

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

SPECIAL PUBLIC BOARD MEETING MINUTES
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
(PUBLIC MEETING)
February 27, 2007

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public session on February 27, 2007, in the Board Room of the 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
Ms. Irene M. Boyle
Mrs. Susan Cummings
Mr. Frank J. Koziol
Dr. William H. Spitz
Mr. Ritchie Webb

ADMINISTRATORS:

Mr. Paul J. Kadri
Dr. Louis T. Muenker
Dr. Sandra Costanzo
Dr. Geeta Heble
Mr. Joseph V. Paradise
Dr. Jacqueline Rattigan

BOARD MEMBER NOT PRESENT:

Mr. Jason Bowman

SOLICITOR:

Thomas Profy, III, Esquire

SECRETARY:

Mrs. Anita E. Walls

OTHERS: Approximately 20 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.

Announcements

No announcements.

Public Comment

Ms. Chris Coen, Feasterville, PA, stated that she believes that the Board owes the public an apology. The last board meeting that was televised was a disgrace. Fighting like that should never take place in a public forum. Especially since the weather conditions that evening were very poor. Students that attend the meetings to help with the video taping were present that night. Parents need to pick those students up. Ms. Coen stated that she was furious when she saw the meeting and saw the fighting, personal agendas and backstabbing, etc. Get on with the business of the District and run the meetings professionally.

Mr. Steve Rodos, Villages of Flowers Mills, Langhorne, PA, stated that the role of the school board member is not to run the schools. Mr. Rodos does not think that it is necessary to have a board policy which states how many people are hired or who is hired, nor does a board member need to sit on a hiring committee. Mr. Rodos feels that those in charge are doing a great job and let them continue to do their job. Second, Mr. Rodos advised that New York City allows advertising on school buses on the right side which must contain a highway safety theme. Seatbelts on school buses manufactured after 1987 are required in the state of New York, New Jersey, Florida and California. Mr. Rodos stated that yesterday there was a bus accident where the school bus turned onto its side. Mr. Rodos stated that if anyone tried to take their grandchildren in their vehicle without having them buckled up in seat belts you would never hear the end of it from their parents. Mr. Rodos stated that he is in favor of a full day kindergarten. While the board may be elected by seniors the real constituents are the 9,300 school children for whom you are entrusted to provide quality education. Spend the money and

the worst that can happen is that the test scores will rise throughout the District and the fair market values of the homes will also rise because Neshaminy School District is leading the way rather than following. Finally, Mr. Rodos stated that he is against Act 1 regardless of the fact that he would get a refund under its provisions. It is unfair in that it gives a free ride to politicians who were recently voted out of office and therefore retired, also, to retired teachers and other former executives whose pensions, 401K's and other non-taxable forms of income under Pennsylvania law. Mr. Rodos believes in paying the fair share of taxes. Act 1 does not share my belief.

Mr. Solis Basen, Langhorne, PA, thanked Dr. Costanzo for the beautiful newsletter that went out to the community. Mr. Basen noted that Act 1 is a cop out by the state and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to help property tax relief. Mr. Basen urged the Board to vote for the earned income tax to be placed on the May ballot. Help the senior citizens who support Neshaminy School District. Mr. Basen has gained respect for Mr. Kadri and his hands on policy, but in the last few meetings he has proposed three or four new projects costing many thousands of dollars. Mr. Basen would like to hear of some projects that would save the school district money to help control the upcoming budget.

Mr. Sy Goldstein, Villages of Flowers Mills, Langhorne, PA, stated that the legislators of PA have sold its citizens down the river and he would also be in favor of the board placing on the ballot an earned income tax. The assessment issue costs Pennsylvania approximately \$10M-\$15M per year among the various counties that have to or want to reassess. Mr. Goldstein feels that the earned income tax would be a fairer way to proceed for those who can afford same.

