

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC BOARD MEETING
PUBLIC WORK SESSION MINUTES
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
January 8, 2008

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public work session on January 8, 2008, in the District Offices Board Room in the Maple Point Middle School. The following persons were in attendance:

BOARD MEMBERS:

Mr. Richard M. Eccles, President
Mr. Frank Koziol, Vice President
Mr. Joseph Blasch
Ms. Irene Boyle
Mrs. Susan Cummings
Mr. Kim Koutsouradis
Mr. William D. O'Connor
Dr. William H. Spitz
Mr. Ritchie Webb

ADMINISTRATORS:

Mr. Paul J. Kadri
Dr. Louis T. Muenker
Dr. Sandra Costanzo
Dr. Geeta Heble
Mr. Joseph V. Paradise
Dr. Jacqueline Rattigan

OTHERS: Approximately 19 persons from the public, staff and press

SECRETARY: Mrs. Anita E. Walls

SOLICITOR:
Thomas J. Profy, III, Esquire

1. Call to Order

Mr. Eccles called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

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

3. Announcements

None.

4. Public Comment

Mr. Mike Haston, Levittown, PA, stated that he supports the new athletic director and that too often these days, complaints and negatives seem to over shadow the recognition of a job well done and positive feedback. Since the hiring of the new athletic director we have heard and read the opinions of a vocal minority with complaints of nepotism and the buddy system. Mr. Haston stated that he is present to speak on behalf of many Penn del Wildcats Athletics Association members who believe the school board could not have made a better choice when they selected Tom Magdelinskas as the new Athletic Director. Mr. Haston stated that he has reached out to Tom for advice and guidance in the past. A more positive atmosphere needed to be created and children needed to be brought back into a shrinking program. Three seasons later the program has tripled and has a few state banners to their name. Mr. Magdelinskas has had similar impact in other programs at Poquessing and Archbishop Wood. As an Administrator and coach Tom is always well prepared for practices, games and for the season as a whole. Part of the success is keeping an open line of communication between himself and his players and parents. Tom is always clear in what he expects from the participants and what they can expect from him. He takes great pride in the roles he plays in the development of these young scholar athletes. Tom has done more than coach football the past few seasons while with the Wildcats. He has brought forth ideas on how the program can help disadvantaged children participate in sports. He has also offered to take leadership roles beyond his volunteer coaching

responsibilities like giving good kids the opportunity to rectify situations that may have been the result of a one time bad decision. Tom's thoughts about the youngsters extends beyond the playing field. The appointment of Tom Magdelinskas to the position is not only a dream job for a former Mr. Redskin and Neshaminy Hall of Fame Athlete, but also a tribute to the Neshaminy School District for helping develop an individual whose goal was to return to his Alma Mater as an Administrator and mentor. Our children and our community have been and will continue to benefit for his positive leadership.

Mr. Andy Amoroso, Lincoln Avenue, PA, stated that he is a detective with the Middletown Township Police Department. He first met Tom on the job when he was at the middle school and the police had dealings at the school and he was the school liaison at the time. Tom was always very professional in the way he handled incidents and was caring. Tom would work through problems until there was a successful outcome. At the high school Tom was very instrumental in solving the bomb threat. From an Administrative standpoint he has exceptional experience. Mr. Amoroso feels Mr. Magdelinskas is a fine choice for Athletic Director.

Mr. Solis Basen, Villages of Flowers Mill, Langhorne, PA, stated that it was a gratifying night at the ribbon cutting at the High School Phase 1. The accolades were well deserved and a former board member noted that she was not in favor of this project, but she was very happy and it worked out beautifully. Mr. Basen noted that he had four items that he presented and wished that a reply would be given tonight regarding the portable modulars, salaries, etc.

Mr. Howard Lindner, Langhorne, PA, stated that last night was an exceptional night for himself and Martha because they were believers of the movement for reconstruction. The newspaper had an excellent article. Mr. Lindner advised that the homework was done. Mr. Paradise complimented many people last night at the ceremonies. A major group was left out: Open and Honest Government was formed when we felt people were not being heard and then when it came time for the Referendum another group was formed called the CARE Group comprised of people from Flowers Mill, Lower South, and other areas. The number of people who donated for reconstruction from \$1-\$500 was just unbelievable. The next group formed was CREST which was developed in order to run people for school board who believed in reconstruction: Irene Boyle, Ritchie Webb, Rick Eccles. People who believed. At that time the school board was pushing for a new school. They had a minority of people who believed. What they did not have was the voice of the majority of the people. The credit should go to the people who came out and won the referendum on a landslide. This was democrats, republicans and independents alike. No support was given from the Republican party or Democratic party. Neshaminy tradition and pride is what got the movement moving forward. People at this time are hurting and some are in jeopardy of losing their homes. These people should be given the credit. Mr. Webb and Mr. Eccles were re-elected. Mr. Lindner noted that he has great respect for Mr. O'Connor. When you are a school board member you are not representing just one segment of people or area. A board member is for the entire Neshaminy School District. Each board member represents everyone once they are voted onto the board. Thank the people who voted for the referendum and donated their time and worked on that campaign.

