

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC BOARD MEETING MINUTES
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
(WORK SESSION)
February 8, 2005

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public session on February 8, 2005, in the Board Room of the Maple Point Middle School. The following persons were in attendance:

BOARD MEMBERS:

Mr. Richard M. Eccles, President
Dr. William H. Spitz, Vice-President
Mrs. Sue C. Barrett
Mrs. June R. Bostwick
Mr. Jason Bowman
Ms. Carol A. Drioli
Mrs. Susan Cummings
Mr. Ritchie Webb

ADMINISTRATORS:

Mr. P. Howard Wilson
Dr. Louis T. Muenker
Dr. Sandra Costanzo
Mr. Joseph V. Paradise
Mr. Bruce M. Wyatt

BOARD MEMBER NOT PRESENT:

Mrs. Kimberly A. Jowett

SOLICITOR:

Thomas J. Profy, III, Esquire

SECRETARY: Mrs. Anita E. Walls

OTHERS: Approximately 35 persons from the public, staff and press

Prior to the Work Session an Executive Session was held.

1. Call to Order

Mr. Eccles called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

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

3. Announcements

Mr. Eccles advised that Mrs. Jowett is ill and will not be present at this evenings meeting and prayers are sent to her.

4. Public Comment

Ms. Boni Riether, Langhorne, PA, advised that she resides in the Cider Knoll development and she has an eighth and ninth grader at Maple Point Middle School. Ms. Riether advised that she has attended only two previous school board meetings and has written letters a couple times. She has found the course of events surrounding the state of Neshaminy High School extremely frustrating and applauds the efforts of Bill and Maryanne O'Connor in trying to secure a safe and up to date facility for Neshaminy High School students. Ms. Riether does not want nor need a Taj Mahal building for her children to attend. Ms. Riether does want a secure and safe building, a clean and properly maintained building, a building with adequate classroom space and current technology and laboratory capabilities, a building heated and cooled appropriately and consistently throughout and a building that is free from all health related problems, i.e. asbestos, lead paint, faulty sewage hookups, poor air circulation and leaky roofs. A building, whether it is new or renovated promotes an atmosphere of learning for her children. These goals are not lofty, they are achievable, but only if all the hand ringing, feet dragging, whining and delays are ended. Ms. Riether begged the board to make a decision and act upon it. The passage of time will not make the cost go away,

but you have the knowledge to effectively manage the spending so that taxpayers can get the most for their hard earned money. The time is now, please make a decision.

Mr. Steve Rodos, Village of Flowers Mill, Langhorne, PA, stated that over one year ago he appeared before the board to speak about a group named SAGE (Senior Adults for Greater Education). After many meetings with Neshaminy staff members and union representatives this school board approved entering into a contract with SAGE to begin their program within Neshaminy School District. A program similar to the one that has been so successful in Council Rock, and which resulted from an award from the Philadelphia 76er's, Earl Katz, the founder of SAGE and 76er's hometown hero. Even the Eagles knew last year that they could not do it in house with the receivers that they had so they went to the outside and obtained Terrell Owens. Mr. Rodos would like to know the following: Why the delay in getting this program into operation and what are the underlying reasons for not entering into the contract to which you previously agreed after discussion and vote by this board? If there are no valid reasons for the delay, Mr. Rodos urged the board to enter into the agreement and allow both the students and senior citizens to participate and enjoy the benefits of SAGE.

Mr. Kyle Yeingst, Feasterville, PA stated that he is a student at Ferderbar Elementary School and in two years he will attend Poquessing and then Neshaminy High School. Kyle asked the board how the students will learn with distractions from construction. Right now there are no distractions at Ferderbar and students can concentrate on their work. Once he moves to middle school there will be the noise of jack hammers, workers drilling and smells that go with construction, etc. Kyle has asthma and constructions will make his asthma worse and he will need to go home early or not even attend school. Kyle loves school and this makes him sad. Kyle stated that this will hurt attendance and grades. Kids should not have to go to a construction site to learn. Please consider himself and his friends when the board makes decisions.

Mr. Solis Basen, Langhorne, PA, stated that next week the board will have representatives speak about Act 72. Mr. Basen feels that the community should be invited to ask questions, there should be publicity in the papers about the meeting, and everyone should attend. Ms. Basen knows it is a tough situation for the board.

Mr. Wilson responded to a letter to the editor of the Bucks County Courier Times posted last week that was completely erroneous. This district has not paid \$5,000 to SAGE. This district has not paid \$5,000 to anyone for a volunteer program. Mr. Wilson advised that the information was completely inaccurate, completely erroneous.

