

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC BOARD MEETING MINUTES
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
November 25, 2003

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public session on November 25, 2003, in the Auditorium of the Neshaminy High School. The following persons were in attendance:

BOARD MEMBERS:

Mrs. June R. Bostwick, President
Mrs. Kimberly A. Jowett, Vice-President
Mrs. Yvonne V. Butville
Ms. Carol A. Drioli
Mr. Richard M. Eccles
Mr. Steven E. Schoenstadt
Mr. Michael A. Soifer
Dr. William H. Spitz
Mr. Edward T. Stack

ADMINISTRATORS:

Mr. P. Howard Wilson
Dr. Raymond J. Boccuti
Mr. Harry Jones
Mr. Joseph V. Paradise
Mr. Richard Marotto
Mr. Bruce Wyatt

OTHERS: Approximately 25 persons from the public, staff and press

SECRETARY: Mrs. Anita E. Walls

SOLICITOR:
Thomas J. Profy, III, Esquire

Call to Order

Mrs. Bostwick called the meeting to order at 8:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mrs. Bostwick requested those in attendance join in the salute to the flag.

Announcements

No announcements.

Student Representative Report

Student Representatives were not present.

Public Comment

Mr. Kevin Yeingst, Feasterville, PA advised that he has been coming to board meetings for approximately one and half years and he has learned a great deal, not always about the students, but about politics. Mr. Yeingst noted that the board positions are a thankless job, and whether Mr. Yeingst agreed or disagreed with the board members he thanked the outgoing board members for their hard work. Mr. Yeingst appreciates everything that was done.

Superintendent's Report

Mr. Wilson wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and safe holiday. Mr. Wilson requested that a late trip be approved for students from Sandburg who will be taking a trip to the United Nations for a day trip and two of the students along with the advisor, Ms. Patty Carson, will be staying the night for an additional night to work with other students in the Global Education Awareness Program.

Approval of Minutes

Upon motion of Mrs. Jowett and seconded by Mrs. Butville the Board approved the minutes of the October 16, 2003 Public Meeting by a vote of eight ayes and zero nays. Ms. Drioli abstained.

Approval of Treasurer's Report, Bills for Payment, Investments, and Exonerations of Personal and Per Capita Tax

– Mr. Paradise presented the following for approval:

- October 2003 Treasurer's Report, subject to audit
- Bills for payment Check Register – October 2003
- Two Escrow Funds, Capital Project Funds, Investment Funds
- Budget Transfer Report (Working Copy 04-2)
- Personal and per capita tax exonerations for October 2003 totaling 426 exonerations

Dr. Spitz moved the October 2003 Treasurer's Report be approved, subject to audit, and the October, 2003 bills for payment, Budget Transfer Report (Working Copy 04-2), Escrow Funds, Capital Project Funds, Investments Funds, and personal and per capita tax exonerations be approved. Mrs. Butville seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved the Treasurer's Reports, subject to audit, bills for payment, investments, two escrow funds, capital project funds, budget transfer, and exonerations of personal and per capita tax.

Approval of Bids

Mr. Paradise reviewed the following bids:

Bid No. 04-19 Boiler Replacement at Heckman Elementary School

Bid Amount: \$289,950.00

Replacement of boiler at Oliver Heckman Elementary School.

Bid No. 04-20 HVAC Replacement at Maple Point Middle School (Equipment)

Bid Amount: \$439,000.00

Replacement of rooftop air conditioning units at Maple Point Middle School.

Mr. Paradise noted that this is continuing the program and there is only one additional unit that will need replacing after this job is completed.

Bid No. 04-21 HVAC Replacement at Maple Point Middle School (Installation)

Bid Amount: \$255,000.00

Installation of rooftop air conditioning units at Maple Point Middle School.

Bid No. 04-22 Exterior Door Replacements at Pearl Buck, Schweitzer, and Lower Southampton Elementary Schools and Maple Point and Sandburg Middle Schools

Bid Amount: \$188,300.00

Replacement of nine doors at Buck Elementary, five doors at Hoover Elementary, two doors at Schweitzer Elementary, twenty doors at Lower Southampton Elementary, four doors at Sandburg Middle School, and one door at Maple Point Middle School.

Ms. Drioli suggested that when the high school renovation or new construction is decided upon, every single cost is included in the renovation or new construction, and is not amortized over many years after the fact.

