

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
WORK SESSION  
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS

June 3, 2008

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public session on June 3, 2008, in the Board Room of 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 R. 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  
Mr. Joseph V. Paradise  
Dr. Sandra Costanzo\*  
Dr. Geeta A. Heble  
Dr. Jacqueline Rattigan

\*Arrived at 9:10 p.m.

**SECRETARY:**

Mrs. Anita E. Walls

**SOLICITOR:**

Thomas Profy, IV, Esquire

**OTHERS:** Approximately 100 persons from the public, staff and press

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Prior to the meeting an Executive Session was held.

1. **Call to Order**

Mr. Eccles called the meeting to order at 7:12 p.m.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

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

3. **Announcements**

Dr. Richard Coe, Immediate Past Chairman of the Board of Directors of United Way of Bucks County presented a plaque to the Neshaminy School District for the Highest School District Contributor in Bucks County. Mr. Kadri also introduced Mrs. Sharon Barker, Senior Vice President of the United Way, Pat Boylan and Joanne Ramsey.

Mrs. Barker stated that Pat Boylan and Joanne Ramsey were the two individuals who received the recognition. United Way could not be successful without the different community businesses and people. The employees of Neshaminy School District have raised \$37,000 for the United Way. Pat and Joanne received the Campaign Excellence Award.

Mrs. Barker also thanked Mr. Kadri and Dr. Muenker and the entire Administration for allowing the staff to participate.

4. **Public Comment**

Ms. Amanda Swords, Paxson Lane, sophomore at Neshaminy High School, stated she is currently a member of the swim team. The team is very appreciative of the renovations that have taken place at the pool. As competitive swimmers it is necessary to have a well maintained, properly functioning pool to swim in. They are glad they have a place to practice. Why do other sports get more recognition when it comes to supplies and location to participate in the sport? The other teams at the high school all have fields including, football, field hockey, lacrosse and soccer. The swimmers should have an adequate place to practice. Swimmers need to practice year round. It is important that the swimmers remain healthy. Bad ventilation makes it very difficult to breath and it causes us to become ill. This is also a concern for the spectators. Everyone's eyes

begin to burn due to the poor ventilation. There are several safety issues that need to be addressed: Blocks for starts at the beginning of races are dangerous, storage is a problem and safety issue, touch pads for the timing system are left out on the deck where they can get damaged. These are a few of the concerns and thank you for allowing us to voice our opinion.

Mrs. AnnMarie Swords, Paxson Lane, certified physician assistant, thanked the Board for allowing the renovations to be done at Poquessing, however, some safety concerns that need to be addressed. Ventilation is poor and chlorine fumes make it difficult to breath and eyes burn. It is a shame that people with disabilities cannot participate and watch the swimmers. The coaches have not been asked for their input and what would be necessary in the renovation of the pool. They are knowledgeable, experienced and highly qualified individuals that should have input in the renovation project.

Mrs. Paula Miller, Hillside Road, Philadelphia school teacher, stated that swimming is a spectator sport and something needs to be done regarding the ventilation system. There are concerns whether the pool area was tested for air quality and will the report be made available? Were the coaches approached about the concerns and if they were able to provide input?

Mr. Kevin Mikus, Oakland Avenue, Junior at Neshaminy High School, stated that he will be attending the National Leadership Conference for the Future Business Leaders of America which will take place in Atlanta, GA. He is attending for Computer Applications programs for Microsoft that will be tested. Kevin placed first in Regionals and second at the State level. Kevin has won an opportunity and he wants to cash in on that opportunity at the Leadership Conference. Kevin will have an educational experience seeing Atlanta and exploring the history. Kevin's goal is to win. The competition will be beneficial in many ways. Kevin has also gained worked experience from this class. Kevin will represent Neshaminy to the best of his ability.

Mr. Chris Graham, Langhorne, Financial and Estate Planning Consultant, wished the Graduates of 2008 well in their endeavors. Mr. Graham stated that the Fact Finding Report by Mr. Skonier is concerning. The nation is in a financial crisis. Many companies are laying off workers. Oil prices continue to rise. A recession is defined by the man on the street a little bit differently. Unemployment is approaching 5%. Mr. Graham read an excerpt from Job Bank USA. Mr. Graham stated that the Board and teacher's union must listen to the word on the street which is the people cannot afford an increase. Mr. Graham has spoken with some teachers and they are willing to accept a freeze on wages for two years, continue to having health care at no cost, eliminate the cash payment and full health care benefit until age 65. The educators want to work with the district to get us through these rough times. Mr. Graham's remarks are not to be construed as a personal attack. The educators in our district are worth \$80,000 and more, however, economic facts are economic facts.

