

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC WORK SESSION MINUTES
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
February 4, 2014

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public work session on February 4, 2014 in the District Offices Board Room at the Maple Point Middle School. The following persons were in attendance:

BOARD MEMBERS:

Mr. Scott E. Congdon, President
Ms. Irene Boyle, Vice President
Mr. John Allen
Mrs. Susan Cummings
Mr. Mike Morris
Mr. Stephen Pirritano
Mr. Ron Rudy
Mr. Mark Shubin

ADMINISTRATORS:

Mr. Robert L. Copeland
Mrs. Barbara Markowitz
Mrs. Theresa Hinterberger
Mr. Anthony Devlin
Dr. Gloria Hancock
Mr. Don Harm

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mr. Anthony Sposato

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

SECRETARY: Mrs. Jennifer Burns

SOLICITOR: Thomas J. Profy, III, Esquire

1. Call to Order

Mr. Congdon called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

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

3. Announcements

None.

4. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Copeland advised the Board on the following:

- Mr. Charles Kistner - Technology Education Presentation - Poquessing Middle School
7th Graders: Emily Kirsch, Heather Dixon, Joseph Palmieri, Rishi Patel
8th Graders: Louis Donatucci, Matt Pozzuolo, Emily Abrams

5. Public Comment

Almando Carrasquillo, retired trooper, resident of Langhorne, congratulated Mr. Kistner on his technology presentation. Mr. Carrasquillo made a suggestion that they look into reverse engineering because it is a great way to see how things are designed and created. Mr. Carrasquillo stated that when it snows there have been a lot of students walking on Yardley-Langhorne Road because the sidewalks are not shoveled. He commented on the danger of this practice. Mr. Carrasquillo said there is a path along Lake View Estates that could be used and he asked the Board to make sure Lake View Estates is plowed for students.

6. Items for Discussion

a) Comprehensive Annual Financial Report

Mrs. Markowitz explained that the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report of the Neshaminy School District is brought to the Board as an informational item. Mrs. Markowitz stated that the report is

divided into three sections, introduction, financials, and statistics. The information is presented in a manner that fairly represents the fiscal soundness of the District.

7. Items for Approval Tonight

a) Overnight Trips

Mr. Harm submitted the following trips for approval:

1. Neshaminy High School Vocal Music Students to PMEA Regional Chorus Festival, February 13 -15, 2014 at Upper Merion High School.
2. Neshaminy High School Boys Indoor Track State Championship, February 28 - March 1, 2014 at Penn State University.
3. Neshaminy High School Vocal Music Students PMEA All State Festival and Conference, March 26 - 29, 2014 at Hersey Lodge.
4. Neshaminy High School Junior Class Trip to Williamsburg, VA, May 3 - 5, 2014.
5. Neshaminy High School Model UN Club to UN Headquarters & Grand Hyatt Hotel, New York City, May 15 - 17, 2014.
6. Neshaminy High School Men's Chorus to Barbershop Harmony Society's Mid-Winter Convention, January 8 - 11, 2015, New Orleans Louisiana.
7. Neshaminy High School Foreign Language Trip to Spain/France, TBD Summer 2016.

Mr. Shubin asked how Neshaminy High School UN Club came to be representing the country of Syria.

Mr. Harm stated he did not have that information at this time.

Mr. Morris asked if all students are eligible to attend the junior class trip and how do they fundraise for that trip.

Mr. Harm stated that all students are eligible but there is no fundraising for that particular trip.

Mr. Morris stated that he would like to see some fundraising done for those students who would like to attend that trip but aren't financially able to.

Mr. Allen asked if there was a criteria of ratio for chaperones per students.

Mr. Copeland stated it's approximately 8 to 12 to 1.

Mr. Shubin stated sometimes parents and administrators go along as well but are not listed.

Mr. Shubin made a motion to accept said trips.

Mrs. Cummings seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously accepted said motion by a vote of 8 ayes and 0 nays. (Mr. Sposato was not present.)

Motion: Revised 2013- 2014 School Calendar

Ms. Boyle read the following motion:

WHEREAS, due to inclement weather on December 10, 2013, January 3, January 22, and February 3, 2014 which closed schools for our K-12 student body, school will now be in session on April 14, 15 and 16, 2014 pending a signed Memorandum of Agreement with NESPA; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the Pennsylvania School Code, it is necessary to revise the calendar in order to meet the minimum state child accounting and attendance regulations;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of School Directors approves the attached revised school calendar.