Mr. Paradise responded that ten additional years were obtained from the rooftops units by not replacing them initially when the renovations took place. One could view same as a smart decision, depending on the approach.

The Board unanimously approved the four bids.

Certified and Support Personnel Actions

Mr. Wilson presented the following for approval:

- Elections – Certified Personnel
- Resignations and Leaves of Absence – Certified Personnel
- Elections – Support Personnel
- Addendum of Elections of Certified Personnel
- Addendum of Elections of Support Personnel
- Resignations and Leaves of Absence – Support Personnel
- Sabbatical Leaves of Certified Personnel

Mr. Wilson recommended the approval of the personnel report for certified and support personnel.

Mrs. Butville inquired of Mr. Jones regarding two support personnel being hired on H-5 that also appear as day to day subs. Mr. Jones advised that these individuals were day to day subs and were hired as regular employees. Mr. Jones advised that the approval date is different from the start date.

Mrs. Bostwick moved the personnel actions be approved. Mrs. Butville seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the personnel reports for certified and support personnel.

Mr. Stack requested an Executive Session at 8:15 p.m. regarding a personnel matter.

The public meeting reconvened at 8:30 p.m.

Motion: Contracted Transportation Services for 2003-2004

Mr. Schoenstadt presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, the school district transports public, private, and parochial school students in accordance with the applicable state laws; and

WHEREAS, private contractors are sometimes used if it is more practical and less expensive to do so with other than district vehicles.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Neshaminy Board of School Directors authorizes the school district to enter into private contracts for the 2003-2004 school year for the transportation of certain students in accordance with state regulations as follows:

Contract #1	Huntingdon Valley Christian Academy	\$3,700
Contract #2	Lakeside Youth Services	\$21,299
Contract #3	Middle Earth, Incorporated	\$76,923
Total:		\$101,852

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Business Administrator is authorized to sign these contracts on behalf of the school district.

Mrs. Butville seconded the motion.

Dr. Spitz advised that the total amount on the motion is incorrect. Mr. Paradise advised that the amounts are based on estimates and the board is approving three separate contracts. Mr. Paradise advised that if the total is not accurate the total can be stricken.

Mr. Profy's recommendation to the board was to correct the mathematical error and approve the motion as corrected. The corrected total should be \$101,922.

Mr. Schoenstadt requested to know how many students are transported for this amount of money. Mr. Paradise advised that two (2) students presently attend Huntingdon Valley Christian Academy, three (3) at Lakeside and twenty (20) students at Middle Earth. Mr. Paradise advised that these are all very special needs students, and therefore, the cost for transportation is very expensive.

Dr. Spitz made a motion to amend the Contracted Transportation Services motion to have the total amount amended to \$101,922. Mr. Soifer seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion to amend.

The Board unanimously approved the amended motion.

Motion: Establishment of an Account with The Pennsylvania Treasury's INVEST Program

Mr. Soifer presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, the Neshaminy School District invests monies as authorized by the Pennsylvania Public School Code; and

WHEREAS, a significant amount of revenue is realized from the temporary investment of funds.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that in order to achieve competitive investment rates, the Neshaminy Board of School Directors authorizes the Business Administrator execute the necessary documents upon review of the district Solicitor in order to permit our participation in The Pennsylvania Treasury's INVEST program.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that as with other investment vehicles, this program will be used to provide diversity and investment options when financially advantageous to the District in order to maximize our investment income.

Dr. Spitz seconded the motion.

Board discussion ensued regarding the investment and the guarantee of the State.

Mr. Paradise advised that when the district looks to invest money they look for local banks, PA school district liquid asset fund, and this will be another option to look at. All options must comply with the school code and be fully insured. The district cannot take any risk at all with taxpayer's money.

Mr. Paradise advised that the investment program is operated by the Commonwealth of PA, however, it is a separate local government pool. The fund has larger purchasing power to go out and invest with banks to obtain better rates.

The Board with a vote of eight ayes and one nay (Mrs. Bostwick) approved the motion.

Motion: Establishment of Accounts with Sovereign Bank

Dr. Spitz presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, three Government Banking Product Accounts are required by Sovereign Bank as "pass-through accounts" to invest in CD's; and

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Public School Code requires that the Board of School Directors approve all bank accounts.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Neshaminy Board of School Directors authorizes the establishment of Government Banking Product Accounts with Sovereign Bank in the name of Neshaminy School District.

