

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC BOARD MEETING MINUTES
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS

November 25, 2008

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public session on November 25, 2008, in the Board Room of the Maple Point Middle School. The following persons were in attendance:

BOARD MEMBERS:

Mr. Richard M. Eccles, President
Mr. Frank Koziol, Vice President
Mr. Joseph R. Blasch
Ms. Irene Boyle
Mrs. Susan Cummings
Mr. Kim Koutsouradis
Mr. William D. O'Connor
Dr. William H. Spitz
Mr. Ritchie Webb

ADMINISTRATORS:

Dr. Louis T. Muenker
Mr. Joseph V. Paradise
Dr. Sandra Costanzo
Dr. Geeta A. Heble
Dr. Jacqueline Rattigan

SECRETARY:

Mrs. Anita E. Walls

SOLICITOR:

Thomas Profy, III, Esquire

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

Call to Order

Mr. Eccles called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

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

Announcements

None.

Public Comment

Mr. Leonard Pokalsky, 125 Terrace Road advised that he is attending the meeting on behalf of himself, Mr. Giglio who lives at 121 Terrace Road and Mr. Birdie who lives at 117 Terrace Road. All are being troubled by pests called the alder beetle. They are on the houses, they are in the houses and they are a mess. The reason they are there is because the facilities department at Pearl Buck has allowed the brush and trees to grow along the property line which is ten foot from the fence. Mr. Pokalsky had pictures and information which he would leave with the Board. The tree which grew wild is the female alder tree and Mr. Pokalsky had information from the Colorado University State Extension which describes the only way to eliminate the insects is to remove the trees. Mr. Minotti felt that it was none of Mr. Pokalsky's concern. Mr. Pokalsky is concerned about the beetles. Mr. Pokalsky would like the Board to do something about this situation. The code enforcement officer advised that he could do something about brush, but not about trees. Brush is anything wild that grows along the fence line and needs to be cut back. Mr. Pokalsky is looking for a remedy for this problem.

Mr. Chris Graham, Langhorne Boro, addressed the Board regarding the economy and the effect on the school district. Mr. Graham is concerned about the Tax Collectors wishing a three percent increase. Many people are worried about their jobs and keeping their jobs. The public employees do not have a problem keeping their jobs and also they have the right to an increase in pay. As a society we all need to stand firm and say no we

cannot pay anymore. Peter Scheff who is a regular contributor to CNBC stated the other day that he not only believes that we are in a financial crisis, but it will get worse. Mr. Graham begged that the school board try to cut costs. Mr. Graham begged of the educators to realize that the district cannot afford an increase. Be happy that you have a job. The tax base which pays the teacher's salaries one by one is getting laid off from their jobs and the tax base is going to go away. This needs to be addressed. The district needs to look at ways to make this work. Consider the economic times and negotiate accordingly.

Mr. Steve Rodos, Villages of Flowers Mills, Langhorne, PA, thanked the Board for taking the meetings to various elementary schools and taking concerns of the residents. Mr. Rodos feels that the residents are pleased with these meetings. The turnout is very good and discussion of the problems has been very helpful. Mr. Rodos appreciates the efforts to relocate the Tawanka program. The concern is whether the students will thrive at the location at the high school and the Administrators, principal and counselors have the answers on a non-fiscal basis, making sure the program works. Mr. Rodos asked the board to spend the necessary funds to spruce up the wing that would be left standing after final demolition at the high school. That wing is somewhat shabby and no funds have gone into this area. Finally, Mr. Rodos asked that the Board follow Mr. Koziol's proposal regarding increasing the walking distance of some of the students so that the overall busing costs might be reduced. Mr. Rodos also asked the Board to consider the increase the tax credit for senior citizens.

Student Representative Report

Ms. Meshael Jones, Student Council Treasurer, provided the following student representative report:

- Field Hockey finished as District 1 Champions
- Soccer team advanced to the state semi-finals
- Cross County runner, Martina Drew, advanced to the State competition
- Foot Ball team received the District 1 Title and will continue to the State finals
- Festive Holiday concert will take place on December 4th
- Power Puff Football game will take place on November 26th

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Muenker read the following letters:

"I recently read about the event at the end of the Ridley game last Friday where Coach Schmidt had his team applaud Coach Waller of Ridley as an excellent example of building character. This is what high school athletics is all about, to teach the players to play hard and when it is over, to be men of character. The Neshaminy School District and the students of the high school are fortunate to have a coach and teacher that recognizes this and is instilling it in the people around him. Years from now when high school and football are a faded memory lets hope that the students and players will still have the character that was developed in them by a Teacher/Coach when they were young. Congratulations to the Football Team and to a School District that has a man of character involved with their children. Good Luck, Ridley Fan."

