

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC WORK SESSION MINUTES
PUBLIC HEARING ON TAX PROPOSAL FOR PRIMARY ELECTION BALLOT
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
March 13, 2007

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public work session on March 13, 2007 in the District Offices Board Room in the Maple Point Middle School. The following persons were in attendance:

BOARD MEMBERS:

Mr. Richard M. Eccles, President
Mrs. Sue C. Barrett, Vice President
Mr. Joseph Blasch
Mr. Jason Bowman
Ms. Irene Boyle
Mrs. Susan Cummings
Mr. Frank Koziol
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 30 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.

Mr. Eccles stated that this evening the public hearing on the Tax Proposal for Primary Election Ballot will take place. Public Comment regarding Act 1 will take place first.

PUBLIC HEARING ON TAX PROPOSAL FOR PRIMARY ELECTION BALLOT

Public Comment

Mr. Mike Smith, Penndel, PA, stated that as a resident of Penndel he is familiar with the possibility of enacting an earned income tax. The residents knew that revenues needed to be raised and thought was given to put a tax on each address. That was not allowable and after research it was discovered that possibly a land value tax could be enacted. This land value tax is not an approved tax for the school board at the present time; however, a meeting will take place on the 25th of March at which time legislators will meet with the designers of the tax. Do not look at the working people to pay the whole bill.

Mr. Richard Sypek, Langhorne, PA, stated that he is retired and was the Vice-Chairman of the Tax Study Commission. Basically, the Board does not have the option to do nothing and Mr. Sypek believes that the Board should recommend the 1% EIT. Act 1 is a diversion from the real problem. The real problem is that the taxes statewide and district wide are way too high. Act 1 is a minimal amount of what people will get back and will be a tax increase for over 50% of the residents. Mr. Sypek notes that Neshaminy had over 10,300 pupils in 2000 and currently about 9,100. There is a 12% reduction in pupils over the years. Expenditures per pupil in 2000 were \$10,200. Currently, the expenditures are \$17,600 according to the projected budget. That is a 72% increase on a 12% reduction. That is approximately 10% per year. At this rate the district will be spending approximately \$35,000 per pupil with the next

10 years. Mr. Sypek suggested that the Board stop using consultants, reduce salaries for Administrators and teachers, etc. The target for meaningful property tax reduction needs to be ½ of the inflation rate with no exceptions.

Mr. Phil Schieber, Langhorne, PA, stated that he is speaking about a group called Pennsylvania Taxpayers Cyber Coalition which is a group across the state which has been lobbying with the legislators for about the past 6-7 months telling them how poor Act 1 is. They have written a Petition to the legislators and it has already been signed by a number of districts in the state of Pennsylvania. Mr. Schieber read the following Resolution:

“WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Legislature is unable to carry out its Constitutional responsibilities and is crippling school districts and property owners through its inaction on property tax reform, and

WHEREAS, Act 1 does not provide property tax reform, and

WHEREAS, the disproportionate rebates that may become available under Act 1 are distributed in a discriminatory manner by favoring property owners with low school property tax bills and are not distributed equitably within or among school districts, and in fact favor major cities over the balance of the state, and

WHEREAS, the shift to a higher local earned income tax under Act 1 in exchange for an offsetting reduction in property tax is not tax reform and does not solve inequitable funding across all school districts, and

WHEREAS, stressed school districts that have insufficient assessed value to support education also lack a sufficient earned income tax base, rendering the shift to local earned income tax useless in solving funding inequities, and

WHEREAS, Act 1 exacerbates funding inequities, as any rebates that may become available, plus a shift in local income tax, if approved, result in the greatest reductions provided to school districts whereby the tax burden is the least and the smallest reductions provided to districts where the tax burden is the greatest.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the (school district) Board of School Directors, STRONGLY URGES that the Legislature immediately repeal Act 1, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the undersigned (school district) School Directors STRONGLY URGE the Legislature to IMMEDIATELY begin working on true property tax reform. “

Mr. Schieber provided Board members with a copy of said Resolution. Mr. Schieber further advised that Governor Rendell has signed an agreement with the City of Pittsburgh to build the Pittsburgh Penguins a new ice arena and the monies will be coming from the gambling tax.