Mrs. Jowett seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved the motion.

Motion: Amendment To The Technical School Articles of Agreement

Ms. Drioli presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, the School District of the Township of Bensalem, the School District of the Borough of Bristol, the School District of the Township of Bristol, the School District of the Borough of Morrisville, the School District of Neshaminy and the School District of Pennsbury, hereinafter the "Member School Districts," entered into an Agreement dated the 1st day of July, 1966, and subsequently amended, for the operation of the Bucks County Technical School, hereinafter the "Technical School;" and

WHEREAS, the Member School Districts wish to amend the Articles of Agreement.

NOW, THEREFORE, the School District of Neshaminy hereby moves to adopt the amended Bucks County Technical School Articles of Agreement as attached this 25th day of November, 2003.

Mrs. Butville seconded the motion.

Mr. Eccles questioned how much money this amendment will cost Neshaminy School District. Dr. Spitz advised that if the amendment were in effect this year it would cost the district \$1,739.00, but that also includes some savings that would be included for next year. If those savings were excluded the net cost for Neshaminy would be \$25,725.00

Mr. Schoenstadt advised that Neshaminy cannot fill all its positions at the Tech School until 9th grade is moved to the high school. Mr. Schoenstadt further advised that the Tech School has a lawsuit against them because of the discrimination towards students with handicaps. Mr. Schoenstadt stated that he will not support this motion.

Mrs. Butville advised that the Tech School has advised that this year no students will be excluded due to their math or reading level. Every application will be accepted. Mrs. Butville noted that one of the reasons this needs to be changed is because some of the districts that feel the agreement is not fair to their district have been voting down the budget. If the budget is not approved there is no comprehensive tech school.

Ms. Drioli remembers the promise made by the President of this board that the formula would be revisited and address their needs at a later time if they would go ahead and vote for the building of the new school. There is a moral obligation to Morrisville and Bristol. Those districts have stated constantly that some relief is necessary due to the position that the larger districts have placed them into. Promises were made to those districts and there does exist a moral obligation. Mr. Stack echoed Ms. Drioli's comments.

Mr. Soifer inquired regarding the state subsidies and the fairness of the amounts received. Mr. Wilson advised that this is a first attempt to make it more equitable for the three districts.

Dr. Spitz clarified that the Tech School will not automatically accept all special education students, however, the Tech School will not automatically reject those who fall below certain cut off scores in the testing. All students will be considered on a case by case basis.

Dr. Spitz advised that the amendment has already been approved by Bensalem School District, Morrisville and Pennsbury School District. Dr. Spitz is confident that Bristol Borough will approve the amendment. Bristol Township is waiting to vote until their new board is seated. Dr. Spitz suggested that this is a good proposal for Neshaminy to consider.

The Board approved the motion by a vote of seven ayes and two nays (Mr. Schoenstadt and Mr. Eccles).

Motion: Pride & Promise: Public Schools Achieve

Mrs. Butville presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania School Boards Association has initiated a Public Outreach Campaign to appropriately recognize the achievements of public schools throughout the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, the campaign is designed to recognize the accomplishments of students and graduates, and the dedicated leadership of teachers, administrators, support staff and school directors; and

WHEREAS, the Neshaminy School District is proud of the achievements of its students, staff and graduates.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Neshaminy School District supports the statewide Public Outreach Campaign and will conduct its own outreach efforts locally, designed to:

- Increase public awareness of the value of public schools,
- Instill a sense of pride for all involved in public education; and
- Strengthen the competitive position of public schools in today's marketplace of education alternatives, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Neshaminy School District will solicit support in the campaign of business, civic, community and government organizations interested in promoting to the wider community the accomplishments and value of their local public schools.

Mr. Stack seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved the motion.

Mrs. Butville presented to Mr. Wilson two (2) window stickers with the Pride and Promise Campaign logo.

Motion: Board Policy 620 – English As a Second Language

Mr. Eccles presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, new policies are recommended by the administration to the Board for review; and

WHEREAS, adoption and approval of this policy will meet requirements defined in the Federal Elementary and Secondary Act.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that said policy be approved by the Neshaminy Board of School Directors.

Mrs. Butville seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved the motion.

