

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC BOARD MEETING MINUTES
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
January 26, 2010

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public session on January 26, 2010, in the District Offices Board Room at Maple Point Middle School. The following persons were in attendance:

BOARD MEMBERS:

Mr. Ritchie Webb, President
Mr. Kim Koutsouradis, Vice President
Ms. Irene M. Boyle
Mr. Scott Congdon
Mrs. Susan Cummings
Mr. Mike Morris
Mr. William D. O'Connor
Mr. William Oettinger

ADMINISTRATORS:

Dr. Louis T. Muenker
Mr. Joseph V. Paradise
Mrs. Patricia Boylan
Dr. Geeta Heble
Mr. Kevin Kane
Dr. Jacqueline Rattigan

BOARD MEMBER ABSENT:

Mr. Richard M. Eccles

OTHERS: Approximately 120 persons from the public, staff and press

SECRETARY:

Mrs. Jennifer Burns

SOLICITOR: Thomas J. Profy, III, Esquire

Call to Order

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

Pledge of Allegiance

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

Announcements

None

Public Comment

Mr. David Goodman, Sheet metal worker of Local 19, of 403 Main Street in Hulmeville, addressed the Board with two issues. Mr. Goodman raised the question of why would the Board consider outsourcing the busing when other school districts, such as Council Rock and Bristol Township have already tried outsourcing and are now considering going back to using their own transportation systems. Mr. Goodman's second concern was with regard to the district eliminating the midday busing for kindergarten students in order to cut costs, while at the same time awarding \$85,000 in administrative raises.

Ms. Diane Lawless, Physicians Liaison for Aria Health Hospital, informed the Board of an incident involving a three day suspension of a student at Neshaminy High School. Ms. Lawless felt the student was unjustly accused and requested that the Board consider adding an addendum to the Student Handbook, Disciplinary Code 505.

Mr. Webb informed Ms. Lawless that this matter could not be discussed at this time during a public forum; however, that her comments were duly noted by the Board.

Ms. Mindy Anderson, secretary at Samuel Everitt Elementary School, residing in Twin Oaks, stated that she is the president of the Neshaminy Support Professionals. Ms. Anderson noted that she feels the Neshaminy Support Staff is not getting the recognition and proper treatment that they deserve from the School Board. She declared that the Support Staff are dedicated professionals who provide better service and commitment

than the district would receive from profit companies. She also mentioned that the Support Staff has always been willing to negotiate with the Board. Ms. Anderson detailed the various compromises that the Support Staff has conceded to over the past years. Ms. Anderson reminded the Board that the Association is willing to negotiate in good faith for fair wages, healthcare benefits, and pensions.

Mr. Steve Rodos, Villages of Flowers Mills, Langhorne, PA, began his commentary by complimenting Ms. Anderson on her presentation. Mr. Rodos mentioned that as a substitute in the district he feels there is a need for a pay increase for this position. Mr. Rodos also pointed out that after attending a meeting of the Educational Development Committee; it was brought to his attention of a deficiency in the computer education instruction at the elementary school level. Mr. Rodos suggested that a program be created for computer instruction and staffed by volunteer teachers within the district. He feels that this program would benefit the students without any further cost to the district. Mr. Rodos concluded by requesting further clarification of the budget from Mr. Paradise and an explanation on the cost of the renovations to the high school.

Mrs. Marianne O'Connor, Neshaminy High School Musical Chair Person, extended an invitation to the community, School Board, Administration, and staff to show their support by coming out to the High School Winter Musical, Willie Wonka. The Show will run February 10th, 11th, 12th, and 13th, with five performances. Tickets can be purchased for \$7.00 at the Co-Curricular Office.

Student Representative Report

None

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Muenker began his report by congratulating Neshaminy Senior, Marissa Harven, for being selected as a finalist in the Drexel High School Photography Contest. Marissa was one of the 150 students chosen out of 2,200 entries submitted. Marissa's photos will be on exhibit at the Drexel Photography Gallery at 33rd and Arch Streets, Philadelphia, on Saturday, January 30, 2010 from 1 to 3 p.m.

