

Neshaminy School District
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC BOARD MEETING MINUTES
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
(WORK SESSION/PUBLIC MEETING)
August 24, 2004

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public session on August 24, 2004, in the Board Room of the Maple Point Middle School. The following persons were in attendance:

BOARD MEMBERS:

Mr. Richard M. Eccles, President
Dr. William H. Spitz, Vice-President
Mrs. Sue C. Barrett
Mrs. June R. Bostwick
Mr. Jason Bowman
Ms. Carol A. Drioli
Mrs. Susan Cummings
Mrs. Kimberly A. Jowett
Mr. Ritchie Webb

ADMINISTRATORS:

Mr. P. Howard Wilson
Dr. Louis T. Muenker
Dr. Sandra Costanzo
Mr. Joseph V. Paradise
Mrs. Jacqueline Rattigan
Mr. Bruce Wyatt

SOLICITOR:

Thomas J. Profy, IV, Esquire

SECRETARY: Mrs. Anita E. Walls

OTHERS: Approximately 32 persons from the public, staff and press

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

No announcements.

4. Public Comment

Mr. Louis Goodman, Langhorne, PA spoke in reference to the authorization of the approval of the bond for school improvements. Personally, Mr. Goodman understands that it needs to be approved by a September 3rd deadline, but the community would be better served until waiting till after that date so that the referendum is required the local voters would have a chance. Mr. Goodman previously suggested an earned income tax. Mr. Goodman stated that he was told by Board members that it had been investigated and decided that it would not be economical due to the losses to the Philadelphia School District because of the Sterling Act and the loss to New York State due to the commuter tax. The commuter tax has been abolished and under the new Act after September 3rd, if an earned income tax is passed the district will not be penalized by people who work in Philadelphia. The state will make up that amount. Mr. Goodman urged the Board to consider the earned income tax and put on the agenda an earned income tax as soon as

possible after September 3rd. Mr. Goodman would personally like to see the money come to Neshaminy instead of Chester County where he works.

Mr. Solis Basen, Langhorne, PA stated that he has questioned Mr. Paradise several times regarding the personal income tax. Mr. Basen thinks that the public and the Board should hear the ramifications of this type of tax. The pros and cons related to same. Mr. Basen is aware that several neighboring communities have the earned income tax in place. Mr. Basen understands that the state will subsidize the equal amount. Mr. Basen noted that more money will be received from the state. Mr. Basen feels that this is one way the district could obtain money and Mr. Basen would like to hear something from the Board regarding the income tax.

Mrs. Connie Birrane, Feasterville, PA stated that residents at the last election were against spending \$97M for building a new school. The Board is now considering borrowing \$85M to set aside and everyone is aware that when you have a loan it is very easy to continue to borrow, borrow, and borrow. Mrs. Birrane asked the Board to consider the needs and the financial concerns of the residents in the community and do not vote for a resolution to incur debt of this magnitude.

Mr. Charles Lauble, Langhorne Manor, PA changed the focus to education. Mr. Lauble would like to see the Board spend more time on having a continuous improvement program that would improve the education that Mr. Lauble's two children at the high school are receiving and his grandchildren at Oliver Heckman are receiving. Mr. Lauble stated that he received a better education in this school district in 1959 than his children are receiving today. Mr. Lauble has spent numerous hours accumulating data, looking at school district budget, etc. Mr. Lauble would hope that the Board would put a process in place that will improve the education of the children. Neshaminy School District is just as close to the bottom as it is to the top when the data is compared with other county schools. Mr. Lauble feels that the difference between his education and the education received by his children today is that his teachers brought life experiences to the job. Many went to school on the GI bill after they were done fighting in the Second World War and the Korean War. The school system consisted of wisdom, respect and virtue. One of the virtues that was always shown in this school district was frugality. Mr. Lauble would hope that those same traits would be shown today. Frugality means don't just borrow money so it is there, borrow what is needed. Be role models for the children. Show wisdom, respect and virtue. Don't just throw money after money. Improve the education of the children and put a process in place that raises expectations and results. Spend some time reviewing data. Mr. Lauble noted that there should be a healthy tension between the Board and the people that the Board is directing. Tension should not be between the Board and the taxpayers.

