POTTSTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
SPECIAL VOTING MEETING
FEBRUARY 8, 2010 - 7:00 P.M.

The Special Voting meeting of the Board of School Directors of the Pottstown School District was held on Monday, February 8, 2010 at 7:00 PM in the boardroom of the Administration Building. The following board members were present: Mr. Richard C. Huss, President, Mr. Dennis Wausnock, Vice-President, Mr. Thomas J. Hylton, Mrs. Polly M. Weand, Mr. Nat White and Mrs. Julia Wilson, Ms. Valerie L. Harris and Mr. Robert H. Hartman. Absent was Mrs. Michele M. Pargeon. Also present were Superintendent, Mr. David Krem; 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. John Armato, Ms. Terri Lampe, Ms. Pamela Bateson, Dr. Robert Stevens, a member of the press, and interested citizens.

DETERMINATION OF ARCHITECT FOR REPLACING WINDOWS AT RUPERT & EDGEWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Mr. Huss introduced and turned the meeting over to Mr. Hylton.

Mr. Hylton indicated that 15 different proposals were received for architectural services to replace windows at the Rupert and Edgewood Elementary Schools. It appears that Crabtree Rohrbaugh is the lowest qualified bidder. He stated the easiest course of action would be if he offered to pay for the architectural services himself. It will take a minimum of 6 weeks for the design with an additional 3 weeks to advertise for bids. He ran for office on a pledge to preserve schools while being fiscally responsible with open government. We must proceed as energy costs are going to get higher.

Mr. Hylton provided a letter addressed to Mr. Huss detailing his proposal to provide funding for the architectural services if the district later decided not to complete the window replacement project. This letter is attached as addendum #2009-2010-054.

Mr. Hylton made the motion to award the contract for architectural services to replace the windows at the Edgewood and Rupert Elementary Schools with the expectation that a rate schedule would be provided for reimbursable expenses and that his provisional donation of $20,000 for these services along with the final contract be reviewed by the solicitor, Mr. Stephen Kalis. Mr. White seconded the motion.

Mrs. Weand felt this was a very gracious offer by Mr. Hylton, but believed there was a need to look beyond that donation. She questioned where the money would come from to pay for the actual window replacements. She is still concerned that Rupert doesn't need new windows per the Honeywell study. Edgewood may need new windows, but there is still the concern over where the money will come from to pay for the installation.

Mr. Hylton believes that a better decision can be made in two months when the costs will be identified and we are further into the budget. Just because Honeywell didn't recommend something doesn't mean it couldn't be done. Mr. Angstadt reviewed Mr. Schmidlapp's report and didn't disagree with his assessment to replace windows.

Mrs. Weand again questioned how the windows at Rupert deteriated in the 6 months between the Honeywell report and Mr. Schmidlapp's report. She has received many calls from tax payers concerned over historically correct window replacements.

Mr. Hylton indicated that the only difference is that the windows would contain a 12 by 12 grid to make them appear to be multiple paneled windows and this was not very expensive.

Mrs. Weand asked why the need for the grid? If the windows are not historically correct to look at what's the problem? Why do they have to be historically correct? It has been indicated that we are getting stimulus money to pay for the windows, but we aren't "getting" anything, this money has to be paid back. This won't help the education of our children. We have a lot of kids with many needs. It would look great, but we can't afford it.

Mr. White indicated he went through the same thing with our house. We went out to get good energy efficient windows for the house and were able to put the grids in for a minimal amount.

Mrs. Weand indicated that that was your money to spend, but you shouldn't be spending additional tax payer's money.

Mr. White believes this is the best possible decision and that it is fiscally responsible.

Mrs. Weand believe that Ruperts' windows are currently energy efficient and that this is foolish spending.

Mr. White indicated that the Neighborhood Committee members felt this would save money in the future due to efficiencies.

Mrs. Weand indicated that all the plaster around the windows was going to have to be torn out to make them historically correct. She doesn't want to spend this money - her campaign was fiscal responsibility.

