

**POTTSTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
October 15, 2015 - 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, October 15, 2015 at 7:30 PM in the Cafeteria of the Pottstown High School with Vice-President, Mr. Andrew Kefer presiding via tele-conference. Upon roll call, the following members were present: Ms. Mary-Beth Bacallao, Mr. Thomas Hylton and Mrs. Polly Weand. Absent were Ms. Katina Bearden, Mrs. Amy Bathurst Francis, Mr. Ron Williams and Mrs. Kimberly Stilwell. Also present were Superintendent, Dr. Jeffrey Sparagana; Board Secretary, Mrs. Linda S. Adams; Director of Human Resources, Mr. Stephen Rodriguez; Solicitor, Mr. Stephen Kalis; Mrs. Pamela Bateson, Mr. Kevin Downes, Mrs. Daniel McCoy, Mrs. Lindi Vollmuth, Mr. Michael DiDonato, Mr. John Armato, Borough Manager, Mr. Mark Flanders; P.A.I.D Executive Director, Mr. Steve Bamford; PFM Consultant, Mr. Jamie Schlesinger; a member of the press, and interested citizens.

Upon roll call, four Board Members were present; no quorum. The Board Members proceeded with discussion items; no action to be taken.

AWARDS

None.

COMMUNICATIONS

None.

PRESENTATIONS

Mr. Jamie Schlesinger, Public Financial Management Consultant, reviewed the refinancing process of the General Obligation Bond Series 2010A. After reviewing the bank proposals, it was determined that the best alternative came from Univest at a fixed rate of 2.44%. Based on the current conditions, it is the belief that the district can realize a savings of approximately \$400,000 net of all fees from refinancing a portion of the bonds. The bond is pre-payable without penalty allowing the district the opportunity to refinance should interest rates get reduced in the future. The Univest proposal provides all the terms and conditions that PFM looks for and is the recommended proposal for refinancing the General Obligation Bond Series 2010A.

Mrs. Francis entered the meeting at 7:37 pm.

The Committee of the Whole meeting of the Board of School Directors of the Pottstown School District was called to order. A quorum was present.

MINUTES

Mrs. Adams presented the minutes of the Committee of the Whole meeting held on September 17, 2015, the minutes from the Regular meeting held on September 21, 2015, and the minutes from the October 1, 2015 Board Meeting to be placed on the October 19, 2015 Board Agenda for approval.

LIST OF BILLS

Ms. Bacallao presented the list of bills from the various funds for the period of September 2015 to be placed on the October 19, 2015 Board Agenda for approval.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Ms. Bacallao presented the Treasurer's Report for September 2015 to be placed on the October 19, 2015 Board Agenda for approval.

HEARINGS FROM PATRONS OF THE SCHOOLS

None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

POLICY COMMITTEE

Mr. Rodriguez gave a report on the committee meeting held on October 1. The committee reviewed five policies for Board approval. The Policy Committee recommends the policies as presented on tonight's agenda to be placed on the October 19, 2015 Board Agenda for approval.

CURRICULUM/TECHNOLOGY /CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Ms. Bacallao gave a report on the topics discussed at the October 1 committee meeting. The committee reviewed the PSSA and Keystone data and summary results. As a result of the scores, the focus will be on math and improving the district's math programs. Each building will be working on their improvement plans. Highlights from the Technology report included improving intercom communications between the offices and all-purpose rooms at the elementary buildings, an update on replacing ink jet printers with laser printers throughout the district, and the success of the CDT testing done on Window 7 operating system. The committee viewed a slide presentation given by Dr. Sparagana concerning a new protocol for an active shooter and a violent intruder in the building. All buildings will receive training with a drill planned for sometime in the spring.

