

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC WORK SESSION MINUTES
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
May 4, 2010

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public work session on May 4, 2010 in the Harry M. Dengler, Jr. Performing Arts Center at the Maple Point Middle School. The following persons were in attendance:

BOARD MEMBERS:

Mr. Ritchie Webb, President
Mr. Kim Koutsouradis, Vice President
Ms. Irene Boyle
Mr. Scott E. Congdon
Mrs. Susan Cummings
Mr. Richard M. Eccles
Mr. Mike Morris
Mr. William D. O'Connor
Mr. William Oettinger

ADMINISTRATORS:

Dr. Louis T. Muenker
Mr. Joseph V. Paradise
Dr. Jacqueline Rattigan
Dr. Geeta Heble
Mrs. Patricia Boylan
Mr. Kevin Kane

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

OTHERS: Approximately 100 persons from the public, staff and press

SECRETARY: Mrs. Jennifer Burns

SOLICITOR: Thomas J. Profy, III, Esquire

1. Call to Order

Mr. Webb called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

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

3. Announcements

None

4. Public Comment

Rich Miller, Accountant, Langhorne, PA, opened his comments by stating that he had forwarded some suggestions regarding the budget to Mr. Paradise and the Finance Committee. Included in Mr. Miller's list of suggestions for the Board to review were regular education property, music technology initiative, special education professional services, and instructional staff substitute salaries, bicycle rentals, cost of trees, vehicle replacement, computer supplies, and building improvement services. Mr. Miller questioned the sum of 3.7 million dollars from the stimulus fund and asked for an accounting of how the money is being utilized. Mr. Miller also suggested that the Board investigate if the state can offer any assistance with the budget.

Sy Goldstein, Villages of Flower Mills, Langhorne, PA, voiced his opinion regarding the 6 percent salary increase that has been requested from the NFT. Mr. Goldstein stated that while he is not opposed to fair wages, there simply are not enough funds to support a 6 percent salary increase. Mr. Goldstein indicated that this would cost the district over 20 million dollars over the next three years. Mr. Goldstein urged the Board to stand firm and not give in to what he believes are unreasonable demands.

Steve Rodos, Villages of Flower Mills, Langhorne, PA, suggested that the Board look into the following lists of suggestions in reducing the budget: star program, cell phone towers, solar panels, Amazon affiliation, and cyber schools. Mr. Rodos suggested that the Board raise taxes to provide a cushion for next year's budget. Mr. Rodos further suggested that the Board consider reassessment of properties that were sold in

the past year. Mr. Rodos concluded his comments with the suggestion that summer school be held in one building.

Louise Boyd, President of NFT, Biology Teacher at Neshaminy High School, Buckingham, PA, stated that she and six colleagues reviewed portions of the budget from the past three years. Ms. Boyd compared the proposed budget figures with actual budget figures and stated the percentage differences. Ms. Boyd stated that she feels it is difficult to get answers from the Board and mentioned that she is somewhat confused about what this year's actual percentage difference will be. Ms. Boyd stated that she finds it difficult to understand why the budget is proposed for so much higher than what is actually spent. Ms. Boyd explained that in her opinion the amount projected is always much higher than what is spent and consequently this leads to the consideration of program cuts, which are very unpopular with teachers, students, and parents. Ms. Boyd declared that the School Board and the union need to sit down at a table to negotiate a resolution. She also charged the Board with purposely delaying negotiations.

Mr. Webb declared that he is willing to meet with Ms. Boyd at any time and asked her to set a date.

Ms. Boyd retorted that the Board only offers to meet with her when she comes up to the podium. She also stated that she can be contacted via her cell phone, home email, union address, union telephone, or at work.

Mr. Webb stated that he can be reached via telephone or email as well.

Ms. Boyd claimed that each time she has met with the Board she is told that if their offer is not accepted there is no need to continue with the meeting.

Mr. O'Connor asked if paying for benefits was on the table.

Ms. Boyd exclaimed that she will not negotiate in public nor would she negotiate one item at a time.

Mr. Eccles was not present for the remainder of the meeting.