Mrs. Marilyn Keefe, Old Lincoln Highway, retired Controller and Accountant, advised that a law was passed by the County Commissioners in Bucks County regarding the pools. Mrs. Keefe has the law with her for duplication. The law is effective on May 28<sup>th</sup>.

Mrs. Maria Keashon, Carol Drive, Feasterville, PA, has sons and grandsons who are competitive swimmers. Everyone needs a swimming pool for the children. Mrs. Keashon's children attend private schools. Mrs. Keashon would like to come up with different ideas for taxes. Swimmers are tired and stay out of trouble. There is unity in the neighborhoods of the district. Everyone should work together and fundraisers could take place for a brand new pool. Its time for a change.

Mrs. Elaine Robinson and Shawn Robinson, Meadowbrook Road, are present to support the swim team. CORE swim team is very time consuming and it takes a lot of time from the student's activities and it is a huge commitment. Shawn stated that the sport is a year round sport. The students need to train all year round to stay competitive. A diving well is not really necessary; the deep end could just be deep enough. Shawn would like other students to experience what he has over the last few years.

Mr. Steve Rodos, Villages of Flowers Mill, Langhorne, PA, spoke regarding the SAGE group dinner and thanked the Administration for coming to the dinner and showing the support for SAGE. Mr. Rodos praised Maple Point Middle School men's choir. Mr. Rodos spoke regarding the fact finder's report and the statement that "I do not recommend a change in the health insurance at this time." Mr. Rodos would like clarification on that statement. Mr. Rodos discussed the proficiency exams wanted by the governor to receive a diploma. Failing students should not blame teachers and administrators. Mr. Rodos quoted Peter Redman with regards to why we educate students in America. Everyone must show respect. Mr. Rodos has the utmost respect for Rachel Canelli whose articles are right on point. Hopefully, the Courier Times will not turn all groups against one another. Show respect for beliefs and values in order to reach an amicable contract solution.

Mr. Paradise provided the Board and public with an update regarding the environmental testing at the Poquessing Middle School pool. Air testing which took place at the pool indicated that there was no air quality issues related with the pool. The district is still awaiting the results of the chlorine testing. All environmental tests were in compliance and there was no negative impact on indoor air quality. Mr. Paradise advised the Board that it would cost approximately \$385,000 to completely replace the HVAC system in the pool area which would increase the utility costs within the pool area.

Dr. Spitz is concerned that the coaches need to have input regarding the pool area and pursue the issues raised by the public and students. Dr. Spitz is requesting more information before the Board needs to make a decision regarding the pool area.

Mr. Kadri advised that the locker room will be used to provide easy storage access for the canoes, touch pads (timing system), etc.

**5. Items for Approval**

a) Fact Finding Report/Negotiations

MOTION: Fact Finding Report/Negotiations

Mr. Blasch presented the following motion:

That the fact finding Report dated May 20, 2008 of John M. Konier, Esquire in Case No. Act 88-08-08-E regarding the fact finding between the Neshaminy Federation of Teachers, Local 1417, AFT and the Neshaminy School District be hereby rejected by the Board and that written notice of that rejection be immediately given to the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board.

Mr. Koziol seconded the motion.

Mr. Eccles requested a roll call vote. The roll call indicated that the motion passed by a unanimous vote of the Board. Mr. Blasch, Ms. Boyle, Mrs. Cummings, Mr. Eccles, Mr. Koutsouradis, Mr. Koziol, Mr. O'Connor, Dr. Spitz and Mr. Webb voted aye.

**6. Items for Discussion**

a) High School Construction Update

- Reynolds Construction Presentation – Mr. Damion Spahr

Mr. Paradise advised that all work is on schedule and the project is moving along steadily.

Mr. Spahr provided an update of what would occur over the summer months:

- Finalize F building for occupancy
- Gym 1 completion
- Library renovations
- Road work on Old Lincoln Highway
- PlanCon I changes have been approved by PDE with a net reimbursement of \$500,000

Mr. Spahr apologized for the air conditioning problems at the high school. Issues are encountered with the installation of new units. Repairs have taken place and the units are functioning properly.

Mr. O'Connor requested the status of the music room. Mr. Spahr advised that by the end of the project the band will no longer occupy the space and will be occupied by the orchestra. Mr. Spahr advised that he is hesitant to spend significant dollars on a temporary condition.

Dr. Spitz requested an explanation of the Executive Summary regarding the claims not approved as change orders.

b) Lower Southampton Township request to build a community center

Mr. Kadri advised that Lower Southampton Township is requesting to build a community center within Lower Southampton Township. The Township has requested whether the school board would be interested in engaging in further dialogue with three possible options of using district land to further the goal.

