

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC BOARD MEETING
PUBLIC WORK SESSION MINUTES
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
March 11, 2008

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public work session on March 11, 2008, in the auditorium of the Maple Point Middle School. The following persons were in attendance:

BOARD MEMBERS:

Mr. Richard M. Eccles, President
Mr. Frank Koziol, Vice President
Mr. Joseph Blasch
Ms. Irene Boyle
Mrs. Susan Cummings
Mr. Kim Koutsouradis
Mr. William D. O'Connor
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

OTHERS: Approximately 45 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

None.

4. Public Comment

Mr. Solis Basen, Villages of Flowers Mill, Langhorne, PA, stated that Mr. Kadri at the previous meeting said "The Tawanka program is a success," however he failed to give an opinion on the financial picture. Mr. Basen provided a few figures on the Tawanka program. Last year 54 students were enrolled in Tawanka. The budget was approximately \$1.6M. The total staff was over 17 which equates to approximately 1 staff per every 3 students. This amounts to approximately \$29,600 per year, per student. Compare this to \$14,000 per student in the regular school system. It is time to look at the overall picture.

5. Items for Discussion

a) High School Construction Update

Mr. Damion Spahr, Reynolds Construction provided the following update:

- Unit A is presently under construction with some unforeseen conditions, i.e. flooring which is having an impact on time and scheduling, however schedule is being maintained
- Fire protection upgrades are complete
- Site work is being pushed up
- Renovations will take place on Gym 3
- Library area is upcoming
- Demolition will begin for the next phase

- PennDot is reviewing road repairs for Old Lincoln Highway which is outside the scope and attempting to absorb some of the costs with work on the road to take place during the summer months
- Goal is to finish within the contingency budget, however, the road work may be over and above the contingency budget

Dr. Spitz inquired regarding the charges from Middletown Township (\$350,000 in soft costs and a total of \$465,000). Dr. Spitz is concerned about the payments to Middletown and Gilmore which may not have been budgeted, but has been spent. Dr. Spitz advised that he feels that over \$700,000 has been spent on the project which was not originally budgeted. Mr. Webb commented that the roadwork for Old Lincoln Highway was never figured into any project. Mr. Webb noted that \$500,000 was saved to offset this in the additional classroom space with the state's reimbursement. Dr. Spitz noted that his comments were not meant as criticism.

Mr. Paradise noted that the Board passed a Resolution which allowed the district to charge back expenditures to the bond issue.

Mr. O'Connor inquired regarding the music room acoustics. Mr. Kadri stated that meetings have taken place regarding same and attempt is being made to improve the situation for its present use, however, for the long term a different group will occupy the area and the area will accommodate same more than adequately. An additional meeting has been scheduled to review the additional data collected on that area.

b) Budget Update

Mr. Paradise provided a document to Board members regarding the budget. Mr. Paradise advised that currently there is a budget gap of \$7.6M. The figures in the budget as of today are based on the district having approximately 100 retirees.

Mr. Paradise provided additional items which would affect this budget:

- 3 additional guidance counselors
- Closure of Neshaminy Middle School (\$1.5M possible savings, rent building, etc.)
- Removing of modular classrooms
- IU Special Education budget reduction
- Tawanka Learning Center
- Health Care premium reductions
- Pennsylvania Employee Retirement system rates (PDE is recommending the districts budget the higher rate)
- Eliminate capital reserve contribution
- Aging Classroom furniture in elementary schools (Costs approx. \$1.1M)

Mr. Paradise noted that the total allowable increase under Act 1 is \$10.6M. Work will continue on the budget with a complete review of every single item. A Facilities and Finance Meeting will take place on March 23, 2008.

Mr. Paradise stated that the maximum allowable tax increase under Act 1 on the average residential assessment of \$27,000 would be \$371.00.

Mr. Kadri noted that over the next month valuable information will be received to offset some of the larger costs within this budget. (i.e. consolidation, retirements, etc.)

6. Items for Approval

a) Summer Programs 2008

Dr. Heble directed Board members to the handout regarding same.

- Secondary Summer School (Students Grades 6-12)
- Summer Fine Arts Program
- Tentative Calendar (June 30,2008-August 1, 2008)

The Board approved an overnight trip to the Eastern Regional Championships for the Bowling Team which will take place on March 13 and March 14th. The Board unanimously approved same.

b) Proposed School Calendar

Mr. Kadri distributed a preliminary calendar for the 2008-09 school year and asked that same be tabled for discussion to take place at the next meeting.

c) Approval of Board Policies

- Revised Policy 121 – Prohibiting Discrimination in Education
- Revised Policy 551 – Behavior Management
- Revised Policies 248, 348, 448 – Sexual Harassment
- New Policy 726 – Procurement Cards

Dr. Rattigan presented the following Board policies which will be presented for approval at the next public meeting.

