

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC BOARD MEETING MINUTES
(WORK SESSION)
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
April 14, 2004

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public session on April 14, 2004, at Maple Point Middle School Auditorium. The following persons were in attendance:

BOARD MEMBERS:

Mr. Richard M. Eccles, President
Dr. William H. Spitz, Vice-President
Mrs. Sue C. Barrett
Mr. Jason Bowman
Mrs. Susan Cummings
Mr. Ritchie Webb

ADMINISTRATORS:

Mr. P. Howard Wilson
Dr. Raymond J. Boccuti
Mr. Joseph V. Paradise
Mr. Bruce M. Wyatt

BOARD MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:

Mrs. June R. Bostwick
Ms. Carol A. Drioli
Mrs. Kimberly A. Jowett

OTHERS: Approximately 75 persons from the public, staff and press

SECRETARY: Mrs. Anita E. Walls

SOLICITOR: Thomas J. Profy, III, Esquire

Prior to the Work Session the Annual Neshaminy Recognition Reception hosted by the Neshaminy Board of School Directors was held in the Auditorium of Maple Point Middle School. The awards ceremony began at 6:30 p.m. and a reception and light buffet were held in the cafeteria following the ceremony. The following awards were presented to Long Term Service Employees of Neshaminy School District:

<u>Years</u>	<u>Gift</u>	<u>Awardees</u>
15	Ceramic Box	43
20	Gold Lapel Pin	21
25	6 1/2" Silver Bowl	20
30	Brass Handbells	17
35	9" Silver Bowl	13
40	Crystal Apple	1

I. **Call to Order**

Mr. Eccles called the meeting to order at 8:20 p.m.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

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

Mr. Wilson announced that there would be a change in the agenda for this evening. A presentation would be given by Mr. Mac Butcher from Wachovia Bank, National Association and Robert Jones, Esquire and Joseph Falcone, Esquire from Saul, Ewing who are acting as Bond Counsel. Public comment would occur after the presentation and motion for approval of the Bond Resolution.

Mr. Mac Butcher distributed to Board members a copy of the summary results of the bond sale and reviewed same with the Board. Mr. Butcher stressed that the interest rates at this time are historically very low. Mr. Butcher advised that closing is scheduled for May 19, 2004 and the underwriters will establish the interest rate based on market conditions today. The millage rate for this bond issue would increase by 10.5 mills. Prepayment option exists and the first date the District could prepay is in ten years. Mr. Butcher thanked the Board for the opportunity to sell the bonds and opened the floor for any questions.

Robert Jones, Esquire from Saul, Ewing addressed the Board and noted that he was happy to represent Neshaminy School District with the District Solicitor, Thomas Profy, Esquire, in connection with this bond issue. The formal legal part of the proceedings is represented by the Resolution, which each Board member has received in final form. Mr. Jones brought to the Board's attention Exhibit "A" which is the summary of the projects, which are funded in this \$25M bond issue. The Exhibit has been divided into types of work, totaled the cost in each category and determined the estimated useful life. These are all required by the Local Government Unit Debt Act. The Board is reserving the right in the Resolution to undertake the particular work included in these various projects in whatever order the Board determines to be appropriate. The bondholders are not relying on any particular project or undertaking. They are relying on the District's general credit in purchasing the bonds. Bond Amortization Schedule Exhibit "B" profiles exactly how the loan will be repaid over the twenty year period on a semi-annual basis. Principal is payable once a year every April and interest is payable twice a year in April and October. The Resolution accepts the purpose proposal and that will be a firm proposal from the underwriters, which will establish the interest rates as presents based on market conditions today. The underwriters will have the risk of future changes in the market between now and closing which is scheduled for May 19, 2004. This is a firm contract that would be approved if you adopt the Resolution this evening. The bonds have a call feature in order that you may redeem these bonds early if interest rates should decline in the future. Prepayment is an option to the District if conditions are favorable to do that.

Mr. Jones advised that the District is purchasing insurance for the bonds which will give the bonds a Triple A rating, which in turn gives the District the lowest set of interest rates based on the higher credit rating of the bond insurer.

Mr. Wilson opened the floor to public comment for anyone who wished to speak to the Bond issue.

3. Public Comment

Mr. Ron Koreck stated that the bond issue was proposed with Wachovia and they are not allowing for the public to ask questions regarding the bond issue. They just described it and the Board is ready to vote on the issue. Let's approve same and it would be too late if there are any questions. Mr. Koreck took objection to the issue.

Mr. Profy stated that the Superintendent said that the presentation would be made by Mr. Butcher and Mr. Jones and then public comment would take place on the issue before the Board takes action. Mr. Profy stated that Mr. Koreck was participating at the right time and this was the public's opportunity to speak on the issue.

Mr. Joe DeAngelis, Middletown Township, PA just wanted to clarify that the interest rate was 4.76% for the bond issue. This is a good deal for the District.

Mr. Alden Thorpe, Levittown, PA, stated that he is not opposed to the bond issue because the District needs to take care of the work that should have been done years ago. Mr. Thorpe inquired what the 10.5 mills equates to for the taxpayer. Mr. Paradise noted that it equates to \$6.60 per mill for the average taxpayer.

