

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC BOARD MEETING MINUTES
(PUBLIC MEETING)
REORGANIZATION MEETING
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
December 4, 2006

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public session on December 4, 2006 in the Board Room at Maple Point Middle School. The following persons were in attendance:

BOARD MEMBERS:

Mr. Richard M. Eccles, President
Mrs. Sue C. Barrett, Vice President
Mr. Joseph R. Blasch
Mr. Jason Bowman
Ms. Irene M. Boyle
Mrs. Susan Cummings
Mr. Frank J. Koziol
Dr. William H. Spitz
Mr. Ritchie Webb

ADMINISTRATORS:

Mr. Paul J. Kadri
Dr. Sandra Costanzo
Mr. Joseph V. Paradise

SOLICITOR: Thomas J. Profy, IV, Esquire

SECRETARY:

Mrs. Anita E. Walls

OTHERS: Approximately 12 persons from the public, staff and press

Call to Order

Mr. Eccles called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

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

Public Comment

Mr. Howard Lindner, Langhorne, PA advised that he read in the paper that the Board hired a Director of Secondary Education. Mr. Lindner noticed that 30 applicants applied for the position. Mr. Lindner questioned how many of these applicants were from Neshaminy School District. Mr. Lindner is very firm about hiring from within and taking care of taxpayer's children. It is hard for Mr. Lindner to believe that the Administrators from within the school district were not good enough for this position. Mr. Lindner was aware that Ms. Murphy applied for the position. Ms. Murphy would have the ability to get the job done. Mr. Lindner also questioned whether the Superintendent played a part in having the applicant apply for the position. Mr. Lindner is sure he did. The question is from within. Neshaminy has excellent educators who are dedicated. Teachers who have made the Neshaminy tradition. Teachers who have put this place on the map. The School Board members are elected by the people. There is no greater excitement and thrill than by being elected by the people. Whether you are Democrat or Republican. When the people speak, and the election is over they are giving you their vote of confidence. As Board members you have the responsibility to make sure that everything is done correctly, fairly and most important of all, you are the employer, not the employee.

Mrs. Marianne O'Connor, Langhorne, PA thanked the Board for their decision and stated that she has complete confidence in the Board to do the hiring. The public are not the experts and you studied the candidates. Mrs. O'Connor noted that whether you are internal or external, it should be the best candidate for this position.

Reorganization of the Neshaminy Board of School Directors – In accordance with the State Code, the Board held its reorganization meeting.

Election of Temporary President - Mr. Eccles requested nominations be presented for Temporary President for the reorganization of the Neshaminy Board of School Directors. Mr. Koziol nominated Mr. Webb as temporary President and Mrs. Barrett seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations. Mr. Eccles moved that the nominations for Temporary President of the Neshaminy Board of School Directors be closed. The Board approved the motion with nine ayes. Mr. Webb acted as Temporary President.

Election of President - Mr. Webb requested nominations be presented for President of the Neshaminy Board of School Directors. Mr. Koziol nominated Mr. Eccles. Mr. Bowman seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations for President. Mr. Webb made a motion to close the nominations. Mr. Bowman seconded the motion. The Board approved the motion to close nominations with nine ayes.

Mr. Webb requested a vote for Mr. Eccles as President of Neshaminy School Board. The Board approved Mr. Eccles as President of the Neshaminy School Board by a vote of eight ayes and one abstention (Dr. William Spitz).

Mr. Eccles thanked the Board for their vote of confidence.

Election of Vice-President - Mr. Eccles requested nominations be presented for Vice President of the Neshaminy Board of School Directors. Mr. Bowman nominated Mrs. Sue C. Barrett. Ms. Boyle seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations for Vice-President. Mr. Eccles moved the nominations for Vice President of the Neshaminy Board of School Directors be closed. The Board approved the motion to close nominations with nine ayes. Mrs. Barrett was elected Vice President of the Neshaminy Board of School Directors with eight ayes and one abstention (Dr. William Spitz).

Motion: Appointment of Solicitor

Mr. Bowman presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, the School Board Policy #100 requires during the month of December that the Board of School Directors appoint a solicitor for a one year term.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of School Directors reappoint the law firm of Begley, Carlin & Mandio as Solicitor of the Neshaminy School District in accordance with its fee letter dated November 14, 2006.

Mr. Blasch seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved the motion.

Motion: Local Tax Study Commission Recommendation

Dr. Spitz presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, in accordance with Act 1, the Neshaminy Board of School Directors appointed its Local Tax Study Commission on September 12, 2006; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has met on four dates and held a Public Hearing on November 9, 2006, to review the financial and other details necessary in order to comply with the Act; and

WHEREAS, the Commission finalized its recommendation at its meeting on November 15, 2006.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Neshaminy Board of School Directors acknowledge receipt of the recommendation by the Local Tax Study Commission.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board also immediately discharges the Commission in accordance with Section 331(f) of Act 1.

