POTTSTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
August 5, 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, August 5, 2010 at 7:30 PM in the second floor LGI room of the Pottstown Middle School with President Richard C. Huss presiding. Upon roll call, the following members were present: Ms. Valerie Harris, Mrs. Michele Pargeon, Mr. Dennis Wausnock, Mrs. Polly M. Weand, Mr. Nat White, Mr. Robert H. Hartman, Jr. and Mr. Thomas J. Hylton. Absent was Mrs. Julia Wilson. Also present were Superintendent, Dr. Reed Lindley; Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Jeffrey Sparagana; Substitute Board Secretary, Mrs. Penny O'Donnell; Solicitor, Mr. Stephen Kalis, Ms. Pamela Bateson, Mrs. Danielle McCoy. Mr. Robert Giering, Mr. John Armato, Ms. Terri Lampe, a member of the press, and interested citizens.

PRESENTATIONS

Mr. Angstadt introduced the presenters from Reynolds Energy Services: Mr. Robert Strickler, Mr. Michael Conchilla and Mr. Richard Evans. Mr. Strickler introduced the agenda for the energy audit presentation. Mr. Evans explained that the energy study included the middle school, high school and lighting for all five elementary school buildings. The study analyzed the existing utility usage in each building, outlined the current energy star rating for each building and categorized the energy usage. Mr. Evans talked about a comprehensive approach to energy savings that would be a significant savings to the school district. Mr. Conchilla outlined various efficiency measures which included behavior modifications, comprehensive lighting upgrades, building improvements and heating and ventilating upgrades and modifications.

Mrs. Pargeon asked Mr. Evans to clarify the total energy savings if the school district were to include the elementary school lighting based on the terms of the loan.

Mr. Hartman stated that the Facilities Committee feels it would be cost effective to upgrade the lighting in the elementary schools, explaining that even if the school district would end up closing one or two elementary schools, the lighting would be reused in the existing buildings.

Mr. Hylton asked Mr. Evans if it was fiscally possible to take out an 8 year bond utilizing the savings to pay back the loan. Mr. Hylton confirmed with Mr. Evans that "by choosing the guaranteed savings route, Reynolds Energy Services would guarantee the savings at no risk to the school district. Mr. Evans stated that Reynolds Energy Service would pay the difference between the guaranteed savings and the actual utility bill.

Mr. White asked what the total savings would be over the 15 years. Mr. Evans stated that the district would save approximately $4,000,000. He confirmed Mr. Hylton's statement that additional savings would be determined by the terms of the loan.

Mr. Evans concluded the presentation with a detailed financial analysis for the recommended scope of work and the savings that the school district would realize in the first year and future years. He explained the Act 129 Incentive Program and reviewed the steps to proceed with the Act 77 Performance Contract.

Ms. Harris asked Mr. Evans how long the project would take. She asked if the teachers would need to prepare their classrooms for the work.

Mr. Evans estimated that construction could begin by the beginning of next year and be completed within four months. He stated that the construction site is kept neat and organized and should not interfere or disrupt any classroom activity.

AWARDS

None.

REPORTS

None.

COMMUNICATIONS

Dr. Lindley read a letter from PASBO recognizing Mrs. Diane Meck for completing one year of service as President of the Eastern Technology Data Manager. The Pennsylvania Association of School Business Officials thanked the school board for supporting Mrs. Meck during her year of leadership.

MINUTES

Mrs. O'Donnell presented the minutes of the regular meeting held on July 15, 2010 to be placed on the August 19, 2010 board agenda for approval.

HEARINGS FROM PATRONS OF THE SCHOOLS

Mr. Leflar voiced his concern about the lack of action by the board to collect unpaid property taxes. He stated that the Borough realized significant results by initiating 35 Sheriff Sales on delinquent taxpayers. Mr. Leflar foresees delinquent taxes becoming a future campaign issue.

Mr. Kalis clarified that the Finance Committee will be making a recommendation to the board authorizing Portnoff Law Associates to proceed with the collection process, which includes initiating Sheriff Sales on behalf of the school district.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee

Mr. Wausnock stated that The Finance Committee will meet next Thursday to put together a motion directing Portnoff Law Associates to collect any taxes that are not paid by 12/31.

Facilities Committee

Mr. Hartman reported that the Facilities Committee was impressed with the Reynolds Energy Audit that was presented at their meeting in July. The Finance Committee will be bringing to the board their recommendation to proceed with this project. He provided updates on the recoating of the running track, stadium projects that are being worked on, the Chestnut Street Park equipment removal and lighting repairs that are needed to be done at the tennis courts. Mr. Hartman stated that the Facilities Committee will not meet on August 9, 2010.