Dr. Muenker also mentioned the extraordinary measures Neshaminy Schools are taking to help in the relief efforts for Haiti through donations to the Red Cross. The successful walk-a-thons and coin drops have already realized well over \$9,000 to date.

Dr. Muenker informed the community that the application for the Senior Citizens Property Tax Assistance and Relief Program can be found on the Neshaminy's website. This includes instructions and income guidelines and a complete explanation of the rebate.

High School Construction Update

Mr. Paradise, in his introduction of Mr. Spahr, praised Mr. Spahr and Reynolds Construction for their invaluable assistance in the renovation project of Neshaminy High School.

Reynolds Construction Presentation

Mr. Damion Spahr presented Mr. Ryan Brennan, a graduate of Neshaminy High School, and also the project manager of the high school renovation project, to explain the wrap up report on the construction project.

Mr. Brennan informed the Board and the Administration that payment to some of the contractors has been finalized and closed-out, while some payments and work are still pending. Mr. Brennan, having conferred with Mr. Minotti, confirmed that most of the payments to the contractors will be completed by the end of next month and the remainder to be paid at the end of March. Mr. Brennan advised the Board that the project remains within budget and there are no claims present to date. He noted that the change order comes in under contingency. He further mentioned that there is still one final area of work concerning flooring that will be taken care of over the week of Spring break. Mr. Brennan concluded by stating that the Fire Marshal had approved the sprinkler system.

Mr. Paradise requested that Mr. Spahr address a previous question regarding the total cost of the renovation project.

Mr. Spahr confirmed that the amount of \$72,596,141.02 is approximately 99 % of the total construction cost. The question of a water leakage in the cafeteria was brought up by Mrs. Cummings, and Mr. Brennan verified that the problem has been resolved. Mrs. Cummings further commented that the construction company did an outstanding job on the high school renovation project.

Mr. O'Connor brought up the question of why the music sound rooms are not being utilized.

Mr. Spahr responded that he was unaware that the situation existed, but would be happy to investigate further. Mr. Spahr finalized his presentation by thanking the School Board Members, Administration, parents, students, teachers, and support staff for their patience and cooperation during this important renovation project. He also expressed his appreciation for the support given by the School Board, which resulted in the improvement of future reimbursements coming into the district.

Approval of Minutes

Mrs. Burns presented the minutes of November 24, December 7, 2009 and January 12, 2010. Upon motion of Mr. O'Connor and seconded by Ms. Boyle, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the November 24, December 7, 2009 and January 12, 2010. Mr. Eccles was not present.

Approval of Treasurer's Report, Check Register, and Exonerations of Personal and Per Capita Tax

Mr. Paradise presented the following for approval:

- November 30, 2009, December 31, 2009 Treasurer's Report, subject to audit
- Check Register – November, 2009 and December, 2009
- Budget Transfer Working Copy 10 -2
- Investments – 3 Investment motions
- Personal and per capita tax exonerations for November, 2009 and December, 2009

Bids

Mr. Paradise presented the following bid. Information was presented prior to the meeting.

Bid No. 11-13

Amount: 104,604.00

Bid Description: Copy paper for the 2010 -11 school year

Mr. Congdon moved that the November and December, 2009 Treasurer's Report, subject to audit, check register for November and December, 2009, and personal and per capita exonerations for November and December, 2009, Budget Transfer Working Copy 10-2, three investments, and Bid No. 11-13 for copy paper be approved and Mr. Koutsouradis seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the minutes. Mr. Eccles was not present.

Certified and Support Personnel Actions

Dr. Muenker presented the following for approval:

- Elections – Certified Personnel
- Resignations and Leaves of Absence – Certified Personnel
- Elections – Support Personnel
- Resignations and Leaves – Support Personnel
- Extra Curricular Staff and Salaries

Dr. Muenker recommended the approval of the personnel report for certified and support personnel.

Mr. O'Connor moved the Certified and Support Personnel Reports be approved. Ms. Boyle seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved said reports. Mr. Eccles was not present.

