

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC WORK SESSION MINUTES
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
February 3, 2015

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public work session on February 3, 2015 in the District Board Room at the Maple Point Middle School. The following persons were in attendance:

BOARD MEMBERS:

Mr. Scott E. Congdon, President
Ms. Irene Boyle, Vice President
Mr. John Allen
Mrs. Susan Cummings
Mr. Mike Morris
Mr. Stephen Pirritano
Mr. Ron Rudy
Mr. Mark Shubin
Mr. Anthony Sposato

ADMINISTRATORS:

Mr. Robert L. Copeland
Mrs. Barbara Markowitz
Mrs. Theresa Hinterberger
Mr. Anthony Devlin
Dr. Gloria Hancock
Mr. Don Harm

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

OTHERS: Approximately 45 persons from the public, staff and press

SECRETARY: Mrs. Jennifer Burns

SOLICITOR: John Torrente, Esquire
Zack Willard, Financial advisor from PFM

1. Call to Order

Mr. Congdon called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

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

3. Announcements

None.

4. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Copeland advised the Board on the following:

- Two Maple Point Middle School Students read their award winning Veterans Day Essays from the contest called Patriot's Penn Essay Contest which was sponsored by the Veterans of Foreign Wars.
- Devon Place, 1st Place Winner for the local VFW Post 6393 (Yardley) and 2nd Place Winner on the Regional Level (District 8)
- Rachel Schudowski, 3rd Place Winner for the Local VFW Post 6393

5. Public Comment

Kevin Gallagher, IT analyst, resident of Middletown Township, thanked the Board and superintendent for their dedication to the district. Mr. Gallagher asked the Board to provide an update on the financial impact that the consolidation plan and 5th through 8th grade model will have.

Karen Lowry, resident of Feasterville, spoke of her opposition to the closing of any elementary schools, outsourcing of any jobs, the bond issue and to the 5th through 8th grade model. Ms. Lowry asked if the current administration had hired a consultant group to research studies on moving 5th grade to middle school. She also wanted to know which Board member is responsible for proposing the idea of the 5th

through 8th grade model to the Board. Ms. Lowry concluded by asking if it is true that the 5th grade teachers will need to apply for the middle school positions.

Mark Fiore, resident of Levittown, congratulated the students for reading their award winning essays on veterans. Mr. Fiore asked if the public is going to be supplied with the details of the cost of the consolidation loan.

6. Items for Discussion

a) Comprehensive Annual Financial Report

Mrs. Markowitz gave an overview of the comprehensive annual report.

Mr. Lillys gave a brief summary on the bond resolution and answered some questions from the Board and public.

7. Items for Approval Tonight

a) Approval of the Bond Authorization Resolution

Motion: Approval of the Bond Authorization Resolution

Mr. Congdon read the following motion:

WHEREAS, a Resolution authorizing the incurrence of non-electoral debt of Neshaminy School District by the issuance of General Obligation Notes and General Obligation Bonds in one or more series, in a maximum aggregate principal amount not to exceed \$116,400,000 to finance a refunding project and a capital improvement project described herein and in the form presented at the January 27, 2015 board meeting.

Mr. Sposato seconded the motion.

Mr. Morris asked why it is necessary to have the parameters set at \$116,400,000 instead of \$109,000,000.

Mr. Willard stated that it gives the district the most flexibility to get the best interest rates for financing.

Mr. Congdon called for a roll call vote and the tally indicated that the motion passed by a vote of 7 ayes, (Mr. Allen, Ms. Boyle, Mr. Congdon, Mrs. Cummings, Mr. Pirritano, Mr. Shubin, and Mr. Sposato), and 2 nays, (Mr. Morris and Mr. Rudy.)

b) Overnight Trips

Mr. Harm submitted the following trips for approval:

1. Neshaminy High School Band to Upper Merion High School for PMEA Region VI Band Festival - February 5, 6, 7, 2015.
2. Neshaminy High School Marple Newtown High School for PMEA Region 6 Choir Festival - February 26 - 28, 2015.
3. Neshaminy High School Penn State University for the Indoor State Track Championship - February 28 and March 1, 2015.
4. Neshaminy High School to Stratton, Vermont for Ski Club Tri - March 6, 7, 8, 2015.
5. Neshaminy High School to Oxford Area High School for the PMEA Region VI Orchestra Festival - March 12 - 14, 2015.
6. Neshaminy High School to Hershey, PA for PMEA All-State Band/Orchestra/Choir Festival March 25 - 28, 2015.
7. Neshaminy High School to Providence, RI for the NAFME All-Eastern Division Band Festival - April 9 - 12, 2015.
8. Neshaminy High School to Shippensburg University for the Outdoor State Track Championship - May 22 and 23, 2015.

- c) **Approval of request for Sunday Field Usage at NHS by the Bucks County Bulldogs**
- d) **Approval of request for Sunday Facility Usage at Neshaminy High School by Catalyst Prep for March 8, 2015**

Mr. Congdon made a motion to approve item b, 1 - 8 and also items c and d.

Mrs. Cummings seconded the motion.