Motion: Board Policy 110 – Code of Ethics and Conduct

Mrs. Jowett presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, the Board of School Directors recognizes the importance of ethical behavior among its members; and

WHEREAS, a code of conduct can act as a foundation for supporting all School Board Members in their endeavors to provide leadership through governance; and

WHEREAS, a code of ethics can provide a framework board members may use to assess appropriate governance behavior and responsibilities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that said policy be approved by the Neshaminy Board of School Directors.

Dr. Spitz seconded the motion.

Mr. Schoenstadt noted that at the last work session a portion of the policy was misquoted by the Courier Times and the newspaper personally attacked him. The paragraph reads: “Section 324 of the school code prohibits, except in limited circumstances, a Board member from engaging in any business transaction with the school district. The State Ethics Act imposes additional restrictions, which also prohibit contracts awarded by the school district to a Board member’s spouse or business with which the school director, his/her spouse, or child are “associated.”

Mr. Schoenstadt stated that he cannot vote for this policy because by doing that he would automatically place one of the current board members in a position of being in violation of the policy. If that paragraph is deleted, Mr. Schoenstadt could support the policy.

Mrs. Butville noted that this is already law since it refers to Section 324 of the School Code.

Mr. Soifer is concerned about the censure issue. Mrs. Bostwick noted that this is already law and it already appears in the school code. Mr. Wilson noted that a board member may be censured already.

Dr. Spitz pointed out a typographical error in paragraph 22 the word “censored.”

Ms. Drioli stated that she is becoming offended by the comments and innuendo. Mr. Schoenstadt stated that if the board wished to take an Executive Session he would reveal who the person is he is referring to.

Mr. Profy advised that Section 324 of the School Code is basically a restatement of what is contained in the ethics policy. That is the law, which is applicable to school districts. Provisions in the Ethic’s Act will at all times supersede what is in the Board policy, and the Ethic’s Act is statewide in its application and applies not only to school board members but elected and appointed officials as defined in the Act. Section 324 is a verbatim statement of Section 324 of the School Code.

The Board approved the motion by a vote of eight ayes and one nay (Mr. Schoenstadt.)

Student Representative Report

- Powder Puff football game will take place tomorrow night
- Student poll is in process
- Student Council will hold a Winter Formal for all students
- Attended the PSBA school board convention. Great learning experience for all students who attended.

Other Board Business

Mrs. Butville noted that a Legislative Chairperson would need to be appointed for the PSBA's Legislative activities since she will be leaving the Board.

Mrs. Butville noted that there is a need for a third person to be appointed to the Technical High School Authority Board. Mrs. Butville wished to make a motion to appoint Mr. Kevin Yeingst.

Mr. Profy advised that it is not an agenda item, and if something is needed to be added to the agenda a Motion to amend the agenda and have same placed on the agenda. Robert's Rules of Order requires a two-thirds vote to suspend an agenda.

Mrs. Butville made a motion to amend the agenda to include the appointment to the Technical High School Authority Board. Mr. Schoenstadt seconded the motion.

Mr. Soifer is against amending the agenda, since it does not set a good precedent.

Mrs. Bostwick requested a roll call vote. The roll call vote resulted in the motion failing with five nays (Mrs. Bostwick, Ms. Drioli, Mr. Eccles, Mr. Schoenstadt and Mr. Soifer) and four ayes (Mrs. Butville, Mrs. Jowett, Dr. Spitz and Mr. Stack). Mrs. Bostwick requested that this item be placed on a future agenda.

Correspondence

The Board Secretary advised that there was no correspondence.

Public Comment

Mr. William O'Connor, Langhorne, PA thanked all the Board members and district employees for all the work that has been done which often goes unacknowledged. Mr. O'Connor paid tribute to the outgoing Board members. Mr. O'Connor stated that he appreciated the business and critical thinking that Mr. Stack brought to the Board while trying to navigate through all the politics behind the scenes. Mr. Stack brought a sense of fairness and ethics that will leave a lasting impression. Mr. O'Connor thanked Mr. Soifer for stating that performances by the students prior to meetings are not "grandstanding" and Mr. Soifer stressed that children are the very reason this Board exists. Mr. O'Connor sincerely hopes that this message carries forward to each and every Board in the future. Mr. O'Connor thanked Mrs. Butville and Mr. Schoenstadt for sticking by a cause they believed in. It has caused both of them to lose their positions on this Board. They did not allow their sense of doing what is right be obscured by getting re-elected. Unfortunately, re-election is what seems to fuel most of our elected officials these days. Mr. O'Connor made the following quote: "I should care more about what is right than I do what is popular. I should be willing to give this whole thing up for something that I believe in, because if not, then maybe I do not belong here in the first place." Both Mr. Schoenstadt and Mrs. Butville remembered why they are on this Board. Mr. O'Connor expressed his sincere thanks and admiration. Good Luck to the incoming Board.