Mr. Morris seconded the motion.

Mr. Pirritano stated he was concerned the Board did not have a copy of the memorandum agreement with NESPA with this proposal.

Mr. Copeland stated that a copy was sent the last time this was done. He said that what they are looking for is the school district and the association to agree to suspend that memorandum of agreement in 2012. He stated that the concern is that the winter is not over and there may be more days lost. Mr. Copeland said this allows them to pursue NESPA giving a waiver.

Mr. Shubin stated that NESPA has not approved this agreement as of today.

Mr. Copeland stated that is correct. He said we would sign a letter of agreement consistent with 2012, nothing more, nothing less.

Mr. Pirritano asked if this would require additional compensation.

Mrs. Hinterberger explained that there are four paid work days that need to be made up.

The Board unanimously accepted said motion by a vote of 8 ayes and 0 nays. (Mr. Sposato was not present.)

Motion: Reform to PSERS to Reduce Projected Costs to Schools District

Mr. Congdon read the following motion:

A RESOLUTION OF THE NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS TO URGE THE GOVERNOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO PROVIDE REFORM TO THE PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYEE PENSION REFORM TO REDUCE PROJECTED COSTS TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND TAXPAYERS OVER THE NEXT THREE DECADES, WHILE MAINTAINING AN APPROPRIATE PENSION BENEFIT FOR SCHOOL EMPLOYEES.

WHEREAS, Neshaminy School District is a municipal corporation and public entity formed by and for the communities of Langhorne Manor, Langhorne Borough, Feasterville, Trevoise, Middletown Township, Penndel, Hulmeville and Lower Southampton Township operating under the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Public School Code of 1949 as amended from time to time; and

WHEREAS, Neshaminy School District participates in the Pennsylvania Public School Employees Retirement System (PSERS) for its professional employees, administrators and staff; and

WHEREAS, the continued decline in state funding for education together with increased pension costs combine to threaten Neshaminy School District's educational programs, staffing, services and our commitment to Academics, Athletics and the Arts; and

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Public School Employees Retirement System has increased the employer contribution rate from 5.64% in 2010-11 to 21.4% for the 2014-15 fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, this escalation represents a quadruple increase over the last four years; and

WHEREAS, the employer contribution rate to PSERS is projected to continue to increase over the next 21 years, reaching a rate of 31.43% in 2034-35, and will continue to exceed 30% for a total of 17 years, then remain in double digits for an additional 9 years thereafter; and

WHEREAS, meaningful solutions to these problems must involve identifying other funding sources for PSERS, actuarially appropriate adjustments to amortization of gains and losses, limitations of eligibility, adjustment of benefit levels, and examining the possibility of adoption of a hybrid pension plan that would reduce employer costs over time.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that WE, the Board of School Directors of the Neshaminy School District calls upon the General Assembly to begin immediate consideration of school employee pension reform to reduce projected costs to school districts and taxpayers over the next three decades, while maintaining an appropriate pension benefit for school employees.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Neshaminy School District Board of School Directors also calls on the General Assembly to provide the creation of a hybrid pension system consisting of defined benefit and defined contribution for school employees as a potential solution, without transferring the burden to future generations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be submitted to the elected senators and representatives of the Neshaminy School District, and to the members of the General Assembly, and to the Governor of The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Adopted this _____ day of _____, 2014.

Signed,

Scott E. Congdon, President of the Board

Irene M. Boyle, Vice President of the Board

John V. Allen, Board Member

Susan Cummings, Board Member

Mike Morris, Board Member

Stephen Pirritano, Board Member

Ron Rudy, Board Member

Mark Shubin, Board Member

Anthony Sposato, Board Member

Attested by:

{SEAL}

Jennifer Burns, Board Secretary

Robert L. Copeland, Superintendent

Mr. Shubin seconded the motion.

Mr. Copeland stated that the Governor's speech this morning put the PSERS rate much lower and in order for that to happen there needs to be a revision in the law.

Mr. Morris asked if this is a movement that is being done in other districts.

Mr. Copeland stated that we received a sample resolution from Centennial and we were asked by several Board members to present this motion this evening.

Mr. Morris suggested that a written report be submitted by the State Representatives, who are representing the district, so that we can see what has been done and what direction Harrisburg is going.