Montgomery County Legislative Representative / PSBA Representative

Mrs. Pargeon reported that the Montgomery County Legislative did not meet in July. She stated that the Federal Medicaid Assistance Program was just passed. It is uncertain how the State Legislators will allocate the funds. Mrs. Pargeon asked the board if they would agree to send her and Mrs. Adams to attend the PSBA Platform to represent the voice of the district. All board members agreed.

Montgomery County Intermediate Unit Representative

No report.

Community Relations Committee

Mrs. Pargeon reported the first video taping of last month's school board meeting has been posted on the website. We are the only school district in the area to post their meetings. She also provided an updated on the number of views on the website. Mrs. Pargeon was happy to announce that 40 students are currently participating in the tennis farm camp.

Mr. Armato presented two Pottstown High School Diplomas that were donated to the school district through the efforts of Ms. Harris. The first diploma is dated 1882 for Dr. Elmer Porter and the second diploma dated 1916, is the diploma of Martha Porter, the daughter of Dr. Porter. He provided an update on the September 11th "Back to School "community event. This event is being partnered with various community members during the hours of 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The school district will hold an open house from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Mr. Armato recognized the fundraising efforts of Mr. Tom Coyle and the PHS Boosters Club as a tremendous asset to the district. He reported on a recent donation of office supplies from Pfizer Pharmaceutical Company at an approximate value of $30,000.

Co-Curricular Activities Committee

Mr. Hartman indicated a Co-Curricular Committee meeting was not held in July. He reminded everyone that Co-Curricular activities will be starting up in the next two weeks.

Technology/Curriculum Committee

Mrs. Weand reported that the Technology/Curriculum Committee reviewed the K-6 Core Reading Program at their July meeting. Sixty teachers attended the July training session; another training session will be offered in August. She asked the Board Secretary to send a thank-you letter to Mrs. Judy Gondal for her efforts in achieving a savings of $3,596.59 for on-line ordering of the Science Programs textbooks. Mrs. Weand also stated that the mid-progress report policy and the progress of the Virtual Academy program are topics for further discussion at future meetings.

Dr. Lindley reported the PSSA/AYP results for the 2009-2010 school year. He stated that the Pottstown School District made AYP at the district level. All of the schools made AYP in all categories with the exception of two subgroups in grade 11 reading. This is also the 3rd consecutive year that the District has made AYP.

Policy Committee

Mr. White stated the Policy Committee conducted an extensive discussion of Policy 122: Interscholastic Athletics and Co-Curricular Activities and Policy 122.1: Co-Curricular Awards. The committee asked the administration to come up with ways to bring equity in the funding of the state and national competitions without over-stressing the budget.

Personnel Committee

Ms. Harris stated that at the July meeting the Personnel Committee discussed different roles of certain key players within the school district and redefining some job descriptions based on new positions at the administrative level. She reported that Dr. Sparagana has recently made contact with Lincoln University regarding recruiting minority student teachers.

Dr. Sparagana reported that he met with Dr. Joanne DeBoy, Chair of the Education Department at Lincoln University to discuss recruiting minority teachers. The meeting concluded with a plan for Dr. DeBoy to present to the Lincoln Education Department the development of a partnership with the Pottstown School District. Dr. Sparagana agreed to a future meeting with the hopes of possibly placing some student teachers in the second semester. The Personnel Committee has discussed the possibility of developing a host family program for the student teachers.

LIST OF BILLS

Mrs. O'Donnell presented the list of bills to be placed on the August 19, 2010 board agenda for approval.

CONSENT ITEMS

Personnel

Dr. Sparagana reviewed the personnel items as presented to be placed on the August 19, 2010 board agenda for approval.

Professional Leaves

Dr. Sparagana reviewed the professional leave as presented to be placed on the August 19, 2010 board agenda for approval.

Field Trips

None.

Contracts

Mrs. O'Donnell reviewed the contracts as presented to be placed on the August 19, 2010 board agenda for approval.

School Physician and Dentist Rates

Mrs. O'Donnell reviewed the School Physician and Dentist Rates as presented to be placed on the August 19, 2010 board agenda for approval.

Settlement of Per Capita and Occupation Tax Duplicate

Mrs. O'Donnell reviewed the resolution exonerating the Tax Collector from the balance of the 2009 Per Capita and 2009 Occupation Tax Duplicate as presented to be placed on the August 19, 2010 board agenda for approval.

Attendance Officers

Dr. Lindley reviewed the Attendance Officers for the 2010-2011 school year as presented to be placed on the August 19, 2010 board agenda for approval.