Mr. Howard Lindner, Langhorne, PA stated that during the summer months he is out of the area for the majority of the time. Mr. Lindner became aware by an August 11th Courier Times article that this School Board was going to vote this evening to borrow up to \$85M which Mr. Lindner thinks will establish a line of credit, not a loan, of \$85M for the renovation of Neshaminy High School. Mr. Lindner is shocked and bewildered. In Lower Southampton every single voting district voted against \$95M. In the time Mr. Lindner is home during the summer citizens are asking, "What's happening?" Mr. Lindner suggested to start coming to the meetings. There is a problem when you cannot read results. What are some of the School Board members trying to do? The same members are at it again. School Board member Cummings also to vote for the \$85M. Lower South look carefully. There is another election coming soon. The members are trying to build a Taj Mahal. Certain Board members are trying to get around the law. The new Homeowner Tax Relief Law. A law that protects the taxpayer. By passing a resolution to borrow up to \$85M before September 3rd, the date the new tax law goes into effect, the debt will be grandfathered. The Board would not need voter approval if the borrowing increases taxes more than the cost of living. What bothers the public is a shame, that the school Board members have lost contact with the people. Everything that Mr. Lindner predicted two years ago has happened. Mr. Lindner spent 33 years in the game and he is aware of the game. Mr. Lindner knows that certain members have lost contact with the public. Mr. Lindner stated

that what bothers the public is that the Board is going to vote on an \$85M line of credit even before the independent architect's report which the Board is paying to review and present the best options for the high school renovations. This presentation is scheduled for tomorrow night at 7:00 p.m. in this room. Why is this vote if taken, not taken after tomorrow night? If the Board votes to establish this line of credit you will have an outraged public. The mandates of the last election clearly showed that the public does not want an \$85M credit line. The renovations can be performed for \$65M. The public wants responsible people on this Board and they will vote out of office those who do not listen to the voting majority. In conclusion, Mr. Lindner stated that evidently shame has no merit.

Ms. Carol Drioli responded that she has sat and listened to more misinformation than she has in a very long time. What the Board is about to do this evening or not do this evening, regarding how the vote turns out, is to vote on a fictitious number. It means absolutely nothing. It means nothing until the Board issues the bonds. It is a way that the state has recognized a district likes ourselves, in order to proceed with projects, even a renovation at this point is going to cost money. Ms. Drioli is only voting for a renovation. Ms. Drioli in no way will vote for anything more than that at this point. Ms. Drioli heard the vote and believes in it and understands same. Ms. Drioli has been around and knows that when a renovation is started and the layers are peeled away what is revealed is a mystery. Ms. Drioli stated that if the district gets three quarters of the way into this project it is totally and completely irresponsible for the Board not to see it through to the end. Ms. Drioli will only vote for renovation. Ms. Drioli will work vehemently for a renovated project that will cost \$60M. Ms. Drioli stated that since the new members have gotten on the Board the only thing that has happened is that the interest rates have gone up and the cost of building materials has gone up. What the district is going to get for \$60M is a whole lot less than what the district would have received four or five months ago. At the rate the Board is going possibly six months from now it will be a whole lot less. The point is that if the district gets three quarters of the way into the project and not has the resources to finish the project, it is a problem. The state recognizes it enough and is allowing school districts to provide a number, fictitious, it does not need to be used. If the Board votes for \$85M, it does not mean that the district is going to borrow \$85M. The press needs to get this information. Ms. Drioli does not want to go back and revisit the 50's as far as education is concerned. A fine job was done then, but it is not where the district is at today. Ms. Drioli is appalled at the amount of misinformation that has gotten into the community. Ms. Drioli stated that if Mr. Lindner is embarrassed and ashamed, so is she. Ms. Drioli stated that in no way is she stating that she will vote for a brand new Taj Mahal, never did, never will. Ms. Drioli was just looking for something decent, just as she would in her own home. Problems arise during renovations and costs continue to rise as the layers are peeled away. Ms. Drioli does not want to be three quarters of the way completed and then need to be stopped because the district cannot fund same. That is like taking \$60M and throwing it out the door. It is the most irresponsible position that Ms. Drioli has heard to date.