Mr. Paul Sweeney, Langhorne, PA, stated that he sends his children to parochial school, however, he believes in a strong Neshaminy. Mr. Sweeney last spoke before the Board regarding a new high school. Mr. Sweeney is glad that people are taking care of the children. Mr. Sweeney noted that the district has a high proportion of special needs students. The expenses are way higher than any other districts within the state. Mr. Sweeney works in Philadelphia and his wife works in Newtown which also has a 1% tax. Mr. Sweeney chooses to live in Neshaminy. Mr. Sweeney is for the PIT. Mr. Sweeney is a regular person who makes money. Living on dividends and income is most important for some; however, a 1% tax on the total net income is punitive. Transferring wealth from the rich to the poor and the burden is overwhelming. Mr. Sweeney knows that the only reason why his house is worth what it is worth is because he lives in Neshaminy, Mr. Sweeney wants to stop protecting people that live well and happy. Let's make decisions for the children's sake and the children's sake only.

Mr. Mel Cherry, Middletown Township, PA, presented a Petition signed by several hundred senior citizens of the Township who wish to ask the Board not to enact a PIT. There are many people within this Township who need to consider whether to take medications or they eat. Do not advertise a PIT.

Mr. Cherry provided the Petition to be entered into the record as an Exhibit.

Mr. Michael Moriakis, Langhorne, PA, stated that his comments were covered and he did not speak.

Mr. William O'Connor, Langhorne, PA, requested that the month prior to the referendum the district once or twice a day rebroadcast the last meeting of the Tax Study Commission on the Neshaminy channel so that everyone has an opportunity to view same. Mr. O'Connor encouraged the Board to send out a mailer to the district so that the residents are aware that there is a referendum and needs to be voted upon. Many people are still ignorant to the facts surrounding this issue. Mr. O'Connor noted that the EIT/PIT is not repairing or reforming anything. Property taxes still exist. The burden is being shifted upon the working class people. The plan is very highly speculative. The governor is proposing to increase the sales tax by 1% which is going to also fund property tax relief. What happened to the gaming revenues? Working class people will be paying more money in income taxes, more money when purchasing items, etc. Social Security is in crisis and by the year 2040 will be insolvent. By the year 2018 Medicare will be insolvent. Retirees during that time will not even benefit from 100% distributions from those programs. They cannot save from their money now, because a higher percent of their money is going towards property tax relief. Harrisburg needs to cut the perks and find a true path to property tax relief which is to reduce the unnecessary spending and stay away from the working class taxpayers.

Mr. Keith Moss, Lower Southampton Township, PA, stated that Act 1 is going after the middle class working people of the school district. The magic number is \$58,000 which is the breakeven point per family. People need to understand what is at stake. It is a combined income of the family. Renters will lose. There will be no property tax relief for them and the income tax will rise. Once the tax is passed there is no turning back. Lower Southampton Township already has a 1% earned income tax. However, if it becomes a 2% tax and you plan to sell your home within a year, two, five and you are the only district or township that has a 2% earned income the ability to sell your home will become difficult. Everyone needs to vote on May 15th and express their opinions.

Mr. Eccles requested if anyone else wished to address the Act 1 issue.

Board Discussion

Mr. Profy advised the Board that after discussion the Board will either accept or reject the actions of the Tax Study Commission recommendation. Mr. Profy advised that what was recommended by the Tax Study Commission cannot be accepted by the Board and must be rejected. Then, the authorization of the ballot question will take place. Mr. Profy advised that today is the last day in which a decision can be made. Mr. Profy stated that the action that the Board will take this evening is to approve the placement of the ballot question on the May 15, 2007 primary election.

Mr. Webb commented that this is a state mandate. If it were not, this Board would not be addressing same. The School District will not receive any of the monies. The taxpayers will decide this issue. Mr. Webb inquired whether persons sixteen years of age and younger could be exempt from this tax.

Mr. Profy stated that the Act does not provide for granting of exemption based on age or other criteria. Mr. Profy cited Section 325 of the Act states:

"A school district that imposes an earned income tax, net profits tax, authorized under this Section may exempt from the payment of that tax any person whose total income from all sources is less than \$12,000."

Mr. Profy stated that is not a household exception. It is a per person exception.

Mr. Webb stated that each individual in the household would complete an earned income tax return. Mr. Profy noted that the school district does not have the statutory authority to create exemptions or deductions on an earned income tax other than provided specifically in this Section 325.

Mr. Profy stated that in the event the ballot question passes, the district will need to pass a tax resolution which would cover items such as how the tax will be collected, when payment obligations will be, and any exemptions provided for in the statute.

