

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC BOARD MEETING MINUTES
(WORK SESSION)
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
June 8, 2004

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public session on June 8, 2004, at the Maple Point Middle School Board Room. 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
Mrs. Susan Cummings
Ms. Carol A. Drioli
Mrs. Kimberly A. Jowett
Mr. Ritchie Webb

ADMINISTRATORS:

Mr. P. Howard Wilson
Dr. Raymond J. Boccuti
Dr. Sandra Costanzo
Mr. Harry P. Jones
Mr. Richard S. Marotto
Mr. Joseph V. Paradise
Mr. Bruce M. Wyatt

OTHERS: Approximately 8 persons from the public, staff and press.

SECRETARY: Mrs. Anita E. Walls

SOLICITOR: Thomas J. Profy, III, Esquire

1. **Call to Order**

Mr. Eccles called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

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

3. **Announcements**

No Announcements.

4. **Board Recognition**

Mr. Paradise on behalf of the Board recognized two students, Robert C. McCarney and Christopher Scheidell, who have worked diligently for the last several months on the video project. Mr. Eccles presented plaques to the students and congratulated them for a job well done.

5. **Public Comment**

No public comment.

6. **Items for Discussion**

a) **Boy's Lacrosse**

Mrs. Sheila Murphy provided a handout to board members. Mrs. Murphy presented the following information to the Board:

- Neshaminy School District wants to provide as many opportunities to students as possible especially in the Co-Curricular area and athletic area.
- Boys' Lacrosse is neither a P.I.A.A. sport nor a District One Sport.
- Facilities become a major concern as there is no site at the high school for competition/fields.
- Teams would have to be transported to and from fields at another school for practices and home games.
- Girls' Lacrosse will begin next year since it is a P.I.A.A. sport.
- An additional trainer would have to be funded to provide medical coverage.
- An administrator would have to be assigned to be present at all home games.
- Title IX substantial proportionality numbers would also be affected with the addition of Boys' Lacrosse.
- At present the district sponsors 13 male athletic teams and 12 female athletic teams.
- With the addition of Girls' Lacrosse in the 2004-2005 school year the district will have the same amount of teams for males and females.
- Estimated Boys' Lacrosse Budget - \$45,000-\$50,000.
- Estimated Girls' Lacrosse Budget - \$15,000-\$20,000.

Ms. Drioli suggested since it is not P.I.A.A. the students sell advertising, sponsorships, etc. to procure uniforms, equipment and other items necessary. Mrs. Murphy responded that the district has always tried to provide equipment for students. When the district assumes ownership of the sport, the ownership comes under the auspices of the P.I.A.A.

Mr. Wilson recommended that the district look into Boys' Lacrosse as a club sport and Mrs. Murphy get the team a Suburban 1 schedule. Also, await clear direction from P.I.A.A. and Title IX responsibilities.

b) 2004-2005 Facilities Professional Services Budget

Mr. Paradise provided a handout to board members. Mr. Paradise summarized the following:

- Pennsylvania Public School Code is clear that professional services do not require public bidding (doctors, lawyers, accountants, engineers, architects, and other professional consultants).
- Federal and state laws require the use of professional services to ensure compliance.
- Neshaminy School District has used the following professional companies:
 - Consolidated Engineers
 - Colm Engineering
 - Weatherproofing Technologies, Inc.
 - Eagle Industrial Hygiene Associates, Inc.
 - Siemens Building Technologies, Inc.
 - Environmental Control Systems, Inc.
 - D.A.D. & Associates, Inc.
 - Quality Control Laboratories
 - Energy Solutions Services

Discussion ensued regarding the various professional companies and the services that they provide to the district. Mr. Paradise advised that none of the companies are on retainer with the district. Mr. Minotti provided board members with information regarding specific jobs in progress.

Ms. Drioli noted that the district needs to keep a good working relationship with specific professionals in order to maintain the best services for the district and to obtain a speedy response from those professionals.

7. Items for Approval

a) Proposal to Increase Facility Usage Fees

A handout was provided supplying information regarding specific fees which the district charges for various buildings, i.e. auditoriums, gymnasiums, cafeteria, etc. for profit and non-profit groups.

- Application Fee (one time):
Profit Groups - \$100.00
Non-Profit Groups - \$100.00
- District costs are not covered, i.e. custodial, lighting, heating

Mr. Eccles pointed out that it has always been a practice in Neshaminy School District to keep young children active with the usage of the facilities. Mr. Eccles raised a concern that if the district increases the fee schedule it will be a significant impact on the various groups that use the facilities.

Mr. Paradise estimates that the increase would provide the district with approximately \$42,000 in additional revenue. Mr. Paradise noted that a survey was performed with surrounding school districts and Neshaminy is the only one that does not have a per usage fee.

