

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC BOARD MEETING MINUTES
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
October 23, 2012

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public session on October 23, 2012, in the Harry M. Dengler, Jr., Performing Arts Center at Maple Point Middle School. The following persons were in attendance:

BOARD MEMBERS:

Mr. Ritchie Webb, President
Mr. Kim Koutsouradis, Vice President
Mr. Scott Congdon
Mr. Mike Morris
Mr. William Oettinger
Mr. Mark Shubin
Mr. Anthony Sposato

ADMINISTRATORS:

Mr. Robert L. Copeland
Dr. Jacqueline Rattigan
Mrs. Barbara Markowitz
Mrs. Therese Hinterberger
Mr. Anthony Devlin
Dr. Geeta Heble

BOARD MEMBER ABSENT:

Mrs. Susan Cummings

OTHERS: Approximately 50 persons from the public, staff and press

SECRETARY: Mrs. Jennifer Burns

SOLICITOR: Thomas J. Profy, III, Esquire

Mr. Webb announced that prior to the meeting an Executive Session was held where negotiation and personnel issues were discussed.

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

Superintendent's Report

Mr. Copeland advised the Board on the following:

- Columbia Scholastic Press Association selects Playwickian Editor Melanie Matyi as Gold Circle Award Winner.
- Maple Point Middle School students learning to be "Upstanders" – Business, Computer and Information Technology students recognize National Cyber Awareness Month.
- Business Computer and Information Technology Middle School teacher chosen to participate in educator in the workplace job internship for sports and technology entrepreneurs.
- Breakfast with the Superintendent are the following dates: Saturday mornings in the Board Room of the Administrative Offices at 9:00 a.m.; December 15th, February 9th, March 16th, April 13th, May 11th, and June 8th.
- Maple Point Middle School Celebrates America's 59th Veterans Day.
- 8th graders, Tyler Nolan and Yasmeen Malik, invited any veterans and the community to participate in the annual Veterans Day ceremony on Friday, November 9th, at 12:15 at Maple Point Middle School.
- The NHS Roadies present Spooky and Kooky 2012.
- Mr. Nesbitt from Lower Southampton Elementary School selected as Teacher of the Month by Feasterville Acme.
- Neshaminy High School's Family & Consumer Science Department hosts a "Meet and Greet" for parents and children enrolled in the preschool program.

Public Comment

Gail Thibodeau, Middletown Township, read a letter from a former Neshaminy resident who has moved to South Carolina because they were dissatisfied with the Neshaminy School District. The writer stated that over the past few years Neshaminy has experienced a decline in education and teacher involvement. She said that Neshaminy has experienced the ultimate bullying

level by teachers and the atmosphere is toxic. She remarked that they have found a new school district that is thriving and teachers are performing as they should. She urged the parents of Neshaminy to seek alternatives and support the charter school.

Kevin Gallagher, Middletown Township, IT analyst, stated that over the summer the district benefitted from an IBM grant for a robotics program made possible by Larry Pastor. Mr. Gallagher encouraged the Board to seriously consider ways to find the money to support a STEM education curriculum for Neshaminy.

Stephen Pirritano, Feasterville, self-employed, remarked that he was dismayed by the counter-proposal from the NFT that seemingly is attempting to take a backwards direction from the generous offer that the Board had proposed. He said that the control and changes that they are proposing are absurd and this is not acceptable. He urged the Board and the negotiating team to categorically reject the NFT's proposals and not to be as generous in their next offer.

Approval of Minutes

Mrs. Burns presented the minutes of September 25, 2012 and October 9, 2012. Upon motion of Mr. Congdon and seconded by Ms. Boyle, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the September 25, 2012 and October 9, 2012 Board Meeting Minutes. (Mrs. Cummings was not present.)

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

Mrs. Markowitz presented the following for approval:

- September 2012 Treasurer's Report, subject to audit
- Check Register – September 2012
- Personal and per capita tax exonerations for September 2012
- Investment Summary
- Budget Transfer Report (Working Copy) 13-1

Mr. Koutsouradis moved the September 2012 Treasurer's Report be approved, subject to audit, Check Register for September 2012, Investment Summary, the Personal and Per Capita Tax Exonerations for September 2012, and the Budget Transfer Report (Working Copy)- 13 -1 be approved. Mr. Oettinger seconded the motion.

Mr. Morris asked if the certified staff are still getting free healthcare or 37% opt out option.

Mrs. Markowitz stated that they are.

The Board unanimously approved said reports. (Mrs. Cummings was not present.)

Certified and Support Personnel Actions

Mr. Copeland presented the following for approval:

- Elections – Certified Personnel
- Resignations and Leaves of Absence – Certified Personnel
- Elections – Support Personnel
- Sabbatical Leaves – Certified Personnel
- Extra Curricular Staff and Salary Report

Mr. Copeland recommended the approval of the personnel report for certified and support personnel and the extra-curricular staff and salary report.

Mr. Koutsouradis moved the certified and support personnel actions be approved and Mr. Shubin seconded the motion.

Mr. Shubin asked how the certified positions are selected.

Mr. Copeland stated that the positions are decided on by an interview process at the building level. He also stated that any certified staff that is being recommended by the Board for permanent hire will also be interviewed by the superintendent.

Mr. Shubin asked how many are coming from the sub pool versus outside.