Mr. Koziol stated that because school boards across the state have not been able to curb the runaway costs of a public school education, this increased the burden on those that are living off of a lifetime of savings and social security, or who are at a lower income level. These people are being pushed to the breaking point. For example, the cost of educating a child in Neshaminy, per last year's budget was \$15,901 and that cost is going up this year. There are colleges that cost less than \$15,901. There are households in the community living on less than \$15,901. Within the district there are 1,644 households or 6.7% of the families in the Neshaminy School District that have an income under \$15,000. The intent of this tax was to start shifting the burden of taxes from those who can least afford it to those with broader shoulders.

Mr. Koziol further stated that in Act 1 we say it's not fair to those who rent. Is it fair to charge school tax to single people or married couples without children or older people who have already paid a fair share and then some? Is it fair that people of moderate means that saved their money so they could enjoy their old age be asked to continue to feed the appetite of the public school system? In most cases these saved dollars can not be replaced and taking them is not only unfair, it is outright ludicrous. "Taxation is the power to destroy" and these real estate taxes are destroying the security of our mothers and fathers, our grandmothers and granddads. Act 1 is a tax shift not an increase in taxes. This act is a start. It helps real estate taxpayers who make under \$57,600.

Mr. Koziol mentioned an editorial which stated "Prior to the school board, young and old, held a dream of future retirement based on prudent investments and hard earned savings, this board seems very determined to alter that dream. The board talks to us as if we are children and taxes us if we are reducing our lives. However, this reduction is not play money. It is in fact the future dreams of the young and survival money for the old. Retirement savings by working couples, as well as retirees, is a very serious business and a personal income tax, if enacted, will insult the very essence of retirement planning. The Personal Income Tax literally taxes everything that you earn, invested savings."

Dr. Spitz noted that this proposal before the Board creates division in the community. It puts seniors against wage earners. It is a very poor piece of legislature which the state has imposed. Dr. Spitz does not support an EIT or PIT.

Mr. Blasch stated that he has received many calls regarding the EIT primarily since he represents the residents of Lower Southampton Township. The people in attendance this evening only represents a small amount of people, however, each of the persons here tonight represents approximately another 100 of people.

Mrs. Cummings feels that getting the information out will be the most important thing. By allowing it to appear on T.V. and anything else that can be done will be a help.

Mrs. Barrett does regret that the Board is asked to make a choice on the tax shift. Lower Southampton will endure a very oppressive tax if enacted. The judgment on society comes from how the weakest are treated. Older people are hurting and younger people are looking for help. Both groups are seeking help, one to educate and one to be able to stay in their homes until they so decide to relocate. Older Americans should be able to stay in their homes until they are ready to leave. Children need to be educated.

Mr. Bowman stated that the Board will reject the Tax Study Commission recommendation and the Board will then take action to authorize a ballot question at the May primary election. The Board needs to do both these things according to law. The Board is not taking a position. The Tax Study Commission was formed with nine individuals that represented a cross section of the community. Those nine people said that they did not favor an EIT/PIT. They looked at all the information and they saw probably more information than the Board will see. Mr. Bowman stated that the district will replay the last meeting of the commission.

Mr. Blasch requested that since some people do not have cable, there needs to be another way to get the information to the public.

Ms. Boyle noted that not everyone has cable and internet access. Act 1 was a very poorly worded piece of legislation. Unfortunately, the Board needs to act.

Mr. Webb suggested that the district provide on the website frequently asked questions.

Mr. Eccles stated that whenever there is a shortage of funds the state government seems to find a way to impose another tax. Mr. Eccles has never been an advocate of an earned income tax or personal income tax. The voters need to get out. Mr. Eccles feels that this is a travesty that the state would mandate such a tax. The children need to be educated. Mr. Eccles is concerned about the elderly and middle class. Hopefully voter turnout will be high.

Mr. Paul Sweeney stated that the commission was designed to increase the tax either by EIT or PIT. By accepting or rejecting the Board is stating that they want to increase the EIT or PIT. Property tax relief will be received by the district and individuals may not get same at this time. Mr. Sweeney stated that is the way he understood the issue.

Mr. Paradise responded that there is a great amount of misinformation being passed along. The EIT/PIT is required to be put on the ballot by the Board. If the voters approve same every dime except for a small collection fee goes back to the taxpayers, not to the school district in any way, shape or form. The taxpayers will receive a credit on their real estate tax bills. This is a revenue neutral issue to the school district. No additional monies will be received by the district.

