

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC BOARD MEETING MINUTES
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
July 19, 2011

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public session on July, 19, 2011, 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
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
Mrs. Barbara Markowitz
Dr. Geeta Heble
Dr. Jacqueline Rattigan
Mrs. Theresa Hinterberger

BOARD MEMBER ABSENT:

Mr. Kim Koutsouradis, Vice President

OTHERS: Approximately 450 persons from the public, staff and press

SECRETARY: Mrs. Jennifer Burns

SOLICITOR: Thomas J. Profy, IV, Esquire

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

Call to Order

Mr. Webb called the meeting to order at 7:17 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

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

Announcements

None

Public Comment

Jeff Dunkley, elected officer of the NFT and Neshaminy school teacher, Feasterville, asked the Board to provide an accounting of how the \$1.6 million that will be paid to the Neshaminy School District from the state will be used. Mr. Dunkley said that he hopes it will be used to reinstate some of the school programs that have recently been cut. Mr. Dunkley concluded by stating that the proposal made by the Board on July 18, 2011 was entirely unsatisfactory.

Angie Manning, New Jersey teacher, Langhorne, commented that she and her husband would like to see a full-day kindergarten offered at the Charter School. Ms. Manning stated that she thinks the Board's proposal is right on par with other school districts. She compared the teacher's contract of the school district where she is employed, summarizing the contributions required by those teachers. She remarked that she thinks the Neshaminy School Board's proposal is a good start and she is hopeful for a successful negotiation.

Dawn Belser, graduate of Neshaminy, Langhorne, voiced her support for choice. She said that students all learn at different levels and require different plans of instruction and choice is beneficial. Although a charter school is not the answer for everyone, Ms. Belser said it is good to have the option. She also thanked the Board for standing firm and not raising taxes in this very difficult economy.

Armando Carrasquillo, private investigator, Laurel Oaks, voiced that he was offended at a teacher's comment during a previous meeting, which blamed parents for the failing grades of students. Mr. Carrasquillo said that teachers who refuse to participate in home access and make no effort to communicate with parents via email or phone and do not attend parent-teacher conferences are derelict in their duties and should not be casting blame on parents. Mr. Carrasquillo said that if there is a teachers strike, he will push for the No Strike Bill in Harrisburg. He concluded by remarking that the latest Board offer is fair and reasonable and should be considered by the union.

Gail Thibodeau, parent and resident of Langhorne, asked the NFT if the issue is not about the money as they claim, then why don't they agree to the monetary portion of the contract offer and then negotiate the remaining items. Ms. Thibodeau encouraged the Board to approved School Lane Charter School Application so that parents have a choice, especially in light of the current contract situation and the threat of a Work to Contract action or a strike.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Muenker advised the Board on the following:

- Summer Arts Performances
- Footloose July 27th - 30th
- Alice In Wonderland July 29th - 30th
- Summer Art Show July 27th
- Summer Instrumental Concert July 28th

Certified and Support Personnel Actions

Dr. Muenker presented the following for approval:

- Elections - Certified Personnel

Dr. Muenker recommended the approval of Beth Fox for the position of principal at Lower Southampton Elementary School.

Mr. O'Connor moved that the Certified Personnel Report be approved. Mrs. Cummings seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved said report.

Mr. Webb announced that the reopening of the 2011-2012 Budget and Adopting the Revised 2011-2012 Budget has been tabled.

Motion: Application of the School Lane Charter School - Neshaminy

Mr. Profy presented the following motion:

Neshaminy School District
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, on November 15, 2010, School Lane Charter School - Neshaminy (hereinafter Applicant) submitted a Charter School Application (hereinafter Application) to the Neshaminy School District (hereinafter District) in accordance with Act 22 of 1997 seeking a charter for the 2011-2012 school year; and

WHEREAS, District was required to review the application and must hold a public hearing to obtain information necessary to determine whether the Application shall be accepted or rejected; and

WHEREAS, duly advertised public hearings were held on December 15, 2010 and February 17, 2011 for the purpose of clarifying information submitted in the Application and answering questions from the District's Board of School Directors (hereinafter Board) and the public; and

WHEREAS, the Board and its administrators reviewed the Application and supplemental information provided by Applicant and either attended the public hearing or had an opportunity to review the transcript of the public hearing; and

WHEREAS, the Board reviewed the Application and record of the proceedings to evaluate the Application under the criteria set forth in Charter School Law Section 1717-A(E)(2); and

WHEREAS, the Board was required to evaluate the Application and grant or deny the Application, pursuant to Charter School Law Section 1717-A(E); and

WHEREAS the Board by Resolution dated February 22, 2011 denied the Application of School Lane Charter School – Neshaminy; and

WHEREAS, the Applicant resubmitted the Application in accordance with Section 1717 of the Charter School law; and

WHEREAS, a duly advertised Public Hearing was held on May 31, 2011, for the purpose of clarifying information submitted in the revised Application and answering questions from the District's Board and the public.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of School Directors of Neshaminy School District hereby approved the application of School Lane Charter School and directs the solicitor to prepare a formal resolution to that effect.