"I am a former student at Neshaminy High School, and I also live in Middletown Township. Recently I had the pleasure of visiting the high school for back to school night. I can't say how happy I am that Neshaminy is providing a new school for the next generation of young adults to go to. I was there to see the school and learn what new things that they are teaching and doing for our children. As a taxpayer and the parent of some one going to your school I really don't know how to say thank you enough. The new portion of the school was beautiful, the classes had all new and modern equipment and all the new ways the students have to learn, internet, monitors in the classrooms. The teachers were also very professional and informative. I would like to say the money the school is getting in taxes is money well spent. The school looks great and the rest should be redone also. I hear a lot of complaints from parents about taxes. This is one parent saying thank you to everyone at the high school and the district."

Dr. Muenker attended a Commissioner's Meeting that was held at the Hulmeville Fire Company at which time the district was presented with a proclamation:

“At the November 19, 2008, meeting of the Bucks County Commissioner’s Neshaminy School District was presented with a proclamation recognizing its effort to prevent suicide amongst school age children. The Neshaminy Teenage Suicide Prevention Task Force has launched programs such as the Committee for Positive Change, Yellow Ribbon, Celebration of Life and Lifeline, a health curriculum based program that educates students about the warning signs of suicidal behavior and intervention steps.”

On Saturday, November 22nd the American Federation for Suicide Prevention will sponsor its tenth annual national survivor of suicide day in an effort to reach out to the thousands of people who has lost a love one to suicide.

Dr. Muenker advised that many of the schools participate in a program called “Jump for Hoops” for the Heart Association. Over the years the district has collected \$37,308 as a result of the students participating in the program.

The Red Cross Shelter provided thanks to the Tawanka Learning Center for donating 35 hand made quilts to the Red Cross shelter located in Levittown. The Quilts for Kids program was founded by a Bucks County resident and uses unwanted and discounted fabrics to create quilts to comfort children in need.

Carl Sandburg’s Looney Tune Team participated in a community service project at Highland Park on a walking field trip to clean up trash.

Samuel Everitt School sponsored a national artist, Stacey Scott, a local Bucks County artist, who visited the school exploring with the children.

Dr. Muenker advised that Poquessing Middle School Family Consumer Science Department has donated 20 pairs of mittens to the Red Cross homeless shelter.

Dr. Muenker advised that Mr. John Sutton, student delegate, has a thank you letter regarding the PSBA workshop he attended which simulated a school board meeting.

Approval of Minutes

Mrs. Walls presented the minutes of the October 14, 2008 and the October 28, 2008 public meetings. Upon motion of Dr. Spitz and seconded by Ms. Boyle the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the October 14, 2008 and October 28, 2008 Public Meetings.

Approval of Treasurer’s Report, Check Registers, Investments, and Exonerations of Personal and Per Capita Tax

Mr. Paradise presented the following for approval:

- October, 2008 Treasurer’s Reports, subject to audit
- Check Register – October, 2008
- Investment Summary
- Personal and Per Capita Tax Exonerations – October, 2008

Mr. O’Connor moved the October, 2008 treasurer’s report, subject to audit, check register, investments, and exonerations of personal and per capita tax be approved. Ms. Cummings seconded the motion.

Mr. Eccles inquired regarding the Commerce Bank accounts and the change of name to TD Bank. Mr. Paradise advised that the district does not need to follow up on this matter, however, we can add the TD Bank name to the Treasurer’s report.

The Board unanimously approved the Treasurer's Reports, subject to audit, check registers, investments and personal and per capita tax exonerations.

Bids/Budget Transfers:

Information distributed prior to the meeting. Mr. Paradise presented the following bids and budget transfers for Board approval:

Bid No. 09-21 HVAC Rooftop Air Handling Unit Replacements at Maple Point Middle School

Bid Amount: \$223,586

The bid is for replacement of two 16 year old roof top HVAC units. These units are inefficient and are need of some major repairs to keep them running for the warmer weather when they are used at full capacity.