FACILITIES COMMITTEE

Mrs. Adams gave a report on the Facilities Committee meeting held on October 8. Topics presented and discussed were: 1] the progress of the elementary schools project closeout on several general contractor items including the latent defect for water infiltration of room 004 at Rupert (this item continues to be analyzed), 2] updates on Reynolds Measurement and Verification of Energy Savings, 3] roofing and masonry work planned for the Administration building and re-shingling of the Field House roof, 4] demolition of the old concession stand in Grigg Stadium. There was general discussion regarding the leasing of available space at the Annex and usage of the pad which will remain when the old concession stand is demolished.

JOINT FINANCE/PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Mrs. Adams gave a report on the Joint Finance and Personnel Committee meeting held on October 8. The committee and Board Members present were given an update on the status of the bond refinancing. It was the consensus of all present that a representative from PFM present their recommendations to the full Board at the October 15 Committee of the Whole meeting. The committee reviewed the proposed LERTA Resolution and agreed the resolution be placed on the October 15 Committee of the Whole Agenda under Unfinished Business for additional discussion. The committee supports the resolution to limit school property tax increases to at or below the Act 1 Index. The resolution as presented is listed on tonight's agenda under consent along with the contracts presented for Board approval on October 19.

Personnel items not in green appearing on tonight's agenda were reviewed at the committee meeting and are supported by the committee. An executive session was held at the end of the meeting for the purpose of discussing personnel matters.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Ms. Bacallao gave a report on the September 21 committee meeting. The committee continued discussion on items to contribute to the borough's time capsule. Items secured to-date include a science club t-shirt, 2014 yearbook and a full collection of Pottstown Pride summer photos. The committee is accepting applications for the junior class student board representative and alternate. The selection process is anticipated to be completed in early November with induction taking place at the November 19th Board meeting. The color run has been postponed to some time in the spring.

STUDENT BOARD REPRESENTATIVE

No report.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE , PSBA REPRESENTATIVE, MONTGOMERY COUNTY INTERMEDIATE UNIT

No report.

BOROUGH LIAISON REPRESENTATIVE

No report.

CONSENT ITEMS

PERSONNEL

Mr. Rodriguez reviewed the personnel items as presented to be placed on the October 19, 2015 Board Agenda for approval.

PROFESSIONAL LEAVES

Mr. Rodriguez reviewed the professional leaves as presented to be placed on the October 19, 2015 Board Agenda for approval.

POLICIES

Mr. Rodriguez reviewed the policies as presented to be placed on the October 19, 2015 Board Agenda for approval.

CONTRACTS

Mrs. Adams reviewed the contracts as presented to be placed on the October 19, 2015 Board Agenda for approval.

RESOLUTION TO LIMIT SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

Mrs. Adams reviewed the resolution to limit school property tax increase to be placed on the October 19, 2015 Board Agenda for approval.

NON-CONSENT ITEMS

DEBT RESOLUTION

Mrs. Adams reviewed the motion to approve the incurrence of non-electoral debt through the issuance of Pottstown School District General Obligation Bond, Series of 2015 in aggregate principal amount of \$10,000,000 for the purpose of refunding General Obligation Bonds, Series A of 2010.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

LERTA RESOLUTION

Mr. Kefer spoke about the LERTA discussions held at the October 8th Joint Finance and Personnel. He invited Board Members to address their concerns regarding the motion to approve the proposed LERTA resolution as presented on the agenda.

Dr. Sparagana announced that Mr. Flanders and Mr. Bamford were invited to attend tonight's Committee of the Whole meeting to answer any questions.

Mr. Kalis reviewed details on the conception of the LERTA Resolution and reviewed by the Board in June with no formal action at that time. Questions arose concerning residential properties. The most recent discussions about the language are contained in the draft resolution presented tonight.

Mr. Hylton stated he had searched the internet on LERTA programs. He found there are various LERTA programs throughout municipalities and found other issues regarding the cost of processing the additional paperwork and property owners filing assessment appeals after being enrolled in the program. Mr. Hylton recommends tabling the motion until the borough can provide written documentation on the various LERTA programs throughout Pennsylvania.