Mrs. Bostwick noted that when the public voted in the spring they voted against a new building. The problem did not go away just because the public said "No." The problems still exist. The Board still needs to address the problems and it is going to cost money, and every "No" vote that goes through because someone wants to appease the public, it costs the public a little more money. Mrs. Bostwick noted that until that is understood, the public is going to be paying more and more to get the basics done.

Mrs. Barrett stated that her feeling is \$85M is too much.

Mr. Eccles advised that what is happening within the state is that school boards are subverting the law the way it was written. There is a loop hole in the law. Once a district puts \$85M on the books, rather than the way the law is written, that you must maintain a cost of living or 3% increase per year, once the district puts \$85M or \$120M as one district has already done, that now increases your percent of increase. Mr. Eccles noted that in a way the districts are subverting the spirit of the law, by acting on incurring debt. Mr. Eccles referred the issue to Mr. Profy.

Mr. Profy noted that it is the debt service number.

Mr. Eccles noted that the district is in a unique position, because something needs to be done. Everyone needs to be clear on what is happening in the state. True property tax reform will not occur until everyone stops voting to incur debt. Mr. Eccles stated that when you pick a random number of \$85M, and certainly does not mean that the district will borrow \$85M, but when you incur the money it increases year after year.

Ms. Drioli noted that the \$85M is just a number on a piece of paper. It means absolutely nothing. It has nothing to do with the formula unless a vote is taken to incur the debt.

Mr. Eccles stated that the spirit of the law for true property tax relief was to let the voters vote.

Ms. Drioli is aware that this community is not interested in a brand new building. This community is interested in renovation. Ms. Drioli noted that there are no other projects associated with this \$85M number. Anything else necessary within the district will go to the community for referendum.

Mr. Eccles noted that the Board has still not heard from the independent third party that was fought so hard to have. The vote should not occur until the Board hears what the independent person has to report.

5. Items for Approval

- a) **Student/Advisor Attendance at PASA/PSBA Conference**– September 29 - October 1, 2004.

Mr. Wilson noted that this will be a motion for approval this evening.

- b) **Approval of Bond Authorization Resolution** – Discussion to take place after Superintendent's Report.

- c) **Removal of Tax 2002 Lien for Veteran's Exemption**

Mr. Paradise noted that an individual has applied for a Veteran's exemption and did not understand that they must do so every two years. Subsequently, the July 1st real estate tax bill was liened since it was not paid. The district has in the past allowed the lien to be removed. Mr. Paradise noted that a motion will presented this evening.

- d) **Approval of Bid/s**

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

Bid No. 05-19 - Musical Instruments

Bid Amount: \$19,729.70

The bid is for musical instruments and accessories for K-12 instruction throughout the district.

Bid No. 05-21 – High Cube Delivery Van

Bid Amount: \$27,316.00

This van is used by the purchasing department for the delivery of supplies and equipment throughout the district.

The two bids will be presented for approval later this evening.

6. Items for Information

- a) **Summer School 2004**

Mr. Wilson advised that 216 students were enrolled at Neshaminy this summer. The program is a self supporting program. The budget was distributed for board members.