4. Items for Approval

a) Approval of Bond Purchase Contract for \$25 Million General Obligation Bond Issue

Mr. Bowman presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, the Neshaminy School District is granted the power by the Local Government Unit Debt Act of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, as codified by The Act of December 19, 1996, P.L. 1158, No. 177, as amended to incur indebtedness and to issue bonds for the purpose of financing its capital projects; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the provisions of the Act, the School District has determined to undertake the financing of the capital improvements set forth in Exhibit A attached hereto and made a part hereof, including the repayment of a bank loan which provided temporary financing for certain of such capital improvements, and the expenses of issuing and insuring the Bonds; and

WHEREAS, in connection therewith the School District proposes to issue \$25,000,000 aggregate principal amount of its General Obligation Bonds, Series of 2004 for the purpose of financing the Capital improvement Program, and the expenses of issuing and insuring the Bonds; and

WHEREAS, the School District has determined that it is in the best financial interest of the School District to sell the Bonds at a private negotiated sale, and has received a proposal for the purchase of the Bonds from Wachovia Bank, National Association, which it desires to accept.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of School Directors of the Neshaminy School District adopt the attached resolution authorizing this incurrence of non-electoral debt.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Business Administrator and Officers of Neshaminy Board of School Directors are authorized to execute the necessary documents for completion and issuance of the bonds.

Mr. Webb seconded the motion.

Mr. Eccles requested a roll call vote. The roll call tally indicated that the motion passed with six ayes (Mrs. Barrett, Mr. Bowman, Mrs. Cummings, Mr. Eccles, Dr. Spitz, Mr. Webb) and zero nays. Three board members were absent (Mrs. Bostwick, Ms. Drioli and Mrs. Jowett).

b) Personnel Report

Mr. Wilson provided the following report for approval:

- Elections of Certified Personnel
- Long Term Substitute Positions
- Day to Day Substitutes
- Resignations/Leaves of Certified Personnel
- Elections of Support Personnel
- Resignation/Leaves of Support Personnel
- Sabbatical Leaves of Certified Personnel

Mr. Wilson noted the appointment of one administrator to Dr. Lou Muenker's position. The individual is an internal candidate and two persons were considered for the position. Mr. Kevin Kane was selected for the position. Mr. Wilson further noted that the Resignations/Leaves of Certified Personnel is particularly important. The Board needs to approve these resignations and leaves. Mr. Wilson further advised that three sabbatical leaves are requested for professional development.

Mr. Wilson recommended that the Board accept this Personnel Report as so stated.

Mrs. Barrett noted that some of the leaves are listed as maternity leave extensions. Mr. Wilson advised that on a maternity leave the individual has the right by law to request an extension. It is obviously without pay, but it can be extended for as long as a person needs same.

Dr. Spitz made a motion to accept the Personnel Report. Mr. Bowman seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the Personnel Report. Mrs. Bostwick, Ms. Drioli and Mrs. Jowett were not present.

5. **Announcements**

Mr. Wilson announced that the three absentee Board members Mrs. Bostwick, Ms. Drioli and Mrs. Jowett are working this evening.

Mr. Wilson announced that the last day of school for students would be Friday, June 18, 2004.

Mr. Wilson further announced that high school graduation is still scheduled for Monday, June 14, 2004 with a rain date of Tuesday, June 15, 2004.

Mr. Wilson received a letter from outgoing Secretary of Education, Vicki Phillips. She accepted a Superintendent's position in Portland, Oregon. The governor is looking for a new Secretary of Education. Neshaminy School District was awarded \$552,000 for its Accountability Grant that will be used to provide remedial assistance, add teachers, and cut down class size to students who are not performing up to the district standards on the PSSA testing. The grant is for one year.

Ms. Stephanie Huston, Student Council President, provided the following report:

- Fourth marking period started on Monday, April 12, 2004.
- 35 days are left until graduation.
- Sophomore Dinner Dance was held on Friday, April 2, 2004.
- Five day Spring Break followed the Dinner Dance.
- Community Garage Sale and Flea Market will take place on Saturday, April 24, 2004 from 9:00 a.m. till 12:00 in front of the high school. Everyone from the community is invited to participate.
- Hockey team is interested to know whether they will receive their varsity letters.

Ms. Huston stated that on behalf of the students of Neshaminy High School she thanked everyone in advance for voting on April 27th in the Primary Election. Ms. Huston encouraged every parent of a Neshaminy student to go and vote "Yes" for the students of Neshaminy. This is the last chance to make the right choice. For those opposing the new high school the Neshaminy students respect your opinion. However, I would like to request that you consider the future generations. We appreciate what everyone does for the community and sometimes sacrifices need to be made for the good of others. Saying "Yes" now will start to build a stronger community for future generations.

6. **Public Comment**

Mrs. Elen Snyder, Newgate Road, stated she is the PTO President at Pearl Buck Elementary School and stated that we must build a new Neshaminy High School. Mrs. Snyder is a mother first and foremost. Have we lost track of the big picture in all this. We are talking about our most precious possessions. We have an obligation to provide them with a safe learning environment. If there is even a remote chance of them being harmed in any way we, as parents need to protect them. Is everyone familiar with the asbestos contamination that is now plaguing the renovation of Council Rock North High School? Those kids are getting sick. The very same thing is in danger of happening at Neshaminy High School. The roof is filled with asbestos and students and staff would be in direct contact with contaminated air. Maybe the people who are against the new building don't care about our children; they are too busy trying to distort the truth about our taxes. They know if all the parents that are overwhelmingly in favor of this new building show up at the polls, they have lost. Mrs. Snyder asked that is the question. Do we want to put

Neshaminy High School teachers and students at risk investing in an asbestos filled building with faulty electrical, heating, plumbing and ventilation systems. Mothers, fathers, protect your children. The most important thing is that you come out on April 27th and vote "Yes!"

