

NESHAMINY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC BOARD MEETING MINUTES
NESHAMINY BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
(WORK SESSION)
June 8, 2006

The Neshaminy Board of School Directors met in public session on June 8, 2006, in the Board Room of the Maple Point Middle School. The following persons were in attendance:

BOARD MEMBERS:

Mr. Richard M. Eccles, President
Mr. Joseph R. Blasch
Mr. Jason Bowman
Ms. Irene M. Boyle
Mrs. Susan Cummings
Mr. Frank J. Koziol
Dr. William H. Spitz
Mr. Ritchie Webb

ADMINISTRATORS:

Dr. Louis T. Muenker
Dr. Sandra Costanzo
Mr. Joseph V. Paradise
Mrs. Jacqueline Rattigan
Mr. Bruce Wyatt

SECRETARY:

Mrs. Anita E. Walls

SOLICITOR:

Thomas Profy, III, Esquire

BOARD MEMBER NOT PRESENT:

Mrs. Sue C. Barrett, Vice President

OTHERS: Approximately 30 persons from the public, staff and press

Prior to the Work Session a Special Public Board Meeting was held regarding the Additions and Alterations to Neshaminy High School Project.

1. Call to Order

Mr. Eccles called the meeting to order at 7:19 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. Webb announced that the approximately one year ago the Lacrosse Team came before the Board and a small committee were formed to meet with the Boy's Lacrosse Team. The team requested that they be considered to be an approved school team. The Board had financial concerns at that time. The parents and team agreed that they would help the district financially and they agreed to provide the district with \$15,000 towards equipment, coaches, and any other additional expenses incurred.

Mrs. Eileen Foreman, Middletown Township, stated that the team is very grateful to the Board and past Board members for allowing the team an opportunity. Mrs. Foreman presented the Board with a check in the amount of \$15,000 which the team raised through fundraising. The team captain, Mr. Justin Campanili, thanked the Board for the opportunity. Justin stated the first year was a little rough; however, the team has a great coach and looks forward to the next season.

Mr. Eccles stated that he recently was over at Community Park and he noted that a tremendous amount of children were playing Lacrosse and every field was taken. Mr. Eccles again thanked the members of the Lacrosse team for their dedication and making this team a successful Neshaminy addition.

5. **Items For Discussion**

a) **Facilities Update**

Mr. Paul Minotti presented a power point presentation. All Board members received a hard copy of the presentation.

Capital Improvement Plan 2003-2004

- Roof Restoration
- Transformer replacement
- Boiler replacements
- Security systems
- Door Replacements

Capital Improvement Plan 2004-2005

- Access control system
- Floor tile at Pearl Buck
- Boilers at Poquessing
- Roof Replacement at Sandburg

Capital Improvement Plan 2005-2006

- Roof Replacement at Poquessing
- Roof Replacement at Maple Point
- Roof Replacement at High School (Library Area)
- Renovations at Poquessing
- New Boilers at Neshaminy Middle School

Capital Improvement Plan for 2006-2007

- Roof Replacements at Gym 1 and Gym 3 at High School
- Roof Replacement at Neshaminy Middle
- Roof Replacement at Carl Sandburg – Cafeteria
- Coping Stone at Lower Southampton

Mr. Minotti reviewed with Board members some other projects that were done with in house employees. Mr. Minotti advised that at Herbert Hoover the district employees have totally refurbished the inside of the school. Different wings have been worked on every summer.

Mr. Minotti reviewed the following deficiencies with Board members:

- Neshaminy Middle needs transformer work, asbestos tile removal, ventilation system, original single glass windows.
- Carl Sandburg needs balance of window walls, classroom ventilation and gym bleachers
- Oliver Heckman needs window walls and ventilator units
- Albert Schweitzer needs window walls, ventilation units
- Samuel Everitt needs window walls, ventilation units drop ceilings & lighting, hallway doors and frames non-rated
- Herbert Hoover and Lower Southampton also require the same upgrades

Mr. Minotti advised that after the 2006-2007 budget year there should be approximately \$5M left from the \$25M to continue renovations and upgrades.

b) Technology Plan

Mr. Paradise directed Board attention to the revised Compromise Proposal for Instructional Technology in Neshaminy. The total cost of this proposal is one-half the cost of the original proposal. Mr. Paradise noted that it accomplishes many of the suggestions of the committee, while still meeting the needs of the students. It is before the Board in order to get a financial plan in place for the budget. Acceptance of the proposal would make a substantial positive impact on instructional technology in Neshaminy the first year. It would require a \$2.5M bank note of four (4) years with payments of approximately \$670,000 per year. Since the capital budget for technology purchases is usually about \$1M each year, the balance of the funds could be used each year for "rolling updates" of equipment in keeping with the request of the committee.