Mr. Copeland stated that he would look into that.

Mr. Morris inquired on page 38, if all the extra-curricular activities were cross referenced to make sure that the individuals are not doing multiple jobs at once.

Mr. Copeland responded that is correct.

The Board unanimously approved said reports. (Mrs. Cummings was not present.)

Motion: Declaration of American Education Week

Mr. Webb presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, public schools are the backbone of our democracy, providing young people with the tools they need to maintain our nation's precious values of freedom, civility, and equality; and,

WHEREAS, by equipping young Americans with both practical skills and broader intellectual abilities, public schools give them hope for, and access to, a productive future; and,

WHEREAS, public education employees, be they substitute educators, custodians, teachers, bus drivers or librarians, work tirelessly to serve our children and communities with care and professionalism; and,

WHEREAS, public schools are community catalysts, bringing together adults and children, educators and volunteers, business leaders and elected officials in a common enterprise;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Neshaminy Board of School Directors hereby proclaims November 11 – 17, 2012, as the 91st annual observance of American Education Week.

Mr. Congdon seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said motion by a vote of eight ayes, and zero nays. (Mrs. Cummings was not present.)

Motion: Employee Termination

Mr. Koutsouradis presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, Employee X was sent an official Notice of Dismissal Charges and Right to Hearing dated January 25, 2012; and

WHEREAS, a hearing on the Notice of Dismissal Charges and Right to Hearing was held on April 26, 2012; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Neshaminy Board of School Directors find that the Administration has proven the charges set forth in the Notice of Dismissal Charges and Right to Hearing dated January 25, 2012 and Employee X is dismissed from employment with the School District effective January 10, 2012; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board approves, adopts, authorized and ratifies the annexed Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law as prepared by the Hearing Officer enlisted by the Board to hear this matter on its behalf.

Mr. Morris seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said motion by a vote of eight ayes, and zero nays. (Mrs. Cummings was not present.)

Motion: Authorization to Proceed/Refinancing 2004 Bond

Mr. Morris presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, The District authorizes its financial advisors, investment bankers, bond counsel, district solicitor and district administration to make the necessary preparations to proceed with the refunding of the General Obligation Bonds, Series of 2004, based upon a \$9,995,000 refunding of a portion of the 2004 Bonds in 2012 and a refunding of the remaining portion of the 2004 Bonds in 2013. The Board shall direct the debt service savings after review with its financial advisors and investment bankers.

Mr. Koutsouradis seconded the motion.

Mr. Koutsouradis asked if this would lengthen the bond.

Mrs. Markowitz stated that it would not.

The Board unanimously approved said motion by a vote of eight ayes, and zero nays. (Mrs. Cummings was not present.)

Federal Programs

Mr. Copeland advised the Board of the 2012-13 active federal programs/grant allocation.

Other Board Business

None

Public Comment

Stephen Pirritano, Feasterville, self-employed, remarked that he is not in favor of making any changes to or limiting the time limit of the public comment time. He said he is aware that the matter will be discussed at the upcoming Board Policy Meeting. Mr. Pirritano also said he thinks the comment time should be given to the residents of the community first. Mr. Pirritano concluded by urging the Board to introduce policies that will continue with the level of transparency, so this honesty will continue to be upheld in the Neshaminy District in the future.

Larry Pastor, Middletown Township, business executive, welcomed Mr. Copeland to the district and advised him that the community is one hundred percent supportive of him. Mr. Pastor said that he fully expects the proposal from the NFT to be rejected as nonsense. He said he is astonished at the gall of the NFT to make changes and more demands to a more than generous contract offer, which is the same contract accepted by one of the top school districts in Bucks County, (Council Rock).

Board Comment

Mr. Koutsouradis thanked the administration for their efforts and the negotiating team for working together and for a job well done.

Mr. Shubin stated that the Citizens Advisory Committee had a very successful meeting about school consolidation. He said he was happy to report that the committee is comprised of a very diversified group of people. Mr. Shubin cleared up any misunderstanding that may have been caused by an article in the press, which said a vote was made at the last meeting. Mr. Shubin said the vote was merely to take some action, but no decision making was conducted at this time.

Mr. Copeland commented that he appreciates the gracious welcome that he has been given by the community, Board, staff and administration of Neshaminy. He also stated that he values teacher input, teacher expertise and the professionalism of the staff, because these are all intrigal in the development of successful programs and educational curriculums. However, the responsibility of the supervision, placement, assignments and development of staff must rest with someone in charge.

Mr. Congdon remarked that he was deeply troubled by the letter from the former resident who moved her family to another state to provide her children with a better education than Neshaminy can provide. He said this impasse is destroying the Neshaminy School District. Mr. Congdon said that the Board has offered the NFT a more than generous contract and it does not seem like the NFT is serious about settling this contract dispute. He wants to see Neshaminy get back to being the great school district that it once was.

Mr. Webb said that the response from the NFT seems to be taking everything that they liked about the Council Rock contract and everything they liked from the old Neshaminy contract and combining it into a new proposal without any concessions on their part. He said it remains to be seen what will occur at the next negotiation meeting.

October 23, 2012

Adjournment

Mr. Webb moved the meeting be adjourned and Mr. Shubin seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion. Mr. Webb adjourned the meeting at 7:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Burns
Board Secretary