Mr. Wilson commented on Mr. Rodos' statement. There has been no contract approved by the Neshaminy School Board. There has been no authorization by this board to approve the SAGE contract. The district is reviewing the contract now and when a final decision is made regarding the contract a public announcement will be made.

Mr. Wilson introduced Mr. Paul Erickson, President of ATS&R, who is in attendance this evening to go over renovation options that are available at the high school. Mr. Wilson believes that the integrity of this board and Mr. Erickson will make certain that the children of this district will receive a wonderful renovated building well into the next thirty or forty years. Mr. Wilson congratulated Mr. Erickson for the finest high school facility that he has ever seen which is Central Bucks South. Mr. Wilson has toured the facility three times and it is unbelievably impressive and Mr. Wilson asked Paul to provide the same type of facility for the students of Neshaminy in a renovated model.

5. Items for Discussion

a) Paul Erickson, President of ATS&R

Mr. Erickson presented a slide presentation of Option "A" so that everyone could see what is new, what is existing and what will be remodeled and the extent of remodeling within the building. Mr. Erickson stressed the following points:

- While construction is going on school is still in session since all the walls will remain closed while the two story new structure is built. Once the new two story structure is completed, which houses approximately 40 classrooms, the students will be transferred into the new classroom space while phase 2 construction begins. Students will not be exposed to any dust, debris, etc.
- construction will provide for a "main street" which will connect old with new
- two levels will provide for a more efficient use of space
- additional site and land will be gained around the building which will help playfields
- drawings will be reused in the renovation project (art, science areas)
- new mechanical, electrical, technology systems will occur
- code upgrades will take place throughout the facility
- the plan is comprehensive and every space of the existing building will be touched

Mr. Erickson reviewed Option 2 and Option 3 with those present. Option 2 is more sprawling than Option "A." Mr. Erickson provided pros and cons of both the options. Option 3 would probably be the most disruptive to students, since construction is impacting all the existing areas.

Mr. Erickson opened the session to questions and comments from the board.

Mrs. Bostwick questioned whether there is any place in the building which would hold the entire student body at once, since the auditorium does not. Mr. Erickson stated that typically, the auditorium does not seat the student body, and possibly the gymnasium would probably accommodate same.

Mr. Webb asked about the square footage of Option "A." Mr. Erickson stated existing space is 182,000 sq. ft. and the addition is 240,000 sq. ft. with a total of 425,000 sq. ft. providing sufficient space for 2,800 students, 700 per grade, 4 grades, allowing the 9th graders to move to the high school.

Mr. Erickson noted that the majority of the space is air conditioned. The only areas are the gymnasiums which are not air conditioned due to the volume of space and the costs involved.

Mrs. Cummings inquired of the three options which would be least disruptive to students, faculty, etc. Mr. Erickson feels that Option "A" is the most efficient and least disruptive.

Mr. Erickson stated that modularity in some instances are more economical in order to speed up construction or in order to make the phasing larger. This however needs to be discussed with the construction manager in order to receive his input.

Ms. Drioli stated that she likes Option "A" since it is least disruptive to everyone involved.

Mrs. Barrett questioned what percentage of the drawings that are already completed can be reused on Option "A." Mr. Erickson noted that it was a substantial percentage and would provide same to the board.

Mrs. Bostwick questioned handicap accessibility. Mr. Erickson noted that since there are two main levels there would be a necessity of two elevators to accommodate the need.

Dr. Spitz inquired whether there needs to be any further discussions with the staff regarding particular departments. Mr. Erickson stated that most definitely there would be further interaction with staff.

Dr. Spitz inquired whether Mr. Erickson was prepared to discuss the costs of the three different options. Mr. Erickson replied that Option "A" has basically been considered. The other two options are providing for more new building spaces and more costs per square foot. Option "A" has been found to be the most efficient and the most reuse of the existing facility.

Mr. Wilson stated that he personally feels that Option "A" will be the best option educationally and for the entire student body and staff.

Mr. Eccles opened the floor to the public to provide comments. Comment would be limited to two minutes.

Mr. Steve Rodos, Langhorne, PA commented that a figure was given a few months ago, but now on top of that is the asbestos removal and elevators for the special education students. Mr. Rodos feels that those items should be included into the figures so that the public has a more accurate and honest opinion of the costs.

Mr. Webb stated that the projected costs presented at the Facilities and Finance meeting was \$61M and \$4M for contingency fees. These figures could possibly go up or down.