Mr. Bowman seconded the motion.

Mr. Keith Moss from Lower Southampton who acted as the Chairman for the Local Tax Study Commission read a prepared statement which was prepared by Thomas Profy, Solicitor for Neshaminy School District:

“The Tax Study Commission recommends to the Board of School Directors that neither an Earned Income Tax (“EIT”) nor a Personal Income Tax (“PIT”) be imposed upon the residents of Neshaminy School District.

This recommendation was approved by the Commission by a vote of five to three at the Commission’s Public Meeting on November 15, 2006. The Commission, prior to approving this recommendation, rejected by a vote of five to four a motion to recommend to the School Board an EIT with a rate of one (1%) percent. No vote was taken by the Commission on a recommendation proposing a PIT.

The Members of the Commission, representing the diversity of Neshaminy School District and the geographic composition of the School District, held four Public Meetings and presided over a Public Hearing on November 9, 2006 to obtain input from the entire Neshaminy community. Residents of the School District participated in each of the Public Meetings of the Commission, as mandated by Act 1 and the Sunshine Act. The Commission also received presentations at three meetings from Public Financial Management, Inc. (“PFM”) which the Commission found to be very informative and instructive. The studies of PFM show that those benefiting from the Act 1 mandated shift from predominate dependence upon property taxes to either an EIT or PIT will be senior citizens-retirees without significant earned income, and resident property owners working in Philadelphia who will receive full property tax rebates but pay no additional taxes on their earned income as a result of the Sterling Act which mandates that wage taxes paid to the City of Philadelphia are to be credited against local taxes on earned income. An enactment of either an EIT or PIT will cause higher income wage earners and renters not working in Philadelphia to bear most of the burden of the shift from property taxes.

The Commission’s reasoning for its recommendation is based upon the concern of the Commission Members and the concern of the participants at the Commission’s Public Meetings and Public Hearing that either an EIT or a PIT will impose a tax increase on a majority of residents of the School District and as to the residents of Lower Southampton Township will be particularly burdensome since that municipality has an existing EIT of 1% imposed under Act 511 which will not be credited against an EIT or PIT payable to the School District.

The Commission Members recognize that under Act 1 the Board of School Directors **must** as a matter of law, submit to the electorate an EIT or PIT for approval via Referendum at the May, 2007 Primary Election. The majority of the Commission Members, however, believes this recommendation will be taken as a statement that a majority of the Commission Members do not want either an EIT or a PIT imposed upon the residents of the School District.”

The Board unanimously approved the motion and accepted the recommendation of the Local Tax Study Commission.

Mr. Webb commented that he has been struggling with the issue. Mr. Webb noted that this Board does not have an option to do nothing. The Board must either pass an earned income tax or a personal income tax to be put before the voters in the form of a referendum in the May, 2007 Primary. Also, the District will not receive additional funds from any earned income tax or personal income tax, if the voters approve. Every dollar received, minus 2% for collection costs, will be paid out to reduce property taxes. This money does not come back to the school district. It will be divided among the taxpayers who signed up the Homestead Rebate.

This tax was designed by the State to partially shift the burden of funding schools to those who have the ability to pay from those homeowners who do not have the ability. It is deliberate in its attempt to rearrange or shift the taxes. Mr. Webb believes that renters will be hit twice. Mr. Webb would like to recommend that the Board move forward with the ballot question of asking the taxpayers if they would consider a 1% earned income tax. On a positive note, this is the first time anyone has ever asked whether you want a tax increase. If people do not want same, they can go out and vote and say "No."

Ms. Boyle thanked the Commission for all their hard work and time spent on analyzing the tax implication of the new law. Ms. Boyle was disappointed in the report. By choosing neither the EIT nor the PIT the Commission did not provide the School Board with a viable recommendation. The Board is mandated by law to recommend either the EIT or PIT and the option that the Tax Commission offers does not permit the Board to take advantage of the expertise that the Commission members gained in the last few weeks. This has negated the asset of community involvement which was the whole purpose of establishing the Commission. The function of the committee was to assess financial information and provide an educated response to the Board. Difficult as that may be Ms. Boyle regrets that it did not happen.

Mrs. Cummings asked that the Tax Study Commission meetings be placed on Neshaminy T.V. closer to election time.