7. Superintendent's Report

a) Staff Achieving Tenure

Mr. Wilson advised that 19 certified staff members are scheduled to achieve tenure status in the 2004/05 school year as per the dates listed on the handout distributed.

b) Bond Authorization Resolution

Mr. Wilson introduced Robert Jones, Esquire of the law firm of Saul, Ewing in Philadelphia. Mr. Jones introduced his colleague Joe Falcone, Esquire and Mr. Michael Lillys from RBC Dain Rauscher the district's investment banker and underwriter. Mr. Jones distributed a copy of the final Resolution. Mr. Jones advised board members that Exhibit "A" was the description of the capital improvement program for Neshaminy High School. Mr. Jones advised that this Resolution does not obligate the district to undertake any particular component of the improvement program. The Resolution is an authorization document, not a commitment document. This Resolution authorizes the incurrence of indebtedness. In order to comply with the Local Government Unit Debt Act the Resolution needs to include certain information. The information has been included to comply with the Act. The figure of \$85M is not a commitment to borrow \$85M or spend \$85M, it simply is a not to exceed number for the incurrence of debt. The board would be authorizing a borrowing which would need to be approved in the future by the board for up to that amount.

Mr. Jones noted to Board members that Exhibit "B" summarizes the financial parameters and Exhibit "C" summarizes the total maximum debt service requirements. The not to exceed financing was structured around a "wrap around basis." The purpose is to try to keep the annual payment of debt as level as possible.

Mr. Jones advised that the Resolution provides for the approval of a contract for the sale of the bonds. That contract does not establish final pricing or interest rates; it simply is an undertaking by both sides that will enable the consummation of financing at some point in the future within the parameters of the Resolution.

Mr. Eccles inquired whether Mr. Jones was under retainer with the district. Mr. Jones advised that his firm was being paid by the district based on the time and effort on the transaction. Mr. Eccles questioned who authorized that. Mr. Jones responded that he was not present; however the school board authorized same. Mr. Jones further advised that his firm has served the district in the past and the administration and the school district solicitor felt that this information was essential for the board to have knowledge.

Mr. Paradise advised that Saul, Ewing was bond counsel in the past and when this opportunity arose from state legislation and at the board workshop there was board consensus to proceed. Mr. Eccles inquired whether a fee was discussed. Mr. Paradise advised that it was the normal hourly rate.

Ms. Drioli noted that this Resolution was brought to the board as an option. This is an option that the board needs to act on one way or the other.

Mr. Eccles questioned the spirit of the law and that there are numerous districts rushing to incur debt on the books prior to the enforcement of referendums and involvement of property tax relief.

Mr. Jones advised the following:

The legislature provided that the statute would be effective on September 3, 2004 an exception to referendum requirement for taxes necessary to service bonds where the debt was incurred prior to September 3rd.

Mr. Jones felt it was the responsibility of his firm to bring the opportunity to their clients and it would be the decision of each individual district whether they would like to take advantage of what the law allows, or if the district decides that they are uncomfortable with that it is the right of the board not to pass the Resolution. The board members were elected to represent the taxpayers of the school district and it is the board's choice.

Mrs. Barrett noted that the Pennsylvania Department of Education has final approval. Mr. Jones noted that that observation is correct. Mr. Jones further noted that the legislature comes back in session in September and they could decide to change one or more provisions of this law that could produce a different outcome. Mr. Jones noted that there is no guarantee at this point since it is subject to final approval by the Department of Education and further legislation.

Mr. Jones advised that based on the district's prior architectural studies and the fact that the district wants to phase in the impact the \$85M figure was reached. The figure is the maximum amount that could be borrowed by the district. The figure could certainly be lower.

Mr. Wilson authorized the board workshop after speaking with Mr. Profy regarding Act 72. Mr. Wilson felt as Superintendent it was his obligation for school board members to hear all of the facts regarding Act 72. Mr. Wilson advised that Mr. Profy and he discussed who would be best to come in and speak about Act 72 to the board members. Mr. Wilson feels that board members have a right to know what Act 72 is all about. Mr. Wilson advised that he authorized same.