Mrs. Martha Lindner, Langhorne, PA, stated that she is the chairperson of CARE, and we do care. We certainly care about children. However, we feel that the caring we have for our children can be equally accomplished by renovation or reconstruction. We represent the vote "No" group. We are against the \$97M new school. We believe there is another way to do this and accomplish everyone's purpose. Historically BASCO has been the architect for Neshaminy Schools for 10 years. BASCO has presented nine different options on how to handle the current high school and bring it up to speed. Out of that five of them were entered before you in the year 2002. The range of costs between bringing the current high school up to standard would be \$34M-\$62M. The architect for BASCO recently wrote a letter and in that letter he states some things that need to be said. Reconstruction and a new high school both can have a lasting time of 50 years for the bare structural life. The actual construction for renovating or reconstructing the high school would take 24 months of construction time, not the 6 or 7 years that have been quoted. Reconstruction can be the answer for the high school. It can replace windows, ventilation, new plumbing, heating and electrical systems. It can meet today's fire codes and safety codes. It can close unneeded doors. It can create science labs that the Pennsylvania Department of Education recommends. Why are we scaring everyone about asbestos? Is it not part of your plan to close Neshaminy Middle School? Why can't a portion of the building be closed down and the student body for that portion be brought over to Neshaminy Middle, remove the asbestos when there is no one there. The public has been demanding another option. They have rights too. BASCO could have come today and made a presentation to everyone, but the majority of this Board denied that opportunity at their last meeting. Let us look at the new high school. We dispute what the actual payment of the \$97M is going to be. Your own financial report that was presented to you shows 34.7 mills for 25 years. I don't care how you disguise it with what you are saying, that is what it is. This impact will make higher taxes. It will make it harder for families to buy a new home. If mortgage payments are higher then property values drop. What of a fire? Can a disabled student get out of a two story building in time? The World Trade Center fortunately had a good escape plan, but many disabled died just because they could not get out. We all want a good school system. All of us in this room and out in the public. All of us. No one wants less, however, we can do it in a less expensive way. We don't want a new high school that is going to remove money that is needed for better educational programs. So vote "No" on the referendum.

Mrs. Yvonne Butville, Levittown, PA, stated that she attended the last two school board meetings and she felt that she was in a time warp back to several years ago. Almost everything discussed pertaining to the high school was the exact same questions and exact answers as two to three years ago. As a current Board member the people of our community expect you to do your homework. Read the board minutes about the high school situation from the last several years. All the information is available to you. If you do not intend to do the background work with your job involved as a board member why did you run for the position? This District needs to move forward. Don't rehash what has already been done. As to Mr. Webb's last minute request at the last meeting as to having someone from BASCO make a presentation. This was also done over two years ago at three different lengthy meetings all recorded by the Board Secretary. Mrs. Lindner just mentioned about BASCO coming back. We do not need this to happen. Nothing new will be presented. All the information is available. Don't waste our time now. Read the Board minutes and move ahead. If you do read all the information you have at your disposal, and you should be reading, you will also see why all nine past Board members stated that a new building now is by far the best of all solutions both educationally for the students and financially for the taxpayers. Mrs. Butville has with her an aerial view of the present facility. You can see all the roofs and endless hallways that connect nothing but building to building. The original school was built over fifty years ago with a life expectancy of 40 years as documented in a BASCO report. We have already gotten an extra 11 years out of this building. This is a very inefficient school building. Why would you tear down to replace all of the systems, the plumbing, electrical, ventilation, etc. and then put the building back in this same inefficient way? Building materials have different life spans. The pyramids have lasted for thousands of years. The three little pigs used three different types of building materials. It is time to now do the right thing. Yes, it

will cost, however, the new building will cost far less in the long run. Vote "Yes" on April 27th for the best solution for everyone, students and taxpayers. Your vote is important. Don't assume that the vote will go the way you want. You must go to the polls and vote. Your good intentions mean nothing unless you don't actually cast your vote on April 27th. If anyone has any questions about why I feel about the new building I would be happy to speak with you. It takes over 45 minutes to go through all the pros and cons of renovation and the new building.

Mr. Howard Lindner, Langhorne, PA, stated the following: "It is just amazing the things that I see. I see a student push for a new school. Where is education? I have students that are going the other way. Why isn't there two? One from each view. What are we teaching our young people? When you have a situation as we have in the public, if I were still teaching history I would be having people from both sides. I would have them discussing things and I would not just have one point of view. This is a disgrace what happened here tonight. This is a disgrace when I get phone calls this morning that people are standing outside of Neshaminy High School and Sandburg passing out literature and telling people to tell their parents to come to the meeting tonight. I have never heard of that. Where is our security? Do we allow people to interfere with students going to school? It has always been school policy, unless it has changed since my administration days. No politics in school. No politics in teacher's boxes. I have had phone calls where one person took everything out of the teacher's boxes and forwarded it to the Principal. Why is this being allowed? You should make this a teaching environment for our young people. We have people fighting overseas for other people to survive and you have been one sided. I can't wait till this election. You will see what the vote will be. You better start plan B. Reconstruction, 50 years, and it will be like brand new. Look into it, because I have. Mrs. Butville, let me give you some advice. You come up and speak; we live in a representative democracy. Since anyone can't go and vote we elect people from our district to represent us. What is the responsibility of the official who is elected to represent the majority opinion of the people in his or her community? If they do not represent they are voted out of office. The people do not want to listen to Mrs. Butville. Mrs. Butville lost a committee race in her own district. People do not want a new high school, they want reconstruction, plan B. They want a good school, good teachers, they want people to teach both sides. They want people to learn to lose as well as to win. You want to make our students good human beings that will cheer for people and help people. That is the game of education. I spent forty years doing this, and the reason why we are going to win is that the people that I taught and coached I taught them the right thing."