Mr. Paradise recommended that this proposal be seriously considered in order to give Neshaminy the technology jump start we need for the benefit of all students in the District

Mr. Koziol recently visited West Chester School District which is rated number one in the state of PA for technology.

Mr. Koziol reviewed with Board members some of the pros and cons of the District's system, i.e. different types of computers requiring different softwares, various switches, etc. Mr. Koziol hopes that within three years the district can upgrade to all new equipment. Warranties on the products would be for three years. Maintenance costs would be kept down. Work at the high school will also affect the technology upgrades. Some of the district's oldest equipment is at the elementary schools. The IU is forming a consortium in order to allow the districts to speak with one another and allow video conferencing. The consortium is the best thing to happen to Bucks County.

Mr. Koziol believes that the servers, network hardware and back-up storage devices should not be replaced at this time. The consortium may be making this equipment available for the district. Also, the activity at the high school and the possibility of closing Neshaminy Middle, it may make sense that the nine elementary schools receive priority. Mr. Koziol suggested the use of carts in the elementary schools and six at the high school which would cost approximately \$498,000. Mr. Koziol suggested the Dell's out of the labs could be placed into the libraries. Mr. Koziol would like to take present employees and train them to do the installation of equipment in upcoming years.

Mr. Paradise advised that the current year funds are taking care of the elementary needs. Every elementary school will be wired with one computer in every classroom. Neshaminy Middle has the oldest equipment in the district. Whether a facility is slated for closing, students still need to be educated. This plan does include replacing the computers. The high school technology upgrades will take place after the project is completed. Mr. Paradise is hesitant to wait for the IU upgrades since many times the projects from the IU are uncompleted. Mr. Koziol noted that the IU has received a grant for the technology.

Dr. Spitz noted that he is in favor of committing what Mr. Paradise is recommending for technology. Dr. Spitz noted that there needs to be Board consensus on the financial aspect for budgetary purposes. Discussion on how to spend the money needs to take place at the Technology Committee meetings.

Dr. Spitz is in favor of making the financial commitment and Mr. Koziol agreed. Mr. Webb stated that the budget has approximately \$1M slated for Technology.

There was Board consensus to move forward with the compromise proposal for instructional technology program.

6. Items for Approval

a) Overnight Trips

Mr. Wyatt presented the following trips:

- i. Mid Season training and conditioning experience for the Neshaminy High School Swim Team to Estero, Florida
– December 25, 2006 to January 1, 2007
- ii. FBLA National Conference – Nashville, TN, June 27-July 3, 2006.

There was Board consensus for the trips.

b) Approval of Strategic Plan

Dr. Costanzo provided a presentation to the Board regarding the six year strategic plan. Dr. Costanzo advised that the plan was completed by over 60 staff, administration, community members and board representatives. Dr. Costanzo noted that the Board is being asked to approve the Strategic Plan in concept. The full plan includes activities and cost implications recommended to achieve those results. Those activities and costs would be funded for the normal budgeting process over the next six years. The strategic plan has been on display for 28 days for public review. A press release was sent out early in May announcing its availability. In addition, two presentations of the plan were scheduled for the Board and public. At least three Board members were present. Board members received copies of the power point presentation that were made.

Dr. Costanzo advised that in January, 2006, 24 staff, administration, community members and two board members known as the strategic planning community spent one day and half sharing their dreams, visions, and ideas for Neshaminy School District. The group completed an internal and external analysis of the district and looked at critical issues facing the district in the future. Three strategies were developed:

1. Facilities and Educational Environment
(Establish a learning environment which will enable students to meet their maximum potential).
2. Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
(Align the intended curriculum, the implemented curriculum and the attained curriculum for all students to meet the highest educational standards).
3. Student Services
(Provide and maintain a positive and proactive community that supports the diverse needs of every student).

Dr. Costanzo acknowledged the following individuals for the work on the project: Paul Minotti and Marian Reed led the Facilities and Educational Environment Committee, Rob Magee and Karen Wychock led the Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, and Kevin Kane and Mary Cwiklinski led Student Services group.

Dr. Costanzo asked the Board to approve the plan in concept. The costs would come to the Board via the regular school budget.

Mr. Webb inquired regarding the extra staff position which was required. Dr. Costanzo replied that the Board would only be approving the concept and at a later date the extra staff position would need to have Board approval when the Superintendent makes that recommendation.