Mrs. Maryanne O'Connor, Langhorne, PA provided the following questions:

- Will the main hallway, which will have lockers up and down provide enough room for students to move throughout the building? Mr. Erickson stated yes.
- How many stairwells will be provided to accommodate 2,800 students? Mr. Erickson stated probably six, however the key is that they are wide enough.
- Will extra time be provided to students during construction to get from one classroom to another?
- How will the cafeteria accommodate 700 more students if there are no further renovations to the cafeteria?
- Will every single classroom be air conditioned? Mr. Erickson responded yes.
- What is the time frame for construction? Mr. Erickson noted that the key is what can be accomplished within each summer. Four summers are being considered: 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009. Hopefully, we can speed up the process and complete same in three summers. After the building is occupied there is probably 4-6 months of punch lists and testing and balancing of mechanical systems. That does not however impact staff.
- Where will students be in phase two of the project?
- What capacity or percentage will the building be at when completed? Will there be enough room for expansion if enrollment numbers increase?

Mr. William O'Connor, Langhorne, PA inquired whether it would be possible to put a downloadable plan on the website so the public can get a closer look. Mr. O'Connor encouraged the district to perform an updated student enrollment projection. Mr. O'Connor urged that all the above be reviewed with high school staff and administration.

Mr. Joe Blasch, Feasterville, PA noted that he heard that most of the plumbing and sewage would be replaced and he worked at the facility for 14 years and he questioned whether the ground water problem which currently exists could be corrected.

Mr. Howard Lindner, Langhorne, PA stated that he is happy to hear the statement that new, young families are moving in. Mr. Lindner stated that it was not that long ago that he heard that new

families would not be moving in since the district was not building a new high school. Mr. Lindner is happy to see that what he stated before that new families are moving in. Neshaminy has a reputation. There is not any citizen of this school district that should be concerned about the safety and welfare of their students. The district has always had a school board to look out for the best interests of the students. Neshaminy School District has always been rated as one of the best. It will continue to be rated as one of the best. Mr. Lindner stated that the majority of the people within the district believe in the board and what you are doing. This will be proven in the next election.

Ms. Drioli stated that there will be plenty of opportunities for the public to make comments. Ms. Drioli would like to move forward as soon as possible. Everyone on the board is working toward this goal.

Mr. Wilson stated that if there is consensus from the board to move forward with Option "A" then ATS&R will begin planning their documents and begin meetings with staff, contracts can be approved for the architect and the construction manager by the end of February.

Mr. Eccles noted that ATS&R has worked with the district with great effort to salvage the prior drawings. The district has saved a great deal of time and money by staying with ATS&R. ATS&R have made concessions and negotiations have been ongoing. At the end of the month further information will be provided regarding same.

Mr. Bowman stated that ATS&R has put together a wonderful presentation and provided a tremendous amount of work for not being under contract with the district. Mr. Bowman looks forward to approving the contract at the end of the month.

The board provided consensus to move forward with Option "A."

6. Items for Approval

a) Overnight Trips

- i. Neshaminy High School to Penn State University Track and Field Invitational – February 18-19, 2005**
- ii. Neshaminy High School to FLBA State Conference – Champion, PA - April 12-15, 2005**
- iii. Neshaminy High School to Susquehanna University for Debate Team - State Finals – April 23 – 24, 2005**

There was Board consensus for the three trips.

Mr. Paradise provided the Board with information regarding delinquent tax collections. When a delinquency occurs the financial burden of that collection costs falls upon the delinquent taxpayer. The district incurs no direct cost in collecting delinquent fees. The new law which was just passed in the legislature requires that when the Board approves a delinquent tax collector, in our case, Berkheimer is the district's delinquent tax collector, most approve a schedule of fees that will be assessed by them to the delinquent taxpayer. The law further states that until the Board does this it may no longer collect any delinquent taxes. Mr. Paradise stated that a motion will be provided in two weeks to approve the fee schedule.

b) Cooperative Purchasing Agreement

Mr. Paradise advised that this is an economical way for the district to purchase particular items. Mr. Paradise advised that there are two items necessary to the district. A specialty vehicle is necessary for transporting HVAC gases, and a 1991 Dump Truck body (salt truck) which is necessary.

c) **Approval of contracts for high school architect and construction manager**

Mr. Paradise explained that the ATS&R contract would be presented and a motion would be provided for the construction manager. Mr. Webb advised that at the Facilities meeting which took place last Wednesday the committee reviewed the proposals from Reynolds and Foreman. Both companies were very competitive and great companies. Mr. Webb advised that Reynolds was about \$300,000 cheaper and provided a little more service to the district since they would have two full time construction managers on the project versus one plus a part-timer. Based upon that, the committee will make a recommendation to appoint Reynolds as the construction manager for the high school project. A motion will be made at the end of the month.

d) **Approval of Financial Advisor for Forward Swap**

Mr. Paradise advised that this deals with the rate borrowing for the high school project. Mr. Paradise advised that he received four resumes. There is one company in particular that has been reviewed and has the lowest fee. Hopefully, the committee will be ready to make their recommendation next week, and then it will be ready for approval at the end of the month.

e) **Approval of Revised Policies**

Policy #500 – Non-Resident Students

Policy #121 – Prohibiting Discrimination in Education

Dr. Muenker stated that Mrs. Rattigan and the Policies committee are seeking approval of the Board on two revised policies.