Mrs. Helen Ratner, stated that she is part of the CARE organization because she is doing same as a citizen of the community and not for any political reasons, and she believes in what they stand for. Mrs. Ratner is tired of hearing that CARE does not care about the children of this community. We believe in them just as much, if not more, then all the other organizations. Mrs. Ratner is sick about what happened last Monday. Mrs. Ratner started putting out signs and distributing literature for this organization, and Mrs. Ratner is tired of being harassed and questioned. Mrs. Ratner is doing this because she believes in what she is standing for. She does not want to be followed while she is putting out signs, questioned why she is putting out these signs. Mrs. Ratner put out thirty signs last Monday, by 6:30 – 7:00 p.m. all those signs were removed. Mrs. Ratner was approached and followed by a person and questioned whether she had a permit and why was she putting out those signs. Mrs. Ratner does not need to answer to anyone. Mrs. Ratner does not need a permit and those signs do not need to be removed. The signs are on private property. The signs were tampered with and marked with markers. Not only by adults, but by children. If adults are allowing their children to do that, it is disgraceful. It is intolerable. People have the right to vote. Mrs. Ratner stated that the organization raised this money and you do not have the right to remove signs from people's private property. Mrs. Ratner went to the police department and she has the person's license plate number and it has been reported. This type of behavior needs to stop.

Mr. Steve Rodos, Langhorne, PA, stated that he is a resident of the Village of Flowers Mills. Mr. Rodos addressed the Board regarding an organization called SAGE (Senior Adults for Greater Education). Mr. Rodos stated that Superintendent Wilson and Dr. Costanzo heard the proposal. A meeting has been scheduled for later this month at which time the proposal can be made to the District. Representatives from SAGE and Neshaminy School District have been invited to attend. Mr. Rodos distributed an article

regarding SAGE, which appeared in the Courier Times. "The founder of Council Rock Senior's group has offered to help other districts develop other similar grass roots programs in their community. Senior Adults for Greater Education is a way to encourage senior citizens to participate in the community. SAGE members volunteer in the classroom, give guest lectures, participate in spelling bees and other activities, and take district sponsored enrichment classes. It is a nonprofit organization and the founder of SAGE came up with the idea after hearing senior citizens voice their concerns during Council Rock School Board meetings. They felt disenfranchised. Their taxes were going up, but they were made to feel as if they were part of the system. There is a retired reading specialist who provides her expertise every week who provides kindergarten support. Many schools volunteer to host specific events each year. SAGE offers both seniors and district students the chance to gain an appreciation for one another. It also makes the seniors less isolated in the community. It is so important for seniors to know they have something to offer." Mr. Rodos can attest to the positive effect when the seniors get involved. Mr. Rodos has been a judge for the debate teams in the local suburban league. Mr. Rodos looks forward to the meeting, and hopes that the seniors and the district can work together for the benefit of the students.

Mr. Kevin Yeingst, Feasterville, PA, responded to Mr. Lindner that pamphlets were handed out off of school property; therefore, it has nothing to do with the school. What is the problem with asking parents to attend a public meeting about a school? Why is that a bad thing? Mr. Yeingst spoke about property values going up in the district at the last meeting. Afterwards, he was approached by Mr. Thorpe who asked whether the value of his home in Levittown would go up. Mr. Yeingst thought about same and maybe it will not. Maybe it has reached its crest. However, if you do not build new, the property value will go down because people are not going to want to move to a district with a dilapidated school. A neighbor is selling their home for \$279,000.00. They paid \$7,000.00 for the home 40 years ago. The people buying are waiting to see if the referendum goes through. If not, they are not going to purchase. There will be people behind them that will buy it anyway. The community has been divided. The people of Flowers Mill have filed a lawsuit against the County for reassessment. A reassessment hurts mainly the seniors, the people who have lived in their homes for thirty years and have not been reassessed. Their taxes will triple. If this whole point was about not affording the taxes, then why are they suing for reassessment? If we are reassessed won't that help us all as a district because there will be an influx of money throughout the district? If this project does go through maybe the tax will not have to go up as much because if there is a reassessment more people will be paying higher taxes. That is a way to look at it. Mr. Yeingst feels that doing a renovation while the students are in school with asbestos removal and noise is not a good environment for the students to be in. You cannot move half the students to one building and half to another because it is not broken up that way. If you vote "No" your children will be going through this. People paid for your children to go to school. It is the way the Pennsylvania tax system is setup. It is not the way the district is setup, it is the way the state is and it is wrong. You need to go to the legislators to change the system, not to the school board. The Board's objective is to provide a quality building that is up to today's standards. Please, on April 27th vote Yes.

Mr. Ron Rudy stated that he is the class of 1974. Since February 2003 he has attended nearly every public meeting, including informational meetings with video presentation, has taken tours of the school and followed newspaper accounts on the Neshaminy High School building issues. The parents of the district decided early on to pursue construction of a new building as opposed to renovations and produce much information stated as facts to justify their position. However, on closer scrutiny Mr. Rudy has determined that much of this is not based on facts but on conjecture, distortions, and in some cases outright deception. In addition to my concerns outlined in his Guest Opinion in the April 7th issue of the Courier Times he has learned the following. A rebuild/renovation will entail removal and replacement of the buildings entire infrastructure, this would include, interior and exterior doors, electrical, plumbing and heating, adding air conditioning and would incorporate any technology present in new construction. The above materials would have the same quality as used in new construction for approximately 2/3's the cost of a new building. Now 9th graders could not be moved to that building, but that was not the primary goal when this process began. Renovation of this type could have a life span similar to that of a new building. In regards to the dangers of asbestos, it should be noted that thousands of schools of this era, which constitutes the backbone of educational facilities in this country, have had asbestos abatement. Mr. Rudy

