

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC WORK SESSION MINUTES
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
November 13, 2012

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public work session on November 13, 2012 in the Harry M. Dengler, Jr. Performing Arts Center at the Maple Point Middle School. The following persons were in attendance:

BOARD MEMBERS:

Mr. Ritchie Webb, President
Mr. Kim Koutsouradis, Vice President
Ms. Irene Boyle
Mr. Scott E. Congdon
Mrs. Susan Cummings
Mr. Mike Morris
Mr. William Oettinger
Mr. Mr. Mark Shubin

ADMINISTRATORS:

Mr. Robert L. Copeland
Dr. Jacqueline Rattigan
Mrs. Barbara Markowitz
Mr. Anthony Devlin
Mrs. Theresa Hinterberger

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

Mr. Webb announced that an Excessive Session was held and personnel issues were discussed.

1. Call to Order

Mr. Webb called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Webb 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:

- Oliver Heckman Hosts Teddy Bear Day.
- IBM community service grant supports Neshaminy School District.
- 2012 Neshaminy School District Property Tax Assistance Program.
- Neshaminy Drama Presents Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*.
- The Playwickian Columbia Scholastic Press Association Gold Medal Award.
- Art Student wins Attorney Generals' Drug Free Calendar Contest.
- Maple Point Middle School Celebrates America's 59th Veterans Day.
- All three Neshaminy High School publications receive silver award from the Pennsylvania School Press Association.
- Holiday Concert will be held on November 19th at 7: 00 p.m.
- Neshaminy High School girl's soccer team is in semi-finals.

5. Public Comment

Donna Boyle, Parkland, voiced her opposition to Neshaminy using the term "Redskins" in relation to team names, school newspaper, flyers, etc. Ms. Boyle said that the term is offensive to Native Americans and it is

comparable to a racial slur. She suggested that another name be selected because the district had used other names in the past and should do so now.

Almando Carrasquillo, retired State Trooper, Middletown Township, stated that Policy #811–Acceptable Use of the Computers, Network, Internet, Electronic Communications and Technical Services is counterproductive and he is strongly opposed to it. He noted that he had previously sent an email to the Board outlining the reasons for his opposition and he said that he will follow up with another report to the Board. Mr. Carrasquillo said that although the policy is used by other districts, such as Council Rock, Neshaminy’s record of performance should be considered as a reason not to accept this policy for our district.

Stephen Pirritano, self-employed, Feasterville, agreed with Mr. Carrasquillo that he also has reservations regarding Policy #811. He said that there have been times in the past where personal use of computers has been abused and he asked the Board to take that into consideration in deciding if this policy should be allowed to continue. Mr. Pirritano said he is in support of the Board changing Policy #512.

6. Items for Discussion

a) Setting of Tax Collectors Salaries

Mrs. Markowitz advised the Board on the Tax Collectors Compensation Program which must be set on or before February 15th. The compensation is set every four years. A handout was distributed prior to the meeting.

Mr. Koutsouradis asked if the district has to have tax collectors.

Mrs. Markowitz stated that it can be another firm and referred the question to Mr. Profy.

Mr. Profy added that there is three ways taxes can be collected, local tax collector can be the tax collector for the district, a tax collecting firm or other type of commercial endeavor, or you can collect the taxes through your own administrative staff. It’s a decision of the School Board.

Mr. Shubin inquired if the district can go to RFP for the service.

Mr. Profy stated that they can.

Mr. Shubin asked if there should be Board representation at the meeting with the tax collectors.

Mr. Profy stated that it is not necessary but Mrs. Markowitz could attend the meeting and report back to the Board or a Board member is free to do so.

Mr. Webb stated that Mrs. Markowitz will report back to the Board with any recommendation as far as increases.

Mr. Webb stated that the setting of tax collectors salaries will be an agenda item for the November 27th, Public Board Meeting.