Mr. Hartman indicated he did not have an issue doing something that improves the look of the building when it's time to do something. What is the overall plan? We have no plan. It's actually piece mill. He has a problem when a study is supported when it supports what you want, but don't support it when it doesn't agree with what you want. Some seepage with windows is actually good. When an overall plan indicates you can include these types of items (window replacements) in the overall project, then you do them. What are we going to cut to pay for this, even if it's just windows? You're not going to be saving $30-40 thousand in energy costs per year. You still need to address the potential asbestos in the caulking. Right now savings will not offset the costs. Thank you very much; it is nice you are willing to make this financial offer. There is still no plan here. What is the ultimate plan? If the funding is truly from grants where is it coming from? How are we going to pay for this?

Mrs. Weand read a comment from Mrs. Pargeon. She apologized for being ill, but indicated without a comprehensive plan and a source for funding being identified, she could not support this project.

Mrs. Wilson can't believe the board has wasted so much time on windows when there are so many other important educational issues to be discussed.

Ms. Harris agreed with Mrs. Wilson indicating that at one Committee of the Whole meeting and hour and a half was spent discussing windows – how fiscally responsible was that? She sees no reason why the board should not move forward.

HEARINGS FROM PATRONS OF THE SCHOOLS

Mrs. Zahra agreed with Mr. Hartman. It is very important to know where the funds are coming from to pay for this project. Mr. White you have not voted for budgets with increases at the index. The next budget has over a million dollar deficit with the Keystone Exams being another unfunded mandate. Windows are wonderful, but make no sense. You should have an overall plan. If we cut every single co-curricular activity that's only $600,000 and we're still short $400,000. Please get a plan. It doesn't have to happen right away. You can't spend money before you have a plan to enable students to pass exams and determine how you are going to get the students out of the modulars.

Mr. Thees thanked Mr. Hylton for his generous offer. He would like to know where the money for the actual project is going to come from. The community is already over taxed and tapped out. Half the household in this community live below $25,000 a year. Windows at Rupert are only being replaced for their historical look. Need to understand the costs of all aspects. We are trying to save our homes.

Mr. Marable asked if we are really concerned about our children. Are we looking at priorities? No Windows are not a priority. We have to look at priorities. Taxpayers don't have any money. Our children are still in modulars. You say windows may save some money, but we don't know that. If we Are concerned about children we wouldn't be thinking about windows.

Mrs. Carmody indicated the need to identify the problem prior to developing a solution. By not doing so we may be missing the appropriate course of action. There is a need to determine the educational needs of the buildings. There is no clear course due to the lack of leadership. You need to explore other options. I applaud Mr. Hylton's generous offer but fear it is an attempt at grandstanding.

Mrs. Piaz commented that the community elected you to represent them. People here are asking you to say "no" to windows. Give priority to education.

Mrs. Weand asked if there was any way the board can actually get out in the public and ask the public what they want.

Mr. White is arguing against the previously proposed $40million plans.

Ms. Banks asked if there was any way to get the publics view on windows. Mr. Huss responded it could only be done through referendum.

Mr. Hartman stated a plan should be developed that looked at the educational needs, talked with administration and teachers. It would be stupid not to replace windows when remodeling. All of these things were looked at in the previous plans. They included everything and the next step would be to look at what you need to pull out or what you can't afford. Stop comparing the $40 or $50 million plan to this. A plan that is too haphazard to work. We're being sold a bill of goods here.

Mr. Leffler asked the board to stop spending before there is a tax revolt. There are 5 members here that are ignoring what the public has to say. It's like throwing gasoline on a growing tax revolt. I don't have an ax to grind with anyone. Who is going to pay for this? What are you going to cut to pay for the windows? None of this makes any sense at this time. We don't need fancy buildings.

Mr. Hylton asked Mr. Leffler if he had provided him with his phone number, so that he could be called.

Mr. Leflar indicated he had, but he didn't need to be convinced that we need windows.

Mr. Huss asked the Federation if they had any comments.

Ms. Volmouth indicated the board should keep education as their priority and act responsibly.

Upon roll call the vote was recorded as follows: Mr. Huss: aye, Mr. Hylton: aye, Mr. Wausnock: aye, Mrs. Weand: nay, Mr. White: aye, Mrs. Wilson: nay, Ms. Harris: aye, Mr. Hartman: nay.
Ayes: five. Nays: three. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mr. Hylton and seconded by Ms. Harris to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 9:34 P.M.

Linda S. Adams
Board Secretary