Mr. Steve Rodos, Villages of Flowers Mill, Langhorne, PA, congratulated everyone on the opening of the new high school wing. Mr. Rodos over the past few months has asked the Board to institute full day kindergarten. Mr. Rodos has outlined the total cost to the district, sat through the meetings regarding available space within the school district, outlined avenues in which to raise the funds needed, and finally, Mr. Rodos went on the Department of Education website. Mr. Rodos contacted Harrisburg and spoke to the person in charge of Early Childhood Education and she informed Mr. Rodos that it is not illegal to charge for full time kindergarten. Many surrounding states do charge for full day kindergarten. A better foundation in early education should be welcome by both the school board and parents. Since this is the only school district which could offer full day kindergarten, Neshaminy would be doing a favor to the parents and the fair market value of the homes within the school district would be retained. Mr. Rodos has shown the school board a positive approach to two problems: 1) What to do about test scores? By providing a better base, scores will rise in the long term. 2) Providing a viable method to keep neighborhood elementary schools open through an increase in kindergarten enrollment. This will allow school board members to say

that they are bringing additional programming to our schools at no cost to the taxpaying public. This is a win, win opportunity for everyone. Mr. Rodos feels that the district is too easy on the high school students. The students must bear some responsibility for the less than stellar test scores which have occurred in the last few years. If they knew that they were ineligible to go to a prom or to be on a sports team or to engage in extracurricular activities, perhaps the attitudes toward PSSA testing would change for the better. Mr. Rodos stated that if you do the same old thing, the same old way, you will get the same old results.

5. **Items for Discussion**

a) **High School Construction Update**

**Reynolds Construction Presentation – Mr. Damion Spahr
ATS&R – Mr. Paul Erickson**

Mr. Paradise noted that last night at the high school ceremony he overlooked two key people from Reynolds Construction Company: Mr. Mike Cosoff, Project Superintendent and Mr. Ryan Brennan who is a Neshaminy High School graduate and who is spearheading the day to day operations in the construction of Neshaminy.

Mr. Erickson advised Board members that things are going along well from ATS&R's point of view. Communication between Reynolds and ATS&R and the district is going along very well. PlanCon documents are progressing. PlanCon I which is an update of construction costs are proceeding. The shop drawings are continuing, i.e. sprinkler systems. Certificates of payments are being reviewed and payments to contractors are being made. This is incentive to keep the project moving on time. Punch Lists have been done for Unit G and Lower K. Occupancy permits have been issued from the Township.

Mr. Spahr congratulated the Board as part of the entire team for a job well done. Even though the project started approximately 3 weeks late, it managed to complete on time. Mr. Spahr always compares this project to a roller coaster. At this point we are ready to approach the smaller hill. Mr. Spahr updated the following:

- New Classroom F will be finished in June, 2008
- Starting the new E Wing, Tech Education and Art (one story building) in late February, 2008
- New D Wing (2 story Science Wing) will start about one month after the start of the new E Wing
- Gym 1, Art Center and A Wing some work is progressing and will be ready for September, 2008
- Library and Classrooms surrounding same will begin around May 15th
- Sprinkler work is ongoing in the Auditorium (Night work is in progress)
- Gym 3 will begin approximately May 1st for completion in September, 2008

Mr. Spahr advised that the project is continuing to hold to schedule and budget.

Dr. Spitz congratulated everyone on the progress. Dr. Spitz questioned the Executive Summary and the numbers regarding spending and construction project completed to date. Mr. Spahr advised that the figure is a construction value in place. Mr. Spahr advised that funds are being withheld from contractors until total satisfaction is ensured. Mr. Spahr advised that the project is approximately 50% completed in respect to time indication. Time is usually ahead of payments. However, with several buildings and a lot of site work which happens early, that explains the percentages when so much work occurred early on in the project.

Mr. Spahr advised that there are stored materials offsite that have already been purchased for future use on the project.

Dr. Spitz questioned the funds set aside for the Old Lincoln Highway upgrades. Mr. Spahr advised that documents will be resubmitted to PennDot for final approval and once that approval is received we will proceed. Mr. Spahr advised that the Old Lincoln Highway work will need to occur since it was a condition of the Land Development Approval. This was not contemplated at bid time or as part of the project.

