Sweet said the question would need to be answered by the NFT because they requested that clause.

Q. Mr. Pirritano asked for an explanation of "middle bus school duty."

A. Mr. Copeland said it is consistent with an existing policy, which may be irrelevant in view of new time periods.

A. Mr. Sweet added that it was previously part of an MOU, which was now included as part of the contract since the MOU's were eliminated.

Q. Mr. Pirritano asked if those in the long-term substitute pool will still have priority placement or will they just have consideration.

A. Mr. Webb confirmed that until June 29, 2015 those already in the pool will remain in the pool under the same rules and new employees will not be included.

A. Mr. Copeland clarified that there will still be an obligation to be satisfactory to remain in the pool.

Q. Mr. Pirritano asked if the practice of paying staff for mentoring will continue.

A. Mr. Webb said he will answer that question at a later time.

Q. Mr. Pirritano asked how the 7 1/2 hour work day was determined.

A. Mr. Sweet said it was a compromise between the 8 hour work day requested by the Board and the 7 hour work day sought by the union.

Q. Mr. Pirritano asked if the administration can make the participation of Home Access a requirement.

A. Mr. Copeland said he does not think there is anything in the current CBA that would restrict the Home Access participation and he confirmed that he is in favor of Home Access participation.

Mr. Pirritano thanked the Board for their transparency and truth throughout the past five years and he looks forward to making Neshaminy the shining star of Bucks County.

Charles Alfonso, retired, resident of Middletown Township asked for clarification about the opt-out clause regarding health care. Mr. Alfonso said that Mr. Webb, Mr. Sweet and the negotiating committee deserve a "job well done." Mr. Alfonso concluded by stating that it is necessary to remain vigilant in order to keep a well balanced deal with the NFT in the coming years.

A. Mr. Webb explained that the opt-out clause allows for an employee to be paid for declining the healthcare. The previous practice was to give 37% of the district's cost of the healthcare per month for opting out and the new contract states that the payout will be a flat \$200 per month instead of the percentage.

Larry Pastor, business executive, resident of Middletown Township asked for an example of how a grievance will now be handled under the new contract since equal say and past practice has been eliminated.

A. Mr. Sweet said that the NFT and administration can continue to follow past practices that have been beneficial; however, these practices are no longer legally binding should the practices come into question.

Kristin Gibboni, nurse, resident of Levittown, thanked the Board for their hard work negotiating the contract and for their continued transparency throughout.

Steve Rodos, retired, resident of the Villages of Flowers Mills thanked the Board, the teachers and the NFT for settling the contract. He asked if the increase in the work day from 7 hours to 7 1/2 hours includes students or does the extra 30 minutes only include teachers.

A. Mr. Copeland said that the specifics will be determined in the near future.

Mr. Rodos asked for an explanation regarding transfer of entity.

A. Mr. Devlin explained that transfer of entity is when the district takes back programs from the IU. If the district already has employees teaching those courses, the district is not obligated to use the employees from the IU.

Mr. Rodos asked if the PSERS fund is affected by the increase in value of the fund.

A. Mr. Webb said it is a state issue and the state sets the rates and it is a problem because the rate is increasing.

Motion: Ratification of the Contract Between the Neshaminy Board of School Directors and the Neshaminy Federation of Teachers

Mr. Webb presented the following motion:

That the Board ratify and approve the tentative agreement with the Neshaminy Federation of Teachers, Local No. 1417, FLO-CIO, covering the period July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2015, and that the appropriate officers of the Board be authorized to execute the final contract documents effective as of the date of this ratification upon their review and approval by counsel.

Mr. Oettinger seconded the motion.

Mr. Webb called for a roll call tally and the tally indicated that the motion passed by a vote of 9 ayes, (Ms. Boyle, Mr. Congdon, Mrs. Cummings, Mr. Koutsouradis, Mr. Morris, Mr. Oettinger, Mr. Shubin, Mr. Sposato, and Mr. Webb.) and 0 nays.

