POTTSTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
May 6, 2010 - 7:30 P.M.

The Committee of the Whole meeting of the Board of School Directors of the Pottstown School District was held on Thursday, May 6, 2010 at 7:30 PM in the auditorium of the Pottstown Middle School. The following board members were present: Mr. Richard C. Huss, President, Mr. Dennis Wausnock, Vice-President, Ms. Valerie Harris, Mr. Robert H. Hartman, Jr., Mr. Thomas J. Hylton, Mrs. Polly M. Weand, and Mrs. Julia Wilson. Absent were Mr. Nat White and Mrs. Michele Pargeon. Also present were Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Reed Lindley; Director of Education and Human Resources, Dr. Jeffrey Sparagana; Business Administrator, Mrs. Linda S. Adams; Solicitor, Mr. Stephen Kalis, Mr. Robert Giering, Dr. Angela Tuck, Mrs. Lisa Snyder, Mr. Jerry Ummarino, Mr. Matthew Moyer, Mrs. Gail Cooper, Mrs. Loretta Hoch, Mr. John Armato, Ms. Terri Lampe, a member of the press, and interested citizens.

Mr. White arrived at 7:41 PM.

PRESENTATIONS

Mrs. Lampe thanked the school board for their support of the Foundation for Pottstown Education's first fundraiser, "Dancing with the Pottstown Stars". She thanked the participants and volunteers. The event raised approximately $55,000.

Mr. Huss thanked the Foundation Board of Directors and volunteers for their hard work. The fundraiser was a big success for the students and the community. Mr. Huss thanked Mr. Ecker and his dancing partner for their participation and support of the Pottstown School District. Mr. Ecker shared his motivation to participate in this event.

AWARDS

None.

REPORTS

Mrs. Grim, Head Nurse for the Pottstown School District, is responsible for the supervision of all the nurses in the schools and the coordination and implementation of all health programs throughout the district. The nurses are dedicated to promoting lifelong health styles and changes for the students' and their families.

Mrs. Frederick provided an overview of the Healthy Snack Program and the CATCH Program. The Healthy Snack Program provides a healthy snack and the nutritional information to the students twice a week. The CATCH program is an after school program that provides nutritional and physical health components for the students. Mrs. Frederick was the acting Head Nurse during Mrs. Grim's leave of absence this year.

Mr. Connors, the Director of Co-Curricular Activities, reported on the various activities that have taken place during his first three weeks. He provided information on upcoming events and a project he is working on to increase student participation in the various activities and clubs available to the students.

Special Presentation of the Preliminary 2010-2011 Budget Report

Mrs. Adams presented a power point overview of the recommended 2010-2011 Preliminary Budget. The required PDE 2028 Preliminary 2010-2011Budget schedule was available for the public along with the letter of transmittal.

MINUTES

Mrs. Adams presented the minutes of the regular meeting held on April 22, 2010 to be placed on the May 20, 2010 board agenda for approval.

HEARINGS FROM PATRONS OF THE SCHOOLS

Mrs. Linda Chesney thanked the board for allowing the band and arts program to remain as part of the co-curricular activities. She had heard a rumor that these programs were subject to budget cuts.

Mr. Jeff Leflar urged the board to take action against the deadbeat landlords who make up the majority of the delinquent property taxes. He stated he was confused as to what the board policy really is concerning sheriff sales. He visited the Montgomery County Real Estate website listing the Pottstown School District as the Plaintiff for four Pottstown properties.

Mr. Howard Porter asked how many employees fall under the Salaries and Benefits as outlined in the budget presentation. The $11million in fringe benefits sounds ridiculous to the working class citizens.

Mrs. Judy Zahora commended the board for putting together a reasonable budget. She applauded Ms. Bateson and Mrs. Adams for their recent testimony at the Education Committee of the Republican Caucus at Spring Ford. Mrs. Zahora asked the Facilities Committee to check into the Franklin Elementary playground macadam. She received a complaint from a parent.

Mr. Philip Thees commended the administration and board for their hard work in putting together the budget.

Mr. Frank McLaughlin thanked the board for their diligent work in putting together the budget. He expressed his concerns on the crippling effect it has on the Pottstown community. He is shocked that 66% of the budget consists of salaries and benefits.