Dr. Spitz noted that the specific results are potential goals. It will be up to the Board over the next six years to look at the issues and in many cases some of the issues may not be acceptable. This is just a guideline as to what the district is pointing towards with the understanding that virtually all of this is dependent upon financial support.

c) Approval of the Deputization of the Neshaminy School District Deputy Tax Collector

Mr. Paradise advised that the Board approve the deputization by Thomas Kearns, Tax Collector, of Paul Kearns, as a Neshaminy School District Deputy Tax Collector and the approval should be placed on the agenda of the first school board meeting held after July 1, 2006, which is the date on which Mr. Kearns will assume his duties as Tax Collector for the school district.

Mr. Eccles thought that since this issue is before the Board maybe it would be appropriate for the Board to revisit the entire tax collection system.

Mr. Profy advised that the Tax Collector has the right to ask the Taxing Body to approve a deputy who then has many of the same powers as the tax collector. The deputy needs to be bonded and the taxing body has to agree to the deputization. There is no cost involved to the school district for the appointment of a deputy. The surety bonds do not contain any incremental costs.

Mr. Eccles suggested that there may be more effective ways for the district to collect taxes. Mr. Webb stated that the Finance committee will look at the matter.

d) Tax and Revenue Anticipation Note

Mr. Paradise advised that a letter will be forwarded to local banks and borrowing institutions requesting quotations on a Note in the amount of \$15,084,931 to be borrowed on July 10, 2006. This Note is associated with the pre-payment of the Blue Cross payment. Two separate quotes are being requested. One is for 60 days and the other is through June 30, 2007. The district would then invest the money and repay same in 2007. Mr. Paradise made Board members aware that the date to consider the proposals will be on June 20th.

Mr. Paradise advised that there will be 4-6 bids received.

e) Approval of Budgetary Increase for Federal and Other Programs (2005-06)

Mr. Paradise advised that the Auditor General requires the district to add into the current year budget the value of all the Federal programs and all the grants received by the District through the course of the year. The budget will be revised to include all the additional monies received so that when the auditors compare the actual budgetary items the district does not overspend. This will be presented for Board approval at the next meeting.

f) Approval of Year End Budget Transfers

Mr. Paradise advised that this is a standard motion that is required to be approved by the Auditor General's Office that allows the District to make sure that the budget is not overspent. This will be presented for Board approval at the next meeting.

g) Facilities Professional Services/Consultants for 2006-2007

Mr. Paradise explained that the handout contains a listing of professional services/consultants that are used in the facilities area. This will be presented for Board approval at the next meeting.

h) Approval of Board Policies

New Board Policy #522 - Student Wellness Policy

Revised Board Policy #505 - Discipline

Mrs. Rattigan reviewed both policies with Board members and advised that said policies would be presented at the next board meeting for board approval.

Mrs. Rattigan advised that Policy #522 is a new policy that was prepared by the Wellness Committee. The committee consists of our existing District Health & Safety Committee along with other members as required by the policy. A Student Wellness Policy must be provided to the state by July 1, 2006. This is a requirement of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act and the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Mr. Webb inquired whether more physical education teachers will need to be hired. Mrs. Rattigan advised that the policy is not mandating that more teachers need to be hired. More details will be forthcoming in the future.

Mr. Bowman advised that Policy #505 - Student Discipline policy has been revised. A request by the Board was made that the Policy committee review the current policy and revisions have taken place. The School Board does not set discipline codes at the building levels. The policy sets the guidelines. The district wants to allow administrators to have some flexibility and use their discretion.

Mrs. Rattigan noted that bold italics represent changes. The committee wanted to achieve a consistent philosophy of discipline across all levels from K-12 to provide a more proactive and positive approach to discipline.

i) Bids/Budget Transfers

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

Bid No. 07-07 – Science Supplies

Bid Amount: \$ 11,613.50

The bid is for various supplies for the instruction of science curricula district-wide for the 2006-2007 school year.

Bid No. 07-09 - Classroom & Art Aide Supplies

Bid Amount: \$38,016.42

The bid is for classroom and art supplies for the 2006-2007 school year which include: paints, drawing paper, brushes, markers, yarn, cloth, and other arts and crafts materials for classroom use.

Bid No. 07-11 School Agendas

Bid Amount: \$21,579.35

The bid is for agendas- both student and teacher editions for all secondary schools

Dr. Spitz provided Board members with the results of the survey regarding the school agendas at the high school. The Board concern was why money is being allocated for the school agendas when not all students are using same. Dr. Spitz advised that the teachers overwhelming are in favor of having the students have the agenda books. Students in honors and AP level courses are very strong users of the agenda books. Parents surveyed are also in favor of agenda books.