Mr. Eccles thanked the Commission for their time and noted that the State does not make it easy for anyone to reach conclusions. Mr. Eccles has learned that if you wait long enough, it will change. Mr. Eccles is concerned that the state is more controlled by other counties outside the metropolitan areas. Our state needs to take a real hard look at the most populated areas. Assemblymen and lawmakers are voting from areas that are not like our own and they are telling us how to run our schools. This decision will affect everyone's personal income levels and lifestyles. The people will have the final say. Mr. Eccles is also concerned that other government agencies will jump on the bandwagon if an earned income tax is instituted. Municipalities and townships just sit back and wait for the Districts to pass such laws and they will then be able to take 50% of that tax. Government agencies need to work together. Mr. Eccles notes that this situation is not like; however, it is concerning the way the state is running things for school districts.

Mr. Bowman noted that obviously we as a Board cannot take the recommendation of the Tax Study Commission and do nothing. It is important to note that they did do a great service for the community and the majority of the Commission believes that the taxpayers should not vote for either an EIT or PIT. Although the Board has not gotten what it was supposed to receive from the Tax Study Commission, they did serve the community well.

Mrs. Barrett noted that an earned income tax can no longer be passed under Act 511. Mrs. Barrett noted that the Board will have a very difficult decision. The Board was sworn in to uphold the laws of the State of Pennsylvania.

Dr. Spitz clarified that one-half of the Act 1 earned income tax could not be claimed by the municipalities and townships.

Motion: High School Improvement Plan

Mrs. Barrett presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, Neshaminy High School is required to submit a School Improvement Plan to the Pennsylvania Department of Education as a result of being a school in Corrective Action 1, as designated by the Pennsylvania School System of Assessment; and

WHEREAS, a team of professionals from Neshaminy High School met over a period of three months to develop a comprehensive framework and strategies for a plan for Corrective Action; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Neshaminy Board of School Directors approve the Neshaminy High School Improvement Plan and authorize the Administration to submit the plan to the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the implementation of the financial components will be dependent upon School Board approval of the annual operating budgets of the Neshaminy School District.

Mrs. Cummings seconded the motion.

Mr. Alex Menio, Neshaminy High School Principal, provided Board members with a document entitled "Getting Results" and also a one page document entitled "Continuous School Improvement Plan." Mr. Menio advised that nine individuals met to put together the plan. The plan is an extension or continuation of our previous school plan. The plan will be submitted to the PDE, pending the Board's approval. Mr. Menio explained to Board members the three phases of the Continuous Improvement Planning Framework. Mr. Menio noted that the PSSA testing is Pennsylvania's response to No Child Left Behind. No Child Left Behind allows each individual state to identify how they can be in compliance with the laws. Mr. Menio feels confident that the document is a fluid document and one that will give us the best plan for our students to be more successful in the classroom.

Dr. Spitz questioned if there was anything in the plan to address the Grade 11 PSSA scores. Mr. Menio stated that special programs are already in place to assist with the concerns of the 11th grade scores.

Mr. Menio advised that the plan is going to tell the District what to teach, when to teach and how to teach and this will occur much earlier than in the 11th grade.

Dr. Spitz is concerned that there is an incentive problem in the 11th grade. There are no consequences if you do not do well on the 11th grade PSSA testing. Dr. Spitz asked if there was interest on the Board to look further into the problem. An Educational Development meeting will take place in the next few days and it could be looked at further.

Mr. Blasch commented that he would refrain from that at the present time. Dr. Spitz was in agreement that he would like the Superintendent and Administration to take the lead in this area.

There was Board consensus to discuss the situation at the upcoming Educational Development meeting. Mr. Kadri felt that it would be appropriate for discussion to take place at the Committee meeting.

Mr. Kadri noted that the Board has had very little time to review the document due to time constraints.

Mr. Koziol questioned whether tutoring was voluntary or mandatory. Mr. Menio advised that students have the right to opt out of the tutoring if they so choose.

The Board unanimously approved the motion.

Motion: Approval of Board Meeting Calendar

Mr. Blasch presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, the Board of School Directors must adopt and publish a schedule of Public Meetings for 2007.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the attached 2007 School Board Meeting Calendar be adopted by the Neshaminy Board of School Directors.

Mrs. Cummings seconded the motion.

Dr. Spitz noted that the June 19th date conflicts with the IU meeting which is also on the third Tuesdays. Dr. Spitz noted that he missed several meetings this past year due to conflicts.

Mr. Paradise noted that the June 19th date is not the Budget Approval date. The Budget will be approved at the June 5th meeting.

The Board unanimously approved the 2007 School Board Meeting Calendar.

Other Board Business

Mr. Kadri advised that Kelly Macauley, Lead Teacher and Department Chairperson for Family Living and Consumer Science at Maple Point has been recognized by the Philadelphia 76ers as a Hometown Hero and will be an award winner at the December 23rd game versus the Nicks.