Mrs. Michelle Porter voiced her dissatisfaction that the board cannot identify the number of employees that make up the total salaries as shown on the budget. She asked what amount the employees contribute to the benefits stated in the budget. Mrs. Porter expressed her disapproval that the board does not pursue Sheriff sales for delinquent property taxes.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee

Mr. Wausnock reported that the Finance Committee will not meet on Thursday, May 13, 2010. The committee will meet at 7:00 PM on May 20th prior to the school board meeting to discuss the financial effect of the Co-Curricular policies. The Finance Committee will make its decision on whether or not to support the policies.

Facilities Committee

Mr. Hartman reported that the committee reviewed various energy saving issues at their meeting. Mrs. Adams is reviewing these issues to bring costs down and add revenue to the school district. Mr. Hartman announced that the next two Facilities Committee meetings will move to the following week. He thanked the members of the President's Task Force Committee for participating in the committee. He was impressed with the events of the first meeting.

Montgomery County Legislative Representative / PSBA Representative

None.

Montgomery County Intermediate Unit Representative

Mr. Hartman reported on the key items that were discussed at the last meeting. These items included legislative personnel changes and a report on non-public schools.

Community Relations Committee

Mrs. Weand provided an updated on the district's website's new link to the President's Task Force Committee. She shared with the board information on topics that are being looked into including a community function that would be linked to the opening of the new school year, the use of a flip cam to post school board meetings and other school district events on the school district website, developing partnerships with businesses to showcase artwork created by Pottstown students offering senior citizens and residents of Pottstown the opportunity to be connected to the school district's global messaging system. Mr. Armato provided an update on developing an opening school year event involving community members. This event is targeted for Saturday, September 11, 2010. Mr. Armato reported that the school district has received an anonymous donation in the amount of $35,000 through the United Way of Arizona. This donation is earmarked for Dual Enrollment, Peak and the Library Book Fund.

Ms. Harris suggested that the Community Relations Committee contact the Tri-Pack Village Productions for assistance in promoting art murals in the downtown business windows.

Co-Curricular Activities Committee

Mr. Hartman was pleased with the positive manner of their first meeting with the new director. The majority of the meeting was spent on reviewing the Co-Curricular policies. Future meetings will start at 7:00 PM.

Technology/Curriculum Committee

Mrs. Wilson reported the committee met with Taffy Wolfe, Supervisor of Information Technology, who presented an overview of the technology being reviewed and/or updated this summer. The committee also met with Lisa Schiavone from the Assistant Superintendent's office, who provided a detail account of the Core Reading Program under review. Mrs. Wilson stated that the committee discussed the driver safety passenger safety program. A panel of teachers will meet next week to outline the implementation of this program into the health curriculum. The committee discussed and reviewed various curriculum policies.

Policy Committee

Mr. White stated that the committee did not meet last month. He agreed with the statement that the first objective of the school board is the students. It has been that way for 100 years. Mr. White stated that he thinks that it is time the board considered the burden placed on the taxpayers.

Personnel Committee

Ms. Harris stated that the committee will meet next Tuesday to review some policy issues and discuss recruitment practices.

LIST OF BILLS

Mrs. Zahora presented the list of bills to be placed on the May 20, 2010 board agenda for approval.

CONSENT ITEMS

Personnel

Dr. Sparagana reviewed the personnel items as presented to be placed on the May 20, 2010 board agenda for approval.

Professional Leaves

Dr. Lindley reviewed the professional leave as presented to be placed on the May 20, 2010 board agenda for approval.

Contracts – Mrs. Adams

Mrs. Adams reviewed the contracts as presented to be placed on the May 20 2010 board agenda for approval.

Designation of Depositories

Mrs. Adams reviewed the Designation of Depositories as presented to be placed on the May 20, 2010 board agenda for approval.

Bid Awards

Mrs. Adams reviewed the bid awards as presented to be placed on the May 20 2010 board agenda for approval.

Policy

Dr. Sparagana reviewed the policy as presented to be placed on the May 20, 2010 board agenda for board approval.