Mr. Eccles questioned that assuming the motion passes this evening, would Mr. Jones be the attorney of record. Mr. Jones advised that the relationship is entirely within the control of the board and if the board wishes to make any changes regarding attorney or professional advisors it is within their power. Mr. Jones advised that neither his firm nor any other professional firm is named in any of the documents this evening.

Mr. Jones advised that this amount will go on the district's debt statement. It is incurred debt. The district can cancel it at any time, reduce it at any time or borrow the entire amount.

Mr. Eccles questioned whether the increases are based on the \$85M figure or on the actual amount that would be borrowed. Mr. Profy advised that it would only be on the actual borrowed amount.

Ms. Drioli advised that this is of no cost, no obligation and will only be applied to the high school. No other projects in the district will be considered for this amount. Ms. Drioli noted that it was necessary for the board to learn about the new laws.

Mrs. Barrett feels that it is circumventing the law and it is unfair to the public. Mr. Paradise advised that the district is not circumventing any laws in any way, shape or form. Mr. Paradise believes the legislatures acted accordingly since school districts in the state are in very sad condition.

Mrs. Barrett noted that this district can incur electoral debt as high as it wants as long as the voters approve same. We are stopping nothing. Electoral debt can go as high as the public approves. Don't be afraid of same. Mr. Paradise feels the district would be in neglect if the board was not presented the opportunity that was clearly given by the legislatures.

Ms. Drioli noted that every school district in the state has the opportunity to take advantage of this.

Mr. Eccles noted that speaking to representatives in state government this is a loop hole and that it is coming from senators and representatives. The spirit of the law was not for every district to go out and incur debt prior to referendum.

Mr. Paradise responded that a law that takes effect sixty days from today is not a loop hole. Mr. Jones noted that the state has provided interpretations on this subject.

Mr. Webb inquired what if the district did not need to use the entire \$85M. Mr. Jones advised that the district choices would be:

- ✓ Hold in reserve the difference
- ✓ Cancel the bond entirely
- ✓ Cancel all but a couple of million
- ✓ The district has the right to cancel all or any portion of this debt

Ms. Drioli noted that this is like a home equity line of credit.

Mr. Jones advised that there is no time limit for the district to issue the bonds. Mr. Jones advised that the formal action is a motion to adopt the Resolution and a roll call vote needs to be taken.

Mr. Mike Lillys of RBC Dain Rauscher added that there is some flexibility in the issuance of the bonds. They can be issued in a fixed or variable rate mode. The indebtedness can be phased in over three years. There can be either one issue or two issues. Flexibility is built in. Mr. Lillys can not stress enough that the figure does not need to be \$85M. The \$85M provides flexibility when structuring the principal payments.

Mr. Eccles had the same questions for Mr. Lillys. Is his firm under retainer and how did he arrive at putting the proposal together. Mr. Lillys advised that at the board workshop he presented information. Mr. Lillys advised that his firm only gets paid if there is an issuance of bonds.

Dr. Spitz advised that at the last meeting there was specific consensus that Mr. Lillys' firm prepares the documents and undertakes this work. Mr. Eccles questioned whether the board agreed to a bond company without putting same out for bid. Mr. Paradise advised that at the workshop Mr. Jones stated that it was his legal recommendation that if the board approves the bond resolution that a bond underwriter would also be approved. The state has imposed the September 3rd deadline. Mr. Lillys has agreed to work at his previous fee with other bonds.

Mr. Eccles inquired when the prior board meeting took place. Mr. Paradise responded that it took place on August 11, 2004 at 12:00.

8. Committee Reports

a) Board Policies

Mr. Bowman advised that Mrs. Rattigan will be taking over for Mr. Marotto. A meeting and agenda will be set up shortly.

b) Finance/Facilities

Mr. Webb noted that a meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 25th and the independent architect will share his findings.