- Land at Tawanka location for the purpose of building a community multipurpose field
- Field to right at Tawanka center – possible lease or sale of same for building center and parking
- Multi tiered field behind the Poquessing School (sold or leased) for the center to be constructed

Mr. Webb requested that an impact study be performed and a recommendation be provided to the Board. Explore all options. Mr. Webb feels that any land to be used at the Poquessing facility could be detrimental.

Board discussion ensued regarding the above project. Mr. Blasch questioned how these options would affect the McKissick report. Mr. Webb would like to know which would have the least amount of impact on the district.

c) Budget Update

Mr. Kadri provided Board members with a brief update:

- Balance academic excellence with fiscal sustainability (Duty of district)
- Gain efficiency (better services for lesser money)
- Meet Act 1 requirement
- Fuel bids are well above estimates (Increased costs by \$900,000)
- Met with Facilities and Technology
- Create staffing locations
- Health benefits reviewed

Mr. Kadri advised that once finished with this year's budget, he would like to delve into next year's budget. Challenges will be faced.

**7. Items for Approval**

a) Approval of Revised Board Policies

Dr. Rattigan presented the following policies to the Board:

- Revised Board Policy #800 – Used of Facilities
- Revised Board Policy #102 – Selection and Election of Administrative Personnel

Mr. Koziol advised of a duplication in Policy #800.

Said policies will be presented for Board approval at the next meeting.

b) Calendar Addendum for Act 80 Day Reporting

Mr. Kadri provided Board members with a Calendar Addendum required by the State. Dr. Spitz thanked the Administration for providing same to the Board.

c) Tax & Revenue Anticipation Note

Mr. Paradise advised Board members that this would provide the prepayment of medical benefits for all district employees. This will be submitted for approval at the next meeting.

d) Approval of Budgetary Increase for Federal & Other Programs (2007-08)

Mr. Paradise advised that this occurs at the end of every school year. All grants are added into the current year budget.

e) Facilities Professional Services/Consultants for 2008-09

Mr. Paradise advised that same will be approved at the next board meeting.

f) Homestead and Farmstead Exclusion Resolution

Mr. Paradise stated that new law requires approval of same by June 16, 2008 as part of the adoption of the 2008-2009 Budget of the School District.

g) Approval of Year End Budget Transfers

Mr. Paradise advised that same will be presented to Board for approval at the next meeting.

h) Bids/Budget Transfers

Information distributed prior to the meeting. Mr. Paradise presented the following bid for Board approval:

Bid No. 09-18 Trash Removal & Recycling

Bid Amount: \$305,166.60 (Three Year Term)

The Bid is for trash removal and recycling for the District for the schools years: 2008/09, 2009/2010, and 2010/2011 with provisions for year to year extensions beyond the initial three year term.

Mr. Paradise advised that two other bids will be presented for approval.

The three bids and Budget Transfer Report No. 08-7 (Working copy) will be presented for approval at the June 16, 2008 Public Meeting.

i) Approval of Food Service Price Increase

Mr. Paradise provided Board members with a handout to review said issue. Mr. Paradise advised that Neshaminy has not increased prices since September, 2004 in the amount of \$.10.

Food Services is recommending a \$.30 price increase for lunch and no increase in breakfast prices.

Other districts are experiencing the same difficulties. Mr. Webb recommended that the district raise the price by \$.25.

Mr. Paradise advised that ala carte prices are increased regularly and does not require board approval.

Mr. Koziol questioned the increase in adult sales and Mrs. Wallace explained same. Food costs prices are up 12%. This reality exists and prices must increase.

j) Neshaminy Middle School Closure

Mr. Kadri advised that a vote will take place on June 16. The Administration is following down that path. Mr. Kadri addressed the situation of redistricting for two specific groups. Letters have been issued to those students involved. Grandfathering can possibly take place and will be offered as an option. Community meetings have occurred. An e-mail address has been created regarding redistricting.

Mr. Koziol questioned why meetings have not taken place regarding the Tawanka facility.

k) Tawanka Facility Closure

Mr. Kadri advised that the Board has suggested to the Administration that they would like to see the Tawanka program remain in the Tawanka facility for another year and the Administration find a suitable renter of the Tawanka building. Efforts have been put into that direction. If the program is to remain at the facility for another year, the Board should not vote on closing the building and that a year from now when the building is fully rented the Board would again go through the same process of a public hearing and officially close the building when the program comes out. The legal opinion provides that you need to keep the building open until the programs leave.

The Administration is recommending that the Board not close the building at the next meeting.

The IU would like to rent more space for next year at the facility.