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

8. Items for Approval at the February 17th Public Board Meeting

a) 2015-2016 School Calendar

Mr. Copeland stated that at the February 17, 2015 Public Board Meeting the 2015- 2016 School Calendar will be an agenda item.

b) BCIU #22 - 2015 - 2016 Programs & Services and Instructional Materials and Research Budget

Mr. Copeland stated that at the February 17th, Public Board Meeting the BCIU #22 - 2015 - 2016 Programs & Services and Instructional Materials and Research Budget will be an agenda item.

c) Approval of the 2015 - 2016 Preliminary Budget

Mr. Copeland stated that at the February 17th, Public Board Meeting the Approval of the 2015 - 2016 Preliminary Budget will be an agenda item.

d) Post Issuance Compliance Board Policy for Obligations

Mr. Copeland stated that at the February 17th, Public Board Meeting the Post Issuance Compliance Board Policy for Obligations will be an agenda item.

Mr. Stein gave an overview on the Post Issuance Compliance Board for Obligations.

9. Committee Reports

a) Board Polices

Ms. Boyle stated to the Board that the next meeting is scheduled for February 24th, at 6:30 p.m.

b) Educational Development

Ms. Boyle stated to the Board that the next meeting is scheduled for February 10th, at 6:30 p.m.

c) Finance/Facilities

Mr. Congdon advised the Board that the next meeting is scheduled for February 11th.

d) IU Board

Mrs. Cummings stated to the Board that she gave a presentation on the WOW students. The next meeting is scheduled for February 17th.

e) Neshaminy Education Foundation

Mr. Shubin advised the Board that the next meeting will be held on February 9th, at 4:00 p.m.

f) Technical School

Mr. Morris stated to the Board that the last meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather.

g) Technology

Mr. Shubin informed the Board that there is no update at this time.

h) Facilities Ad Hoc Committee

Mr. Pirritano informed the Board that the next meeting is scheduled for February 11th, at 7:00 p.m.

i) Legislative

Mr. Shubin stated to the Board that the next meeting has not yet been scheduled.

10. Public Comment

Leann Hartpence, homemaker, resident of Langhorne, asked the Board to clarify what committee initiated the 5th through 8th grade model. She also asked if the rumors are true that a tax increase may be necessary.

Robert Sanna, resident of Middletown Township, stated that there is a lot of miscommunication in Neshaminy. He asked the Board to educate the public and then have a referendum so the taxpayers can decide about the matter. He asked if the social studies teachers who will be teaching foreign languages in middle school are properly certified for foreign language. Mr. Sanna asked for an explanation on the 15 minutes that will be added to the literacy block.

11. Future Topics

None.

12. Board Comment

Mr. Copeland said the budget is still a work in progress and it has not been determined if a tax increase will be necessary; however, an increase in taxes is always a last resort that is considered. He confirmed that consultants from Lehigh University were consulted on the 5th through 8th grade model. Mr. Copeland announced that Mr. Harm and the HR department are reviewing the staffing for 5th grade teachers and will be making future decisions accordingly. Mr. Copeland said Neshaminy uses an online newsletter to inform the public of the progress of events within the district. Mr. Copeland said an all-district mailing of newsletters is another option that can be considered; however, it is costly.

Dr. Hancock confirmed that the teachers for 5th grade students will be certified in elementary education. She stated that the 6th, 7th and 8th graders will remain on the standard middle school program, i.e., changing classes throughout the day. The 5th graders will retain their usual elementary experience, while in middle school. Dr. Hancock said the FLES (foreign language in elementary school program) is a concept that is being considered. It would introduce 5th graders to some foreign vocabulary words while they learn about that particular culture. This does not require the social studies teachers to be certified in foreign language. It is a goal of Neshaminy to bring a traditional foreign language course back to 8th graders in the future. Dr. Hancock stated that the current reading language arts program runs 105 minutes and now 15 minutes has been added to make it a 120 minute literacy block.

Mr. Pirritano said the concept of the 5th through 8th grade model came out of the Ad Hoc/Facilities committee in 2013. He said the idea was not viable at that time. As time progressed it was moved to the Education committee for further review.

Mr. Morris asked Mr. Pirritano if the idea for the 5th through 8th grade model was his idea.

Mr. Pirritano confirmed again that he originally asked for recommendations on whether the concept was viable for Neshaminy.

Mr. Copeland verified that when he is asked for his opinion regarding an educational concept, he provides information based on his past experiences and research on the matter. He then provides his recommendation on the practicality of the matter as it applies to Neshaminy.

Mr. Shubin said that consolidation has been needed for some time. He said the objectives are to redirect scarce resources from labor contracts, productivity and buildings into education for the students, drive

important educational efficiencies to increase the level of support for students who need it most, and recognize that raising taxes is a last resort. Mr. Shubin said he would like the Board to review the Oliver Heckman Elementary School and consider keeping it open. He concluded with thanking the students for their presentation regarding veterans.

Mr. Sposato thanked the students for reading their essays about veterans. Mr. Sposato said the new school should not be classified as a mega school. He applauded Mr. Copeland's leadership and gave him credit for raising Neshaminy's ranking higher out of 500 schools districts in Pennsylvania. Mr. Sposato said Neshaminy is going in the right direction and can become a stellar school district with the right leadership.

Mr. Allen congratulated the students who spoke on behalf of veterans. He said it is important to show our appreciation for their sacrifices.

Ms. Boyle thanked the students for their support of veterans.

Mr. Congdon thanked the students and veterans. Mr. Congdon said he is very happy that the district is heading in the right direction.

13. Adjournment of Meeting

Mr. Congdon moved the meeting be adjourned and Mr. Pirritano seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion. Mr. Congdon adjourned the meeting at 8:53 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Jennifer Burns
Board Secretary