Dr. Spitz added that it is a bit disingenuous that some board members are complaining that we are going to take a vote this evening before the gentleman presents his findings tomorrow night. Mr. Webb is chairman of that committee and was well aware of the meeting this evening and the gentleman could have presented his findings this evening. The chair of the finance committee wished for the report to be presented at the Finance committee and not at this meeting.

Mr. Webb responded that the gentleman was on vacation and it would have been impossible for him to attend this evening's meeting.

c) Educational Development

Dr. Spitz is in contact with Dr. Costanzo to set up a meeting.

d) IU Board

Mrs. Drioli advised that there was no report.

e) Educational Foundation

Mrs. Cummings advised that the alumni directory will be available for distribution on October 1st. The fundraiser will take place on October 15th and information will be on the Neshaminy channel.

f) Technical School

Dr. Spitz advised that a board meeting took place on August 23rd. Main discussion was intent to hire Scott Parks who is the assistant director to replace Lamar Snyder who is retiring as Administrative Director. Discussion took place regarding the contract. Mr. Wilson attended the meeting as Superintendent of Record at the tech school.

g) Technology

No report.

9. Future Topics

Mrs. Barrett advised that over the summer months SAGE and the Neshaminy Federation of Teachers along with Dr. Costanzo have met and discussed the details concerning the nonprofit SAGE group. The program is volunteer wherein people in the community come into the schools and help out in various capacities. The community volunteers will be a great asset in the schools. Activities will include:

- ✓ Assembly programs
- ✓ Guest lectures
- ✓ Judging competitions
- ✓ Participating in clubs
- ✓ Coordination of activities with residential communities
- ✓ School fairs

Mr. Eccles advised that this should be forwarded to the educational development committee.

Ms. Drioli questioned whether the tax credit was in place for senior volunteers. Seniors donate time in lieu of money for tax credit. Mr. Paradise advised that seniors receive an hourly rate that can be used for a tax credit.

Dr. Costanzo advised that there are some fees such as development fee and licensing fees to work with SAGE. The first year costs \$350.00 per month and \$1,500.00 per year licensing fee. Ms. Drioli questioned if there were any grants available to cover the costs.

Dr. Costanzo noted that the way the program is setup, corporate sponsorship is a very large part of the program.

10. Agenda Development for the August 24, 2004 Public Meeting

11. Correspondence

No Correspondence.

12. Adjournment of Meeting

Mr. Webb moved the meeting be adjourned and Ms. Drioli seconded the motion. The Board approved the motion with nine ayes. Mr. Eccles adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

PUBLIC MEETING

Call to Order

Mr. Eccles called the meeting to order at 8:30 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Upon motion of Dr. Spitz and seconded by Mrs. Bostwick, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the June 29, 2004 Public Meeting.

Approval of Treasurer's Report, Bills for Payment, Investments, and Exonerations of Personal and Per Capita Tax – Mr. Paradise presented the following for approval:

June 2004 and July 2004 Treasurer's Report, subject to audit
Bills for payment Check Register – June 2004 and July 2004
Escrow Fund, Three Capital Project Funds, Several Investment Funds

Mr. Webb moved the June 2004 and July 2004 Treasurer's Report be approved, subject to audit, and the June 2004 and July 2004 bills for payment, Budget, Escrow Funds, Capital Project Funds, Investments Funds. Mr. Bowman seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved the Treasurer's Reports, subject to audit, bills for payment, investments, escrow funds, and three capital project funds.

Bids

Mr. Paradise presented the following bids for approval:

Bid No. 05-19 - Musical Instruments

Bid Amount: \$19,729.70

The bid is for musical instruments and accessories for K-12 instruction throughout the district.

Bid No. 05-21 – High Cube Delivery Van

Bid Amount: \$27,316.00

This van is used by the purchasing department for the delivery of supplies and equipment throughout the district.

Ms. Drioli moved the two bids be approved and Mrs. Jowett seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved the two bids.