noted that there will be disruptions, however, at Council Rock North such disruptions have not prevented them from consistently outscoring their new sister school, Council Rock South on standardized test scores. Age or condition of buildings were not mentioned in that district and the same can be said of the Standard and Poors 27 page evaluation guide on Neshaminy School District which listed 15 subcategories pertaining to its learning environment. Mr. Rudy finds it disturbing that pro new school Board members along with their Administration allies not having the freedom the prior Board provided with the newly elected school Board members would form an outside group for the sole purpose appears to be to spread misinformation, emotionalize issues, and blame those for not agreeing with them of doing the same. Mr. Rudy noted that this is a momentous decision, which should be based on reality and should help us determine the best course of action for all concerned.

Mr. Frederick Cardenas, Langhorne, PA, stated that it is wonderful thing that people on both sides can speak so passionately about this issue. God bless this country. Mr. Cardenas is an undecided voter. There are many facets to the issue and Mr. Cardenas posed several questions:

- If the proposal was rejected by the people would the repairs to the current high school also be put to a referendum, and if so, would the cost be itemized for a vote?
- What would those costs be? (The pamphlet received did not itemize those costs).
- What are the projections for school enrollment five, ten years from now? What are they currently?
- What would the capacity of the new school be?
- Has the Board considered selling off Neshaminy Middle School to help finance the construction?
- Is there any excess property that the District is holding that could be sold?
- Has the Board considered residential property values if the school is built?
- Has an impact study been done?
- The pamphlet states that 76% of the current high school is in poor or very poor condition and only 9% is in excellent condition or good condition. Why?
- What guarantees, if any, will be given to the people that regular maintenance will be done on the new school to ensure that this does not happen again?

It is the duty of the people to provide for the education of the young, so that they may one day take their place at the helm of society. However, it is the duty of the government to ensure that the taxpayer dollars are spent wisely. Mr. Cardenas' asks that the people who would not vote on this proposal would consider before hand that their property values might increase substantially with the new school, and if they are contemplating selling their home in the next five years that a new high school might be in their interest. Those that would vote Yes to understand that vigilance is needed to ensure that taxpayer dollars, your money, our money, is put to efficient use and not squandered away. This decision will have profound consequences over the next thirty years. Vote early, vote often.

Mr. Alden Thorpe, Levittown, PA, stated that he is discouraged with not only this Board but the previous Board, especially since the last time when you voted not to have BASCO come in and present a presentation so that the public could actually know whether it would be better to renovate. How is the public to know? Mr. Thorpe has no confidence at this point. Figures are different all the time. Mr. Eccles stated that it would be confusing to the voters if BASCO came in and reported to us. The voters are the ones that put you in here, and they will be the ones that will take you out if you do not give us the information necessary to understand. Mr. Thorpe regrets that he did not know that the money for maintenance was being spent for other things. The other School Boards were also not open to the public. The same single pain windows are still in the school and that is disgraceful. Mr. Thorpe is discouraged as this School Board continues to vote to keep information from the public. Twenty thousand dollars have been spent to tell him why he should have a new school. It is just not fair. This Board stated that money would be taken out of maintenance because that was the best way at budget time and have the least

amount of problems with the public. Can we depend on you spending the \$25M in the correct way? If the Board could prove to Mr. Thorpe that building was the best way out he would vote for it too.

Mr. Charles Lauble, Langhorne, PA, stated that most of the School Board throws nickels around like they are pennies. As a public servant you should be throwing the nickels around like they are manhole covers. If you can find \$20,000 for the pamphlet, find \$100.00 for Mr. Schoenstadt, Mr. Lauble wants \$160.00 for himself. His son attends Neshaminy Middle School and during his attendance he broke his arm. He was under the District supervision. Mr. Lauble does not have the insurance that the District has. Mr. Lauble goes to the emergency room and pays \$100 deductible. The orthopedic surgeon costs \$15.00 co-pay. Mr. Lauble wants his \$160.00. Mr. Lauble thinks he merits that.

Mr. Lauble has kids in the school and he is concerned about the reputation. Statistics: High School SAT scores are 12.32 below the national average on verbal. Math 14.65 below the national average. Mr. Lauble believes that students in this district can do better. The focus should be on improving my children and grandchildren's education. Mr. Lauble stated that he is a certified asbestos remover, hazardous waste handler. Mr. Lauble removed tons of asbestos at Rohm and Haas. It can be done safely and it will be done safely if you get the right contractor. The contractor at Council Rock is not following OSHA, EPA standards and other mandates. Mr. Lauble is familiar with asbestos and he has been around it all his life. Mr. Lauble took the time to see the results and the results should be better than they are, and he is expecting that the district improve the education of my children and stop speaking about spending money on amenities that have nothing to do with it.

