

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC BOARD MEETING MINUTES
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
February 23, 2010

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public session on February 23, 2010, 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
Ms. Irene M. Boyle
Mr. Scott Congdon
Mrs. Susan Cummings
Mr. Richard M. Eccles
Mr. Mike Morris
Mr. William D. O'Connor
Mr. William Oettinger

ADMINISTRATORS:

Dr. Louis T. Muenker
Mr. Joseph V. Paradise
Mrs. Patricia Boylan
Dr. Geeta Heble
Mr. Kevin Kane
Dr. Jacqueline Rattigan

BOARD MEMBER ABSENT:

OTHERS: Approximately 75 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 regarding legal and personnel issues.

Call to Order

Mr. Webb called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

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

Announcements

Mrs. Burns stated that the student representatives would not be in attendance this evening.

Public Comment

Steve Rodos, Villages of Flower Mills, Langhorne, PA, requested that he would like the Preliminary Budget further explained at an upcoming Finance Meeting. Mr. Rodos implored the Board not to cut librarians, counselors and the learning center at the cost of the students in order to save money. Mr. Rodos proposed an idea for a fundraiser for the District in the month of December. The suggestion is for parents to purchase a star in the name of a teacher as an alternative to buying holiday gifts for teachers. The proceeds would be remitted to the school district and the donation would be tax deductible for the parents.

Marie Kovach, Pearl Buck Elementary School parent, addressed her concerns to the Board regarding the quality of education offered in the Neshaminy School District compared to the education offered in her family's former school district in Michigan. Mrs. Kovach cited several examples, such as, extended school days, foreign language classes, progress report cards at the elementary level, more field trips, computer labs, and various other programs she feels are not offered by the Neshaminy School District. Mrs. Kovach mentioned that the salaries of teachers in Michigan are significantly lower than that of Neshaminy teachers and she further commented that real estate taxes are reassessed every year in Michigan.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Muenker advised the Board on the following:

- Walter Miller Elementary School sponsored a "Hats for Haiti" coin drive. All proceeds went to the American Red Cross.
- Walter Miller Elementary School donated 250 cans of soup to a local food pantry during the week prior to the Super Bowl.
- Herbert Hoover Elementary School donated the proceeds from a recent T shirt sale to the Unicef Relief Fund.
- Neshaminy High School students and staff donated \$1.00 for a "be aware, make a change" bracelet with all proceeds going to help the Red Cross Haitian Relief Efforts.
- Neshaminy's business students qualified to represent Neshaminy at the LifeSmarts State finals, which are to be held in Harrisburg in March.
- Neshaminy High School Drama Club will present its annual comedy show, "Laughingstock," on March 4th, 5th, and 6th at 7:00 p.m. Tickets are \$5.00. This year's performance is dedicated in memoriam to Ashley Clark. All proceeds from Saturday night's performance will be donated to a special fund set up for Ashley's newborn daughter, Emma.
- Maple Point Middle School will present Disney's "Aladdin, Jr.," on March 3rd, 4th, and 5th at 7:00 p.m., and March 6th will be at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$6.00 for general admission and \$7.00 for reserved seating.
- Neshaminy High School Dance Team will present the third annual "Dancing with the Faculty," on March 11th at 7:00 p.m. at the high school. Tickets are \$5.00.
- Kindergarten registration will be held on Friday, March 5th. Children entering kindergarten must be five years old on or before September 1, 2010. Additional information can be found on Neshaminy's web site.
- Neshaminy High School's Gym Night is scheduled for February 26th and 27th, weather permitting.
- The makeup of any days lost during the school year due to inclement weather will be announced at the March Public Board Meeting.

Approval of Minutes

Mrs. Burns presented the minutes of the January 26, 2010, Public Board Meeting and the February 9, 2010, Public Work Session Meeting. Upon motion of Mr. Morris and seconded by Mr. O'Connor the Board unanimously approved the minutes of January 26, 2010 and February 9, 2010.

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

Mr. Paradise presented the following for approval:

- January 31, 2010 Treasurer's Report, subject to audit
- Check Register - January, 2010
- Budget Transfer Report 10-3
- Investment summary
- Personal and per capita tax exonerations for January, 2010

Mr. Koutsouradis moved that the January, 2010 Treasurer's Report be approved, subject to audit, Check Register for January, 2010, the Personal and Per Capita Tax Exonerations for January, 2010, the Budget Transfer Working Copy 10-3, and the Investment Summary be approved and Mr. Eccles seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved the Treasurer's Report, subject to audit, Check Register, Budget Transfer Report 10-3, Investment Summary, and exonerations of Personal and Per Capita Tax.