Certified and Support Personnel Actions

Mr. Wilson presented the following for approval:

Elections of Certified Personnel/Administrative Positions
Addendum of Elections of Certified Personnel
Long Term Substitute Positions
Addendum of Long Term Substitute Positions
Resignations/Leaves of Certified Personnel
Elections of Support Personnel
Resignations/Leaves of Support Personnel
Sabbatical Leaves of Certified Personnel
Extra-Curricular Staff and Salaries Report

Mr. Wilson requested approval of the personnel report and Extra-Curricular staff and salaries report as presented.

Mrs. Barrett questioned how the Extra-Curricular staff is chosen when they are not employed as a teacher within the district. Mr. Wilson replied that they are usually recommended by someone within the district and then interviewed by the head coach and athletic director of the building.

Mrs. Cummings questioned if the vacancies are not filled for the Extra-Curricular staff positions how are they then filled. Mr. Wilson replied that the district will advertise in order to find individuals to fill the positions. Mr. Wilson noted that it is becoming difficult to fill some of the coaching positions.

Mr. Wilson noted that the district is able to hire back retired individuals to fill the extra-curricular positions.

Mrs. Cummings moved the personnel report be accepted. Ms. Drioli seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved the personnel report.

Motion: Student/Advisor Attendance at PASA/PSBA Conference

Mrs. Barrett presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania School Boards Association and the Neshaminy Board of School Directors encourage student delegates and their advisor to participate in the workshops and activities of the annual PASA/PSBA Conference; and

WHEREAS, in the past it was found that student participation in the conference benefited the local student government program and helped students to understand the purpose and activities of a Board of School Directors.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOVLED, that two students and their advisor are authorized to attend the 2004 PASA/PSBA Conference to be held in Hershey, Pennsylvania from September 29 – October 1, 2004, and that related conference fees and costs be paid by the District.

Dr. Spitz seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion.

Motion: Approval of Bond Authorization Resolution

Mrs. Bostwick presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, a Resolution authorizing the incurrence of nonelectoral debt of Neshaminy School District by the issuance of General Obligation Bonds in one or more series, in a maximum aggregate principal amount not to exceed \$85,000,000 to finance a capital improvement program described herein and in the form presented at the meeting.

Dr. Spitz seconded the motion.

Ms. Drioli reiterated that this is not a commitment by this board to \$85M. It is a fictitious number on a piece of paper that the law has said we can do and Ms. Drioli believes in obeying the law.

Mrs. Barrett believes that \$85M is too much. The district can incur any amount of electoral debt. The voters just turned down \$97M and here we go trying to say that \$85M is what we need. It is not. The board needs to hear the report from the independent advisor tomorrow evening and go from there. Let it go before the people. What are we afraid of?

Ms. Drioli noted that this is something that the state is allowing the district to do and it is strictly a number. No one says the \$85M will be used. Ms. Drioli feels that you cannot guarantee what you find after renovations begin. It would be irresponsible to get three quarters of the way through the project and need to stop due to lack of funds.

A roll call vote was requested by Mr. Eccles. The roll call tally indicated the motion passed with five ayes, Mrs. Bostwick, Mrs. Cummings, Ms. Drioli, Mrs. Jowett, Dr. Spitz and four nays, Mrs. Barrett, Mr. Bowman, Mr. Eccles, and Mr. Webb.

Motion: Removal of 2002 Tax Lien for Veteran's Exemption

Mr. Bowman presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, the Bucks County Board of Assessment allows Disability Veteran's Exemptions under certain conditions as coordinated and approved by the Department of Military Affairs, and

WHEREAS, the following individual has applied, qualified and received such an exemption under the applicable law, and

WHEREAS, a gap in the exemption during 2002 has caused the property to be liened in error.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the property listed below be removed from the school district real estate tax lien list for 2002 and that the Bucks County Tax Claim Bureau be so notified of this change. Be it further resolved that the records of the Middletown Township Tax Collector be adjusted in accordance with the removal of this lien.