Mr. Ed Stack, Middletown Township, PA is a sixteen year resident and for ten years had the distinct honor of serving this community as a member of the Neshaminy School Board. He first took interest in the district in 1991. At that time there was near record enrollment at the elementary schools. Many modular classrooms were deployed and closets were put to use for instructional purposes. People started to look at the Maple Point facility, which was rented to the Educational Testing Service for an annual sum of \$2M as an obvious solution to the elementary enrollment problem. Mr. Stack noted that J.D. Mullane from the Courier Times wrote: "I suggest that Neshaminy builds several smaller community high schools." Well, that was considered in 1991, when it was suggested to reopen Maple Point as a high school or as a facility to house grades 9 and 10. These suggestions were coupled with implementing a true middle school concept inviting a 6-8-grade configuration. Moving the 6th grade and close to 700 students off to the middle schools would have the same effect as building a new elementary school while positioning Neshaminy secondary schools for the bubble that was sure to come. You will recall the group SOS (Save Our Schools) whose platform was not to reopen Maple Point for any educational purpose. In fact, they suggested that it be sold. This group had no plan to address the elementary school problem. Yet, this community bought their message, hook, line and sinker and elected their five SOS candidates to the board. Howard and Martha Lindner led this SOS group. Within a matter of months of taking office suddenly the same enrollment figures and facility capacities that were regurgitated over and over throughout 1991 revealed to the SOS school board the obvious. That the most sensible thing to do was to bring Maple Point back on line. In September 1993, following extensive renovations Maple Point was reopened and Martha and Howard Lindner speak today of trust and deception.

Just last year the pro-referendum candidates abounded the pro new high school board members. Does this not sound vaguely familiar that they too had no plan for the high school? Amazingly, still today we have no clue what the pro-referendum candidates suggest be done with the high school. In June 2003, the pro-referendum candidates were given both public, as well as written invitations, "to objectively review the information that has been collected in order to speak of the facts and as to potential rebuilding or renovation of Neshaminy High School." Instead, they have refused this invitation, in writing, and attached seven unconditional demands. Now that the pro-referendum candidates are in control we are all still asking where is plan B. Who led the campaign for the pro-referendum candidates? It was none other than Howard and Martha Lindner.

Now there is a new group called CARE that is disseminating misinformation throughout the district and on their web site. This group operates under the pretense that they are looking out for the taxpayer's best interest. They advise that the \$97M bond issue will cost 34.7 mills a year for 25 years. This is despite the fact that the chairman of the Facilities and Finance committee that they helped elect has publicly acknowledged on many occasions that the gross cost for a new high school will amount to an 8.5 mill increase for three years. The leaders of this new CARE group are Howard and Martha Lindner. Howard and Martha continue to support a 6-9-grade configuration in all four middle schools. They do not appreciate the close to \$3M in savings that can be realized in closing Neshaminy Middle School by moving the 9th grade to the high school. They did not support closing a middle school in 2001 even though the estimated savings were double the savings expected from closing a smaller elementary school. You should ask was this acting in the best interest of the taxpayer? Howard, Martha and I have worked fervently together on many causes to which we agree and I have known their intentions to be generally honorable. When it comes to the issue of building utilization I believe they are misguided. I believe that the voters of Neshaminy have been misguided. Don't be duped again and vote for the lower cost option. Vote "Yes" on the referendum for a new high school."

Finally, Mr. Stack offered his best wishes to two retiring members of the Administration that have left an indelible mark on this District. Mr. Harry Jones and Mr. Rick Marotto. Their honesty, professionalism, and sincere appreciation for this community and its students will be dearly missed.

Mr. Ron Koreck stated that it is not the kids that want the new school; it is the grown-ups that want the new school. Mr. Koreck hears nothing from the kids. Kids go to school when they are done they get the hell out of there and they either go to their job or are out playing. I never saw a kid take time to hang around a school. They are out as fast as they can get out. Mr. Koreck does not appreciate for or against. What they did was wrong. Mr. Koreck is with this group and he does not touch any signs at all. The same guys that are following Mrs. Ratner should come see him and he guarantees that they won't walk away from there. Asbestos, Mr. Ratner could rebuild that school as good as a new one could go up. No one is around when asbestos abatement is done. There is preventative maintenance, ongoing maintenance and no maintenance. The people cannot afford the new school and the taxes rising. It is out of the realm. If this goes through Mr. Ratner will need to relocate after 35 years. A lot of expenses are involved in building a new school, but it is a far greater expense to knock something down, get rid of it and build new. Schools in Philadelphia are still standing that were 50 years old in 1945 and they are much older now. They are still teaching kids and standing. Mrs. Ratner noted that the steel does not need to be replaced. Mr. Ratner questioned why an out-of-town architect was hired. Some of the best engineers are from Drexel University. Plenty of good people are right here in Bucks County. Consider an in-house architect for the duration of the construction and you will save the people a lot of money. The architect will only give you pictures you want to see. He hires a structural engineer.

Mr. Joe DeAngelis, Middletown Township, PA, stated that he spoke to an elderly woman and he tried to speak with her regarding a new high school. She stated she did not want to pay higher taxes. Mr. DeAngelis invited her to the school board meeting. Mr. DeAngelis feels that many people are still confused. Mr. DeAngelis laid it out simply. The issue is whether the high school is in poor or very poor condition. Everyone agrees that it is and that is not even a debate. Is there potential asbestos? There is a potential asbestos problem. Will a new high school give us better education? Mr. DeAngelis feels that we all agree that it will. Before the money issue even arises there is a certain percentage of people that want the high school and a certain percentage that do not. The people that don't have a problem with the money factor. The handout presented speaks about the money issue. If new construction takes place the average cost to the taxpayer is approximately \$91.00 per year. The average of \$75.00 per year for an assessed property of 6770 and we don't know whether Neshaminy Middle will be rented. That is an unknown. If renovation takes places it will cost the taxpayer \$40.00 per year. The net cost to the taxpayer, the average homeowner is \$51.00 per year. It is almost funny that we are having the argument over \$51.00 per year. The handout provided illustrates what \$51.00 per year is. One Phillies ticket, one tank of gas, dinner for two, a round of golf, a pedicure and a manicure, one play station two game. Look at your bills! Everyone is so concerned about \$50.00 per year. All you need to do is make one phone call

and look at the cell phone bill or heating home bill. Interest rates are very important. We are in a very low interest rate environment now. Even if you did not have to renovate this high school, you could build this new high school and it could still be profitable because if interest rates went to their average, which is 3% higher, this high school would be double the cost. It is a very poor environment for savers. Home price is very important on this issue and for the first time at any of these meetings that there is a possibility if this referendum fails that your home price could go down. Mr. DeAngelis has spoken to ten realtors and they agree that if the yes vote passes your home value will go up. Your home is a major part of a person's assets. If you have a house up for sale, wait till this referendum passes. A vote "Yes" will increase your real estate price.