The Board unanimously approved Bid No. 09-21 and Budget Transfer Report No. 09-2 (Working Copy).

Certified and Support Personnel Reports

Dr. Muenker presented the following for approval:

- Elections of Certified Personnel
- Addendum of Elections of Certified Personnel
- Resignations/Leaves of Certified Personnel
- Elections of Support Personnel
- Resignations/Leaves of Support Personnel
- Sabbatical Leaves of Certified Personnel

Dr. Muenker advised that 10 additional day to day substitute positions were hired. Dr. Muenker also pointed out to the Board that the Resignations/Leaves of Certified Personnel also has an Addendum with Item 7 being an addition to said report.

Dr. Muenker recommended the approval of the personnel report for certified and support personnel along with the Addendums presented.

Mr. Webb moved the Certified and Support personnel reports be accepted. Mr. Koziol seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said reports.

Motion: Election of Acting Superintendent

Mr. Webb presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, the position of the Superintendent of Neshaminy School District is vacant as of November 25, 2008;

WHEREAS, the District needs an Acting Superintendent to provide for leadership and management of the School District and to effectuate a transition upon the election of a replacement Superintendent; and

WHEREAS, the Superintendent vacancy creates conditions that increase the workload upon the administrative staff of the school district and will create serious impairment of the operations of the School District, if an Acting Superintendent were not elected by the Board.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Dr. Louis T. Muenker be elected as Acting Superintendent for Neshaminy School District effective November 25, 2008 in accordance with the Pennsylvania School Code of 1949, as amended.

FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED, that the term of Dr. Louis T. Muenker as Acting Superintendent shall terminate upon the election of a Superintendent of the School District, if such election occurs within one (1) year from the date of this Resolution and if there has been no such election of a Superintendent of the School District within one (1) year, the term of Dr. Louis T. Muenker as Acting Superintendent shall automatically terminate one (1) year from the date of this Resolution.

Mr. Blasch seconded the motion.

Mr. Eccles requested a roll call vote. The roll call tally indicated the motion passed by a vote of nine (9) ayes (Mr. Blasch, Ms. Boyle, Mrs. Cummings, Mr. Eccles, Mr. Koutsouradis, Mr. Koziol, Mr. O'Connor, Dr. Spitz and Mr. Webb) and zero (0) nays.

Mr. Webb requested that Dr. Muenker provide a brief history of his accomplishments.

Dr. Muenker thanked Mr. Kadri for his service to Neshaminy School District and the district wishes him the best in his future endeavors.

Dr. Muenker provided the following background:

- 35 years of public education
- 18 years with Neshaminy School District
- Prior to Neshaminy worked for the Philadelphia School District and Mt. Carmel Area School District as a Director of Guidance
- 1980 worked for Bensalem School District
- 1990 began working for Neshaminy at Hoover Elementary
- 1993 Assistant Principal at Poquessing Middle School
- Elementary Principal at Walter Miller Elementary School
- Elementary Principal at Lower Southampton Elementary School
- Supervisor of Pupil Services
- Director of Human Resources and Assistant Superintendent

Dr. Muenker thanked everyone for their confidence in him and asking him to be the Acting Superintendent for the district.

Motion: Contracted Transportation Services for 2008-2009

Mr. Blasch 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 a private contract for the 2008-2009 school year for the transportation of certain students in accordance with state regulations as follows:

ContractLakeside Educational Network \$53,187.50

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Business Administrator is authorized to sign this contract on behalf of the School District.

Mr. O'Connor seconded same.

Mr. Blasch advised that this is not work being taken away from Neshaminy District employees.

The Board unanimously approved said motion.