Dr. Spitz advised that the agenda books consist of two separate components. The calendar and school discipline code. Every student needs to receive the discipline code each year. A majority of special education students have written into there IEP that they need to have an agenda book to help with assignments and organizational skills.

Board discussion ensued regarding the pros and cons of school agenda books being distributed. A complete review of the survey handout was also accomplished.

Dr. Spitz emphasized that the savings to the district by not having a school agenda book would be approximately \$2,300 since the discipline code would still need to be printed and provided to students. Dr. Spitz noted that Education Development is strongly in favor of the students having the school agenda books.

Mr. Eccles advised that he would never take away from any student the ability to use a product. Mr. Eccles questioned why the use of the agenda book is not made mandatory.

Mr. Koziol noted that the agenda book is not used for reference, students use the internet. Mr. Koziol provided a sample agenda book which cost \$.85 each as opposed to \$3.00 and accommodates the uses needed. Mr. Koziol wanted the discipline code included on the website.

Dr. Spitz made a motion to have Bid No. 07-11 School Agendas presented for approval. Mr. Bowman seconded the motion. A roll call tally indicated that the motion passed by a vote of eight to zero.

Dr. Spitz made a motion to accept Bid No. 07-11 School Agendas. Mr. Bowman seconded the motion. A roll call tally indicated that the motion failed by a vote of four ayes (Mr. Bowman, Mr. Eccles, Dr. Spitz, Mrs. Cummings) and four nays (Mr. Blasch, Mr. Webb, Mrs. Boyle, Mr. Koziol). Mrs. Barrett was not present. Mr. Profy advised that the motion fails under Section 506 which requires a five/four vote.

Mr. Webb made a motion to reconsider Bid No. 07-11 School Agendas. Mr. Bowman seconded the motion. A roll call tally indicated that the motion passed by a vote of six ayes (Mr. Blasch, Mr. Webb, Mr. Bowman, Mr. Eccles, Dr. Spitz, Mrs. Cummings) and two nays (Ms. Boyle, Mr. Koziol). Mrs. Barrett was not present.

j) Adoption of Budget for 2006-2007

Mr. Paradise reviewed the budget for 2006-2007. Twelve items would require Board approval or disapproval of each of the following budget changes –

1. Increase teaching periods of lead teachers
2. Reduction of staff along with development of a plan to accept more tuition students at Tawanka Learning Center
3. Consider relocation of Tawanka Learning Center in September, 2007 and seek a neighborhood oriented tenant
4. Lower building temperatures during the winter months in order to save fuel – inside average temperature to 68 degrees
5. Do not replace 2 part-time custodial vacancies and one part time grounds position presently open, and reorganize the staff to balance the work load.
6. Do not replace 1 full time maintenance mechanic in which retirement is anticipated during the year
7. Possibility of reducing a total of four hours of part time bus drivers due to declining enrollments
8. Consider not heating the pool water in the summer months in the 3 middle schools
9. Increase walking distances for all students by approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile and change board policy to match that practice.
10. Reduce “per pupil allocations” back to levels funded in the current year. No increases
11. Reduce the IU fair share costs by utilizing as many classrooms as possible, including modular classrooms in order to lower our fair share costs
12. Consider increasing the average interest rate received on investments from 5% to 5.25%

Recommended/Required changes to 2006-2007 Budget. The following areas are recommended for change:

- Increase the estimated cost per gallon for fuel oil to \$2.50/gallon
- Increase the estimated cost per gallon for diesel fuel to \$2.50/gallon
- Reduce budget for life insurance premium by \$230,000 as a result of change of vendors
- Make appropriate budget changes due to 23 teacher retirements for a net reduction of \$444,000 savings.

Mr. Paradise advised that in order to work this into the budget, Board consensus would be necessary on each one or all of the items depending on where the votes lie.

Board discussion ensued regarding the increase of walking distances for students. There was Board consensus to eliminate number 9.

Mr. Koziol provided that other districts are requiring students to walk one mile and further. Mrs. Cummings advised that back packs and other equipment have tremendous weights.

Mr. Webb inquired whether there was any other controversy.

Mr. Bowman commented on number 1 that lead teachers would not be cut in PSSA areas. Dr. Muenker advised that this is correct.

Mr. Koziol advised that in another large district lead teachers teach the full number of classes, 7 periods a day. They stay after school for an hour or two every day for whatever is needed. In the summer they attend for an extra month and are compensated for extra time at night and during the summer. This has been very successful and it keeps the costs down.

