



**POTTSTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING  
May 18, 2017**

The Committee of the Whole meeting of the Board of School Directors of the Pottstown School District was held on Thursday, May 18, 2017 at 7:00 PM in the Cafeteria of the Pottstown High School with President, Mrs. Amy B. Francis presiding. Upon roll call, the following members were present: Mr. Kurt Heidel, Mr. Thomas Hylton, Mrs. Susan Lawrence, Mrs. Kimberly Stilwell, Mrs. Polly Weand, Mr. Emanuel Wilkerson and Mr. Ron Williams. Absent was Ms. Katina Bearden. Also present were Acting Superintendent, Mr. Stephen Rodriguez; Board Secretary, Mrs. Linda S. Adams; Director of Human Resources, Dr. Deena Cellini; Solicitor, Mr. Stephen Kalis; Student Board Representative, Ms. Courtney Parry and Mr. Kenil Patel; Mrs. Maureen Jampo, Mr. Joseph Schroeder, Mr. Steven Anspach, Mr. Jeff Delaney, Mr. Michael DiDonato, Mr. John Armato, members of the press, and interested citizens.

**Ms. Bearden entered the meeting at 7:06 pm.**

**PRESENTATIONS**

Girls on the Run - Mrs. Burkholder presented a video demonstrating the many activities and opportunities the program provides to the participants. The program focuses on building inner strengths, individually and as a team. Girls on the Run is a national program consisting of 65 teams and approximately 1,000 girls and runs from February to mid-May. Local community organizations help to support the program along with fundraisers that help cover any financial aid not covered by the program.

NAMM – Mr. Kelly, Zeswitz Music, presented the Best Communities in Music Education award to the district and music department. The award recognizes the district, teachers, students and parents that excel in music education. Accepting the award on behalf of the Pottstown School District were Mr. Stephen Rodriguez, Mrs. Amy Francis and Mr. Michael Vought.

Senator Mensch Acknowledgment - Mr. Rodriguez spoke about an Education Access Grant initiated and supported by Senator Mensch. The grant award included technology equipment needed for instruction, curriculum materials and financial support to complete the stadium lights replacement. He was pleased to announce that the grant has been awarded to Pottstown and the lights will be back.

Senator Mensch congratulated Mr. Rodriguez on his appointment as Superintendent. He thanked the Board for their service as directors on the school board. Senator Mensch was grateful to have the opportunity to be a part of helping the Pottstown School District and community.

Mrs. Weand expressed her gratitude to Senator Mensch and all the contributors who supported the Save the Lights campaign. She looks forward to the completion of the project.

Aaron Diamond, member of the Trojan Football Team, spoke on behalf of the team, thanked Senator Mensch along with Mr. and Mrs. Weand.

Mrs. Francis indicated she would call for a vote to accept the Education Grant and indicated that the Hearings of the Patrons should include any comments regarding the motion to accept the grant.

## **HEARINGS FROM PATRONS OF THE SCHOOLS** (general comments and grant acceptance)

Aram Ecker, 21 Winding Road, thanked Senator Mensch for his help to save the lights.

Kevin Ownes, 36 East Fifth Street, President of the Pottstown Schools Music Association asked the Board to support replacing the auxiliary field lights. He spoke about the summer and after-school night practices that are necessary to accommodate summer weather conditions and the volunteers who are needed to assist at the evening practices.

### **MOTION TO ACCEPT GRANT**

It was moved by Mrs. Weand and seconded by Mr. Williams that the Board acknowledge acceptance of the Educational Access Grant in the amount of \$250,000 of which \$100,000 is awarded in support of the stadium lights replacement project.

#### **Comments from the Board:**

Mr. Wilkerson thanked Mr. & Mrs. Weand for their leadership and commitment to the campaign. He looks forward to the lights being back up.

Mrs. Weand thanked everyone for their support and extended a special thank you to Mrs. Stilwell.

All members present voted aye. None opposed. Ayes: Nine. Nays: None. Motion carried.

The Board adjourned for a brief celebration at 7:37 pm to honor of the completion of the "Save the Lights" campaign.

The Board reconvened at 7:53 pm.

### **MINUTES**

Mrs. Adams reviewed the minutes of the Combined Committee of the Whole and Regular Board meeting held on April 24, 2017 to be placed on the May 22, 2017 Board Agenda for approval.

### **LIST OF BILLS**

Mrs. Adams presented the list of bills from the various funds for the period of April 2017 to be placed on the May 22, 2017 Board Agenda for approval.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Mrs. Adams presented the Treasurer's Report for April 2017 to be placed on the May 22, 2017 Board Agenda for approval.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **POLICY** - Mr. Wilkerson

The Policy Committee met on April 24<sup>th</sup>. The committee reviewed policies recommended to be placed on the May 22 Board agenda for approval. The committee was in favor of a workshop to discuss the dress code policy versus the uniform policy and a student senate policy. The workshop took place tonight prior to the May Policy Committee. A full committee report is attached to tonight's agenda.

