

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC BOARD MEETING
PUBLIC WORK SESSION MINUTES
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
April 10, 2007

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public work session on April 10, 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 A. Heble
Mr. Joseph V. Paradise
Dr. Jacqueline Rattigan

OTHERS: Approximately 25 persons from the public, staff and press

SECRETARY: Mrs. Anita E. Walls

SOLICITOR:

Thomas J. Profy, III, Esquire

*Mrs. Susan Cummings - Arrived at 7:15 p.m.

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. Public Comment

Mr. William O'Connor, Langhorne, PA, reminded that a mailer regarding Act 1 would be useful to be sent out district wide. Mr. O'Connor noted that many people do not even know that a referendum will take place on the ballot this election. Mr. O'Connor strongly encouraged the Board to agree to the mailer. Mr. O'Connor would like to see a rebroadcast of the tax meetings held earlier this year regarding Act 1.

Mr. Solis Basen, Langhorne, PA, remarked to the Administration, Business Department, Finance Committee, School Board and those in the community who are giving the Board a blank check to run the district. At the last Board meeting we were told there was no silver bullet to curtail spending. We are now awaiting the second feasibility study and the opinions on the future of the middle school and alternative school. The preliminary budget calls for a 3.4% increase with the cost average per homeowner of \$238. This includes many homes that are assessed for only \$10,000. Mr. Basen stated that his development will expect increase of \$360. Last week the district applied for exemption status so they can increase the budget and do without a referendum. This is going to cost the taxpayers many more dollars. How will this affect the taxpayer? It seems that the school district is trying to walk up a down escalator.

Mr. Steve Rodos, Langhorne, PA, stated that he believes that you cannot spend enough money educating properly the students of Neshaminy School District. Mr. Rodos applauds the Administrators and faculty of the district. They do a fantastic job. Mr. Rodos stated that Governor Rendell is asking our local representative Chris King to introduce legislation to

authorize an additional \$100M for education. It appears that 25% of this amount will go towards full day kindergarten and 75% for pre-school programs. Someone from the district can follow this proposal to its logical fruition, which would be additional funds for the Neshaminy School District. Mr. Rodos would also like the Board to address the disparity in funding among school districts in Lower and Central Bucks. Having seen all the figures in the Inquirer publication, Mr. Rodos would like to know if other districts' budgets were obtained and compared to our district. Every school district's test results start high in elementary school and they go down by senior high school.

5. Items for Discussion

a) High School Construction Update

- Reynolds Construction – Mr. Damion Spahr
- ATS&R – Mr. Paul Erickson

Mr. Paradise advised that Mr. Erickson was unable to attend the meeting this evening. Mr. Spahr from Reynolds Construction will provide a monthly update and address any questions that the Board may have.

Mr. Spahr provided Board members with the March, 2007 monthly project report. Mr. Spahr advised that all the time lost due to weather has been regained to date. The project is continuing to move on track and move on by the district at the end of the year and the opening of Building J in the fall. Also, the boiler room work is tracking ahead of schedule. Site work for Phase 2 is continuing ahead of schedule. Mr. Spahr advised that the project is about 38 weeks into the 138 week project.

Mr. Spahr advised that he was looking into ways to save the district money regarding the roofing issue and Phase 2. ATS&R is awaiting documentation in order to proceed with this change order.

Mrs. Barrett asked regarding the status of piping which involved a change order of approximately \$45,000. Mr. Spahr advised that when the school was designed a specification existed for insulation. Between the design of the all new high school and the school currently being built there was a code change that required that insulation on hot/chill water piping serving the HVAC effectively needs to get thicker. That change was not picked up by ATS&R at bid time for this project and when the shop drawings were submitted they found the issue and notified the contractor that a change needed to be made to comply with code. The contractor in turn responded with an additional cost. This was a State Energy Act Code change. This was not a Middletown Code change. Mr. Spahr advised Board members that it is a required change and we need to know that the contractor has submitted fair pricing.

Mrs. Barrett questioned the status of the climbing wall. Mr. Spahr advised that a meeting took place at which time discussions took place as to what was in the existing gym and what needs to be in the new gym to accommodate the equipment that the district has and utilizes at this time. ATS&R has discussed the issue with the contractors in order that the required point loads can be met in accordance with OSHA protection. ATS&R has at least two options. What gets reuse of the equipment today. The second option would be the ability for expansion anywhere within the gym. Expansion anywhere will be a significantly higher cost. Mr. Spahr is a proponent of not spending unless it is necessary. The design is underway for the Challenge Course and Climbing Wall.