Motion: Approval of an Assignment to an Agreement of Sale Regarding Eisenhower

Mr. Webb presented the following motion:

At the meeting of the Board of School Directors of the Neshaminy School District for which notice was duly given held on the 13th day of June, 2013, at the Maple Point District Offices Board Room, 2250 Yardley Langhorne Road, Langhorne, Pennsylvania, upon motion duly made and seconded.

IT IS RESOLVED, that the school district enter into the annex assignment to the agreement purchase of real-estate dated January 3, 2013, between the school district and Delta Communication Supports Inc., hereinafter the agreement for the sale of the school district and for that certain lot and track of ground and existing structures and buildings located thereon commonly known as the Eisenhower Elementary School situated in Middletown Township, Bucks County, Pennsylvania and containing fourteen acres more or less along Woodbourne Road, Bucks County Uniform Parcel Identification Number 22-055-201.

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED, that the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Solicitor of the school district are hereby authorized and directed on behalf of the school district and under its corporate seal and otherwise to execute the assignment of the agreement of the purchase of real-estate and such other documents and other affidavits and take such further actions as may be necessary or desirable to effectuate the assignment and intent of the resolution.

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED, that the President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Solicitor of the school district are hereby authorized to the Court of Common Pleas of Bucks County for the approval of the assignment to the agreement of the purchased of real estate in accordance with the subject to the condition set forth in section 707 of the public school code 1949 as amended and within the time provided and conditions contained in the assignment to the agreement of the purchase of real-estate the resolution was adopted this 13th day of June, 2013.

Mr. Shubin seconded the motion.

Mr. Congdon asked for clarification.

Mr. Profy stated that the underlying agreement remains the same.

Mr. Shubin asked what the sale price is.

Mr. Profy stated \$2.2 million dollars. He also stated that the only condition that remains open at this time is the Court approval.

Mr. Congdon asked for confirmation that the property is being purchased by CIBC Investment Group and Delta will continue to lease it.

Mr. Profy stated that is correct.

The Board unanimously approved said motion by a vote of 9 ayes and 0 nays.

Board Comment

Mr. Shubin commented that the future of Neshaminy is now brighter and clearer than it has been in many years. He said the objectives are clear - modernization of curriculum and buildings, improve resource utilization, and improve student achievement. Mr. Shubin urged the union to look for ways to improve the professional status of their members and engage with the administration and community to build a better school district. Mr. Shubin asked the union to drop all pending arbitrations against the district as a first step towards healing. Mr. Shubin thanked Mr. Webb and the negotiating team and Ms. Schmidt for bringing the impasse to an end and said he looks forward to building a better Neshaminy.

Mr. Koutsouradis said the ratified contract will now help this financially struggling school district put the students and taxpayers first. He said the district will now only get better. Mr. Koutsouradis thanked Mr. Larry Pastor for getting involved and spearheading the citizens groups to improve the Neshaminy School District. He also thanked all the Board members for their solidarity and for Mr. Webb for his leadership.

Mr. Morris thanked all those who have been so supportive to the Board during the past years. He also thanked Mrs. Webb for her understanding of the time Mr. Webb has spent away from his family during negotiations.

Mrs. Cummings said the process has been tough, but the agreement will be a new beginning of running the district with everyone focused in the same direction. She expressed appreciation to Mr. Webb, the negotiating committee, legal counsel and certified staff for their efforts in achieving a successful contract.

Ms. Boyle thanked Mr. Sweet for his guidance, Mr. Webb, Mr. Morris, Mr. Oettinger, Bill Gulla, Mrs. Hinterberger and the members of the NFT who helped to bring about the contract.

Mr. Oettinger said it has been very interesting being on the negotiating team and he thanked the NFT members for their cooperation.

Adjournment

Mr. Shubin moved the meeting be adjourned and Mr. Congdon seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion. Mr. Webb adjourned the meeting at 8:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Burns
Board Secretary