POTTSTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
OCTOBER 2, 2008 – 7:30 PM

The Committee of the Whole meeting of the Board of School Directors of the Pottstown School District was held on Thursday, October 2, 2008, at 7:32 PM in the second floor LGI room of the Pottstown Middle School. The following board members were present: Mr. Edwin Edwards, Mr. Richard Huss, Mrs. Michele Pargeon, Mr. Dennis Wausnock, Mr. Nat White, Mrs. Julia Wilson, and Mrs. Judyth Zahora. Absent were Mrs. Amy Francis and Mr. Robert Hartman. Also present were Superintendent of Schools, David Krem; Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Reed Lindley; Director of Education and Human Resources, Dr. Jeffrey Sparagana; Business Administrator, Mrs. Linda Adams; Solictor, Mr. Stephen Kalis; Mr. John Armato, Mrs. Pamela Bateson, Mrs. Gail Cooper, Mrs. Mia DiPaolo, Mr. Robert Giering, Mrs. Loretta Hoch, Mr. Matthew Moyer, Dr. Angela Tuck, Mr. Kurt Adam, Mr. Robert Decker, a member of the press and interested citizens.

AWARDS
No awards.

MR. HARTMAN ENTERED AT 7:33 PM.

MINUTES
Mrs. Adams presented the minutes of September 18, 2008 Regular Board meeting to be approved at the Regular October 16, 2008 Board meeting. No changes or comments were suggested.

COMMITTEE REPORTS
Personnel Committee
Mr. Wausnock stated the committee would not meet on October 14, 2008, and there is no report at this time.

Finance Committee
Mrs. Zahora asked if the committee needs to schedule a budget meeting. Mrs. Adams indicated she would like to have a budget meeting in November. Mrs. Zahora stated there would be no Finance Committee meeting in October.

Facilities Committee
Mr. Hartman stated there will be a meeting on Monday October 6, 2008 at 7:30 PM at the Annex. Mr. Hartman asked for an update on the modulars. Mrs. Adams advised that all modulars are occupied with the exception of Franklin; the district is required to move a door on this modular. She anticipates this will be completed within a week.

Montgomery County Legislative Committee
Mr. White discussed the PDE reversal of the PSSA test schedule, the antibullying omnibus bill, the Virtual high school study commission, the reduction in state tax collectors, the reauthorization of the Keystone Opportunity Zone, and the autism bill.

PSBA Representative
Mr. White advised of two upcoming conferences. The School Leadership Conference October 14 -17, 2008 and the November workshop entitled "Hiring the Best and Getting the Most" regarding attracting and retaining highly qualified educators and administrators.

Montgomery County Intermediate Unit Representative
Mr. Hartman shared that the IU is moving forward with plans to purchase the Anderson School and has received two proposals. Changes to the Sunshine Law, No Child Left Behind and IDEA funding were discussed. He shared that in 2007 five schools in Montgomery County were in corrective action status, in 2007 that number jumped to thirteen with an additional nine

schools in warning status. The IU is gathering information for a transportation study. He advised the next meeting would be held in the third week of October.

Community Relations Committee
Mr. Armato advised Ursinus College has donated $800 in school supplies to Rupert Elementary. Dr. Patel, a local chiropractor, donated $1,000 in school supplies to Franklin Elementary. United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania participated in the "Day of Caring" with Vanguard volunteers doing landscaping and painting at Barth Elementary. Gerald Koren, a Pottstown graduate, has increased his excellence in math scholarship from $500 to $700 and instituted a new $700 excellence in computer science award. The Rotary Club has donated 250 dictionaries to our 4th and 5th graders for their use at home. Many activities have been held district wide in honor of Constitution Day including a voter registration campaign and a mock signing of the Constitution.

Neighborhood Elementary Schools Project
Mrs. Pargeon reported the committee met and reviewed architectural costs, the number of classrooms needed based on enrollment projections and special education. The committee also discussed the merits of eliminating one school versus another. They examined such issues as square footage, parking, busing and budget considerations. They also discussed the possibility of changing boundaries.

Co-Curricular Activities Committee
Mr. Hartman advised the committee held a meeting on September 22, 2008 where they reviewed the wrestling mats and the order has been placed for a new mat. They also discussed the need for a master co-curricular calendar. Mrs. Zahora asked why we are still waiting for a master calendar. With the technology at our disposal, this should be an easy thing to accomplish. Mr. Krem will review this item and respond to the Board. The girls' soccer uniforms were in the budget and have arrived. Mrs. Zahora feels the uniforms were ordered too late. The athletic department was aware there would be a team. Mr. Krem will discuss with Jeff White and respond to the Board. Mr. Hartman indicated the cheerleaders are required to purchase their own uniforms. He advised the committee is interviewing boys' basketball coaches and are still looking for girls' basketball coaches.