Mr. Koziol stated that it was never suggested to eliminate the program, however, the closure of the building itself should be voted upon. Mr. Koziol feels the high school would have adequate space for the Tawanka program. Mr. Kadri advised that the IU needs time in order to take over the entire Tawanka facility. Mr. Kadri stated that it would be cheaper for the district to leave the program at the Tawanka facility for the 2008-09 school year.

Board discussion took place regarding the above topic. Mr. Koziol does not agree with specific timeline and Board direction regarding the Tawanka closure.

The Board in the future needs to come to an agreement as to where the program will be housed in the 2009/2010 school year. The Tawanka program requires at least 5 classrooms plus 3-4 offices. The issue still remains whether

having it in the middle of the building, an alternative high school program at the same place, a regular middle school program is in session.

Mr. Kadri wanted the Board to agree that the program could only take place in the high school or Tawanka facility for next year.

Dr. Spitz asked if there was consensus on the Board for Mr. Kadri to continue with his proposal to keep the program in the Tawanka facility next year.

Mr. Eccles suggested that a committee meeting take place to explore the alternatives for said program and walk the various facilities.

- l) Adoption of the 2008-09 Budget  
Said budget will be voted upon at the June 16, 2008 meeting.

#### 8. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Kadri advised that the state has approved PlanCon I – Interim Reporting and PlanCon F – Construction Documents. (See Attachment A).

Mr. Kadri announced outstanding student accomplishments:

- Track & Field team competed at the state meet
  - Kevin Steinberg won the 200 meter and 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 100 meter
  - Tim Malloy finished 7<sup>th</sup> in the 110 hurdles
  - Nick Defeo finished 10<sup>th</sup> in the 400 meter
  - Team finished 6<sup>th</sup> in the State

Mr. Kadri announced that the Concert Band had a rating of First Place Superior for Wind Ensemble, Jazz placed first, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Chorus placed first, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Chorus placed first, Concert Choir placed 2<sup>nd</sup> and the Select Choir placed 1<sup>st</sup>.

Neshaminy Middle School had a student runner up in the National Listen to Life Legacy Project. Katherine Babalove, 6<sup>th</sup> grade student at Neshaminy Middle School was one of 20 runner up winners. Katherine interviewed her 102 year old grandmother.

Dylan Lang is congratulated for his heroic life saving skills.

Girl's Soccer went to the State Quarter Finals which is the furthest the team has ever gone.

The District currently has 35 SAGE volunteers.

High School Future Problem Solvers excelled in Michigan: Samantha Taylor, Megan Reicher, Jamie Lefkovitz and Vanessa Harper who represented Neshaminy.

Graduation will take place on June 12<sup>th</sup> and best wishes to all graduating Seniors!!

#### 9. Committee Reports

##### a. **Board Policies**

Ms. Boyle thanked all who participated with the committee.

##### b. **Educational Development**

Dr. Spitz advised that a meeting took place on Monday, May 12<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. Discussions took place regarding text books, Graduation requirement to be moved to Board Policies Committee to develop specific language and guidelines.

##### c. **Finance/Facilities**

Mr. Webb noted that the Cell tower discussions will take place at Sandburg auditorium on Wednesday, June 11<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

##### d. **IU Board**

Ms. Boyle advised that a special meeting took place on May 29<sup>th</sup> with the State Legislators to discuss the Graduation competency assessment.

e. **Educational Foundation**

Dr. Costanzo advised that the foundation continues to meet monthly. Scholarships were awarded to graduating seniors who are pursuing a career in teaching. Four \$500 scholarships were awarded.

f. **Technical School**

Mr. Koutsouradis advised that the funding formula was discussed and usage costs for all students at the last meeting. The auditorium is under budget, on schedule and expected to be completed in the summer of 2008.

g. **Technology**

Mr. Blasch advised that the telephone system had an overview by Jim Wood.

10. **Future Topics**

11. **Agenda Development for June 16, 2008 Public Meeting**

12. **Other Board Business**

Mrs. Cummings inquired whether the pool was active when the samplings were taken. Mr. Minotti stated that is was performed on Field Day.

Dr. Spitz advised that the district has information on our website regarding the teacher negotiations. Dr. Spitz thanked the Courier for providing the information to the public.

Mr. Basen, Villages of Flowers Mill, Langhorne, PA stated that for four years it has been stated that the Tawanka facility will be closed. The Board cannot get together to have a meeting to try to straighten this matter out. This is very concerning.

13. **Adjournment of Meeting**

Mr. Blasch moved the meeting be adjourned and Mr. Webb seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion. Mr. Eccles adjourned the meeting at 10:06 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Anita E. Walls  
Board Secretary