Mrs. Donna Esposito, Langhorne, PA, stated that she was also very surprised by the behavior of some of the Board members. Mrs. Esposito does not support the formation of a personnel committee. The role of the school board is to set goals and policies for the district and there should be no interference with the hiring process. All a personnel committee will do is bring politics into the hiring decisions. A statement was made that the district must only hire outstanding candidates, either external or internal. Mrs. Esposito stated that one member noted that the district should attempt to train inside candidates to become outstanding. Mrs. Esposito does not agree. She feels that you cannot train a person to be outstanding. Qualities of outstanding employees are dedication, diligence, commitment and drive. Mrs. Esposito stated that it takes more than intelligence to hire qualified individuals; you need background knowledge in the field of education, just like you would need background knowledge in engineering if you were to hire an engineer. Stop trying to do the jobs of administrators and department chairs and do the job you were elected to do. Mrs. Esposito further commented that the on-line resource that was sent home to all parents of students in the district is a fantastic tool which is now available to all students within Neshaminy School District, however, the district needs to do more in showing students how to use this valuable resource. Mrs. Esposito stated that she is a professional librarian in the state of New Jersey and will encourage her children to use same, however, many parents within the district will not. Students need to be shown how to use this resource since teachers have been trained in this new on-line resource.

Student Representative Report

Miss Stephanie Esposito, Neshaminy High School Student Council Historian, provided the following report:

- Boys and Girls Swimming went to District 1 Championships and they did very well
- Girls' Basketball team went to the first round of the District 1 Tournament
- Girls' Bowling won the state championship
- Six wrestlers attended the District level competition
- Boys and Girls Track Team went to Penn State for State Championships
- Varsity Cheerleaders placed 3rd at SOL's and JV took 1st place
- Springs sports begin on March 5th
- 54th annual Gym Night will take place this weekend
- Junior Prom will take place on March 24th
- Welcome Back Spring Concert is on March 20th & 21st

Superintendent's Report

Mr. Kadri announced that Lower Southampton Elementary School received a grant sponsored by the Best Buy Organization in the amount of a \$2,500 scholarship and a \$15,000 scholarship. This now entitles Neshaminy to compete for a \$250,000 grant. Mr. Kadri announced that a junior, Brian Gemberling, became the first athlete from Neshaminy ever to win a district championship in diving. Mr. Kadri further advised that in Track and Field, Tim Bech broke a 20 year old record in the triple jump by jumping 45 feet. Congratulations are in order to all the fine athletes of Neshaminy.

Mr. Kadri noted that nutrition is a very high priority in all Neshaminy schools. Four of the schools belong to the Alliance for a Healthier Generation. The district is in the process of becoming bronze certified. Neshaminy Middle has been profiled in the newsletter for their efforts regarding nutrition.

Mr. Kadri stated that a request has been received from the CYO, Region 19 to use the track on four Sundays due to the fact that our track has a six lane track. The request has been presented at the Facilities and Finance Committee. Security and custodial services will have a cost involved and the association is aware of this cost.

Presentation by ATS&R

Mr. Paul Erickson from ATS&R provided Board members with an update from an architectural point of view of the construction project at Neshaminy High School.

Mr. Erickson stated to Board members that the project is moving along with great progress. Mr. Erickson noted that this is a difficult time of the project due to the fact that the project is coming out of the ground. For example, footings, utilities, foundations, etc. Contractors, construction managers, and leadership are on point and the project is moving along well.

Mr. Erickson addressed the roofing change order with Board members. Efforts were being made to save dollars for the district. State contracts are being used on this project for roofing, carpeting and modulars. Mr. Erickson advised that drawings were issued to the district back in 2005 during the design development phase at which time 70-80% of the design development was complete and the district went out and received a price from the state for said roofing contract. The final bid drawings versus the design development set were different and hence the changes required. The change order was in the area of \$290,000 and reflects the adjustment that needed to be made in this roofing area since the drawings used for the bid were in the design development stage and not final drawings. This decision was made to go forward in an effort to take advantage of 2005 pricing.

Mr. Paradise noted that the adjustment received regarding the roofing contract is of greater magnitude than the district was expecting. However, there was no mark-up in pricing.

Mr. Damien Spahr from Reynolds Construction was also available for questions from the Board. Mr. Spahr believes that the District is still saving approximately \$50,000 on the roofing contract even with the adjustment which has now been made. Board discussion ensued regarding the roofing contract.

Mr. Spahr advised that the project has not been delayed in any way.

Mr. Erickson advised that all the other contracts were bid on a complete set of documents based on industry standards. This situation regarding the roof was based on a set of documents which were not complete at the time and everyone was aware of the situation in order to obtain the best pricing.

Mr. Paradise noted that the district at the time was aware of a pending price increase in state contracts and requested that the documents be provided in order to obtain the state contracts. The district did not however anticipate the significance of the price change. It was suspected that there would be some modification.

Mr. Erickson addressed the issue of the climbing wall system and the challenge course. Mr. Erickson noted that a thickened slab has been poured in order to support the climbing wall system from the floor. The challenge course was also discussed in early design stages and during the last week changes have been occurring and verifications are taking place regarding the structural integrity.