Ms. Boyle stated that it is fair to say that not all lead teachers have the same amount of work to do. Ms. Boyle does not think this is the way to proceed. PSSA will in the future include science.

Mr. Blasch questioned number 4 regarding temperatures. Mr. Paradise advised that complaints will be received if the temperatures are lowered. Most districts low range is 68 degrees. Neshaminy averages around 71 degrees. Some classrooms are cooler and some are higher. Dr. Spitz suggested that on testing days the temperatures return to warmer temperatures. Mr. Minotti felt that it would be difficult to control in large buildings.

There was Board consensus to lower the building temperatures to 68 degrees.

Dr. Spitz was concerned with the per pupil allocation. This would be a third consecutive year with no increase in per pupil allocation. These are expenses that students see in the classrooms. Mr. Paradise noted that the elementary schools struggle because they receive lesser amount per pupil and they have a smaller enrollment with certain fixed costs that are not going to change.

Mr. Bowman feels that if they have not received an increase in two years they should get an increase.

There was Board consensus to reduce the "per pupil allocation" back to levels funded in the current year.

Mr. Webb addressed the Fund Balance usage. Mr. Paradise advised that Option 4 would present a monthly increase of approximately \$8 on average residential assessment of \$27,080. This would have a possible fund balance usage of \$7M and net budgetary gap of \$2.75M.

Dr. Spitz advised that the audited Fund Balance has grown every year, except one where it stayed about the same, for the last five years. In fact, it has almost doubled. The Fund Balance in 2003 was \$7.7M. The balance in 2005 was \$14.7M. Ideally, the Fund Balance should be a fairly constant proportion of the overall budget each year. The Fund Balance is 10% of the budget. That is way too high. In reality we have not used any of the Fund Balance in the past several years.

Mr. Eccles agrees with Dr. Spitz. Taxpayers should not be taxed when that amount is sitting in reserve. Dr. Spitz advised that every year the expenditures are overestimated and underestimates the revenues. Whatever is not spent or over collected is placed into the Fund Balance. Since 2001 that has made the Fund Balance grow.

Dr. Spitz would like to take Option 4.

Ms. Boyle stated that the district is extremely fortunate that Mr. Paradise is the type of Business Administrator that he is.

Mr. Paradise stated that a higher Fund Balance is a wonderful problem to have. It is an indication of a healthy financial school district. It allows the district to survive through the summer without having to deal with borrowing money because we need same to operate.

Mr. Paradise stated that if Option 4 is taken it is stating that the district is adopting a spending plan of \$7M more than what the district will take in.

Mr. Webb commended Mr. Paradise on his fine business management skills.

Mr. Webb is concerned about the seniors and if there is a chance to cut same he believes that it should be done. Mr. Webb feels comfortable with \$7M. Mr. Bowman also was in consensus with the \$7M figure.

Mr. Koziol was concerned that a problem may be presented in the future years. Spending needs to be reduced and not just use money that is in the bank.

Mr. Eccles stated that he would like to see \$8M.

There was Board consensus for using \$7M from the Fund Balance.

7. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Muenker advised that a memo was received from two staff members at the high school stating that Neshaminy High School has received official notification from Middle States that they have been awarded reaccreditation till May 1, 2013 and Middle States will be conducting a visit which will be the mid-point review in this process in the Spring of 2008 to check on the progress of the district.

Dr. Muenker advised that graduation will take place on June 14th with a rain date of June 15th.

8. Committee Reports

a) Board Policies

Mr. Bowman advised that policies were previously discussed.

b) Educational Development

Dr. Spitz advised that topics previously discussed.

c) Finance and Facilities

Mr. Webb advised that topics were just discussed.

d) IU Board

Dr. Spitz advised that there was no report.

e) Educational Foundation

Mrs. Cummings stated that the Fall fundraiser is being planned.

f) Technical School

Ms. Boyle advised that labor negotiations are in process and an arbitrator has been appointed. The next meeting will take place on June 26th.

g) Technology

Mr. Koziol advised that technology was discussed earlier this evening.

9. Future Topics

Mr. Koziol would still like to see more places for cutting costs within the Budget. Spending the Fund Balance should not be an option to balancing the budget. Expenses need to be cut.

10. Agenda Development for the June 20, 2006 Public Meeting

11. Other Board Business

None.

12. Adjournment of Meeting

Mr. Bowman moved the meeting be adjourned and Mrs. Cummings seconded the motion. The Board approved the motion with eight ayes. Mr. Eccles adjourned the meeting at 9:40 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Anita E. Walls
Board Secretary