NON-CONSENT

Election of Treasurer

Mrs. Adams reviewed the Election of the Treasurer as presented to be placed on the May 20, 2010 for board action.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Policy 5900: Interscholastic Athletics and Co-Curricular Activities for Pottstown High School and Pottstown Middle School
2. Policy 5910: Co-Curricular Awards and Recognition for Co-Curricular Participation

NEW BUSINESS

First Suburbs Project

Dr. Lindley presented to the board for their consideration the invitation by Dave Forrest and The Borough of Pottstown to participate in the First Suburbs Project event scheduled for June 10th at the Montgomery County Community College. This meeting with local legislators, administrators and gubernatorial candidates is an opportunity to join the efforts to fight for more equitable funding and the other policies that would favor our aging communities.

INFORMATION

1. Donation to Cafeteria for Dairy Industry
2. Going Green
3. House Bill 67
4. Resolution Supporting the Strike-Free Education Pact
5. Policy 100: Strategic Plan
6. Policy 101: Mission Statement
7. Policy 102: Academic Standards
8. Policy 105: Curriculum Development
9. Rescission of Policy 5240
10. Conference Report

FEDERATION REMARKS

Mr. Decker thanked The Foundation for their great efforts that made The Dancing with the Stars fundraiser a huge success. He thanked the Foundation for the opportunity to showcase the students and community.

ROUND TABLE

Mr. White – no comment.

Mr. Hylton presented to the board information about a pilot program allowing school districts to partner with community colleges to graduate 10th graders. He explained that the State of Pennsylvania is looking for ten districts to partner with community colleges with the idea that a 10th grader could take a test that would allow him/her to graduate and move directly to the community college. He requested that the board allow Dr.Lindley to look into the program for the feasibility of Pottstown to be among the ten districts participating in this program. Mr. Hylton asked Mr. Huss, who decided there would be 40 people on the Task Force Committee and who decided who the 40 people would be. Mr. Huss responded that it is the Board President's Task Force. He appointed Mr. Bush as head of the Task Force. Mr. Bush and Mr. Huss discussed names with the administration. Mr. Huss directed the administration and Mr. Bush to contact the people for their acceptance to participate in the Task Force.

Dr. Lindley stated that he and Mr. Krem have been in contact with the Montgomery County Community College and Lehigh Carbon Community College in regards to the pilot program mentioned by Mr. Hylton. Dr. Lindley indicated more discussion is needed with the possibility of expanding dual enrollment.

Mrs. Wilson had attended various music events in the district this past week. She was very impressed with the talent throughout the district especially the middle school band. She was unable to attend the Dancing with the Stars fundraiser but enjoyed seeing the pictures.

Ms. Harris was also impressed with the band performance.

Mr. Hartman thanked the public for their comments and assured them that the board does listen. He was glad to see the community come together for the Dancing with the Stars fundraiser. He emphasized the importance of having the Foundation for Pottstown Education to help raise funds for the school district during this difficult economy.

Mrs. Weand understands the burden of the taxpayers. She recognizes the value in our tax dollars going towards developing the talents of all the students. Mrs. Weand stated that the council is looking into the problem of delinquent taxes by landlord owned properties.

Dr. Sparagana reported on the success of the 5th Parent Literacy Night. The staff had an opportunity to share their information with a group from Hazelton. The parents and children who attended also had the opportunity to visit the art exhibit that was going on at the same time. He invited the board members to attend an event on Friday at the middle school. The 8th graders will be explaining their science projects to elementary students from Edgewood.

Dr. Lindley - no comment.

Mr.Wausnock - no comment.

Mr. Huss thanked the Foundation for their dedication to helping the students of the Pottstown School District. He reported on the events of the first Task Force meeting that took place on May 3rd. The meetings are scheduled to take place through May 2011. Mr. Huss will keep everyone updated as the meetings progress. When the committee makes their recommendations, he will then take it to the board.

Mr. Huss provided an update on the Superintendent interviews that took place on Saturday, May 1st. Dr. Tuck, Dr. Sparagana and Dr. Lindley were interviewed. There will be another executive session on Thursday, May 13th to discuss the interviews. He stated that a decision might be rendered at the Regular Board Meeting scheduled for May 20th.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mr. Hartman and seconded by Ms. Harris that the Board adjourn. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:45 P.M.

Linda S. Adams
Board Secretary