Discussion ensued amongst board members regarding the impact on various groups and what impact the district faces with regards to custodial workers and support to keep the buildings open and ready for use by outside organizations.

Mr. Minotti provided board members with a fee comparison charged by surrounding school districts. Neshaminy is the lowest at this point and time.

Mr. Eccles is not in favor of placing a burden on non-profit organizations. Mr. Eccles noted that 24% of the student population in this district attends private and parochial schools, and those parents are paying taxes and are involved in the organizations. Mr. Eccles feels the organizations should be notified and obtain a response from such groups regarding a fee increase.

Mr. Webb stated that the Finance Committee is in favor of raising the fees and having the organizations bear some of the responsibilities for the costs involved. The district is just attempting to find an alternative source of revenue.

There was board consensus to move forward with the increase for Facility Usage Fees. Voting yes, (Mr. Webb, Mrs. Barrett, Dr. Spitz, Mrs. Jowett, Mr. Bowman); nays (Ms. Drioli, Mrs. Bostwick, Mr. Eccles). Mrs. Cummings was undecided.

b) Proposal to Increase Aquatics Program Fees

Mr. Paradise provided a handout regarding fee increases, which was the result of considerable discussion. Mr. Gallagher feels the community could bear the following increase.

	Present Prices	Proposed
Swim Lessons	\$45/10 lessons	\$50/10 lessons
Per Person – Adult	\$4/session	No increase
Per Person – Seniors	\$2.50/session	\$3/session
Friday Swim Night	\$4/session	No increase
		Add season pass option
Pool Rental	\$60 per hour	\$100 per hour
Birthday Parties		\$100 per hour plus Custodial costs

There was board consensus to move forward with the increase for Aquatics Program fees.

c) Proposal to Increase Food Service Prices

A handout was provided to board members. Mrs. Wallace requested an increase of \$.25 per lunch at the secondary level and \$.15 at the elementary level. There was only agreement to provide a \$.10 increase at both levels. The increase of \$.10 would yield approximately \$60,000.00 in additional revenues.

Current price for elementary lunch is \$1.60 and secondary lunch is \$2.00.

Mrs. Barrett is not in favor of raising the price of lunches. Mr. Paradise noted that the Food Services will in the next year need to absorb all the additional labor price increases that are built into the existing collective bargaining agreement. Additional health and retirement costs must also be absorbed. Food price increases are a direct result of fuel oil.

Mr. Paradise noted that there has not been a food price increase within the district in seven years. Mr. Eccles asked whether the indigent families would be affected by the price increase. Mr. Webb stated that their lunches would remain free. Mr. Eccles inquired what price is being paid by adults. Mr. Paradise noted that all adults are paying ala Carte prices and they are being raised ongoing.

There was board consensus to move forward with the increase for Food Service prices.

d) Tax and Revenue Anticipation Note for Pre-payment of Blue Cross Premiums

Mr. Paradise noted that the district would have a payment savings of \$689,000 if the district paid the premium up front. The district would borrow \$14.9M on July 12, 2004 and the Note would have a maturity date of September 17, 2004 at which time the district would have the money (tax proceeds) to repay the Note. The interest costs would be approximately \$50,000.00, however, the district will have a considerable savings.

e) Approval of Budgetary Increase for Federal and Other Programs (2003-2004)

Mr. Paradise advised that a motion will be made at the public meeting which will increase the current year budget and officially adopt the federal funding and grants received by the district.

f) Approval of Year End Budget Transfers

Mr. Paradise advised that a motion will be made at the public meeting stating that the Board of School Directors in accordance with directions from the Auditor General's office authorizes the administration to make the necessary budget transfers within and between accounts to prevent any possible over expenditure without exceeding the total budget for the year.

g) Bids/Budget Transfers

County Diesel/Fuel Oil Bid

Information distributed prior to the meeting. Mr. Paradise reviewed the following bid:

Mr. Paradise noted that this is the first time ever that an increase is necessary. The I.U. fuel oils bid committee has accepted a firm price for heating oil for next school year of \$1.0861/gallon from Sunoco. The price for transportation fuel will be \$1.0773/gallon from Connectiv.

h) Adoption of Budget for 2004-2005

Mr. Paradise distributed information to board members.

Mr. Wilson alerted Board members of a possible issue regarding the librarian position at Everitt. The Administration is recommending that the librarian from Everitt help with the overflow at Herbert Hoover since it is a larger school. This move would save the district less than \$15,000. The consensus of the cabinet was to have the librarian help at Hoover. It is not a program cut, however, it will be perceived by the public as such. Mr. Marotto advised that when the librarian is at Hoover the Everitt library would be closed for use. However, if the district chose to place an aide at the Everitt library it could remain open for use. The district intent is to balance the number of classes between the two teachers and make it more equitable. However, there could be a negative impact by making this type of difficult decision, but there is data to support same.