Mr. Paradise summarized that the new gymnasium was designed to handle the climbing wall and challenge course. Mr. Spahr advised that the system was grandfathered by code to be used in a specific manner. If the wall is moved it cannot be put back into a masonry wall and it will need to have its own support system. The recommendation of the architect was to have the climbing wall supported from the floor with a thickened slab. Currently a structural analysis is occurring to identify where each of the pieces can be located and what is needed to support them.

Mr. Spahr noted that the project is on time and on budget. Contingencies are in place and at this time the district is not being asked to change any of the contingencies.

Approval of Minutes

Mrs. Walls presented the minutes of the January 23, 2007 and February 13, 2007 public meetings. Upon motion of Dr. Spitz and seconded by Ms. Boyle, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the January 23, 2007 and February 13, 2007 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:

- January, 2007 Treasurer's Reports, subject to audit
- Check Register – January, 2007
- Investment Summary
- Personal and Per Capita Tax Exonerations – January, 2007
- Budget Transfer Report (Working Copy 07-3)

Mr. Webb moved the January, 2007 Treasurer's Reports, subject to audit, Check Register for January, 2007, Investment Summary and Personal and Per Capita Tax Exonerations for the month of January, 2007, and the Budget Transfer Report (Working Copy 07-3). Mr. Blasch seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved the Treasurer's Reports, subject to audit, check registers, and investments and Budget Transfer Report (Working Copy 07-3). Mr. Bowman was not present.

Approval of Bids

Mr. Paradise presented the following bid:

Bid No. 08-10 Concrete Paving – Various Schools

Bid Amount: \$147,829.50

The bid is for concrete and curb repairs and ADA curb ramp installation at various schools throughout the district.

The Board unanimously approved the Bid No. 08-10. Mr. Bowman was not present.

Certified and Support Personnel Reports

Dr. Muenker presented the following for approval:

- 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 noted that a building principal has been chosen for Lower Southampton Elementary School and he is a 1988 graduate of Neshaminy High School.

Dr. Spitz moved the personnel report be accepted. Mrs. Cummings seconded the motion.

Dr. Spitz thanked the Administration for providing all the information regarding the position in Lower Southampton.

The Board unanimously approved the Certified and Support Personnel Reports as presented. Mr. Bowman was not present.

Mr. Kadri introduced Mr. Matthew Walsh who will fill the position as Principal at Lower Southampton Elementary School.

Motion: Approval of the BCIU #22 Programs & Services and Instructional Materials & Research Budget for 2007-2008

Ms. Boyle 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 2007 - 2008 in the amount of \$1,977,325 with our District share to be \$106,326.

Mrs. Barrett seconded the motion.

Mr. Eccles requested Mr. Profy to address the situation regarding the advertising on the IU transportation vehicles.

Mr. Profy advised that the motor vehicle code states that school buses are only allowed to have exterior labels and markings which are specifically required by law and regulation. The code requires buses to have certain markings. Mr. Profy stated that advertising is not permitted on school vehicles. Mr. Profy is not prepared to state that the license covers which are in question are actually advertising. If it is determined by the Department of Transportation that these license covers are advertising they could certainly be removed. The Department of Transportation publishes the regulations which are enforced by the state police.

Mr. Profy stated that what is before the Board this evening is an approval of the budget for the Intermediate Unit Program and Services.

Mr. Profy noted that it could be requested that the matter be addressed and appropriately dealt with at the Intermediate Unit.

The Board unanimously approved the motion. Mr. Bowman was not present.

Mr. Eccles asked if there was Board consensus to forward a letter to the IU regarding the advertising issue.

Dr. Spitz is not in favor of any further action regarding this issue.

There was not Board consensus to proceed with any further action.

Motion: Revision of Board Policy #535 - Weapons

Mr. Eccles presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, in order to keep District Board Policies update and current, new policies and 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 535 – Weapons

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

Mr. Koziol seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved the motion. Mr. Bowman was not present.