ATTEST:

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Jennifer Burns, Board Secretary

By: _____
Ritchie Webb, Board President

Mr. Congdon seconded the motion.

Mr. O'Connor asked if there was any update regarding the status of the Charter School's PSSA scores.

Ms. Shade responded that the PSSA scores for the student data information was distributed from the state, but it has not yet been determined if the school has made AYP; however, that information will be forwarded to Neshaminy as soon as it is available. It is expected that they will make AYP as usual.

Mr. Eccles announced that it is with great despair that he will support the Charter School due to the present situation in the state of Pennsylvania and the present unfortunate situation in the Neshaminy District, now is the time for school choice.

Mr. Webb called for a roll call tally. The tally indicated that the motion passed by a vote of 7 ayes and one nay, (Mr. O'Connor).

Motion: Approval of Solar Energy Agreement

Mrs. Cummings presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, in order to provide solar energy to Neshaminy High School and Maple Point Middle School, the District has entered into discussions with Sunlogics; and

WHEREAS, the District has reviewed and discussed a Power Purchase Agreement at the Board Facilities Finance Committee meetings.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Neshaminy Board of School Directors authorizes the Solicitor and Superintendent to finalize the terms and conditions of a 20-year Power Purchase Agreement with Sunlogics; and for the School District to enter into an Agreement with Sunlogics with terms and conditions acceptable to the Solicitor and Superintendent subject to the approval and ratification of the Agreement by the Board of School Directors.

Mr. Congdon seconded the motion.

The motion passed by a vote of seven ayes, and one nay, (Mr. Eccles).

Mr. Eccles stated that the reason why he voted against this motion is because a twenty year contract is a very long time and technology is constantly changing.

Mr. Webb announced that there is no cost to the district regarding this motion and the energy that will be purchased should save the district money.

Other Board Business

None

Public Comment

Steven Pirritano, self-employed, Feasterville, commented that several weeks ago at a Public Board Meeting the NFT came in force chanting negotiate, negotiate; however, when the time came at the negotiation meeting on July 18, 2011 they walked out. Mr. Pirritano said that negotiations cannot occur if both sides are not in attendance. He stated that the Board's offer is fair and reasonable. He thanked the Board for putting items in such as Home Access, which is a very important tool for parents and he thanked those teachers who have been participating in this program. He concluded by imploring the NFT to negotiate.

Charles Alfonso, semi-retired business executive, Middletown, stated that as long as the district's scores remain mediocre, he will continue to voice his opinion and disapproval regarding the matter. Mr. Alfonso remarked that he is offended when some teachers criticize parents for lack of involvement in their children's education, because he feels teachers are out of touch with the long hours and multiple jobs that some parents endure in today's economy. Mr. Alfonso said that teachers are paid a high salary for much shorter work hours than most parents put in and such criticism is unfair to parents.

Marian Reed, Neshaminy middle school teacher, challenged a comment made about Ms. Boyd and Mr. Dunkley having New Jersey shore summer homes stating that this is untrue.

Lisa Piento, X-ray technician, Levittown, thanked the Board for their service and said that the recent offer is a realistic offer in today's world. Ms. Piento suggested that the \$1.6 million from the state be put towards repairing some of the schools in the district.

Kathleen Morris, Philadelphia School teacher, Neshaminy resident and wife of a Board member declared that NFT's decision to protest outside the homes and work places of School Board members is harassment and intimidation. Ms. Morris acknowledged that most of the NFT members are good teachers; however, this action is certainly not beneficial to their cause.

Board Comment

Mr. Morris stated that to date he still has not received an explanation from the NFT of the savings that they had previously claimed were in their offer. Mr. Morris remarked that many hours of preparation went into the Board's offer and it is untrue that the offer is not a fair and reasonable offer. He urged the newer members of the NFT to get involved and voice their opinions in order to come to an agreement on the contract.

Mr. Webb announced that he informed Mr. Kearns, the mediator, of dates that are available for negotiations and Mr. Kearns will provide the dates to the NFT for scheduling meetings.

Adjournment

Mr. Eccles moved the meeting be adjourned and Mr. Congdon seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion. Mr. Webb adjourned the meeting at 7:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Burns
Board Secretary