5. Items for Approval Tonight

Mr. Paradise advised the Board on the following:

a) Approval of the 2010 – 2011 proposed Final Budget

Motion: 2010-11 Proposed Final Budget

Mr. Webb presented the following motion:

WHEREAS, the Board of School Directors did, on February 9, 2010, adopt the 2010-11 Preliminary Budget of the School District in accordance with Act 1 of 2006, and made same available for public inspection as required by law; and

WHEREAS, Section 687 of the Pennsylvania Public School Code requires that the Board of School Directors prepare a Proposed Final Budget at least thirty (30) days prior to the adoption of the Final Budget, and to make the Proposed Final Budget available for public inspection at least twenty (20) days prior to the date set for the adoption of the Final Budget; and

WHEREAS, Section 687 of the Pennsylvania Public School Code requires that the President of the Board of School Directors certify to the Pennsylvania Department of Education that the Proposed Final Budget was prepared, presented and made available for public inspection using the uniform form furnished by the Department of Education; and

WHEREAS, the Board of School Directors has the 2010-11 Proposed Final Budget of the School District in the required form, and desire that same be made available for public inspection as required by law.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the 2010-11 Proposed Final Budget presented at this May 4, 2010 Public Meeting of the Board of School Directors be made available for public inspection, and be made available for duplication to any person on request, beginning on May 25, 2010, and that the President of the Board of School Directors is authorized to issue the certification to the Pennsylvania Department of Education required by Section 687 of the Pennsylvania Public School Code.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of School Directors will approve the 2010-11 Final Budget of the School District at a Public Meeting to be held on June 15, 2010 at Maple Point Middle School District Offices, Harry M. Dengler, Jr. Performing Arts Center, 2250 Langhorne-Yardley Road, Langhorne, PA.

Mr. Koutsouradis seconded the motion.

The Board approved said motion by a vote of 8 to 0. (Mr. Eccles was not present.)

Mr. O'Connor stated that he voted for the approval of the 2010 -2011 proposed Final Budget as a matter of process. He does not necessarily agree with the proposal at this time.

Mr. Webb stated that he was in agreement with Mr. O'Connor.

Mr. Paradise commented about an earlier question regarding stimulus funding and the seriousness of the state's financial difficulties. Mr. Paradise stated that the funding was used in many different ways. The district used 1.2 million for special education expenditures last year and 1 million is budgeted for next year for special education expenditures. The remaining funds were sent directly to the state of Pennsylvania. Due to the state's financial difficulty, Neshaminy did not receive the remaining stimulus funds from the state.

b) Overnight Trips

Dr. Rattigan presented the following trip for approval:

- 1) June 10 – 13, 2010 – Maple Point Middle School and Neshaminy High School to Future Problem Solving Program International Competition – University of Wisconsin – La Crosse, WI

Ms. Boyle asked if the cost to the district is \$9,000 for the trip.

Dr. Rattigan confirmed that \$9,000 is the cost for the trip, and she added that Dr. Muenker and she have the money set aside in their budgets for the trip.

Ms. Boyle questioned if any money could be raised through fundraising activities.

Dr. Rattigan replied it is not an option for this trip.

Dr. Muenker clarified that this is part of the educational program and curriculum, which is the difference between the obligation to fundraise and our obligation to support our students in the academic program.

Mr. Congdon asked if the eight students already qualified and how many chaperones will be accompanying the students.

Dr. Rattigan replied the students have already qualified to compete at the national level and two chaperones will attend.

Mr. O'Connor made a motion to approve said trip and Mr. Oettinger seconded same.

Mr. Webb requested a roll call. The roll call tally indicated that the motion passed by a vote of 5 ayes, (Mr. Congdon, Mr. Morris, Mr. O'Connor, Mr. Oettinger, Mr. Webb), two nays, (Ms. Boyle, Mrs. Cummings) and one abstention (Mr. Koutsouradis). (Mr. Eccles was not present).

6. Items for Approval at the May 19, 2010 Public Board Meeting

Mr. Paradise advised the Board on the following:

a) Appointment of Treasurer

Mr. Paradise stated that the appointment of Treasurer will be an agenda item at the May 19th Public Board Meeting.

b) Approval of New Board Policy

Dr. Rattigan advised the Board on the following policy:

- Board policy #506 - Gangs

Mr. Morris asked how this new policy partners up with the current no bullying policy.

Dr. Rattigan replied that the new policy enhances the no bullying policy and it is one more specific policy to ensure the safety of the students and staff.

Mr. Morris questioned how the bullying policy is being enforced throughout the school district.