Mr. Kadri presented a brief overview of a Web Page Software proposal. Mr. Kadri has done extensive research over the past few years regarding Web Page Software. Typically, school districts had one person within the district that would create web pages. The web is a great tool to communicate information from the school district to the parents and community. Neshaminy has a traditional model. Mr. Kadri would like to provide an easier to use web page presence. A true and correct copy of the Web Page Software handout is attached hereto and made a part hereof (See attachment A). Mr. Kadri advised that the system would be E-ratable and the district would qualify for benefits to defray the costs. Mr. Kadri asked for the Board's support since it takes between two to four months to implement. Mr. Kadri would like the system up and running by September, 2007.

Mr. Blasch asked if teacher participation would be mandatory. Mr. Kadri noted that establishing a web page will be very easy and user friendly. Within one hour proficiency can be accomplished. Mr. Kadri noted that it will not be mandated, however, once launched the teachers will be excited to use same and standard templates will be created for teachers if they so choose to use same rather than creating their own web page. All technology skill levels will be able to use the new software and communicate effectively.

Mr. Bowman noted that it is an extremely powerful tool that the district can acquire and the contract term is on a yearly basis. Most importantly, the parents will benefit the most from this type of software. Teachers will use same and they can be inserviced on using this particular product. The 40% subsidy is also a great advantage. Mr. Bowman further inquired as to what the IT Department thinks about this particular software. Mr. Kadri advised that the IT Department has given its approval for this package.

Board discussion ensued regarding the software package and web page implementation with topics including upgrades, costs, security of site, etc.

There was Board consensus to move forward with the Web Page Software upgrades.

Motion: Real Estate Tax Assessment Appeals

Mr. Profy presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, the Board of School Directors herewith authorizes the filing with the Court of Common Pleas of Bucks County, Pennsylvania of Appeals Real Estate Tax Assessments for Year 2007 for each of the following:

WKG Schafer Real Estate L.P.	Tax Parcel No. 22-057-008-002
Maple Prop II, L.P.	Tax Parcel No. 21-001-002-007 & No. 21-001-002-008
Maple Partners I, L.P.	Tax Parcel No. 21-001-013-004
Gator Feasterville Part Ltd.	Tax Parcel No. 21-007-001
Gator Langhorne Part Ltd.	Tax Parcel No. 22-047-198-002
Crestview North Inc. Geriatric &	

Medical Center Inc.
Top of the Hill Apartments
F.R. Bucks Prop Hldg. L.P.

Tax Parcel No. 22-004-036
Tax Parcel No. 21-011-038-003 & 21-011-038-004
Tax Parcel No. 22-057-008-004

and herewith authorizes and directs the Business Administrator and Solicitor of the School District to take all actions required to timely perfect said Appeals.

Dr. Spitz seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved the motion.

Public Comment

Mr. Howard Lindner, Langhorne, PA, stated that during the summer a search committee was in place to hire a Superintendent. Individuals came for interviews and Mr. Lindner was shocked to learn that after the Superintendent was appointed that the other two candidates put in for expenses for the second visit. One was for over \$1,000 and the other for over \$300. An e-mail circulated to see whether the Board would approve payment of same. Mr. Lindner cannot remember wherein a public school system taxpayer's money would be used to pay for expenses for someone looking for a better job. Mr. Lindner cannot understand how taxpayer's money could be used to pay for these expenses. Mr. Lindner hopes that this will never occur again.

Mr. Keith Moss, Lower Southampton Township, PA, stated that as a resident and parent of Neshaminy students he is concerned that we are part of a society that believes in taking money from higher wage earners to subsidize the lower income earners and senior citizens. We need to take a look at Act 1 slightly differently. It does not pertain to high wage earners. The break even point is \$58,000. Not per person, but a household income. Mr. Moss urges the people to take a look at the situation. The people of Lower Southampton Township already have a 1% earned income tax. The seniors need to be aware of one thing, if the seniors plan on selling their home in the very near future, there could possibly be a 2% earned income tax in Lower Southampton Township. This will make buying a home in Lower Southampton not so attractive. Mr. Moss urges every taxpayer to vote "No."

Mr. Solis Basen, Langhorne, PA, thanked Ms. Boyle for her comments regarding the Tax Study Commission. Their statement says they don't want to get involved. Regarding the PSSA testing, are the parents aware that the students can opt out of the tutoring provided by the district? Mr. Basen also inquired whether advertising could be part of the new web page software to help defray costs.

Board Comment

Mrs. Barrett reminded the public that Friday, December 8, 2006, at 9:00 a.m. at Maple Point, Senior Adults for Greater Education will have a breakfast with informative information regarding the program. Please contact Dr. Costanzo at 215-752-6428 if you are interested in attending.

Adjournment

Mr. Bowman moved the meeting be adjourned and Mr. Blasch seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion. Mr. Eccles adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anita E. Walls
Board Secretary