Dr. Spitz inquired regarding the additional contractor parking lot. Mr. Spahr advised that this would alleviate parking problems which is arising. Mr. Spahr advised that student parking has not been infringed upon to date.

Mr. Spahr advised that the job was bid on 2005 prices. 2006 pricing would have been significantly different due to several market factors. Savings have occurred. Efforts are being made to acquire credits regarding abatement.

Mrs. Barrett inquired if the security system will mesh with the rest of the system. Mr. Spahr advised that the submittals are required and discussion between the architect and district are completed.

Ms. Boyle inquired regarding the fire protection system. Mr. Spahr advised that this is relevant to Units J & H. Coordination drawings exist and specific issues have been identified and are being discussed with the sprinkling contractor.

Mr. Webb is disappointed that ATS&R is not present to provide answers to some issues that have been hanging for two to three months. Mr. Webb would like to withhold ATS&R monies until they come before the Board and answer the open ended questions. Mr. Webb requested a roll call vote to direct Mr. Paradise to withhold monies from ATS&R until such time as these matters are brought to a successful conclusion.

Mr. Eccles asked Mr. Profy for an opinion regarding same.

Mr. Profy advised that he anticipated that ATS&R was to be present this evening. Mr. Profy asked if Mr. Paradise could have ATS&R present for the next public meeting. Mr. Paradise advised that he contacted Mr. Erickson and advised him that a meeting would take place on April 24th and May 1st and asked him to arrange to be at either meeting. Mr. Profy thought it would be best to set a date specific for ATS&R to be present and also that the Board direct Mr. Paradise and myself to have a meeting with ATS&R in advance to clarify some of these pressing issues. Mr. Profy would like to have a meeting in advance to define the issues, rather than to suspend the payments at the present time. The Board will have the option and flexibility in two weeks hence to at that time suspend the payments.

Mr. Webb believes that this company has received a tremendous amount of money percentage wise of their contract, and Mr. Webb cautions the Board that a point is not reached where all their money has been distributed and not enough money exists to make it worth there while to continue working in the district's best interest.

Mr. Eccles requested when the next ATS&R payment was due. Mr. Paradise noted that the district is a bit behind with said payments. There is currently a bill outstanding from ATS&R. Mr. Paradise advised that the bulk of the money is paid to the architect early on in the process. Design and development is done in the early phases of the project. There will be monthly payments throughout the length of the project, and they are based on the work being done in terms of assistance. Mr. Paradise advised that it has been in the area of \$20,000-\$25,000 per month.

Mr. Eccles inquired whether it would be wise to place the money in escrow. Mr. Profy advised that placing the money in escrow puts the money out beyond the control of the Board and that is not the intention of the Board. The Board would like to reserve the right to direct the funds and not place same in escrow.

The Board feels there are issues that are pertinent and need to be addressed, however, the Board does not wish to stop the project.

Mr. Profy suggested that no payments be made to ATS&R unless present at the next meeting and the Board receives an explanation.

Mr. Bowman asked if ATS&R was fulfilling their obligation per the contract by having an architect onsite on a regular basis. Mr. Spahr advised that some time has been missed with the onsite representation.

Mrs. Barrett believes that ATS&R should take on some financial responsibility for the change orders and mistakes that have occurred. Mr. Profy advised that at the last meeting it was culminated that most of the requests for such refunds by the district have been agreed upon by ATS&R.

The Board directed Mr. Paradise and Mr. Profy to meet with ATS&R before the next meeting in order to clarify and define the issues currently existing. A delay in two weeks in the payments would be acceptable under the contract.

Mr. Spahr suggested that he speak with Mr. Minotti and Mr. Paradise tomorrow and allow them to provide direction to ATS&R so that in two weeks they can come forth with what is required for the Challenge Course, Climbing Wall, pipe insulation and at least preliminary discussions with what can happen with the roofing modifications in Phase 2, and also settle the issue with the upgrade to the electrical service. In that manner it will give them a sufficient amount of time to respond.

Mr. Profy inquired whether it would be realistic to expect that in two weeks time all the above issues could be addressed. Mr. Spahr believes that it is realistic that these items can be addressed and preliminary, if not final pricing, could be

obtained, with the possible exception of the roofing. The roofing may take a couple of steps; however, significant headway should be made in two weeks time.

There was Board consensus to withhold the payment for two weeks. It was a Board directive to the Business Administrator to withhold the payment for two weeks until the Board can further review the matter in two weeks.

Mr. Eccles advised that the project is on time and on budget. Significant savings will be seen in the next few months.

b) Facility Plan Update

- McKissick Associates

Mr. Kadri advised that a brief presentation from Mr. McKissick would take place.