Mr. William O'Connor, Langhorne, PA, commented regarding people taking signs and defacing signs. Regardless of what those signs say he would never support the actions that Mrs. Ratner experienced. Mr. O'Connor and his wife have also experienced those same actions. This is an emotional issue, however, Mr. O'Connor asked that everyone respect the opinions of others. Say it at the election booth on April 27th. Mr. O'Connor asked for information from the National Fire Protection Agency. Studies show that serious injuries resulting from fires in schools are extremely remote and nationally it is statistically insignificant. Mr. O'Connor remarked that the comment regarding student council representative, Stephanie Huston, she came and spoke and Mr. O'Connor hopes that she did not hear the tirade that occurred. Mr. O'Connor can see why someone would not want to hear those comments, but to know that students will be watching and for another person to make the comment that students don't care about this issue. Mr. O'Connor is not aware of BASCO and people seem to keep mentioning them. One question exists in front of this community. Do you want a new high school? Yes or No. If the Board has not created the need and you do not believe it is necessary, then vote No. If you believe they have established the need and it is necessary vote Yes. In states where referendums are required you do not see web sites putting up multiple kinds of information. There is no shame in the district promoting that they are putting forth a referendum for a new school. New Jersey and Illinois require referendum. They spend money to promote new schools in those areas. Referendums require that information be provided in support of what they are saying. Mr. O'Connor is encouraging everyone to vote. Yes or No. The worst thing that anyone can do is to sit at home and think that their vote does not count. This is a very unique opportunity for this entire district. Each and every vote could make a difference. Regardless of which side wins or loses, the Board will treat the situation very differently if you get a large turnout. Voting always shows that you have a voice. This is your opportunity.

Mr. O'Connor thanked all the Board members sincerely. People question your integrity and motives, but your time and efforts are expended. It is never thanked. Collectively, Mr. O'Connor thanked all the Board members. Vote on April 27th and vote "Yes."

Mr. Mike Soifer, Langhorne, PA, commented that he is tired of people with misconceptions about the maintenance on the schools. No Board has ever hidden or held back from the community about what is going on. If you attend the meetings it is during budget time unfortunately, that past Boards have played politics with allocating dollars. Because elections become involved and people are running on platforms. Things get cut out. What is easy to cut, maintenance. Problem is that maintenance is trying to be put back in on a mandatory basis that the buildings have to be maintained. These things are not hidden from the public. Mr. Soifer noted that thank God we live in a democracy. People can say what they want; they can speak their mind. Mr. Soifer chastised the Board regarding bringing up an issue for a vote without having same on the agenda. The public had no knowledge of. This Board made a common commitment not to do this. Mr. Soifer would never support having something coming up at a meeting that the public was not informed of before, unless it was a dire emergency that involved funding and was for the health and welfare of the students. The building has been upset about this issue in the past. It is called building trust. Previous Boards made a vow that it would never happen. Mr. Soifer hopes that it will continue because the public needs to know that a Board is not going to bring an issue that they never been prior informed so that they can speak their mind and viewpoints.

Mr. Aaron Knobel, Flint Road, thanked the school district and Board for the quality education that they provide. Mr. Knobel's son graduated last year and was accepted to every school that he applied too. Schools like Duke, Tufts, etc. all with full scholarships. This is saving Mr. Knobel \$40,000 a year. Secondly, Mr. Knobel is in the construction business and has been in the renovation business for thirty years. Mr. Knobel also has a background in architecture. Mr. Knobel volunteers every year that his children have attended the district and beyond. Mr. Knobel has been in the high school and has worked in the corridors. Mr. Knobel has spoken with the people who work in the building. The building is very disappointing. You can rebuild anything, however, the question is whether it is worth it. Parts of the building there is nothing that can be done to save those parts. The electricity is not sufficient. The roofs are leaking and circulation patterns are terrible. Mr. Knobel feels that overall when the Board looks at what has to be done, no matter what the vote is; they eventually will need to choose a new school. Mr. Knobel's final comment was regarding the students leaving the school right after it is over. Most of the work that Mr. Knobel has done in the building is done after school. Mr. Knobel cannot say how many students are in the building after hours. He is very proud that so many students have interest in the school to stay for extracurricular. He has been in the building till 10:00 p.m. and the students are still in the building.

7. **Items for Discussion**

a) **NESACC/Neshaminy Kids Club Lease Renewal**

Mr. Paradise stated that the Neshaminy Kids Club has made their annual request for an extension to their lease. The Club provides a before and after school child care program in the district elementary schools. They have been operating for 19 years. This is primarily at no cost to the district. They use the facility as needed based on enrollment. The fees that they pay are approximately \$25,000 to the district.

There is no formal approval that needs to take place. Consensus from the Board that if there is agreement to renew their lease the district will do so.