Mrs. Weand agreed that more information is needed before taking action on the proposed resolution.

Mr. Flanders explained the application process as currently written in the borough ordinance. Applicants have up to 90 days after the issuance of a permit to apply for LERTA. The LERTA application is submitted to the school district and the county. The county assessment office determines the validity of the application. Tracking is then done through the tax office. Mr. Flanders stated the borough asked the solicitors to review the enactment of an ordinance that states "any property owner in the LERTA program who applies for a re-assessment will forfeit the LERTA incentive"

Mr. Bamford agreed there are a variety of LERTA programs throughout the state. He is not currently aware of a comprehensive study. Mr. Bamford provided a summary from the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission forum "Using Tax Incentives to Spur Development: What Can Locals Do?" Mr. Bamford stated that the Berks County Commissioners passed a resolution that approves any LERTA district upon approval at the municipality and/or school district level. This resolution simplifies the process for the municipalities and school districts. A synopsis of a newspaper article on the Berks County Commissioners approving LERTA tax abatements was also distributed to all Board Members.

Ms. Bacallao asked what the plans are to measure whether or not the plan is working, the level of interest and how many of the applications go through the entire process. She sees this as valuable information to promote future development. Ms. Bacallao suggested getting some stories from other counties on their successes. She sees this as beneficial information that could persuade Montgomery County Commissioners to pass a similar resolution as did the Berks County Commissioner.

Dr. Sparagana thanked everyone for their questions and sharing their ideas. It is appropriate to seek more information to help develop a much needed tool to attract significant renovations to business properties in the community.

Mr. Kefer thanked Mr. Bamford and Mr. Flanders for attending and sharing information. He agrees additional information and examples of other LERTA programs is a good thing . Mr. Kefer supports economical development and hopes LERTA is an opportunity to raise property values and bring more commercial business to Pottstown.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

INFORMATION

PEAK Update

Dr. Sparagana was pleased to report that today, he, along with Mrs. Reick and Mr. Williams made a presentation at the PSBA Conference on the impact of community partnerships, revitalization and PEAK. The presentation was well received by all who attended. York and Lancaster County school district officials expressed interest in the program.

FEDERATION REMARKS

Mrs. Vollmuth stated the Federation is continuing with the distribution of books from the First Book Plan. Books will be handed out at the Homecoming game and on the side lines at the Halloween Parade. The Federation is working with their membership to become politically active, pursuing meetings with representatives for the southeastern area. The Federation received a document from the state federation on the upcoming election of two judges that support educational issues. The Federation is glad to share this information with anyone interested. Mrs. Vollmuth invited the Board to attend the fall festivities taking place at the district buildings.

ROUND TABLE

Mr. Rodriguez - no comment

Mrs. Weand gave a brief update on Save the Lights donations and sales from yard signs and t-shirts. Funds raised to date are approximately \$77,000. She thanked the Drauschak Family for remembering the Save the Lights campaign in memory of Mark Drauschak.

Mrs. Francis – no comment.

Mr. Hylton – no comment.

Ms Bacallao looks forward to hearing about the student board representative's experiences while attending and participating in events at the PSBA Student Delegate Conference in Hershey.

Dr. Sparagana gave an update on the start of the Walking School Bus pilot. The program started on Wednesday, October 7, with 14 children participating. Daily reports are being sent out to Board Members. Enrollment appears to be increasing. Dr. Sparagana invited Board Members to attend the 30th Annual Alumni Honor Roll Induction taking place tomorrow in the auditorium at the high school.

Mr. Kefer announced the Board will meet in an executive session for the purpose of litigation. He thanked Board Members for the opportunity to participate in the meeting via tele-communications.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mr. Hylton and seconded by Mrs. Weand that the Board adjourns. All members present were in favor. None opposed. The meeting adjourned at 8:22 pm.



Linda S. Adams

Board Secretary