7. Items for Approval Tonight

a) Approval to extend due date deadline for real estate taxes

Ms. Boyle read the following motion:

WHEREAS, the provisions of the local tax Collection Law at 72 P.S. 5511.10 require that the taxing district impose a penalty if taxpayers fail to make payments of real estate taxes within four (4) months after the date of the tax notice;

WHEREAS, Governor Corbett of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania declared an emergency throughout portions of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a result of the impact and consequences of Hurricane Sandy, which said Hurricane affected the area encompassing the Neshaminy School district beginning on Monday, October 30, 2012;

WHEREAS, as the result of Hurricane Sandy, many property owners lost power, lost internet access, lost access to financial resources because of back closures and restrictions upon transportation, and were otherwise unable to secure the necessary funds to pay the real estate taxes by the October 31, 2012 deadline;

WHEREAS, the Board of School directors believes that, but for the effect of Hurricane Sandy, most property owners would have paid their real estate taxes by the October 31, 2012 deadline; and

WHEREAS, the Board of School Directors is desirous of extending the time within which property owners may pay their real estate taxes without incurring a penalty.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it **RESOLVED** by the Board of School Directors of the Neshaminy School District as follows:

1. **Extension of Deadline.** The deadline for property owners to pay their real estate taxes for the period beginning July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013 shall be extended, such that property owners paying their real estate taxes for the fiscal year noted herein shall not be required to pay the penalty, a set forth in 72 P.S. 5510.0(a), provided the real estate taxes are paid on or before November 12, 2012.
2. **Limitation.** This Resolution shall be applicable solely to the real estate taxes levied by the Neshaminy School District for the period beginning July 1, 2012 and ending June 30, 2013 and shall not be extended beyond the period to November 12, 2012 as herein provide.
3. Effective Date of this Resolution shall be upon adoption and shall supersede any and all prior Resolutions to the extent inconsistent herewith.
4. This Resolution was duly adopted at a duly advertised public meeting of the Board of School Directors of Neshaminy School District held on the 13th day of November, 2012.

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT

By: _____
Ritchie Webb, President

ATTEST:

Jennifer Burns, Secretary

Mr. Congdon seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously passed the motion by a vote of eight ayes, and zero nays. (Mr. Sposato was not present.)

Solicitor's Report

Mr. Profy advised the Board on the following:

Recommendation to settle pending 2006 through 2013 Tax Year Assessment Appeals of Foxwood Affordable Housing, Inc. as follows:

Foxwood Affordable Housing, Inc.

Settlement Assessment

22-059-021	\$ 952,000.00 – 2006 Tax Year Assessment
	\$ 841,500.00 – 2007 Tax Year Assessment
	\$ 773,500.00 – 2008 Tax Year Assessment
	\$1,350,000.00 – 2009 Tax Year Assessment
	\$1,350,000.00 – 2010 Tax Year Assessment
	\$1,350,000.00 – 2011 Tax Year Assessment
	\$1,350,000.00 – 2012 Tax Year Assessment
	\$1,350,000.00 – 2013 Tax Year Assessment

Mr. Webb made a motion to accept the recommendation to settle pending 2006 through 2013 Tax Year Assessment Appeals of Foxwood Affordable Housing, Inc.

Mr. Shubin seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously passed the motion by a vote of eight ayes, and zero nays. (Mr. Sposato was not present.)

Mr. Profy stated that the district is in the process of refinancing the 2004 bonds of the school district by Michael Lillys of RBC Capital and bond counsel is required.

Mr. Profy requested the Board to adopt a motion appointing Stark and Stark in Yardley, Pennsylvania as bond counsel for the refinancing of bonds of the school district.

Mr. Webb made a motion to adopt Mr. Profy's request of appointing Stark and Stark bond counsel for the refinancing of the school district's bonds.

Mrs. Cummings seconded the motion

The Board unanimously passed the motion by a vote of eight ayes, and zero nays. (Mr. Sposato was not present.)

8. Items for approval at the November 27th Public Board Meeting

a) Private Transportation Contract for 2012 – 13

Mrs. Markowitz advised the Board on the Private Transportation Contract for 2012 – 13 for Lakeside Youth Services.

Mr. Webb stated that the Private Transportation Contract will be an agenda item at the November 27th Public Board Meeting.

b) Revised Board Policies

Dr. Rattigan advised the Board on the following policies:

- Policy 811 – Acceptable Use of the Computer, Network, Internet, Electronic Communications and Technical Services Policy
- Policy 512 – High School Diploma

Mr. Morris asked on policy 512 if it has more leverage and accountability towards graduation.

Dr. Rattigan responded yes, if they don't do well they will have opportunities for remediation.

Mr. Morris asked for an explanation on policy 811, as to why secondary students are asked to sign this policy.

Dr. Rattigan stated that it is very similar to the disciplinary code that the students and parents are asked to sign off on that policy. It's following the same procedure.