The Board unanimously accepted said motion by a vote of 8 ayes and 0 nays. (Mr. Sposato was not present.)

8. Items for Approval at the February 18th Public Board Meeting

a) BCIU #22 - 2014 - 2015 Programs & Services and Instructional Materials and Research Budget

Mr. Copeland stated that at the February 18, 2014 Public Board Meeting the BCIU #22 - 2014 - 2015 Programs & Services and Instructional Materials and Research Budget will be an agenda item.

b) Approval of the 2014 - 2015 Preliminary Budget

Mr. Copeland stated that at the February 18, 2014 Public Board Meeting the Approval of the 2013 - 2014 Preliminary Budget will be an agenda item.

c) Bids/Budget Transfers

Mrs. Markowitz stated that there were no bids and there was one Budget Transfer (Working Copy) 14-4 with three transactions, which will be an agenda item at the February 18th, Public Board Meeting.

9. Committee Reports

a) Board Polices

Ms. Boyle stated to the Board that the next meeting is scheduled for February 26th, at 6:30 p.m.

b) Educational Development

Ms. Boyle stated to the Board that the next meeting is scheduled for February 11th, and the agenda will be listed on the website.

c) Finance/Facilities

Mr. Congdon advised the Board that at their last meeting in January they reviewed the preliminary budget and will be working on the date of the next meeting with the Ad Hoc committee.

d) IU Board

Mrs. Cummings informed the Board that the IU Board did vote on the Programs & Services and Instructional Materials Budget and the next meeting is scheduled for March 17th.

e) Neshaminy Education Foundation

Mr. Shubin advised the Board that the date will be announced at a later time.

f) Technical School

Mr. Morris stated to the Board that they are in the early stages of talks with the support staff with regards to the proposal.

g) Technology

Mr. Shubin informed the Board that the first meeting is scheduled for March.

h) Ad Hoc Facility Use Update

Mr. Pirritano informed the Board that they are waiting on the GIS report and then a date will be announced for the next meeting.

10. Public Comment

Steve Rodos, retired, resident of Villages of Flowers Mill, stated that, in order to save money, he thinks it is time to close an elementary school in September. He asked for an explanation on the proposal of pensions.

Almando Carrasquillo, retired trooper, resident of Langhorne, asked if school trips are insured in the event of a last minute cancellation. Mr. Carrasquillo stated that there seems to be some resistance to parent chaperones and suggested a policy be written regarding parent chaperones.

11. Future Topics

None.

12. Agenda Development for the February 18th, Public Board Meeting

None.

13. Board Comment

Mr. Copeland stated, that the response to Mr. Rodos' question on pensions, that the resolution the Board voted in the past talks about a relief from the school districts there is nothing that states a diminution of benefits for people that are eligible. He stated that he will look into if there is insurance on cancelled trips. He also said that the problem with parents chaperoning trips is getting the clearance with background checks and fingerprints and at times becomes complicated when there is overnight trips.

Mr. Pirritano said that the Ad Hoc committee is currently working towards the goal of consolidation and they are gathering the correct information and following state requirements.

Mr. Congdon reiterated that there is a process for the consolidation project and the Board will be following that process.

Mr. Morris thanked Mrs. Markowitz for the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and said it is a wealth of information. Mr. Morris said that he needs more information with regard to closing any schools in the district. Mr. Morris asked if the motion is stating that there will be a reduction in pensions.

Mr. Copeland responded that the increased cost of the pension burden is going to escalate to 31% in 2034-35 and this motion puts the Legislature and the Governor on notice to do something about it rather than pass their obligation on to the municipalities and school districts.

Ms. Boyle stated that the resolution basically says that we are asking them to investigate it at this time.

Mr. Shubin thanked Mr. Kistner for bringing his 7th and 8th graders to demonstrate what they do. Mr. Shubin said that with regard to PSERS, it is a statewide issue and we need to get everyone involved and action needs to be taken. He also said that the consolidation project is not a one year project it is a multiyear plan.

Mr. Congdon said that the sidewalk issue relating to the snow will be looked into. He said that the continued decline in state funding for education together with increased pension costs combine to threaten Neshaminy.

Mr. Pirritano stated that we have to be proactive and minimize our costs.

14. Adjournment of Meeting

Mr. Congdon moved the meeting be adjourned and Mr. Shubin seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion. Mr. Congdon adjourned the meeting at 8:22 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Jennifer Burns
Board Secretary