Mr. McKissick provided the Board with a brief summary of what his company's work on behalf of the district will be:

- Assess the architectural, HVAC, plumbing and electrical condition of each facility in the district
- Walked 1,530,000 square feet of space in the last seven weeks
- Determine deferred maintenance items
- Reviewing the current historic enrollment of each building and district overall
- Forecasting future enrollment using PDE and district projections, as well as looking at potential development and age changes within the district
- Structural capacity of existing schools
- Educational goals as a district and community needs

Mr. McKissick reviewed timelines with Board members. Meetings have taken place with Administration and Faculty to date. Mr. McKissick will return on May 1st to present the Phase 1 findings. The study is being conducted in three phases. The first phase is baseline conditions. The district has begun to make some major improvements to facilities. Many of the buildings at the elementary level are only showing 80% utilization. The middle schools are showing about 75% utilization. The high school will not be researched at this present time. The second phase is option generation and will be completed in May. Phase Three will look at one or more options, based upon the Board's input, and provide some things that the Board can key into to discussions.

Mr. McKissick reviewed with Board members diagrams regarding student movement within the district to specific schools and housing projections and developments in the upcoming years.

Mr. Eccles noted that the Board has placed money aside to begin the rehab process of the school buildings.

The extra money put aside by the Board over the past three years has been effective within the buildings.

c) District Wide Mailing of Act 1 Information

Mr. Paradise presented to the Board frequently asked questions concerning the proposed Earned Income Tax which appear on the May 15 Primary Election Ballot. Mr. Paradise advised that this a draft of the one page fold in half document that will be mailed to the residents of the district. Mr. Paradise advised that the costs would be approximately \$15,000-\$19,000 which would include postage to 30,000 residential properties within the district.

Mr. Paradise advised that this mailer would also be sent to rental properties.

Mr. Eccles is concerned with question 1. The State legislators and governor of PA has required the Board to place this question on the ballot. Mr. Eccles noted that it is the legislators that have caused this issue. Now the district is required to spend more money to educate the public on this topic.

Mr. Paradise advised that the mailer would be sent prior to the May 15th primary.

Mr. Webb feels that it is well worth the money to mail the flyer to residents of the district. Mr. Eccles suggested that the legislators put a letter out regarding this issue. Let's contact the representatives and use their mailing allowance to provide information to the public.

Dr. Spitz is concerned that the district is running out of time. Mr. Eccles advised that he will personally contact the representatives and ask them for their support with the mailer.

Mr. Eccles requested that he have until Friday to contact the representatives. There was Board consensus for that to occur.

There was Board consensus to have Mr. Paradise finalize same and have the mailer provided to taxpayers.

Mr. Profy advised that once adopted the Earned Income Tax cannot be rescinded or reduced. However, it can be changed to a Personal Income Tax beginning the primary of 2009.

Dr. Spitz inquired how much money was needed to mail out the information guide concerning the renovations at the high school. Mr. Paradise advised that he would obtain that information for Dr. Spitz. The brochure was mailed to homes of grades 9-11 with extra copies being available at the high schools and board meetings.

6. Items for Approval

a) Overnight Trips

Maple Point Middle/Neshaminy Middle/Neshaminy High School to Camp Hill, PA for State Bowl Competition for Future Problem Solving Program - April 20-21, 2007

Dr. Heble noted that this is an integral part of the enrichment program within the district. Twenty students will be traveling with four chaperones.

There was Board consensus for this trip.

b) Proposed 2007-2008 School Calendar

Mr. Kadri reviewed with Board members the significant change for the school calendar. Mr. Kadri advised that it is still in draft form since some contractual issues exist. Mr. Kadri advised that the goal is to have same finalized.

Mr. Kadri highlighted the following key change which would be for one year only. During the high school construction this will be the only year which will have a significant relocation of classrooms over the December break. During that time a wing of classroom will be packed and relocated. The proposal is to move a few days from the March vacation and move them to the first week of January, giving the district a very long vacation prior to Christmas and after New Year, but giving a reduced schedule in March.

Normally, an entire week off was provided in March. In 2008, three days of the March vacation will be moved to January 2, 3, and 4. Basically, students will not be in school from December 22nd until January 6th. Staff members will have a slightly different schedule.

January 7th all students will return to school except 10, 11 and 12. Teachers will prepare that day at the high school with students returning on January 8th.

Vacation in March will be from the 20th till the 24th.