NON-CONSENT

None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Policy 122: Interscholastic Athletics and Co-Curricular Activities for Pottstown High School and Pottstown Middle School – Dr. Lindley
2. Policy 122.1: Co-Curricular Awards and Recognition for Co-Curricular Participation– Dr. Lindley

NEW BUSINESS

Refinancing of the 2005 and 2006 Bonds

Mrs. O'Donnell stated that the Working Group will be making a presentation to the Finance Committee on Thursday, August 12, 2010 regarding the refinancing of the 2005 and 2006 Bonds.

Dr. Lindley asked the Board whether they wanted the Finance Committee to consider including the $1.5 million for energy related projects with the refinancing of the 2005 and 2006 Bonds. The Board agreed. Mrs. Pargeon and Mr. Hartman asked that the Working Group incorporate into their presentation, information on a shorter term loan, the cost of the loan each year, and a comparison with the Build America Bonds. Mr. Kalis stated that he would see that this information is included in the proposal.

Dr. Lindley asked that a potential contract with Step by Step Learning be added to the agenda under "New Business", in the amount of $25,000. This contract would enable the Literacy Team to continue working with our staff focusing on the RTI process and the continuation of working in grade 6. Dr. Lindley stated that $15,000 from the School Improvement Fund would be applied to this contract.

Bids Awards

Mrs. O'Donnell stated that the bid for the School Van is scheduled to be opened on August 10, 2010 and the bid for Recoating of the Running Track and Field Events Area is scheduled to be opened on August 11, 2010. The bid awards will be presented on the August 19, 2010 board agenda for approval to the lowest bidder meeting the required specifications.

INFORMATION

1. Governor's Budget/FMAP Funds – Dr. Lindley
2. Community Relations Community Report – Mr. Aramto
3. Spring Pottstown Pride

FEDERATION REMARKS

Mr. Decker had attended the National AFT Convention in July and was impressed with "how far ahead of the curve" our district is in terms of relationships, programs and infrastructure. He stated the Federation is looking forward to participating in "Community Day."

ROUND TABLE

Mr. White – no comment.

Mr. Hylton – no comment.

Ms. Harris was pleased with the PSSA/AYP results. She would like to "define the common denominator" among the students who were not able to achieve the 11th grade Reading level. Ms. Harris suggested offering remedial instructions to help the students improve their scores in the upcoming school year. Ms. Harris is looking forward to the upcoming school year with new implementations which should help our students be more competitive and succeed after graduation. She thanked Dr. Sparagana for his persistent efforts to recruit minority teachers. Board Members were asked for their feedback to support Project Reach. She explained that Project Reach is a community based organization similar to First Suburbs. The organization is looking to raise $7,000 to partner with the Pennsylvania Diversity Commission. The Pennsylvania Diversity Commission team will provide a strategic plan, with follow-up on community input, and a contract of agreement for all who attend.

Mr. White responded to the 11th grade Reading problem stating that our school district is doing a fantastic job. He indicated "if we do not get the students by 3rd grade on reading and math levels, they are going to have problems in 11th grade." "Our school district is right on target solving that part of the puzzle."

Mrs. Pargeon reported that classroom placements are on our district website. She is looking forward to the upcoming sporting events and back-to-school activities. Mrs. Pargeon thanked all the parents who are actively supporting the students and communicating with the teachers.

Mr. Hartman concurred with Ms. Harris on the PSSA/AYP progress report. He thanked the students, staff and administration for working so hard to achieve the AYP results. He also thanked the maintenance staff for working so diligently to prepare our buildings for the new school year.

Mrs. Weand – no comment.

Mr. Wausnock – no comment.

Dr. Sparagana stated the Pottstown School District is one of forty-five school districts recognized in the Pennsylvania Children News that have implemented positive behavior support. He stated that Restorative Practices are currently at the Middle School and High School. Dr. Sparagana reported on a recent study for Dual Enrollment indicating the program "shows promise for non-high achievers." This study indicated the success of the Dual Enrollment program with specific supports in place for non-traditional students to be successful. Sate legislators need to continue to advocate for this program.

Dr. Lindley advised the Board of the Administrative In-Service scheduled for August 10th, 11th and 12th. He reported that Mr. Rodriguez will be reviewing an on-line Driver Safety Course being offered through the Virtual Learning Network. Mr. Rodriguez will look at the quality and content of the course and investigate local services to offer insurance savings.

Mr. Huss congratulated Mrs. McCoy for a job well done. He thanked the cleaning crew for working through the excessive heat this summer. He also thanked the elementary teachers who attended the Core Reading program training.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mr. Wausnock and seconded by Mr. Hartman that the Board adjourn. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

Penny O'Donnell /gsa
Penny O'Donnell
Substitute Board Secretary