Mr. O'Connor requested an update on the Music Room and Acoustics. Mr. Erickson advised that a meeting is scheduled for tomorrow morning to discuss same. Many meetings have taken place regarding storage/size of rooms/volume of rooms/sound and acoustics/sound treatment/hard surfaces/soft surfaces. The next phase is the new band room which will be over 2,000 square feet which impacts the volume and how sound is treated. Their existing space is temporary. More discussion will take place on the original design. Discussion will take place regarding the floor treatments, carpet vs. hard surface. The long term plan is that the Orchestra will remain in Room 106A. Once the band moves into their new area, better acoustics will result.

Mr. Koziol stated that he was very impressed with the building. Mr. Koziol questioned the sprinkler system/water supply and how does it relate to fire protection. Mr. Erickson stated that the fire protection system is designed and engineered to support a load in any portion of the building. Engineers would need to respond more specifically to this question. Mr. Spahr noted that the district is operating on a wet system as opposed to a dry system. The system is under pressure at all times and sprinklers would be operational before the fire department arrives.

Motion: PlanCon I

Dr. Spitz made a motion to approve and submit PlanCon I.

Mr. Webb seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said motion.

b) 2008-09 Budget Development

Mr. Paradise noted that approximately 6 months are left before a final budget is approved. Mr. Paradise noted that the revenues are unable to keep pace with the expenditures as they exist. Mr. Paradise advised that there is a rapidly declining real estate market; dramatic changes in interest rates, temporary earnings are lower, tax collections, etc. Expenditures are increasing, i.e Fuel oil, energy costs, health benefits, salary costs, etc.

Mr. Paradise presented three options:

- Consolidate facilities
- Reducing or Eliminating programs for students
- Increase taxes to remedy the difference

Mr. Paradise advised that he and Mr. Kadri have met with McKissick Associates regarding consolidations of facilities.

Mr. Paradise noted that if a facility is to be closed the district must hold a public hearing by state law which must occur 90 days before the official close of the facility.

Mr. Paradise noted that it was always discussed to close Neshaminy Middle in 2009, however, the concern is could the district wait that long. Mr. Paradise advised that other facilities could also be taken into consideration for consolidation.

Mr. O'Connor noted that redistricting would take place and that process should only take place once.

Mr. O'Connor inquired regarding the modulars. Mr. Kadri advised that a meeting at the end of this month will take place and the information will be presented to the Board.

Mr. Koziol stated that he would like to make a decision on the modulars this evening and remove all the modulars from all the schools with the exception of the high school.

Mr. Paradise explained that a critical component to eliminating the modulars is eliminating future costs and capital improvements to same. This will not help our short term budget picture. The modulars will not reduce millions of dollars from the current year budget.

Mr. Paradise feels that taking the modulars offline is something the district should be doing; however, it is not a major component to the existing budget issues.

Mr. Koziol would like to see the modulars closed by June, 2008. Dr. Spitz reiterated that the Administration knows that there is clear word from the Board and that there is consensus on the Board to close the modulars.

A motion regarding the modulars will take place at the next meeting.

Mr. Blasch feels that redistricting may have to occur more than once within the district. If a building can be closed sooner rather than later, it would help with the current budget issues. Mr. Blasch feels the McKissick report needs to be looked at now.

Mr. Kadri advised that another McKissick presentation can occur and Mr. Paradise further stressed the time constraints on closing a facility in order that it will have an effect on the upcoming budget.

Mr. Kadri refreshed the Board on the options to date:

- Close Neshaminy Middle and 1 Elementary school (All Elementary Schools taken into consideration for study)
 - ✓ summary of cost savings
 - ✓ rental opportunities
 - ✓ walkers/non-walkers
 - ✓ community participation
- Creating a new elementary school at the Tawanka site and closing 2 other Elementary schools
- 5th grade from elementary schools into the middle schools (Capacity value and impact)
- Early childhood centers – K-1 or K-2 step transition to 3-8 and then to high school
- K-8 option (Neshaminy Middle School exits)

Mr. Koziol would like to see the figures regarding the closure of Tawanka and Neshaminy Middle and what impact the closing of those two buildings would have.

Mr. O'Connor would like to make sure that all communications are open between principals, parents and teachers.

Mrs. Cummings noted that there is no way that 9th graders would be moved to the high school in September, 2008.

Possible closing of Neshaminy Middle and realignment of 9th graders to the high school would occur in 2009.

c) Neshaminy Kids Club Lease Renewal

Mr. Paradise advised that this Club has operated before/after school services for students for approximately 20 years. Parents pay to participate in the program. The Club pays the district for use of buildings. The Club will pay \$26 per school per day which equates to approximately \$38,000. Mr. Paradise advised that they are requesting a lease renewal. It is the Administration's recommendation to agree to the renewal.