October will have a solid month of instruction. Spring will also have very little time off and a very aggressive schedule will be upheld.

c) BCIU #22 Special Education Contracted Services for 2007-08

Mr. Kadri reviewed the Schedule of Contracted costs with the IU unit.

d) **Approval of Revised Board Policy**

- **Board Policy #123**

Dr. Rattigan reviewed with Board members the recommended changes to policy #123. The policy was returned to the Board Policies committee for further discussion. It was decided that if a conference is located in another stated, it would need Board approval for reimbursement for attendance.

Dr. Rattigan advised that on line 24 the word "not" should be deleted.

e) **CISCO Lease**

Mr. Paradise reviewed the CISCO lease with Board members. The Board agreed to fund technology advance purchases as part of the technology plan. That has amounted to \$2.5M. They are in the current year budget. The plan was to borrow the money from a bank and repay over the next four years out of the normal amount allocated for Technology. Advance purchase of certain items would occur to have the benefit of them for the four years. CISCO, one of the vendors has agreed to offer the district an interest free, 48 month lease payment, for that money. Rather than the district borrowing \$2.5M, a lease will be entered into by the District.

Mr. Paradise advised that he will be looking for approval to solicit bank quotes in the near future.

f) **Bids/Budget Transfers**

Mr. Paradise advised that there are no bids; however there is a budget transfer with two items that will be submitted for Board approval on April 24th.

7. **Superintendent's Report**

Mr. Kadri advised that an Executive Session will take place after this meeting regarding a personnel issue.

Mr. Kadri identified the top ten priorities that the Cabinet has noted as key issues:

- Develop a process of doing business and resolving issues
- Establish priorities
- Curriculum with standards and instruction (Professional Development, Assessment, PSSA)
- Assessment (Defining roles and responsibilities within curriculum and instruction area)
- Efficient facilities use
- High School opening/construction
- Risk management
- Hiring review and support
- Community outreach (SAGE, T.V., etc.)
- Contract negotiations
- School climate and culture - Understanding each student

Mrs. Barrett thanked Mr. Kadri for sharing his priorities with Board members and look forward to future reports regarding same.

8. **Committee Reports**

a) **Board Policies**

Mr. Bowman advised that the next meeting will take place on April 24th at 6:00 p.m.

b) **Educational Development**

Dr. Spitz advised that a meeting will take place on Thursday, May 3rd at 6:30 p.m.

c) **Finance/Facilities**

Mr. Webb announced that the next meeting will take place on April 18th. Discussions will ensue regarding refinancing of old bonds and high school funding. The budget will be discussed.

d) **IU Board**

Dr. Spitz advised that the search has been narrowed for the Executive Director.

e) **Education Foundation**

Mrs. Cummings stated the Spring Raffle sales will take place from May 14th till May 25th. The first place prize will be two tickets to the Jersey Boys in NY on July 17th with a one night stay at the Manhattan Club. Tickets can be purchased from Dr. Costanzo's office or Mrs. O'Connor will sell same at the May 16th meeting.

f) **Technical School**

Ms. Boyle advised that negotiations are proceeding and the next meeting will take place on April 17th. A five year plan is being discussed for capital asset purchases.

g) **Technology**

Mr. Blasch advised that a meeting took place on March 19th and a large agenda was discussed. Three phases of technology were introduced in the beginning of June, 2006. Phase 1 and 2 are now complete. Phase 1 was the purchase of the computers and servers. Phase 3 is the process of replacing all the core switches with new core switches allowing ability to move information around. Also, in Phase 3 the analog system to a voice over Internet which will replace the antiquated system.

Every classroom in the school district is now hard wired to the Internet with a computer in the classroom. Every staff member has a network account, and in September, 2007 tentatively every student will have a network account.

A new homepage will be developed.

Bucks County IU will provide Internet 2 services to all County school districts and the Bucks County Community College.

The next meeting will take place on Monday, April 16th at 7:00 p.m.

9. Future Topics

None.

10. Agenda Development for the April 24, 2007 Public Board Meeting

11. Other Board Business

Mr. Solis Basen, Langhorne, PA, noted that the one day that teachers have at the high school to set up in January, there could possibly be parent participation to help with the procedures. Mr. Basen noted that 9th graders coming into the high school do not need parking. It was discussed that the only thing additional parking would be needed for was the overflow crowd at the football games. It was decided that it was not worthwhile to spend additional monies for parking lot enlargement. The Board should consider this.

Mr. Bowman advised that Middletown Township has requested the additional parking.

12. Adjournment

Mr. Blasch moved that the meeting be adjourned and Dr. Spitz seconded same. Mr. Eccles adjourned the meeting at 8:50 pm.

Respectively submitted,



Anita E. Walls
Board Secretary