Mr. Bowman stated that by law the Board cannot accept the recommendation of the Tax Study Commission. An EIT/PIT must be placed on the ballot.

Mr. Michael Mariakis, Langhorne, PA, is confused as to if the commission was not legally permissible, why was it done?

Mr. Bowman responded that the commission was required to be put in place by law; however, the recommendation of the commission is not permissible. By law, this Board must place an EIT/PIT on the ballot.

Mr. Steve Rodos, Villages of Flowers Mill, Langhorne, feels everyone should do their fair share for educating the children of the community in which you live. Mr. Rodos has a problem in that retired teachers and local legislators who were forced out of office and anyone else who has a good retirement plan does not pay either of these taxes. Their form of income is not taxed in either way by the EIT/PIT under the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The people who can most afford this are getting a tax reduction because their real estate taxes will be reduced. Mr. Rodos noted that if the Board had a tie vote it would need to go to the Court in Doylestown for a decision and that decision may not be made until after the May election. Either way it is a bad position. Each Board member as an individual should contact the Courier Times and asked to be interviewed as an individual and tell the public how you feel about the issue.

Mr. Richard Sypek, Langhorne, PA, stated that the Board tonight needs to make a decision. It is part of the law. Just because they do this does not mean that your taxes will be increased. The only one that will increase your taxes is the voters in May. The commission stated that it is a bad law. Neshaminy does not need an EIT/PIT and the commission recommended neither. The commission is saying by that vote that the people should vote it down in May.

Motion: Approval to Reject Tax Study Commission Report

Mr. Webb presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, in accordance with Act 1 of 2006 of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Neshaminy Board of School Directors appointed its Local Tax Study Commission on September 12, 2006; and

WHEREAS, the Commission met on four dates and held a Public Hearing on November 9, 2006, to review the financial and other details necessary in order to comply with the Act; and

WHEREAS, the Commission finalized its recommendation at its meeting on November 15, 2006; and

WHEREAS, the Neshaminy Board of School Directors did on December 1, 2006, acknowledge receipt of the recommendation of the Commission; and

WHEREAS, the Board of School Directors did on December 1, 2006, discharge the Commission in accordance with Section 331(f) of Act 1.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Neshaminy Board of School Directors reject in accordance with Section 331(g) of Act 1 the recommendation of the Commission since the Commission made no recommendation on the question of whether to adopt an Earned Income Tax or Personal Income Tax, but rather the Commission advised that a majority of members of the Commission did not want either an Earned Income Tax or Personal Income Tax imposed on the residents of the School District and the School District as a matter of law cannot accept said suggestion of the Tax Commission.

Mr. Koziol seconded the motion.

The Board unanimously approved the motion.

Mr. Webb made a motion to pass an Earned Income Tax at a rate of 1%.

Mr. Bowman seconded the motion.

Mr. Profy stated a roll call vote should occur. The roll call tally indicated the motion passed by a vote of eight ayes (Mrs. Barrett, Mr. Bowman, Mrs. Boyle, Mrs. Cummings, Mr. Eccles, Mr. Koziol, Dr. Spitz and Mr. Webb) and one nay (Mr. Blasch).

Mr. Profy noted that on the Non-Legal Interpretive Statement, paragraph 3, line two, the amount of "1%" should be deleted and replaced with "approximately \$13.9 million."

Motion: Approval to Authorize the May 15, 2007 Primary Ballot Question

Mrs. Barrett presented the following motion:

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
OF NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT
AUTHORIZING THE MAY 15, 2007 PRIMARY BALLOT QUESTION

WHEREAS, Act 1 of 2006 of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania mandates a referendum on whether the School District shall increase or impose either an earned income tax or a personal income tax for the purpose of generating revenues to be used to fund homestead/farmstead property tax exclusions for qualified homestead/farmstead property; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of this Resolution is to approve the referendum question and the taking of a related action.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, and it is RESOLVED by the Board of School Directors of Neshaminy School District as follows:

1. The School District shall place a referendum question on the May 15, 2007 Primary Election Ballot. The referendum question shall be in substantially the following form with additions or changes, other than the tax rate as determined by the School Board President and election officials of Bucks County prior to the election:

Imposition of Earned Income Tax

Do you favor the Neshaminy School District imposing an Earned Income Tax at a rate of 1%? The revenue generated from the tax will be used to reduce School District Taxes on qualified residential properties by an estimated amount of \$576.