Mrs. Barrett explained that Policy #500 would have the addition of the word “homeless” and Policy #121, line #14 would include the word “homelessness.”

Mrs. Barrett advised that Policy #560 was also discussed regarding technology in schools and more information is being compiled at the present time. In the future the nepotism policy and personal property damage on school grounds and records policy will be discussed.

f) **Bids/Budget Transfers**

06-01 General School Supplies

Bid Amount: \$168,535.23

Various classroom and office supplies for use throughout the district for the school year 2005-2006

05-29 HVAC Replacement

Bid Amount: \$110,000.00

Installation of the final multi-zone rooftop heating/air conditioning unit at Maple Point Middle School

Mr. Paradise noted that only one bidder was received and the matter has been reviewed with Mr. Profy. Many bidders came to the pre-bid; however, they then did not provide a bid. Mr. Paradise contacted non bidders to see what their reasons were for not bidding:

- Could not find building
- Only one unit and will not bid
- Representative delivering bid got stuck in traffic
- Bids were higher than \$110,000
- Distributor was uncooperative

7. Superintendents Report

Mr. Wilson advised that the gas line rupture in the area affected Hoover Elementary School. The facilities people shut down the intake valves at Hoover and Everitt. The fire department went to Hoover and evacuation was not necessary. Five students were complaining about feeling ill to the stomach. Mr. Wyatt and Mr. Minotti are to be recommended for their efforts.

Mr. Wilson advised that Harrisburg has commended Neshaminy on its improvement plan regarding PSSA and No Child Left Behind.

Mr. Wilson advised that the students, teachers and schools did a wonderful job raising money for the Tsunami disaster. Maple Point alone raised \$10,000 on a Walk-A-Thon. Lower Southampton did a wonderful job and the high school had tremendous totals.

Mr. Wilson noted that the spring play "Into the Woods" will be performed at the high school.

8. Committee Reports

a) Board Policies

Mrs. Barrett provided report previously.

b) Educational Development

Dr. Spitz advised that a meeting will take place on Wednesday at 6:30 p.m.

c) Finance/Facilities

Mr. Webb advised the 2005-2006 budget process is starting. Mr. Webb noted that the Act 72 meeting will take place Tuesday, February 15, 2005 at 7:00 p.m.

d) IU Board

Ms. Drioli stated that different boards throughout the county may not opt into Act 72. Ms. Drioli noted that this will open the door to personal income tax and districts like ourselves being able to go to 7% on an income tax. Make sure all your questions are answered. Once the district opts they are part of the process.

e) Educational Foundation

Mrs. Cummings stated that the foundation met on Monday and the annual fundraiser will be held on October 23, 2005. More details will follow about the theme, time and prices. Grants were issued and last year \$14,813.00 were funded into the classrooms and this year \$17,277.00 were awarded in grants.

f) Technical School

Dr. Spitz advised that the applications for the tech school are up. The tech school has produced a CD which will be sent to all the guidance offices throughout the sending districts and also, to each home that houses an eighth grade student. Hopefully, more interest will be generated.

g) Technology

Technology did not meet.

9. Future Topics

Ms. Drioli stated that there is a school community, along with student body, staff and members of the community, that would very much like to honor one of their volunteers and they asked if they could name a gym or room after this person in honor of them. Ms. Drioli noted that since naming a gym or room after a person would set precedent, the idea of setting up an "honor board" in his or her name and this particular school could add at their determination any volunteer in their system that has gone over and above and followed in the strengths of the initial person.

Ms. Drioli feels that presenting this type of honor through television at one of the public meetings would be a wonderful thing for the district. Ms. Drioli requested board consensus to move forward with this type of project and to continue to encourage volunteers to participate within the district.

There was board consensus to move forward.

10. Agenda Development for the February 22, 2005 Public Meeting

11. Other Board Business

Ms. Drioli noted that the Poquessing pool should not be renovated within the \$5M project that Poquessing will be undergoing.

Mr. Minotti noted that the pool had a humidity problem due to the fact that there was a mixing valve problem. The funds to repair the problem are coming from the district's budget, and will not be taken from the \$5M.

12. Adjournment of Meeting

Mr. Bowman moved the meeting be adjourned and Mr. Webb seconded the motion. The Board approved the motion with eight ayes. Mr. Eccles adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anita E. Walls
Secretary