Dress Code Policy/School Uniforms
Mr. Edwards indicated there was a meeting held in September with high school student representatives. Mr. Krem feels this was a successful meeting. The students shared their opinions and suggestions. Mr. Armato felt it was a positive meeting and an opportunity for student input. Mrs. Wilson stated the requirement of natural hair color was not in this year's handbook or the new dress code. She feels this could become an issue and the Board should consider correcting and placing this language back in the policy. Mr. Huss asked the principals present at the meeting for their feelings on this issue. Mrs. DiPaolo feels brightly colored hair is a direct violation of the uniform policy and a distraction. Mr. Moyer feels the district needs to be clear in our expectations. Mrs. Cooper feels it is not such a distraction at the Middle School level. Mrs. Wilson asked if the Board will vote on placing the requirement of natural hair color back into the policy at the next meeting. Mr. Edwards feels the Board should discuss but let it rest until next year and the majority of the board present concurred.

Technology/Curriculum Committee
Mrs. Zahora indicated there is a meeting scheduled for October 23, 2008 but she will be unable to attend. Dr. Lindley would like to reschedule so that the chairperson will be there as the Science adoption needs to be discussed and where the district is with the literacy initiative. Mr. Huss suggested rescheduling and readvertising. The meeting will be held on October 28, 2008.

Liaison with Borough Council and Economic Oversight Committee
A meeting is scheduled for October 16, 2008.

CONSENT ITEMS

Personnel

Dr. Sparagana reviewed the personnel items to be placed on the Regular October 16, 2008 board meeting agenda for approval.

Professional Leave

Dr. Lindley reviewed the professional leaves and field trips to be placed on the Regular October 16, 2008 board meeting agenda for approval.

Special Education Contracts

Mrs. Adams presented contracts for special education services for the 2008-2009 year to be approved at the Regular October 16, 2008 Board meeting.

Independence Blue Cross Contract

Mrs. Adams reviewed the Blue Cross Contract to be placed on the Regular October 16, 2008 board agenda for approval. Mrs. Zahora asked if the district was part of this consortium all along. Mrs. Adams stated no the district was not, but that joining the consortium will provide increased economies of scale.

Budget Transfers

Mrs. Adams reviewed the 2008-2009 budget transfers to be placed on the October 16, 2008 board agenda for approval.

NON-CONSENT

No report.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Tax Impacts on Elementary School Projects

Mrs. Adams introduced Gordon Walker and Jason Brockman of Public Financial Management and reviewed the handout of the tax implications based on the different options for the district's elementary schools.

Mr. Hartman questioned when the High School and Middle School bond issues would be paid. Mr. Walker advised that all current debt will be finished in 2028. Mrs. Zahora asked if it would be beneficial to reissue all debt. Mr. Walker indicated that with the current turmoil on Wall Street, the current fixed rates are higher and the district could not refinance at a lower rate.

Mrs. Zahora asked how the local effort indicated on the handout was calculated. Mr. Brockman advised that the state reimbursement was calculated based on the 35% average figure provided by Crabtree Rohrbaugh. The reimbursement rate is then multiplied by the schools aid ratio. The taxpayers will be responsible for paying approximately 80% of the bond issue. Mrs. Zahora questioned what the net local effort would be. Mrs. Adams advised the figures on the handout do not include any economies of scale or other efficiencies. All scenarios will provide efficiencies. Mr. Edwards feels the Board needs the net local effort figures to take a vote at the next meeting. Mr. White would like a vote on this issue at the next meeting. Mrs. Adams advised she will be able to provide the needed figures early next week.

Mrs. Adams stated Hal Hart will attend the next meeting at the Board's request. Mr. Huss would like to have Mr. Hart in attendance to answer any questions that might arise. Mrs. Zahora feels the Board needs to know the effect on operating costs before they can make a decision.

Mr. Edwards feels the Board should make a decision regarding class size first then decide on 3, 4 or 5 buildings, not the specific buildings. Mr. White feels the Board needs new floor plans. He feels the September Crabtree estimates are adding too much additional square footage. Mrs. Pargeon stated the Save Our Land, Save Our Schools plan did not use Crabtree's numbers. The

Board was specific in its request of Crabtree, Rohrbaugh; the Board did not make this request of Mr. Hylton. Mr. White would like to set a limit on the costs. He feels we cannot afford to go over the 28 million in forward borrowing. If the Board sets a cost limit, the Administration and architect can begin.

Mr. Hartman feels the Board needs to be mindful to set the education plan first or problems can arise later. We do not want to repeat the mistakes of the High School renovation. Mr. White feels that with Pottstown having one of the highest tax rates in Montgomery County we can only build what we can afford. Why do we need 40,000 square feet for three new classrooms? We could spend the 28 million on heavy maintenance.