Mr. Eccles' concern is that with the discussion of closing schools, how will that affect this lease? Mr. Paradise noted that a Lease Agreement is in place and those specifications can be part of the Lease Agreement.

There was Board consensus to renew the Lease Agreement with specific terminology regarding possible school closures.

6. Items for Approval

a) Overnight Trips

- i. Neshaminy High School Indoor Track and Field Team to Penn State University- Penn State High School Track and Field Invitational – February 22-23, 2008
- ii. Neshaminy High School Ski Club Trip – Killington, VT, January 26-28, 2008

There was Board consensus for the above trips.

b) Terms of Bucks County Technical School Authority Representatives

Mr. Paradise advised that the term of Neshaminy School District's representatives to the Bucks County Technical School Authority will expire in January, 2008. Mr. Michael Binder and Mrs. Rita Geddes' terms will expire. They will continue in office until the Board chooses to replace them or reaffirm their appointment.

Mr. Paradise advised that both Mr. Binder and Mrs. Geddes would like to remain on the Authority.

A motion to reappoint them will take place at the next meeting.

c) School Director Recognition Month

Mr. Kadri advised that January is School Director Recognition Month. Certificates will be presented at the next meeting.

d) Occupational Privilege Tax Changes Required by Act 7 of 2007

Mr. Paradise advised that this tax has been in existence for many years. Municipalities have the authority to raise the tax up to \$52 and it is called the Emergency Municipal Services Tax. A new act has now been adopted to change the name from Emergency Municipal Services to Local Services Tax so that OPT is now called Local Services Tax. The district must amend the tax resolution to formally change the name and the district has the option to allow anyone making less than \$12,000 should be exempt from the tax.

Berkheimer is estimating what impact it will have on the district if the amount of income is raised from \$5,000 which is the current amount to \$12,000. Hopefully, that information will be available in the next couple weeks.

Occupational tax is based on wages only, not social security. Only working people are required to pay this tax.

e) Bids/Budget Transfers

Mr. Paradise presented the following bid:

BID: 09-10 Caps and Gowns

Bid Amount: \$ 28,596.25

The Bid is for caps and gowns for the graduating classes of 2008, 2009 and 2010.

Mr. Paradise presented Budget Transfer Report No. 08-02 (Working Copy) which will be presented along with Bid 09-10 for approval on January 22, 2008.

Mr. Paradise advised that a Preliminary Budget will need approval on January 22, 2008.

7. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Kadri thanked everyone for the efforts with the Neshaminy High School Construction Project. Mr. Kadri noted that discussion on the Athletic Director was never about individual personalities. The person who has filled the position has Mr. Kadri's complete support and the individual is working very hard in the position. Hopefully, the district will now move forward with a wonderful person in place.

Mr. Kadri commented that the Courier Times has used some of his calculations regarding salaries. Mr. Kadri noted that average salary cannot be used to compare district to district. Average salary can be used in the budgeting process. Comparing cross districts does not lead to accurate results and can be misleading.

Motion: Contract Negotiations

Mr. Webb made a motion to engage Charles Sweets, Esquire, to be the lead negotiator for the upcoming Neshaminy Federation of Teachers contract with Neshaminy School District and compensation shall be in accordance with the contract agreed to by the district.

Mr. Koziol seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved the motion.

8. Committee Reports

a) Board Policies

Ms. Boyle stated that next policy meeting is scheduled for January 22, 2008. Tentative agenda: Procurement cards, Drug/Alcohol and Mandated Lunch Periods.

b) Educational Development

Dr. Spitz advised that at the last meeting the high school improvement plan and Tech Ed program were discussed.

c) Finance/Facilities

Mr. Webb advised that a meeting will take place on January 17th and January 31st.

d) IU Board

Ms. Boyle advised that the next meeting is scheduled for January 15th.

e) Educational Foundation

Representative is needed.

f) Technical School

Mr. Koutsouradis advised that the Tech School Committee had a reorganization meeting and the next scheduled meeting is January 28th.

g) Technology

Mr. Blasch advised that meeting took place on December 17th. 600 Laptops were received as a result of the future grant update. How do we control the number of laptops? No meeting will take place in January. A meeting is scheduled for February.

9. Future Topics

None.

10. Agenda Development for the January 22, 2008 Public Meeting

11. Other Board Business

Mr. Webb advised that the January 28th Tech School Meeting is the Dinner/Meeting. Reservations should be made with Debby and it begins at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Eccles advised that an Executive Session will take place after the meeting.

12. Adjournment

Mr. O'Connor moved that the meeting be adjourned and Mr. Webb seconded same. Mr. Eccles adjourned the meeting at 8:30 pm.

Respectively submitted,

Anita E. Walls
Board Secretary