Dr. Spitz noted that they are asking for a two year lease. Mr. Paradise stated that the district has always granted a one year lease. Dr. Spitz wondered if there was Board consensus to provide a two year lease. There was consensus to provide such a lease.

b) **Short Term Borrowing for Blue Cross Prepayment**

Mr. Paradise noted that this was done last year and it was financially advantageous to the District. The Blue Cross is asking the District to pay its entire premium up front on July 15th. If so, the Blue Cross would provide a discount of \$541,000. In order to accomplish that the District would need to due a specific Tax Anticipation Revenue Note in the amount of \$15M. This Note would be repaid approximately 3 months later when the real estate tax receipts are received.

There was Board consensus to move forward with the Blue Cross Prepayment.

c) **Approval of District Auditors**

Board members were provided with a handout regarding comparison proposals to provide audit services. The Finance Committee reviewed the proposals and it was the recommendation of the Finance Committee to retain Hege Kramer Connell as the Auditing Firm for another year.

8. **Items for Approval**

a) **Overnight Trips**

- i) **Annual Technology Student Association State Conference – Neshaminy High School to Champion, PA - April 21-24, 2004**
- ii) **Future Problem Solving State Competition – Neshaminy Middle School to Harrisburg, PA – April 23-24, 2004**

There was Board consensus for the trips.

b) IU #22 Special Education Contracted Services for 2004-2005

Mr. Wilson advised that the Agreement for Contracted Services for 2004-2005 would be placed on the agenda for April 28, 2004 for Board approval. The 2004-2005 projected cost for special education programs is \$4.9M.

Mr. Wilson did comment that the IU is now providing services for children from the age of 0-3 and also age 3 through pre-school. This type of early help and intervention proves to be productive in many cases because the children are receiving assistance at an early age making the transition into the elementary school programs easier.

c) Bids/Budget Transfers

Information distributed prior to the meeting. Mr. Paradise reviewed the following bids:

Bid No. 04-29 Band Uniforms

Bid Amount: \$88,109.75

Uniforms for Neshaminy High School Marching Band.

Bid 05-10 Science Supplies

Bid Amount: \$12,541.27

Various supplies for the instruction of science curricula district-wide for the 2004/2005 school year.

Bid 05-11 Bituminous Concrete Paving, Resurfacing and Repair

Bid Amount: \$194,971.00

Paving repairs at Neshaminy High School, Sandburg Middle School, Ferderbar Elementary School and Walter Miller Elementary School.

In response to a question raised by Mrs. Cummings, Mr. Paradise noted that the transfer of unused summer school funds for new stage curtains for Maple Point Middle School was a necessity since the Summer Stock performance takes place at Maple Point. The curtains at the Maple Point facility are the original curtains, and even though the outer curtain seems in fairly good condition the back curtains are torn and in very poor condition.

The three bids 04-29, 05-10 and 05-11 and Budget Transfer Report No. 04-6 (Working Copy) will be presented for approval at the April 28th Public Meeting.

9. Superintendent's Report

No report.

10. Committee Reports

a) Board Policies

Mr. Bowman advised that no further meetings are scheduled for Board Policies. Policies distributed to Board members were Section 525 Student Recruitment and Section 119 Parental Review of Curricula. The No Child Left Behind Act is requiring that the Board shall permit disclosure of required student information to representatives of the armed forces and military.

b) Educational Development

Dr. Spitz advised that a final meeting of the Educational Development Committee would be scheduled by Dr. Boccuti.

c) Finance/Facilities

Mr. Webb advised that the Finance Committee has had a presentation by the Food Services Director and discussion will continue regarding the price list increase for next year. Also, the Finance

Committee has recommended the Auditor firm of Hege, Kramer for District Auditor. Finally, the committee has begun to look at the budget for this upcoming year, however, will continue to proceed after the election on April 27th.

d) IU Board

Ms. Drioli was not present to provide a report.

e) Educational Foundation

Mrs. Cummings advised that all the grants have been dispersed. The seniors will be asked to purchase memory tiles. Fall Fundraiser will be held at Trevoise Fire Hall on October 15, 2004, 7:00-11:00 Fifties Theme. The next meeting is scheduled for May 10th.

f) Technical School

Dr. Spitz advised that budget discussions are taking place. Dr. Spitz advised that the Joint Board Semi-Annual Convention will take place on Thursday, May 13, 2004 at 6:30 p.m..

g) Technology

Meeting will take place in the month of May 2004.

11. Future Topics

Mrs. Barrett noted that the SAGE organization provides a wonderful program for school districts. Mrs. Barrett is pleased that Mr. Rodos will be meeting with Dr. Costanzo to begin discussion to implement this program for Neshaminy School District. Mrs. Barrett advised that she would be speaking with Mr. Katz, the head of SAGE and looked forward to that meeting. Mrs. Barrett hoped that Mr. Katz could come before the Board and provide a presentation of the SAGE program and its aspects.

12. Agenda Development for April 28, 2004 Public Meeting

13. Correspondence

The Board Secretary advised that there was no correspondence.

14. Other Board Business

Mr. Webb noted that there was a correction to be made to the minutes of the March 9, 2004 Work Session minutes and inquired whether the tape was the official transcript or the typed minutes. Mr. Profy noted that when the minutes are presented for approval by the Board the correction should be noted and the minutes at that point would be amended to reflect the change. Mr. Profy advised that the typed minutes are the official transcript of the meeting.

Mr. Paradise thanked the members of the audio and video crew for all the time and efforts, Mr. Tom Miller, Mr. Adam Lorence, and the two students, Chris Scheidell and Robert McCarney.

15. Adjournment

Mr. Eccles moved the meeting be adjourned and Mr. Bowman seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion. Mr. Eccles adjourned the meeting at 10:15 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Anita E. Walls
Board Secretary