Dr. Rattigan replied that all administrators are expected to familiarize themselves with the policy and they are asked each year to review the policies with the student body.

Mr. Morris asked if the police department has been consulted and how the determination would be made as to what signifies a gang sign, e.g. haircuts, hand signs, clothing, gestures, etc.

Dr. Rattigan responded that the police department has not been consulted, however, they have asked for sample policies across the state in creating this policy.

Mr. Morris asked if Dr. Rattigan was aware of any gangs in the high school or middle schools.

Dr. Rattigan replied she was not aware of any at this time.

Mr. Webb stated that the Board Policy #506 – Gangs will be an agenda item at the May 19th Public Board Meeting.

c) Approval of sale of the Red Cedar Property

Mr. Webb stated that the approval of sale of the Red Cedar Property has been tabled.

d) Bids/Budget Transfers

Mr. Paradise advised the Board on the following:

Bid No. 11-02

Bid Amount: \$70,253.96

Bid Description: Athletic & Physical Education Supplies

Bid No. 11-09

Bid Amount: \$24,708.52

Bid Description: Classroom & Art Aid Supplies

Bid No. 11-16

Bid Amount: \$22,000/Annually

Bid Description: Football Equipment Reconditioning Services RFP

Bid No. 11-18

Bid Amount: \$22,090

Bid Description: Bituminous Concrete Paving and Resurfacing at NHS

Bid No. 11-19

Bid Amount: \$194,000

Bid Description: HVAC Rooftop Air Handling Equipment at MPMS

Bid No. 11-20

Bid Amount: \$75,000

Bid Description: Installation of HVAC Rooftop Air Handling Equipment at MPMS

Mr. Paradise presented to the Board Budget Transfer Report (Working Copy – 10-6).

Mrs. Cummings asked if they upgraded the air conditioner units at the time when the school was purchased back from ETS.

Mr. Paradise replied that the district has always owned the school and that ETS leased it from the school district. He further clarified that they have always been responsible during that time.

Mrs. Cummings asked if any of the roof top units were ever replaced since 1994.

Mr. Paradise affirmed that some were replaced in '92, '96, 2003, 2005, and 2008.

Mrs. Cummings asked if the two units are not replaced how much longer will they last.

Mr. Paradise stated the two units in question are scheduled to be replaced due to problems. He also stated that two units are to be replaced next year.

Mrs. Cummings asked if the athletic supplies are guaranteed.

Mr. Paradise replied there is no guarantee.

Mr. Morris inquired if there was any way of handling the HVAC inhouse.

Mr. Minotti stated that a purchase of this magnitude would normally be bid according to the school code.

Mr. Paradise agreed that there is a section in the code that states if the cost is over \$25,000 it cannot be handled in house.

Mr. Congdon asked Mr. Minotti if he has any information on the efficiency ratings of the air conditioner units.

Mr. Minotti replied that he would check into it and confirm the efficiency rating at a later date.

Mr. Webb asked Mr. Paradise to confirm the savings amount.

Mr. Paradise replied that due to the PECO distribution charges the cost will remain the same; however, the good news is that the rates will not skyrocket as previously thought.

Mrs. Cummings inquired what is the condition of the area where the paving will take place.

Mr. Paradise stated that the area is gravel and needs to be repaved.

Mr. Paradise stated that Bid No. 11-02, 11-09, 11-16, 11-18, 11-19, and 11-20 and Budget Transfer Report (Working Copy 10-06) will be presented at the May 19th Public Board Meeting for approval.

7. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Muenker informed the Board on the following:

- Ben Raab and Delaney Campana were chosen as the winners of the Daughters of the American Revolution History Essay Contest.
- Heckman Elementary School donated \$1,060 to the American Red Cross in support of the Red Cross' efforts towards earthquake relief.
- Heckman Elementary School held their Career Day on April 22nd.
- Neshaminy's annual Cheerleading Elementary Clinic will be held August 24th through August 27th.
- Neshaminy's 19th annual Jazz Festival was held on April 30th.
- Neshaminy High School Challenge Day Sign and Poster Contest.
- Neshaminy High School's S.P.I.N. graduation project night for parents will be held on Tuesday, May 11th, at 7:00 p.m.
- Prior to the meeting a Service Awards Ceremony was held recognizing long term service employees of Neshaminy School District.