2. The School District administration, in consultation with the School Board and Solicitor of the School District, shall prepare and present to the Election Officials a non-legal interpretative statement which shall accompany the referendum question in accordance with the Pennsylvania Election Code.

3. The School District Officials shall take any and all action necessary or appropriate to carry out the intent of this Resolution. Should a majority of electors voting on the May 15, 2007 referendum question vote in the affirmative, the School District shall take action to assess and levy the tax beginning on July 1, 2007. The tax shall be self-executing and shall continue in force on a fiscal year basis without annual reenactment, except in a year in which the rate of the taxes changed, or the taxes repealed.

RESOLUTION adopted this _____ day of _____, 2007.

ATTEST: NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Anita E. Walls, Board Secretary

By: _____
Richard M. Eccles, Board President

NON-LEGAL INTERPRETIVE STATEMENT
FOR EARNED INCOME TAX

Under the Taxpayer Relief Act, also known as Special Session Act 1 of 2006, each local school board, with voter approval, may impose a tax on earned income and net profits in order to pay for reductions in property taxes. In short, the funds generated by the new earned income tax will be used to lower property taxes on approved homestead and farmstead properties starting with the 2007-08 fiscal year.

The Act provides that voters within each school district are to decide directly whether their school district will impose an earned income tax to fund property tax relief. This referendum question is being presented to voters to allow them to decide that question.

If the majority of voters vote "yes" on this referendum question, residents in the Neshaminy School District will pay a new earned income tax to the school district; it would be approximately \$13.9 million. Residents who own and live in their homes, and who have applied and thus far have been approved to receive a homestead or farmstead exclusion, will receive a reduction in their property taxes by an estimated \$576 for homesteads and \$576 for farmsteads. This reduction may be lower in the first year of implementation due to time lags in the collection of income taxes. In addition, the new earned income tax would generate an estimated \$277,620 in revenue, representing 2% of the estimated revenue generated by the new tax, which may be used for school district operations in 2007-08 as permitted by the Taxpayer Relief Act.

If the majority of voters vote "no" on this referendum question, the school district will not impose an earned income tax. Therefore, no local revenue would be available for property tax relief.

Voters' decision on this referendum question will not affect the school district's ability to receive state funds that will be used for property tax relief.

The school district currently does not levy an earned income tax. If approved, the school district earned income tax rate will be 1% starting July 1, 2007. The imposition of a school district earned income tax will not affect any income tax currently levied by the local municipality.

Mr. Koziol seconded the motion.

Mr. Eccles requested a roll call vote. The roll call tally indicated that the motion passed with eight ayes (Mr. Webb, Dr. Spitz, Mr. Koziol, Mr. Eccles, Mrs. Cummings, Ms. Boyle, Mr. Bowman, and Mrs. Barrett) and one nay (Mr. Blasch).

Mr. Bowman moved the meeting be adjourned and Mr. Webb seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion. Mr. Eccles adjourned the Act 1 Hearing at 8:12 p.m.

3. Public Comment on other than Act 1

Mr. Paul Sweeney, Langhorne, PA, stated that the EIT was a preconceived notion and he does not see a vote on the PIT. Mr. Sweeney has visited many of the schools on weekends and he would like to emphasize to the maintenance staff that blocking the fire exits and putting tables up and not providing proper egresses for the children is not correct. Mr. Sweeney has spoken to maintenance staff and it does not help.

Mrs. Randi Charen, Langhorne, PA, stated that she has two students in the school district who attend Maple Point. Mrs. Charen stated that the 9th graders are given the opportunity to participate in high school sports; however, they are not housed at the high school. Transportation is not provided over to the high school for the students to participate in the sports. Presently, car pools are being used to get the students to the high school. Parents need to leave work in order to provide transportation for the students. The students are being penalized, and tax dollars are being paid. Mrs. Charen was informed that the Boy's Lacrosse team practices at Maple Point and those students from the high school are bused over to Maple Point to participate in lacrosse, and then they are bused back to the high school. Mrs. Charen would like to see that something is done to resolve this situation. Communications need to be clearer when schedules are changed regarding transportation and times of practices.

Mr. Steve Rodos, Langhorne, PA, stated the need for full time kindergarten and seat belts on school buses. Mr. Rodos stated that SAGE, Senior Adults for Greater Education, is a program that attempts to match senior citizens and their life experiences with teachers and classes in the district who can best utilize the experience and help which can be provided by the seniors. It is a great match. It is a joy to work with the enthusiasm of the seniors and students. Mr. Rodos urged all seniors to get involved.