Certified and Support Personnel Actions

Dr. Muenker presented the following for approval:

- Elections – Certified Personnel
- Resignations and Leaves of Absence – Certified Personnel
- Elections – Support Personnel
- Resignation and Leaves – Support Personnel

Dr. Muenker recommended the approval of the personnel report for certified and support personnel.

Mr. Congdon moved that the Certified and Support Personnel Reports be approved and Mrs. Cummings seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said reports.

Motion: Acceptance of 2008 – 09 Audit Report

Mr. Oettinger presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, the audit for the Neshaminy School District for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2009, has been prepared by Maillie, Falconiero & Company, LLP.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Audit Report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2009, be accepted in accordance with Section 24-2408 of the School Code.

Mr. Eccles seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said motion.

Motion: Intermediate Unit #22 – 2010-2011 Budget

Mr. Webb presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, the Neshaminy School District is one of the thirteen school districts in Bucks County that utilizes the services of the Bucks County Intermediate Unit No. 22; and

WHEREAS, the Neshaminy School District contributed to the support of the Bucks County Intermediate Unit; and

WHEREAS, the School Code requires that the Intermediate Unit budget be presented and acted upon by the Board of School Directors.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Neshaminy Board of School Directors approves the Bucks County Intermediate Unit Program and Services and Instructional Materials Budget for 2010– 2011 in the amount of \$1,896,000 with our district share to be \$106,303.

Mr. Congdon seconded said motion.

Mr. Morris inquired if this is what we are currently paying the IU Department.

Mr. Webb replied that the \$106,303 is only part of the cost. It is Neshaminy's contribution of the basic cost of operating the IU. Mr. Webb stated that in his opinion the costs are too high. Last year Neshaminy paid \$8.8 million dollars to the IU for services that the district could not provide. One of the problems with the IU budget is that there is no direct taxpayer involvement. Mr. Webb further mentioned that there is no pressure on the IU to keep down their costs. Mr. Webb's recommendation to the administration is to explore outside sources.

Mr. Morris inquired if this is \$8.8 million dollars more per year.

Mr. Webb verified that that the \$106,303 is part of the \$8.8 million. Mr. Webb also stated that while the IU and Technical School provide valuable services, nevertheless, the cost is too high.

Dr. Muenker advised the Board that the administration would continue to examine the costs associated with the IU and to look at providing alternative methods to support the students' education.

Mr. Koutsouradis questioned if the Board does vote against this motion what will then happen.

Mr. Webb stated that the motion would still pass. Mr. Webb requested a roll call. The roll call tally indicated the motion was disapproved by a vote of zero ayes and nine nays, (Ms. Boyle, Mr. Congdon, Mrs. Cummings, Mr. Eccles, Mr. Koutsouradis, Mr. Morris, Mr. O'Connor, Mr. Oettinger, and Mr. Webb.)

Motion: Revision of Policies #227, #327, #427 and Guideline to Policy #102

Ms. Boyle presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, in order to keep District Board Policies updated and current, revisions are recommended by the administration to the Board Policies Committee for review, and

WHEREAS, recommended policies meet the requirements of Federal Law; and

WHEREAS, after review by the Board Policies Committee, the District is ready to recommend:

Revised Policy 227 – Work Regulations and Guidelines (Administrative & Supervisory Personnel)

Revised Policy 327 – Work Regulations and Guidelines (Certified Staff)

Revised Policy 427 – Work Regulations and Guidelines (Non-certified Staff)

Revised Guideline to Policy 102 – Selection and Election of Administrative Personnel

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Neshaminy Board of School Directors approve the revised Policies as recommended by the School Board Policies Committee.

Mr. Congdon seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said motion.

Motion: Appointment of Deputy Tax Collector for Middletown Township

Mr. Congdon presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, in accordance with the Local Tax Collection Law, the elected Tax Collector for Middletown Township is authorized to appoint a Deputy Tax Collector with approval of the taxing body and the bonding company.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Neshaminy Board of School Directors accept the appointment of Christina Chapman as Deputy Tax Collector for Middletown Township, in accordance with the request of the Tax Collector. This approval is subject to receipt of confirmation that the bond secured by the elected Tax Collector shall be applicable to the Deputy Tax Collector named above.