Mrs. Pargeon stated the Hylton case study is not relevant to what the district is doing. Mrs. Zahora feels the Save Our Land, Save Our Schools plan is not complete. Mr. White does not see how it is not a complete plan. Mr. Hartman stated Hal Hart can answer how it is not complete. Mr. Edwards feels it would be unprofessional to have Mr. Hart pick apart the plan. The Administration chose Crabtree, Rohrbaugh and the Board trusts the Administration to educate our children. He agrees we have to start somewhere, but it is unrealistic to think we can only spend 28 million. Mr. White feels our primary focus should be to vote on an option at the next meeting. Mrs. Pargeon stated this is not just about voters, it is about the taxpayers and education. Mrs. Zahora and Mr. Hartman stated re-election is not their concern.

REPORTS

Career and Technical Education Update

Mr. Kurt Adam provided an update on the district's career and technical program. The department has conducted a survey to share with staff and students the availability of technical education and post secondary educational opportunities. In the 2007-2008 school year 154 students were enrolled in vocational education programs. In 2008-2009 there are 142 students enrolled.

He advised the Building and Construction Trades program received a $6,000 grant to refurbish the courtyard. They will install a fishpond and picnic tables. The Marketing program received $1,500 from Wal-Mart to attend a leadership conference. The Health Occupations program will participate in a blood drive and safe Halloween. They will also have students participating in a clinical at Manorcare. The CEO of Pottstown Memorial Medical Center met directly with Mrs. DeAntonio and has accepted four Pottstown students into a clinical program at the hospital. The Childcare program will participate in a YMCA clinical. The Culinary Arts program will assist with the PAL fundraiser and attended the Feeser Food Show.

The Co-op program currently has four students. The Montgomery County Workforce Youth Empowerment program is putting together a Building Construction mentoring program to prepare for the retirement of many baby boomers who currently work in the construction industry. Mrs. DeAntonio will teach a medical terminology course.

Mrs. Zahora asked if the Hill School is still interested in using our facilities. Mr. Adam indicated that he has contacted the Hill school and it seems the interest has waned. Mrs. Zahora feels the opportunities with the Hill School need to be discussed at a different level.

Mrs. Zahora asked how many students are sent to CAT Pickering. Mr. Adam advised 12 students are currently attending CAT Pickering. Mrs. Zahora asked if the reason for attending CAT was due to special programs. Mr. Adam advised that the programs include animal science, graphic arts, and law enforcement.

PMS School Improvement Plan Revision

Mrs. Gail Cooper is seeking approval of the School Improvement Plan Revision. The purpose of the revision is to analyze what is working and what is not working. In the Middle School there are 30 subgroups of children. Of the 30 subgroups, 13 subgroups made AYP.

INFORMATION
1. PIPPS Meeting – October 16, 2008 (immediately following the regular board meeting)

FEDERATION REMARKS
Mr. Decker stated the elementary construction has been a long time coming. He is pleased we are moving forward and thanked the Board for their time and discussion.

ROUND TABLE
Mr. White appreciated tonight's discussion and hopes the Board will make the best decision.

Mrs. Wilson was glad to see the flag issue at Rupert resolved.

Mr. Hartman thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting. He felt the meeting with the Borough went well and is looking forward to more fruitful meetings. He is hopeful that the economic conflict will be resolved. It is shameful that our students suffer due to corporate greed.

Mrs. Zahora thanked the High School for their hospitality.

Mrs. Pargeon stated the Culinary Arts Department did a wonderful job at the food fest. She attended all seven open houses.

Dr. Lindley reminded the Board that the update to the Strategic Plan is on the next agenda. The update is due by the end of October.

Mrs. Adams reviewed the four-day workweek savings. The district realized $9,200 in electrical savings even though it was four degrees warmer this summer than last. The district also saw $6,800 in overtime savings due to the four-day workweek for a total savings of approximately $16,000.00. Mrs. Zahora questioned the savings in overtime. Mrs. Adams stated you see the savings due to not losing time to start up and tear down. Mrs. Zahora stated we may want to consider staggering the staff to work four days all year long. Mrs. Adams stated there was approximately $6,000 in savings to the employees as a result of saving one days travel time to work.

Mr. Huss announced an executive session immediately following the meeting to discuss personnel issues.

AN EXECUTIVE SESSION WAS HELD IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE MEETING TO DISCUSS PERSONNEL ISSUES.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mr. Wausnock and seconded by Mr. Hartman that the meeting adjourn. All members present voted aye. The Committee of the Whole meeting was adjourned at 10:18 PM.

Linda S. Adams
Board Secretary