4. Announcements

- Sage Presentation – Mrs. Lyn Wallace
Mrs. Barrett introduced Mrs. Lyn Wallace who is a retired Neshaminy teacher who agreed to be the volunteer coordinator for the program. Many hours have been spent putting the program together. Mrs. Barrett said that a breakfast will be held on March 28th at Poquessing Middle School for the SAGE group.

Mrs. Wallace stated that she has been running SAGE since August, 2006. The program attempts to match senior volunteers with teacher requests for assistance in the classroom. Presently there are 40 senior volunteers, 12 of them are working on a weekly basis. Currently seniors are placed in Schweitzer, Miller, Maple Point, Heckman and Tawanka. Mrs. Wallace provided fliers for the public to get acquainted with SAGE.

5. Items for Approval

- a) **Overnight Trips**
 - i. Carl Sandburg Middle School to FBLA Conference – Hershey Lodge & Convention Center April 30 – May 2, 2007
 - ii. Neshaminy High School to FLBA Conference – Hershey Lodge & Convention Center April 30 – May 2, 2007

Dr. Heble requested Board approval for two overnight trips.
There was Board consensus for the trips.

- b) **Approval of Revised Board Policies**

- i. Board Policy #110 – Board Governance Standards/Code of Conduct
- ii. Board Policy #123 – Attendance at Educational Conferences

Dr. Rattigan noted that the two policies have been merged and will be presented for Board approval at the upcoming public meeting. Dr. Rattigan noted that Board members can attend conferences sponsored by PSBA in Pennsylvania without Board approval. Mr. Koziol suggested extending the conferences to New Jersey. Dr. Rattigan stated that it could be considered.

c) **Penndel Revitalization Development Plan**

Mr. Kadri provided an overview of an initiative that representatives from Penndel Borough are seeking support on. There is an effort to perform revitalization in the Penndel Borough area by the train station and there are state funds available to assist in the efforts. One of the requirements in order to qualify for state assistance is to contact local governmental agencies to seek a resolution of endorsement for them to continue this process. The Board of Supervisors of Middletown Township has already granted their approval. Mr. Kadri noted that this is a positive effort for the community and school district.

d) **Installment Payment Plan for Property Taxes**

Mr. Paradise advised that one of the requirements of Act 1 is for the Board to enact an installment payment plan for property taxes. The Finance Committee has reviewed a plan and it will be presented to the Board for approval at the end of the month. Beginning in July, 2007 the tax bills would reflect this plan. If a homeowner chooses to forego the 2% discount the real estate taxes can be paid in three equal installments. 1/3 due July 15th, 1/3 due September 15th and 1/3 due October 31st. A motion will be presented at the end of the month.

Dr. Spitz was concerned about the July 15th date since bills only go out the beginning of July. Mr. Paradise noted that the Board will approve the Budget on June 8th and bills will be issued by the end of June.

e) **2007 - 08 Bucks County Technical High School Budget**

Mr. Koziol commended the Tech School and Mr. Parks for an outstanding job on decreasing many of the figures for the upcoming budget. To achieve such a result it was partly due to an unselfish staff. Neshaminy's contribution has increased due to the formula. Mr. Koziol stated that the formula will be reviewed and further information will be provided. Mr. Kadri noted that formulas are specified and adjustments occur. Dr. Spitz noted that the biggest cause of the Neshaminy increase is that the district has been sending more students over the past few years and the formula works on a lag. Essentially, the district is paying now for the increase in students over the past couple years. Next year, the annual increase should be less.

Mr. Paradise noted that the Articles of Agreement were amended in 2003 and 2005.

f) **Summer Programs 2007**

Dr. Heble advised Board members that the Neshaminy School District once again will provide Summer School Programs for 2007. Two programs are offered:

- Secondary Summer School (Students in Grades 6-12)
 - Accelerated or Enrichment Courses
 - Make-up Courses

- Summer Fine Arts Program
 - Art
 - Dance
 - Instrumental Music
 - Summer Stock

Dr. Heble advised that each program is operated on a self-sustaining basis.

g) **Bids/Budget Transfers**

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

Bid No. 08-01 General School Supplies

Bid Amount: \$160,333.05

The bid is for various classroom and office supplies for use throughout the district for the school year 2007/2008.