Mr. Joseph Robb, Langhorne, PA thanked everyone for the work. Mr. Robb stated that he cares about this district and he noted that this is not his hometown and he does not have any family in the area. As an employee of the district he feels strong about the high school building. Mr. Robb states that it needs to be the right new school, whether it is new construction or major renovations. Mr. Robb has worked with the architects and there is much frustration in dealing with certain issues. If there is window of opportunity open to step back and re-address Plancon E, and say that the components of the building are great, but the way it is being planned there are missing opportunities, traffic, parking, etc. Mr. Robb hoped that a committee would be put together where some of these issues could be addressed.

Mrs. Rita Geddes, Feasterville, PA thanked the outgoing Board members for their hard work. Mrs. Geddes knows that everyone went into the project with an open mind and came to a conclusion based on the facts, what would be best for this community over the next thirty years, not just over the next five or ten years and came up with a comprehensive plan. Mrs. Geddes feels that the leadership was evident. The district will gain from your

leadership in the next five, ten, twenty years. Mrs. Geddes has respect for all the members of the Board and she appreciates the time and effort expended.

Board Comment

Mr. Stack stated that he thanked everyone for the opportunity to have been able to participate in the process and do what he could for the community. Mr. Stack plans to keep involved, read the paper, speak with Board members. There are needs within the district that need to be addressed. Mr. Stack feels that it is important to find a way to communicate clearly, completely, and accurately and to work hard towards that goal. There may be differences of opinion on some proposals, but lets put all the proposals on the table and let the community give the Board feedback. Hopefully, since there is not an election next year, the high school issues can be looked at more objectively. The needs still exist.

Mr. Stack noted that when he came on the Board ten years ago his first assignment was to be on the Legislative Committee and he was excited about that. Mr. Stack was very interested in property tax reform. Mr. Stack knows that there is a need to change the way taxes are handled in Pennsylvania. It will be difficult to retire and live in the state of Pennsylvania. The community is required to absorb the expenses. Teachers are provided 3% increases, yes expensive but still reasonable. Mr. Stack stated that solutions need to be found and the state is not willing to help.

Dr. Spitz thanked the outgoing Board members for all their hard work and accomplishments. Dr. Spitz noted that it has been a very difficult last year. Members have listened to community members, but in the end the members have cast votes and made decisions based on what they believed was in the best interest of the community as a whole.

Mrs. Butville read the following quote:

“All too often school board members are like firefighters on the ground battling the flames when they should be in a helicopter above the fire able to see how extensive the blaze is, which way the wind is blowing, and where the resources need to be deployed.”

Mrs. Butville feels that this Board was in a helicopter and saw the big picture. The options were presented and what was entailed in each option, conditions of each and that is why the decisions were made in the best interest of the students and the taxpayers. Mrs. Butville was in this position to serve the community, all the community. Mrs. Butville had every taxpayer and student in mind - the senior citizens and young families. Mrs. Butville noted that when interest rates rise the costs will go much higher. Mrs. Butville hopes that the district does not incur a tremendous amount of expense that will have to be done. Mrs. Butville notes that it has been a difficult last year, but all her decisions were based on this community and their best interests. Mrs. Butville stated that there are two kinds of people that serve, one that says “What can I do for you?” and the other that says “What can you do for me?” This Board has seen both types, and the type that serves the community, the community benefits much better.

Ms. Drioli stated that she felt that Mrs. Bostwick has had one of the most difficult years to be President of the Board. Despite what anyone has says, Ms. Drioli offered her deepest respect to Mrs. Bostwick for the way she led the meetings throughout the year. The accusations and charges made by the public towards you were handled in a good fashion. Ms. Drioli applauded Mrs. Bostwick for a job well done.

Mrs. Bostwick thanked everyone.

Adjournment

Mrs. Bostwick moved the meeting be adjourned and Mrs. Jowett seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion. Mrs. Bostwick adjourned the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Anita E. Walls
Board Secretary