8. Committee Reports

a) Board Policies

Ms. Boyle advised the Board that the next meeting will be held on May 26th at 6:30 p.m. They will be discussing communicable diseases, changes in the attendance policy, and the proposal about the gangs.

b) Educational Development

Mr. O'Connor informed the Board that at the last meeting they heard from three reading specialists and they talked about newly implemented balanced literacy programs in the elementary schools. There was a presentation on coaching skills and development for teachers. The next meeting will be held on Monday, May 24th at 6:30 p.m.

c) Finance/Facilities

Mr. Webb noted that Mr. Paradise will be conducting the Finance and Facilities meeting and a date is forthcoming.

d) IU Board

Mrs. Cummings advised the Board that the Programs and Services Budget for the IU was approved throughout the district and sent to Harrisburg. The budget was voted down by Neshaminy and Morrisville by a vote of 88 ayes, 17 nays, and 12 abstentions. Our contribution from the state is \$58,000. We are billed for \$48,270, which totals \$106,303.

e) Education Foundation

Dr. Muenker informed the Board that a NASCAR donation basket in the amount of \$330.00 will be raffled off. The next meeting will be held on Monday, May 10th.

f) Technical School

Mr. Koutsouradis advised the Board that at their last meeting they honored the DECA and Skills USA State winners, nine of which will be going to National competitions. Scott Parks, the Technical School Director, submitted a letter of resignation, which the Board accepted. They also discussed some budget and funding issues. The next meeting is scheduled for May 19th at 7:30 p.m.

g) Technology

Mr. Congdon informed the Board that at their last meeting, which was April 20th, they met the new members of the staff, reviewed current duties of the staff members, and went over the technology plan and possibilities. There was a presentation of whiteboards. They also had some public comment and discussions of computers in the elementary schools. They are in the process of scheduling their next meeting.

9. Public Comment

Steve Young, Writer, Langhorne, PA, cautioned the Board about a group purchase of energy for next year. Mr. Young stated that energy companies can operate under a false inflated cost even within the law. He said it is not uncommon for energy companies to purchase fuel from a subsidiary of their own and then charge the customer an inflated cost and profit from the difference. Mr. Young urged the Board to be very careful before signing any contract with an energy company.

Ariana, Neshaminy High School Student, voiced her support for the Family Consumer Science Department and asked the Board not to cut the program. She said that she has learned a great deal from the FCS Program and it has encouraged her to stay in school.

Samantha, Neshaminy High School Student, commented that the FCS Program is more than a cooking and sewing class. She said it is a valuable class that teaches real life skills. She further stated that it helps students to prepare their pre-college resume through service to the community. She feels that cutting this program would lower the opportunity for students to be admitted to good colleges, and she urged the Board not to cut the FCS Program.

10. Future Topics

None

11. Agenda Development for the May 19, 2010 Public Board Meeting

None

12. Other Board Business

Mr. O'Connor recommended to the Board that any member who abstains from voting should provide a reason for the abstention. Mr. O'Connor noted that the ADHOC Facilities Committee will be reviewing building utilization. The Committee will determine if population continues to decrease, whether there should be any elementary school closings. Mr. O'Connor asked Dr. Muenker if there is any update from the insurance broker about the 19 percent increase.

Dr. Muenker replied that the broker has assured him that he is working diligently to reduce the 19 percent increase.

Mr. O'Connor addressed Ms. Boyd stating that he regretted the exchange of words that previously occurred at the meeting. He acknowledged Ms. Boyd's value as a teacher and his respect for her position as President of the NFT. Mr. O'Connor said that it is a well-known fact that the state of the economy is extremely unstable, not only nationwide but worldwide. He conceded that while the Board is asking for concession from the NFT, especially towards the cost of insurance, it is absolutely necessary, because the alternative is layoffs or program cuts.

Mr. Oettinger inquired if all committee meetings could be indicated on the schedule.

Mr. Webb stated that it would be done.

Mr. Congdon requested that the public and the media keep comments and opinions on a constructive level.

Mr. Koutsouradis commented about an incident involving a citizen and an employee on school property and stated that such outbursts will not be tolerated in the future.

13. Adjournment of Meeting

Mr. O'Connor moved that the meeting be adjourned, and Ms. Boyle seconded same. Mr. Webb adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Jennifer Burns
Board Secretary