Bid No. 08-02 Athletic & Physical Education Supplies

Bid Amount: \$85,665.62

The bid is for supplies for physical education programs and various team sports for the school year 2007/2008.

Mr. Paradise advised that Bid No. 08-01 and Bid No. 08-02 will be presented at the public meeting for approval.

6. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Kadri provided on behalf of the District his sincere condolences to the family of Jessica Kebert who was lost in the accident which occurred this past Sunday. The positive news is that the other student involved in the accident, even though suffering serious injuries, is doing very well and hope for a speedy recovery for her. Mr. Kadri thanked the family for their concern about Jessica's friends. All school resources were focused on her friends. Mr. Kadri also thanked Jessica's friends who have focused on the positive aspects of Jessica and how to appropriately deal with the situation. Mr. Kadri thanked the community and District for all their support in appropriately dealing with the loss.

Mr. Kadri advised that the public safety groups from Middletown have asked the District to identify a half day at the high school in which they can perform security training and testing of their own systems. The police, fire and other federal and state agencies would participate. Mr. Kadri announced that on June 20th such an exercise could take place.

7. Committee Reports

a) Board Policies

Mr. Bowman announced that the next meeting will take place on March 27, 2007. Discussion will take place on the Facilities Dedication Policy. Mr. Eccles requested that the committee also look into Veterans that have gone through the District and have given the ultimate sacrifice.

b) Educational Development

Dr. Spitz advised that passing the PSSA as a graduation requirement was discussed at the meeting on February 7, 2007. Dr. Spitz provided a one page summary to Board members for review.

c) Finance/Facilities

Mr. Webb stated that the last meeting took place on February 21st and the Committee is looking into refinancing an old series of bonds that are callable. Presentations took place. Installment payment plan for taxes was also discussed. Mr. Webb announced that the next meeting is scheduled for March 22, 2007.

d) IU Board

Dr. Spitz advised that Dr. Coe will be retiring at the end of this year and the search for a new Executive Director is under way. The interview process will occur shortly. Teacher's contracts are also in discussion and negotiations are ongoing.

e) Education Foundation

Mrs. Cummings advised that 37 grants were awarded totally approximately \$17,000. The Spring Raffle will take place from May 14th - May 29th. Anyone in the community may enter the drawing. The drawing will take place on June 1st. First place prize is two tickets to the "Jersey Boys" and an overnight stay at the Manhattan

Club. The tickets to the show and hotel stay are July 17th. Raffle tickets are \$5.00 a piece and 3 for \$10.00. Contact Kathy at (215) 752-6428 after May 14th for tickets.

f) Technical School

Ms. Boyle advised that the last meeting took place on February 26th and budget discussion took place.

g) Technology

Mr. Blasch advised that a meeting is scheduled for March 19, 2007.

8. Future Topics

Mr. Bowman suggested discussing the mailer for Act 1 at the next Board meeting.

9. Other Board Business

Mr. Koziol provided figures to the Board regarding the amount of taxes and costs to educate students over the past 30 years. Perhaps instead of a tax shift it should be considered to reduce the person's school district tax starting at age 65 until finally exempting the total amount by age 75 since they have over the years fully paid their fair share and then some.

Mrs. Cummings commended Judy Cunningham for all her efforts at Gym Night. The students had a lot of fun and two wonderful nights resulted.

Mrs. Barrett advised that the Board will be meeting in groups with the Superintendent to discuss the possible formation of a Personnel Committee.

Dr. Spitz attended the PSBA Legislative Leadership Conference in February. Dr. Spitz advised that Committee has been formed to look at state wide health care and pension reforms that would involve teachers. This would entail a state health care system where public employees would take part. Three groups (PSBA, State Education Association and Representative from the State Government) are meeting on the issue; however, each group has veto power.

Dr. Spitz advised that the state is doing a costing out study. The goal is to access what it really costs to educate a student successfully and the state will provide additional funding.

Dr. Spitz advised that No Child Left Behind is up for reauthorization and PSBA and NSBA are very active in obtaining some needed changes to the law so that local school districts are not so burdened.

10. Agenda Development for the March 27, 2007 Public Board Meeting

11. Adjournment

Mr. Webb moved that the meeting be adjourned and Mr. Bowman seconded same. Mr. Eccles adjourned the meeting at 9:05 pm.

Respectively submitted,

Anita E. Walls
Board Secretary