Motion: School Directors Recognition Month

Mr. Congdon presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, the role of locally elected school officials has served the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and local communities meeting the needs of public education since the passage of the Free School Act in 1834; and

WHEREAS, these local boards have discharged their responsibilities to public education in a manner which has placed education in the forefront of our educational systems; and

WHEREAS, locally elected officials have distinguished themselves and their communities in this nonpaid, volunteer public service commitment; and

WHEREAS, the contributions of these men and women should be recognized and appreciated by those who benefit from the workings of our public school system.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Neshaminy Board of School Directors hereby proclaims the month of January as School Director Recognition Month.

Mr. Koutsouradis seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said motion. Mr. Eccles was not present.

Motion: Election of Board Member to the Intermediate Unit

Mr. Webb presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, the Bucks County Intermediate Unit #22 is governed by an Intermediate Unit Board of Directors, and

WHEREAS, the Neshaminy School District has duly elected a board member to participate on the intermediate Unit Board, and Neshaminy's participation is critical to the operation of the Intermediate Unit, as well as the services afforded the Neshaminy School District, and

WHEREAS, the Neshaminy Board of School Directors has nominated Susan Cummings to serve on the IU Board to fill the unexpired term of Dr. William H. Spitz, whose term expires on June 30, 2011, and she is eligible to succeed herself without limitations as to the number of terms or another representative from the school district may be nominated.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Neshaminy Board of School Directors appoint Susan Cummings to serve as the representative to the Bucks County Intermediate Unit Board of Directors.

Mr. Congdon seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said motion. Mr. Eccles was not present.

Motion: Renewal of Delta Community Supports, Inc. Lease for Eisenhower

Mrs. Cummings presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, the Neshaminy School District has leased a portion of the Eisenhower facility of Delta Community Supports, Inc. since 1988; and

WHEREAS, Delta Community Supports, Inc. wishes to renew its lease for an additional five-year term and has entered into discussions with the school district's Business Administrator regarding the terms of the lease.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Neshaminy Board of School Directors authorizes the Business Administrator to finalize the terms and conditions of the lease and to enter into a lease renewal agreement with Delta Community Supports, Inc. for a new five-year term, under terms and conditions acceptable to the school district Solicitor and the Business Administrator.

Mr. Morris seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said motion. Mr. Eccles was not present.

Motion: PA School Employees Retirement System

Mr. Koutsouradis presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, school districts in Pennsylvania are required to participate in a statewide pension program administered by the State Public School Employees' Retirement Board; and

WHEREAS, the Neshaminy School District and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania contribute a fixed percentage of the eligible employee's salary; and

WHEREAS, employees belonging to PSERS prior to July 22, 1983, contribute 5.25% of their salary, and employees who joined PSERS on or after July 22, 1983, contribute 6.25% of their salary; and

WHEREAS, on February 17, 2002, a new membership class was created that set the employee contribution rate at 7.5% of the employee's salary for those employees who were hired on or after July 22, 1983; and

WHEREAS, for the 2009 - 10 school year, the employer retirement contribution rate is 4.78% and effective July 1, 2010, the total employer retirement contribution rate will be 8.22%; and

WHEREAS, both the Neshaminy School District and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania are responsible for paying a portion of the employer's share; and

WHEREAS, because of investment losses and inadequate State funding another large increase is projected for fiscal year 2012 - 13 in the employer contribution rate; and

WHEREAS, on December 12, 2008, the PSERS' Board of Trustees met and stated: "School employers should continue to prepare for dramatic employer contribution increases forecast in four years"; and

WHEREAS, because of further pension fund performance, the rate spike in 2012 - 13 is projected to increase from what was originally scheduled as an 11.23% increase and subsequently designated as a 16% increase to as much as a 29% increase; and

WHEREAS, should the employer contribution rate increase to either 16% or 29% or more, most local educational agencies, including the Neshaminy School district will be unable to fund pension obligations as of 2012 - 13.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Neshaminy Board of School Directors makes the following recommendation:

1. The State Legislature immediately review the anticipated rate spike during the 2012 - 13 fiscal year and beyond.
2. As a result of that rate spike, the State Legislature consider immediately amending the Public School Employees' Retirement Code so as to take immediate action in either amending the Public School Employees' Retirement Code to limit eligibility, funding levels, and/or the extent of the benefits so that the employer contribution rate will be substantively reduced, and/or provide other sources of state revenue independent of the school district contribution rate.
3. The State Legislature recognize that permitting the employer contribution rate to spike to a 16% - 29% level, or more, would adversely impact every school district in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania from providing the constitutional mandate of a thorough and efficient education for district students.