Mr. Oettinger seconded the motion.

Mr. Koutsouradis inquired if there was any cost to the district.

Mr. Paradise stated that the Bonding Company would cover the deputy at no extra cost to the district.

Mr. Webb requested a roll call. The roll call tally indicated the motion passed by a vote of seven ayes, (Ms. Boyle, Mr. Congdon, Mrs. Cummings, Mr. Koutsouradis, Mr. O'Connor, Mr. Oettinger, Mr. Webb), one nay, (Mr. Eccles) and one abstention, (Mr. Morris.)

Mr. Eccles stated that his nay vote was in no way related directly to the tax collector. Mr. Eccles explained that the elected officials should present their request to the Board personally out of respect to the Board.

Federal Programs

Dr. Muenker advised the Board on the professional development for ESL teachers Fund #48 in the amount of \$27,632.00.

Other Board Business

Mr. Profy advised the Board on the two following motions.

Motion: Siles Elementary School Parcel

Ms. Boyle presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, the School District did, on September 30, 1982, grant and convey the Siles Elementary School Parcel to the Township of Lower Southampton under and subject to the Deed Restriction and Reverter that the property at all times be used for only senior citizen activities;

WHEREAS, Lower Southampton Township has requested that the School District amend the Deed Restriction and Reverter to permit the use of the property for senior citizen activities, children's activities and other community and municipal purposes.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the School Board approves the aforesaid request of Lower Southampton Township pertaining to the use of the Siles Elementary School Parcel, as more particularly set forth in and subject to the conditions and Reverter contained in the annexed Modification to Deed Restriction and Reverter which is incorporated into this Resolution and approves and authorizes the Board President and Secretary to execute said Modification.

Mr. Koutsouradis seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said motion.

Motion: Langhorne Holdings, LLC 2009 & 2010 Assessment Appeal

Mr. Morris presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, Langhorne Holdings, LLC has filed Tax Year 2009 and Tax Year 2010 Assessment Appeals for TMP #22-040-026 to Court of Common Pleas of Bucks County, Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, the Solicitor of the School District has negotiated and has recommended to the Board of School Directors that said Tax Year 2009 and Tax Year 2010 Assessment Appeals be settled as set forth; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the School District stipulate and agree that the Assessment for Tax Map Parcel #22-040-026 owned by Langhorne Holdings, LLC be fixed as follows:

- 2009 Tax Year at Two Hundred Eighty-Seven Thousand Two Hundred Thirty-Five (\$287,235) Dollars.

- 2010 Tax Year at Two Hundred Forty-Nine Thousand Seven Hundred Forty-Five (\$249,745) Dollars.

Mr. Eccles seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said motion.

Public Comment

Dave Preston, Middletown Township, and owner of Preston's Garage in Hulmeville, addressed the Board with his concerns about the burden to taxpayers in the Neshaminy District. Mr. Preston stated that during these trying times everyone, including teachers, must share the burden. Mr. Preston also added that the taxpayers of Neshaminy are willing to accept their responsibility; however, requested that the Board keep in mind the best interest of the taxpayers during negotiations.

Larry Pastor, Business Executive of Middletown, agreed with Mrs. Kovach's remarks concerning her impression of the level of education in the elementary schools. Mr. Pastor suggested that program cuts in the Neshaminy School District are an unfortunate consequence due to the higher salaries and benefits that the teachers receive in comparison to other teacher's unions out of state. He stated that he believes that the NESPA contract offer is still not affordable to the district and further negotiations are needed. In Mr. Pastor's opinion, private contracts would realize a much larger savings to the district.

Board Comment

Mr. O'Connor commented on the extraordinary job Neshaminy High School students did on the musical, "Willie Wonka." He suggested to Mrs. Kovach and other parents to explore the possibilities that the District's Fine Arts Program offers.

Mr. Webb stated that the next Public Work Session Meeting, which is on March 9, 2010, will be held in the large auditorium in Neshaminy High School.

Mr. Morris encouraged the public to offer their comments and opinions at the School Board Meetings.

Adjournment

Mr. O'Connor moved the meeting be adjourned and Ms. Boyle seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion. Mr. Webb adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Burns
Board Secretary