JOINT MEETING OF THE POTTSTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS AND THE POTTSTOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL September 25, 2008 – 7:30 PM

INVOCATION

Mayor Sharon Thomas provided the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ATTENDANCE

In attendance for the Pottstown School District were David Krem, Superintendent, Dr. Reed Lindley, Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Jeffrey Sparagana, Director of Education and Human Resources, Board President Richard Huss, Board members Julia Wilson, Robert Hartman, Amy Bathurst Francis, Judyth Zahora, Edwin Edwards, Nat White, Michele Pargeon, Dennis Wausnock and Solicitor Stephen Kalis.

Councilors present were President David Garner, Councilors Greg Berry, Stephen Toroney, Mike Wenzel, and Jody Rhoads. Also present were Manager Raymond Lopez, Assistant Manager Jason Bobst, Mayor Sharon Thomas, Solicitor Charles Garner and Borough Secretary Virginia Takach.

Included in the audience were Directors John Reber, Mark Highley, Doug Yerger, John Armato, Chief of Police Mark Flanders, Supervisors Pamela Bateson, Barry Angstadt, Beth Yoder, President of Federation of Pottstown Teachers, Newstell Marable, President Pottstown NAACP and Evan Brandt, The Mercury.

PEAK

Dr. Jeffrey Sparagana provided a handout and presentation on the Pottstown Early Action for Kindergarten Readiness, PEAK. He advised that this is the third year of the program and stressed the significance and long term benefits of this School District and partnership program for over 500 three and four year olds. Dr. Sparagana stated that the average cost of educating a child in Pennsylvania is $9,300 and a minimum of $16,000 for a special needs child and stressed the urgency of early readiness to ensure the competitiveness of children educated in other countries. Further information regarding PEAK may be found at www.peakonline.org.

LANGUAGE ARTS

Dr. Reed Lindley explained the initiative of hiring the company Step by Step Learning, a literacy coaching program. He added that the main purpose being a *Response to Intervention* program and explained the core leaning process.

Dr. Lindley advised that each elementary school has an instructional coach and one in the Middle School to enhance the Step by Step imitative. He also explained the learning process for the teachers involved.

Dr. Lindley added that the Strategic Plan has six outstanding issues, which are expected to be brought before the Board in October.

OPERATION TRUTH AND CONSEQUENCES

Mayor Thomas reported that she received information on this date regarding an incident of desk throwing and an incident of a sexual innuendo nature, which was reported to the Principal on this date.

The Mayor introduced her imitative of "Operation Truth and Consequences" in order to intervene and troubleshoot this type of problem. This program would also include incidences of retail theft, vandalism and disorderly conduct. Mayor Thomas also reported that she would be involved with Domestic Violence Awareness Education and Notification.

Mayor Thomas commented that it was brought to her attention that there is currently no truant officer employed by the Pottstown School District. She added that truancy management could be a matter for grant funding for addition resources through the Police Department.

Mr. Krem expressed concern that the Mayor failed to notify his office of these recent incidences. He also noted that the School District has always had a truant officer but is presently out on medical leave. Dr. Krem added that neither the District nor the Board would be able to share or identify personal information on juveniles.

Chief Flanders reviewed the means and the empowerment of the Youth Aid Panel, which is overseen by the District Attorney's office.

Mr. Krem also commented that the problem with truancy and juvenile violations is the Court System and not the Police Department. He noted that the offenders rarely are imposed a fine.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS EDUCATION/NOTIFICATION

Mayor Thomas spoke on the effects, signs and awareness of domestic violence. She requested that informational posters be placed in every public building, school and house of worship with hotline numbers and contact information.

Chief Flanders explained the pro-arrest policy in the Department and the benefits of the DART program.

Mr. Krem advised that every poster provided to the schools regarding this subject is displayed at appropriate locations.

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS

Mr. Bobst provided the Planning for Safe Routes to School Pedestrian Road Safety Audit and the Federal Application Project Summary. He explained that Pottstown was chosen by DVRPC as a site for this project due to its urban setting. Mr. Bobst added that the committee consisted of members of Borough staff, the School District and DVRPC. He advised that the engineering cost for this project would be approximately $196,000 to improve sidewalks, crosswalks and new and improved signage. The application is under review by PennDot with hopes of notification in mid-October. Main points of the application include the engineering, evaluation, enforcement and encouragement of the project.

HIGH STREET BRIDGE REPLACEMENT OVER MANATAWNY CREEK

Mr. Lopez reported that a public hearing was held on September 3rd with members of PennDOT and staff of Traffic Planning and Design to provide PennDOT's goals for the bridge replacement on West High Street over the Manatawny Creek. He added that the presentation provided information on the design, detour routes and timing and length of construction. Mr. Lopez advised that the projected time line is approximately 6- 8 months for the construction and detours and noted that they are working with Montgomery County Community College and the Borough to have the least interference with classes at the College. He added that any concerns anticipated through the School District would be addressed and comments would be appreciated.

TRAFFIC STUDY – RUPERT SCHOOL

Chief Flanders advised that concerns have been presented regarding the traffic flow on parallel streets in the area of Rupert Elementary School. He added that preliminary data is being collected. Chief Flanders also noted that the School officials would be advised of any proposed changes prior to being implemented.

Chief Flanders also provided complimentary tickets to all attendees for the Food Festival Event on October 13th to benefit the Pottstown Area Police Athletic League.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER - ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

Barry Angstadt, School District Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds, commended the new Codes Director, Mark Highley, for his efforts in assisting the School District modular buildings project.

Mr. Huss reiterated his request for consideration by the Borough to waive permit fees for the Elementary School projects as was done with the Middle School project.

Amy Bathhurst Francis reported on the success of the school uniform project and commended the efforts of the committee. She added that during the first week of school there was a 90% success rate and the project of uniforms for the High School is forthcoming.

Mr. Krem urged the importance of having a joint relationship with the School District and the Borough. He provided an example of having a possible shelter at one of the schools that could be used for incidences such as the recent fire on High Street.

Mr. Lopez also advised that numerous incidences of communication are done through various settings, such as community meetings, Chamber meetings and phone conversations and not only at formal meetings such as this.

Councilor Rhoads commented that he was in agreement with Mr. Krem in that there is a lack of communication within the Borough.

Robert Hartman suggested having these joint meetings quarterly.

Solicitor Garner reported that developers have applied for and pulled permits for eight town homes for the former Mrs. Smith's site. He added that the commercial development may not be seen in the foreseeable future.

President Garner advised that several economic development matters are being worked upon, such as the redevelopment of the Pottstown Industrial Complex. He added that the State has funding for water and sewer infrastructure for future projects.

Mayor Thomas urged the news media to regard the sensitive issues discussed at this meeting be treated with discretion.

President Garner advised that the RFP for the Ricketts Center for partnership and operation of the Center would be finalized by the November meeting with implementation by January 1st.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:58 p.m.

Submitted,

Raymond W. Lopez
Borough Manager