Mr. Eccles feels the board would be neglecting their duties if a library were closed down for even just one day. Mr. Eccles is concerned about the direction the board is taking.

Ms. Drioli is concerned of the reverse situation where the Hoover staff demands another individual and therein lays benefits, etc.

Mr. Wilson stated that this becomes an issue of equity. Mr. Wilson recommended to the board that the librarian travel between the two schools.

Board members Barrett, Webb, and Eccles wish the library to remain open. Board members Cummings, Drioli, Spitz, Jowett, Bostwick, and Bowman would like to check into the possibility of an aide being placed into the Everitt building keeping the library open and experiencing a savings.

Mr. Paradise advised board members that presently the required additional mills would be 29.4 with a tax increase on an average residential assessment (\$6770) being \$199.00 a year or a monthly increase of \$17. The value of one mill currently is \$185,894. The increase in the expenditure budget is 3.66%.

Mr. Paradise distributed a reconciliation sheet of the projected fund balance to board members. Mr. Paradise advised board members that the projected fund balance at June 30, 2004 would be \$8.7M. Mr. Paradise further advised that if in the 2004-2005 budget \$3.2M were used the district would have a projected fund balance on June 30, 2005 in the amount of \$5.4M.

Mr. Paradise noted that board members have shown a desire to use a larger portion of the fund balance, however, the district must be very careful to maintain a sufficient amount of money in the fund balance to carry the district. If the district depletes the fund balance it will be necessary to make up the fund balance the following year in additional taxes.

Ms. Drioli noted that in her eleven years the fund balance has always remained solid. Ms. Drioli has a problem increasing taxes when there is extra money in the fund balance.

Mr. Paradise further advised board members that when the district has a healthy fund balance it has the opportunity to borrow money at lower borrowing rates. The fund balance helps the district operate through the summer months. Federal funding does not arrive until October, and tax revenues do not begin until the end of August and the beginning of September.

Board discussion ensued regarding the amount to be used from the fund balance.

Mr. Paradise advised that 70% of the district revenue is local taxes. 95% of all the tax is real estate tax.

Mr. Paradise advised that the budget will be presented for approval at the public meeting.

8. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Wilson advised that he is taking the valedictorian issue under advisement. Mr. Wilson will be receiving the grades by Thursday and upon review of the grades he will make a determination regarding who will speak at graduation.

Ms. Drioli took offense to the editorial suggesting that the school board should step in. Mr. Wilson noted that the board cannot have the student's grades.

Mr. Wilson noted that he has directed the high school principal to contact surrounding districts to see what their policy is regarding this issue. The district uses the third marking period as the determination for the valedictorian/salutatorian.

Mr. Wyatt advised that there is currently no written policy regarding this issue.

Mr. Wilson advised that two outstanding people, Mr. Harry Jones and Mr. Rick Marotto, are attending their last school board meeting this evening due to retirement. They have a wealth of knowledge and have served the district well. Mr. Jones' knowledge of the contract is exceptional and seldom has the district had union difficulties. The district will miss both these individuals and they will be very difficult to replace. Mr. Wilson wished both gentlemen health and happiness in their future endeavors.

9. Committee Reports

a) Board Policies

No report.

b) Educational Development

Dr. Spitz advised a final meeting took place on May 20th. The textbook requests were reviewed and the AE program was discussed.

c) Finance/Facilities

Mr. Webb advised a meeting will take place on June 10th to discuss usage fees.

d) IU Board

Ms. Drioli advised that they had their middle states accreditation and the Bucks County I.U. is recognized as one of the leading intermediate units in the country.

e) Educational Foundation

Mrs. Cummings advised a mailing was sent to 2004 graduation class to purchase a tile for the foundation wall. The Fifties night will be held at Twining Hall and is a major fundraiser for the foundation.

f) Technical School

No report.

g) Technology

Mrs. Jowett advised that a meeting was held and a presentation was given regarding the Microsoft program. Distribution of the lists for the repairs and replacement of equipment districtwide was provided.

10. **Future Topics**

11. **Agenda Development for June 29, 2004 Public Meeting**

12. **Correspondence**

The Board Secretary advised that there was no correspondence.

13. **Other Board Business**

Ms. Drioli provided the district with pens that she had received during a recent visit to Commerce Bank.

Mr. Webb advised that he has received comments that the public cannot see the names of the board members when viewing the meetings. Mr. Paradise advised that further improvements will be made to the broadcast.

14. **Adjournment**

Mr. Eccles moved the meeting be adjourned and Mrs. Jowett seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion. Mr. Eccles adjourned the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Anita E. Walls
Board Secretary