Mary E. Smith
11 Quail Road
Levittown, PA 19057
Tax Parcel Number 22-065-172

Mrs. Jowett seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion.

Federal Programs

Mr. Wilson advised that there was nothing to report.

Correspondence

The Board Secretary advised that there was no correspondence.

Public Comment

Mr. William O'Connor, Langhorne, PA stated that he did not believe that \$85M was an unreasonable amount for the board to vote upon. Mr. O'Connor was concerned about the statement that the electorate will vote as needed. This community has never voted what has been needed. That is why the building is in the present condition. Poquessing needs more than \$5M to assure proper improvements. Past boards did not follow through and hopefully, this board will not recreate the exact same problems. Mr. O'Connor believes regarding bond counsel the board should not just go with the cheapest rate. Mr. O'Connor urged the public to remain supportive of the board. Mr. O'Connor would like to see a commitment to put the money forth to keep the building structures up to date and safe for our children.

Mrs. O'Connor, Langhorne, PA stated she did not know where to begin. The community has still not come together and it was depicted several times during this board meeting by certain board members behavior, threatening board members that they will be voted out, etc. Mrs. O'Connor urged board members to do what is right and not politics. Concentrate on what the kids need and not who will be reelected and when. Mrs. O'Connor noted that if the board wishes the community to come together they better start by setting an example. Mrs. O'Connor has attended many board meetings. Politics does not belong here. The Board members are supposed to be here for the kids and the community. Please attempt to have better behavior at the board meetings. The board is supposed to be setting an example. The board is an embarrassment. There is no reason for bullying tactics. Mrs. O'Connor was concerned that the \$85M may not be enough for the renovations and what will happen when the project is three quarters of the way complete and the funds are exhausted. Mrs. O'Connor received her tax bill and it did not go up anywhere near what was said the bills would be before the election took place. People want to stir up the community and provide misinformation. Mrs. O'Connor stated that this Board needs to make a decision. This Board is no closer to a decision. The building needs to be fixed. Mrs. O'Connor hopes that more parents would attend meetings. Mrs. O'Connor urged the board to do what is right and build a school that the community can be proud of.

Mr. Barrett, Feasterville, PA, stated that he too is for the children. Mr. Barrett has a grandson that is starting school this year. Mr. Barrett feels the main concern of the board should be the children. Mr. Barrett stated that since you are elected by the community the board needs to strike a balance. A balance between the members of the community and the needs of those members' children and the people who do not have children. The election showed that the community cannot afford \$97M. Raises are not the greatest. Mr. Barrett senses that the board does not trust the public to make this choice. We don't trust the public because we feel "wounded" by the last election. If you were for the school and after the last election those people now feel bad about that. That is only natural. Since the election the board came back and passed \$25M of indebtedness and now the possibility of \$85M which totals \$110M which is more than the \$97M. Mr. Barrett feels with wisdom we could make the high school look awfully good for a lot less money. Mr. Barrett noted that when he put an addition on his own house he consulted with engineers and builders and told them what he had to spend and asked them to look at the roof and walls. When the money was used there were things that Mr. Barrett could not complete like shutters, carpet in family room, etc. Mr. Barrett needed to do within his means. Mr. Barrett really cares about the community and Mr. Barrett hopes that by passing this motion this evening the board has not destroyed the trust even further. Mr. Barrett has heard a strong appeal for trust in the community, and hopefully there will be a position where we can have that. Mr. Barrett is wondering what the people in the community will think about the option the board has selected. Mr. Barrett felt that when people read about the law in the paper they felt that they may now have a voice. Mr. Barrett is concerned that the board has voted for a resolution of \$85M without the public having a voice.

Board Comment

No board comment.

Adjournment

Public Meeting Minutes of the Neshaminy Board of School Directors (cont.)
August 24, 2004

Mr. Bowman moved the meeting be adjourned and Mrs. Jowett seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion. Mr. Eccles adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Anita E. Walls

Board Secretary