Mr. Morris asked if they were indicting the students, instead of making the teachers be responsible.

Mr. Profy responded we are not opening the students up for indictment. It's having the student recognize the seriousness of this policy.

Mr. Copeland added that there isn't any suggestion that the teachers in charge of the program shouldn't provide due diligence; but the students have to be held to some accountability when it involves the electronic media.

Mr. Oettinger asked if changing the PSSA's to the Keystone tests are fair.

Dr. Rattigan stated that the law requires that the students take the Keystone Exams.

Mr. Copeland added that the state requires that you must pick some assessment for graduation requirement and since the students must take the test anyway this gives the students a sense of urgency and it also meets the needs for the state.

Mr. Oettinger asked if the remediation plan is the same.

Dr. Rattigan stated that the students have the opportunity during study hall to go on line and just take the parts that they are not scoring proficient in and there is also after school opportunities for tutoring as well.

c) Bids/budgets transfers

Mrs. Markowitz stated there are no bids or budget transfers.

9. Committee Reports

a) Board Policies

Ms. Boyle advised the Board that the next meeting is scheduled for January.

b) Educational Development

Mr. Shubin informed the Board that the next meeting has been rescheduled.

c) Finance/Facilities

Mr. Webb advised the Board that a meeting has not yet been set.

d) IJ Board

Mrs. Cummings informed the Board that the next meeting is scheduled for November 20th, at the Tawanka location.

e) Education Foundation

Mr. Copeland informed the Board that the committee met last week and had a successful meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for January.

f) Technical School

Mr. Koutsouradis advised the Board that at the last meeting, which was October 22nd, the committee reviewed policy updates, spoke about the ethics of abstaining from a vote, and approved the general advisory committee made up of citizens of the public.

g) Technology

Mr. Congdon advised the Board that the date of the next technology meeting has not yet been set.

h) Ad Hoc Facility Use Update

Mr. Oettinger announced to the Board that the next meeting is scheduled for the November 29th at 6:30 p.m., and the agenda will include the advisory committee update on the possible closing of schools.

10. Public Comment

Steve Rodos, retired, Villages of Flowers Mill, asked for clarification regarding the date for the Board Reorganization Meeting, which is listed as December 1, 2012. The correct date for the meeting is Monday, December 3, 2012. Mr. Rodos also said the Board should give proper attention to the issue of the term "Redskins" for the Neshaminy teams, as the remarks about the term being offensive are well taken.

Donna Boyle, Parkland, commented that the issue of the term "Redskins" has been brought up for years with no resolution. She mentioned that she cannot understand why racism is allowed in Neshaminy schools and this is unacceptable. Ms. Boyle said there is no single word that is more offensive to Native Americans than Redskins.

Almando Carrasquillo, retired State Trooper, Middletown Township, asked that Policy #811 be posted on the Neshaminy website for the public's review. Mr. Carrasquillo said that minors under the age of 18 cannot be compelled to sign a contract. He concluded that he supports Ms. Donna Boyle's request to change the name of the Neshaminy Redskins and he thinks the Board should contact Native American agencies to obtain additional information on this matter.

Stephen Pirritano, self-employed, Feasterville, said it is his understanding that prior to June 2012 Neshaminy did not have a policy regarding the personal use of school computers. At that time, a policy was then adopted to address the issue of personal use of school computers. He asked the Board to address the issue why can't a policy be written that plainly states that school computers can only be used for school business and for no other reason.

11. Future Topics

None

12. Agenda Development for the November 27, 2012 Public Board Meeting

None

13. Board Comment

Mr. Shubin invited everyone to the meeting on November 14, 2012, in the Board Room at 6:30 pm for the School Consolidation Project. Mr. Shubin also thanked Mr. Rodos for his help in taking notes for the committee meetings. He also stated that the Educational Development meeting will take place on December 10, 2012 and he is looking forward to a good turnout. Mr. Shubin thanked the negotiating team for all their hard work.

Mr. Webb advised Ms. Boyle that the matter of the term "Redskins" will certainly be addressed and he asked for her patience while the Board reviews the issue. Mr. Webb offered condolences to the Basin family for the recent loss of Solis Basin, whose wit, humor and regular attendance at Board meetings will be greatly missed.

14. Adjournment of Meeting

Mr. Webb moved the meeting be adjourned and Mr. Shubin seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion. Mr. Webb adjourned the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Jennifer Burns
Board Secretary