Board Strategic Action Committee Meetings

Update:

Dr. Muenker advised that the committee meetings are a work session environment allowing the public to ask questions and board comments are provided at various locations throughout the school district. Dr. Muenker updated with the following information:

Meeting One – Oliver Heckman Elementary School

- It was discussed and agreed to not reconfigure the schools to a K-8 educational fiscal plant model
- Neshaminy Middle will be utilized as a lease or rental property
- Dr. Rattigan provided a summary regarding full day kindergarten

Meeting Two – Samuel Everitt Elementary School

- Full day kindergarten was discussed with projected costs
- Extended day kindergarten was introduced regarding remedial help and identification
- Fiscal Plan/Building Space regarding full day kindergarten
- Possible new configuration K-4 and 5-8

Meeting Three – Lower Southampton Elementary School

- Relocation of Tawanka Learning Center for 2009-2010 school year
- I.U. tenant at the Tawanka site
- Relocate Learning center to high school campus (site location is not within the brand new facility, separate building area)
- Information regarding costs will be forthcoming

Meeting Four – Date and location to be determined

- Continue discussion regarding full day kindergarten
- Tawanka Learning Center and projected costs

Dr. Muenker advised that he and Mr. Minotti, Mr. Paradise and Mrs. Holland, the principal, looked at the potential option at the high school. Also, possible cost savings could occur with the closure of additional buildings. Discussions have taken place with Mr. McKissick regarding the report and having additional information be provided regarding the elementary facilities and possible building closures.

Mr. Blasch requested if an extension of the McKissick report or update would be provided. Dr. Muenker advised that an update would be beneficial and concentrate on the elementary schools. Mr. Paradise advised that McKissick would provide further information on a time and materials basis.

There was Board consensus to have the next Strategic Meeting to take place on Monday, December 8, 2008.

Federal Programs

Dr. Muenker stated that as of November, 2008 the amount of dollars awarded district wide is \$2,405,076.

Future Topics

Mr. Paradise advised that the Bucks Central Church is interested in renting a portion of the Neshaminy Middle School. Also, Mr. Paradise provided a memo to board members regarding various business/facility updates: Assessment Appeals, Homestead Exclusion Notices for 2009, IU Rental of Tawanka and evening use of Tawanka for 2009-10.

Other Board Business

Dr. Muenker requested Board approval for a trip for the Neshaminy High School Wrestling team to York, PA, Keystone State Games Invitational tournament which is a change of venue to be held on December 13-14, 2008.

There was Board consensus for said trip.

Public Comment

Mr. Marvin Dickler, Villages of Flowers Mills, Langhorne, PA, suggested to Board members that when discussions occur regarding consolidation or possible closures and the McKissick report is addressed once again that the Board would include the principals of the specific buildings. This way the Board would know what the condition of the specific schools is to date so that when the public states close the schools, just don't close mine, the Board has its own facts and figures to deal with and will not be subject to abuse from the public.

Mr. Steve Rodos, Villages of Flowers Mills, Langhorne, PA, stated that the neighborhood meetings at the elementary schools are providing a wonderful selection of foods for the meetings. Mr. Rodos would like the bus routes to be reviewed very closely. Mr. Rodos was substitute teaching last week at Neshaminy and he wears his badges from the other districts. A student at the high school asked Mr. Rodos how does Neshaminy compare to other districts. Mr. Rodos has concluded that the students at Neshaminy are much better behaved towards a substitute. Mr. Rodos congratulated the staff and students at the high school for instilling the proper attitude in the students. The debate went very well at Neshaminy High School. Mr. Rodos stated that in conclusion he would like the Superintendent choice be made within house.

Board Comment

Dr. Spitz expressed his appreciation to Superintendent Paul Kadri for his outstanding leadership of the Neshaminy School district for the past 29 months. Working under exceptionally difficult circumstances he was instrumental in making substantial improvements in a number of areas including significant increases in PSSA test scores at the high school, developing and implementing a new plan for the high school guidance department, reaching towards budget targets while cutting the district's structural deficit in half and keeping educational programs in tack, providing key leaderships that insured that the closures of Neshaminy Middle School was completed smoothly and fairly, leading the implementation of new classroom and district wide technology, motivating the teaching staff and fostering greatly improved community relationships. Even after he announced his departure Mr. Kadri continued to work tirelessly up through his final day in the district pushing for the extra meetings to begin to address key issues such as full day kindergarten, grade realignment, elementary school consolidation, rental facilities and administrative reorganization. He will not be around for the final decisions involving any of these issues, but his input and drive to get the board and the district to consider such matters on a fast and informed track is greatly acknowledged. Thank you Mr. Kadri.

Adjournment of Meeting

Mr. O'Connor moved the meeting be adjourned and Mr. Webb seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion. Mr. Eccles adjourned the meeting at 8:03 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Anita E. Walls
Board Secretary