Mrs. Cummings seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said motion. Mr. Eccles was not present.

Motion: 2010 -11 Proposed Preliminary Budget is available for Public Inspection

Mr. Webb presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, Act 1 of 2006 of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania requires the 2010 -11 Proposed Preliminary Budget of the School District to be available for public inspection at least twenty (20) days prior to its adoption; and

WHEREAS, Act 1 of 2006 of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania requires the Board of School Directors to give public notice of its intention to adopt its 2010 - 11 Proposed Preliminary Budget at least ten (10) days prior to its adoption; and

WHEREAS, School District did on January 20, 2010, publish the annexed Notice of Availability for Public Inspection and Notice of Intent to Adopt Proposed Preliminary Budget of School District as required by Act 1 2006 of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Neshaminy Board of School Directors ratifies and confirms that the proposed 2010 -11 Preliminary Budget of the School district was made available to the public for inspection beginning on January 20, 2010, at the District Office Reception Area and on the School District website, and that the attached Notice of Availability for Public Inspection and Notice of Intent to Adopt 2010 - 11 Proposed Preliminary Budget of the School District on February 9, 2010, was duly advertised on January 20, 2010, as required by law.

Mr. Koutsouradis seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said motion. Mr. Eccles was not present.

Federal Programs

Dr. Muenker mentioned one addition to the Federal Programs, which is a grant, entitled Consumer Wellness Center Grant for Nutrition Education Program for the amount of \$1,000. Dr. Muenker thanked Kelly Macauley for being instrumental in securing this grant.

Other Board Business

Mr. O'Connor reported to the Board the findings that were discussed at the meeting of the Education Development Committee. Of the 200 educators which were surveyed 78 of them responded. Mr. O'Connor confirmed that computer labs are not occurring regularly within our elementary schools. Mr. O'Connor stated possible reasons for this situation are that elementary school teachers do not have the availability of aids and the teachers are not trained themselves on labs. Mr. O'Connor has asked Dr. Heble to provide some recommendations for a short term resolution. Mr. O'Connor verified that some of the neighboring districts are more advanced than Neshaminy in regard to this issue; therefore, this is a very important matter to be addressed in the future and Education Development will be researching the issue.

Public Comment

Mrs. Debbie Matlack, of Forsythia Gate, expressed her concern over the lack of microphones and monitors in the hallway when there is an overflow of the audience. Mrs. Matlack further commented that, in her opinion, the contract negotiations and tensions are affecting the students and the atmosphere within the schools.

Board Comment

Mr. Morris inquired whether the Board would receive any reports from the health insurance broker.

Mr. Paradise stated that there are regular meetings taking place, but no movement at this time.

Dr. Muenker interjected that since the appointment of the new insurance broker, there have been ongoing conversations. Dr. Muenker also mentioned that there is an aggressive schedule put in place to attain the best cost possible.

Mr. O'Connor suggested that the Board follow up with Mr. Stepnoski regarding the invoices and any clarification that may be needed regarding reimbursement.

Mr. Webb inquired as when is the appropriate time to pass the budget with a 2.9% millage increase or less.

Mr. Paradise responded that during the Work Session in February, the Board will be formally presenting exceptions.

Announcements and Board Recognition

- Recognition of Student Videographers, Nick Dampman and Chuck Haney

Dr. Muenker awarded certificates to students, Nick Dampman and Chuck Haney, in recognition of their fine service to the school district as videographers. Dr. Muenker also recognized the School Board for their efforts and dedication to the Neshaminy School District. In response to a public comment regarding the climate within the public school system, Dr. Muenker acknowledged the professionalism and hard work of the teachers and support staff during the difficult times of negotiations.

Adjournment

Mrs. Cummings moved the meeting be adjourned and Mr. Koutsouradis seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion. Mr. Webb adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Burns
Board Secretary