Motion: Technology Communication Devices

Dr. Spitz presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, the Neshaminy School District highlighted in the 2006-07 Budget a plan to improve District Technology Infrastructure over three phases; and

WHEREAS, Phase One (Board approved) involved the purchase and installation of desktop computers, Phase Two (Board approved) involved the purchase and installation of network servers, and Phase Three involves the purchase and installation of network communication devices, and

WHEREAS, the Administration has recommended and reviewed with the Technology Committee of the Neshaminy Board of School Directors the details of Phase Three, and

WHEREAS, approval of this Phase Three Plan is being sought in the amount detailed in the attachment for LAN/MAN equipment, District wide Voice Over IP Equipment, and video equipment. (See Attachment A)

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that authorization by the Neshaminy Board of School Directors be given to proceed with Phase Three of the District's 2006-2007 Technology Initiative.

Mr. Blasch seconded the motion.

Mr. Eccles requested a roll call vote. The roll call tally indicated the motion passed with seven ayes (Mrs. Barrett, Mr. Blasch, Ms. Boyle, Mrs. Cummings, Mr. Eccles, Dr. Spitz and Mr. Webb, and one nay (Mr. Koziol). Mr. Bowman was not present.

Motion: Gallup Teacher Insight Program

Mr. Eccles presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, the Neshaminy School District recognizes the importance effective teaching plays in the success of students; and

WHEREAS, the Board of School Directors anticipates the potential for many District vacancies over the next few years as a result of staff retirements; and

WHEREAS, in order to provide the Human Resources Department with the best research-based tools in which to qualify prospective applicants, a review was done of the Gallup Organization's Teacher Insight Online Screening Tool; and

WHEREAS, this tool provides important information when combined with other aspects of an individual's resume which will give the Human Resources Department a more comprehensive basis in which to hire the best teaching applicants.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of School Directors authorizes the Business Administrator to enter into an annually renewed contract with the Gallup Organization as specified in the attachment. (See Attachment B)

Dr. Spitz seconded the motion.

Mr. Koziol was concerned that money was being spent this year for this program when the need will not be necessary until upcoming years.

Dr. Muenker feels the tool will be helpful in the hiring process but would not be an exclusionary tool. It would be beneficial and add to the hiring/interview process. This tool would also be used when hiring day to day substitutes.

Board discussion took place regarding the benefits and advantages of using such a tool in the hiring process.

Mr. Eccles requested a roll call vote. The roll call tally indicated the motion passed by a vote of five ayes (Mrs. Barrett, Mr. Blasch, Ms. Boyle, Mrs. Cummings, Dr. Spitz) and three nays (Mr. Eccles, Mr. Koziol and Mr. Webb). Mr. Bowman was not present.

Items for Discussion

EIT/PIT Recommendation for Primary Election Ballot

Board discussion ensued regarding whether to place an EIT or PIT on the ballot in May. The Board must place either an EIT or PIT on the ballot. It will be the responsibility of the taxpayers to vote "NO" for this tax. The Board cannot take the recommendation of the Tax Study Commission.

Mr. Webb reviewed with Board members the pros and cons of either an EIT or PIT tax and the impact it will have on various taxpayers and various locals within the district. Lower Southampton will be especially hard hit by either of these taxes, since they already have in place a 1% earned income tax. Mr. Webb stated that he is personally against taxing people's savings.

Mr. Paradise advised Board members of the costs which would potentially be incurred regarding the collection of said tax and would basically be the same for collecting either an EIT or PIT.

Mr. Profy advised that the vote on this specific issue will take place on March 13, 2007. A public hearing will take place on March 13, 2007 and the Board will then take action.

Mr. Paradise reviewed the handouts provided to Board members.

Federal Programs

Mr. Kadri updated the Board regarding the Federal programs.

Other Board Business

Mr. Blasch offered his apology to the public regarding the topic of recognition at the previous board meeting. It is a very emotional topic and he did offer his sincere apologies for conducting in a less than professional manner.

Mr. Webb stated that he is proud that Neshaminy meetings can be televised and discussions take place in an open forum for the public to experience. Mr. Webb also apologized for any conduct which occurred at the prior meeting which was not professional.

Ms. Boyle stated that if the Board may seem over emotional regarding certain topics and issues it is because the Board deeply cares about the outcome of issues concerning the district and students.

Mrs. Barrett commended Poquessing Middle School for providing a wonderful play. The caliber of the performance was great and the new lighting offered a great asset to the production.

Further, Mrs. Barrett noted that the SAGE group will be meeting on March 28th at Poquessing Middle School for a breakfast gathering. Mrs. Barrett invited any interested seniors to attend.

Public Comment

None.

Board Comment

None.

Adjournment of Meeting

Mr. Webb moved the meeting be adjourned and Mr. Blasch seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion. Mr. Eccles adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Anita E. Walls
Board Secretary