Policy 121 has a few minor changes which were made due to changes in Chapter 12 regulations.

Policy 551 has a change in definition of “corporal punishment.”

Policies 248, 348, 448 regarding sexual harassment and two definitions have been added.

Policy 726 is a new policy regarding procurement cards recommended by the Business Office.

Board discussion took place regarding the new Policy #726 – Procurement cards. Concerns of the Board were that this would actually promote additional spending on behalf of district employees. Mr. Paradise noted that only authorized users would be permitted to be part of the pilot program.

Mr. Koziol is concerned that pilot programs at some point become permanent.

Dr. Rattigan stated that the policy has been reviewed by the Solicitor for legal purposes.

Mr. Webb noted that if procurement cards are available the district can receive greater discounts; however, control is a factor. Mr. Paradise stated that he also has some reservations; however, he does feel there are many advantages to instituting this program. Mr. Paradise noted that this could benefit the district, students and staff.

Ms. Boyle state that the pilot program could be terminated if the effectiveness of the program has not be proven.

There was Board consensus to have this policy be voted upon at the next meeting.

d) Bids/Budget Transfers

Mr. Paradise presented the following bid:

BID: 09-15 Exterior Door Replacements at Tawanka Learning Center

Bid Amount: \$51,750.00

The Bid is for replacement of exterior doors at Tawnka Learning Center.

Mr. Paradise presented Budget Transfer Report No. 08-04 (Working Copy) which will be presented along with Bid 09-15 for approval on March 25, 2008.

7. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Kadri provided the following report:

- Safety issues of students – Challenge Day National Program – 100 students participated - Scheduled to take place on April 28-29 –Middletown Community Foundation has provided a \$6,000 to assist in the financial aspect of the program.
- Our Lady of Grace Track team requesting the use of high school track for four upcoming events. They pay the costs and they are insured. There was board consensus for same.

8. Committee Reports

a) Board Policies

Ms. Boyle advised that the last meeting took place on March 11th and the policies that were discussed this evening were reviewed at that meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for March 25th.

b) Educational Development

Dr. Spitz advised that a meeting took place on March 4th. The meeting involved discussions on the following topics: History Alive Program, Students Voting Program, Classrooms for the Future, Technology Grant, Professional Development, and High School Improvement Plan (proficiency with PSSA testing). Dr. Spitz provided board members with an overview of each of these topics which were discussed.

c) Finance/Facilities

Mr. Webb advised that a meeting will take place on March 27th in the Board Room.

d) IU Board

Ms. Boyle advised that the next meeting is scheduled for March 18th. Field trip for new board members will take place on March 13th. The autistic support program will be visited in Quakertown.

e) Educational Foundation

Mr. Kadri advised of the following: \$13,000 in annual grants was given to teachers for innovative ideas. One LCD projector will be provided to each of the middle schools and scholarships for seniors attending a 4 year college to major in education. Applications are due May 1st.

f) Technical School

Mr. Koutsouradis advised that the board is working on finalizing the budget and the next meeting will take place on March 31st at 8:00 p.m.

g) Technology

Mr. Blasch advised that the next meeting is scheduled for March 17th.

9. Future Topics

Mr. O'Connor requested that information be supplied regarding the Technical Educational classes at the high school. Mr. O'Connor requested that a presentation be given to the Board regarding the costs and provide a comparison with our high school program and other districts and if what Neshaminy is providing is also being provided at the Tech School.

10. Agenda Development for the March 25, 2008 Public Meeting

11. Other Board Business

Mr. Paradise advised that by contract agreement with the Township, Verizon FiOS does not need to carry the Neshaminy Channel until November, 2008; however, they have been aggressively working to get same up and running.

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Mr. Paradise advised that the SWAP is in fine shape. The district is \$270,000 ahead. Mr. Paradise can schedule a meeting with Mr. Lillys and Mrs. Culper to review the situation at an upcoming Facilities and Finance committee meeting.

Mr. O'Connor reported that Mrs. Geddes has stated that the ladies room facilities at Gym Night were adequate. Mr. O'Connor noted that Neshaminy Middle, Maple Point and Carl Sandburg had the musical productions at their respective schools. The work done by the students in the Fine Arts was wonderful.

Mrs. Cummings also praised the work done by the middle school students and Gym Night was a huge success.

12. Adjournment

Mr. Webb moved that the meeting be adjourned and Mr. O'Connor seconded same. Mr. Eccles adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Anita E. Walls
Board Secretary