#### **CURRICULUM / CO-CURRICULAR COMMITTEE** - Mrs. Lawrence

The Curriculum/Co-Curricular Committee meeting was held on May 4. Curriculum topics discussed

included options for a grading scale for social studies related to the new reading adoption; Co-Curricular topics were focused on the auxiliary field lights replacement project and options to support feeder programs. A full committee report is attached to tonight's agenda.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE - Ms. Bearden

The Community Relations Committee meeting was held on May 4. The committee discussed having community gardens at other elementary buildings. The Family Advisory Committee gave a presentation on their "Let's Talk Series" that were held at the elementary buildings. The scholarship acknowledgments from the board to the students are being worked on. The Father/Daughter dance has been set for the 2017-2018 school year. More information will follow. A full committee report is attached to tonight's agenda.

STUDENT BOARD REPRESENTATIVE – Ms. Parry and Mr. Patel

National Honor Society Banquet was held May 16<sup>th</sup> honoring 15 seniors. Other events taking place in May included the prom held on May 12, senior pictures and Keystone exams taking place this week. Student Board Representatives will be going to Harrisburg to participate in the advocacy initiative. MIS students will be attending "Education Day" at Six Flags. The new "Day Club" will be addressing controversial topics and two seniors have won medals in the PAC10 Track and Field events.

FACILITIES COMMITTEE – Mr. Heidel

The Facilities Committee meeting was held on May 11. The committee heard a report from Mr. Anspach on the value of the auxiliary field lights. The committee was in agreement to recommend the project to the Board for approval at the May 22 voting meeting. The stadium lights were also discussed. Tonight's acceptance of the Education Access Grant to support the Stadium Lights Replacement Project allows the the district to move forward with the project fully funded by the Save the Lights Campaign, Pottstown Health and Wellness Grant and the Education Access Grant. The next Facilities Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 7 due to Graduation on June 8. A full committee report is attached to tonight's agenda.

JOINT FINANCE/PERSONNEL COMMITTEE – Mrs. Stilwell

The Joint Finance/Personnel Committee meeting was held on May 11. Mrs. Adams provided copies of the 2017-2018 Proposed Budget. The proposed budget was presented in detail and discussed by the committee. The committee was in agreement to recommend the 2017-2018 Proposed Budget for Board approval. The P.A.I.D increased financial support was also included in the budget and is included in the Consent Items for Board approval. Contracts and other annual motions for Board approval were reviewed and can be found on tonight's agenda for Board approval on May 22. The next committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 7. The 2017-2018 Final Budget will be presented at this meeting. All Board Members are encouraged to attend. A full committee report is attached to tonight's agenda.

BOROUGH LIAISON REPRESENTATIVE - Mr. Heidel

Mr. Heidel gave a report on highlights from Borough's Committee of the Whole meeting. Various awards were presented to police officers and staff. A proposal was made to convert the old Pottstown Shirt factory into condominiums. Council discussed changes in the zoning ordinance regarding murals on property. The borough's solicitor gave a report of changing or removing the wards system.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE / MONTGOMERY COUNTY INTERMEDIATE UNIT / PSBA REPRESENTATIVE – Mr. Williams

Legislative information - Charter School Reform (HB97, Assessment Appeals (HB1213) and the proposed legislation for property tax decrease for property owners 65 or older are bills that will have significant impact on the school district revenues. Advocacy initiative - trip to Harrisburg is scheduled for Monday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>. Meeting with representatives to discuss various issues.

## **CONSENT AND NON-CONSENT ITEMS**

Dr. Cellini reviewed the following consent items as presented to be placed on the May 22, 2017 Board Agenda for approval:

### **PERSONNEL**

### **PROFESSIONAL LEAVES**

### **POLICIES**

Mrs. Adams reviewed the following consent and non-consent items as presented to be placed on the May 22, 2017 Board Agenda for approval:

### **CONSENT:**

**P.A.I.D. INCREASE FUNDING** – Mr. Hylton stated that he will make a motion at the Regular Voting meeting to table this. He would like to hear what the money goes to.

### **CONTRACTS**

### **DESIGNATION OF DEPOSITORIES**

### **STUDENT ACCIDENT INSURANCE**

### **NON-CONSENT:**

### **ELECTION OF BOARD TREASURER**

### **ELECTION OF BOARD SECRETARY**

### **HS EXTERIOR SECURITY AND AUXILIARY FIELD LIGHTING**

### **STADIUM LIGHTS REPLACEMENT PROJECT**

### **HOMESTEAD AND FARMSTEAD EXCLUSION RESOLUTION**

## **2017 – 2018 PROPOSED BUDGET**

Mrs. Adams reviewed the 2017-2018 Proposed Budget as presented at the May 11 Joint Finance and Personnel Committee meeting. The total proposed budget for the 2017-2018 school year is \$62,021,819 representing a 4.15% increase from the current year budget. The proposed budget includes a \$500,000 budgetary reserve/contingencies along with an additional \$749,824 from the general fund's PSERS reserve. Mrs. Adams stressed that this is a proposed budget and she does not anticipate the final budget to be as high. The proposed budget includes no increase in real estate millage and remains at 39.2522 mills. It is recommended that all other taxes remain unchanged for the 2017-2018 fiscal year. A copy of the 2017-2018 Proposed Budget is posted on the district website.

### **BOARD COMMENTS**

Mr. Hylton commented he understood that the proposed budgetary reserve remains at \$500,000. The only reserve being used to balance the proposed budget is the \$750,000 which is anticipated to decrease in the final budget. He noted that although it is good not to have a tax increase, he voiced his concern about the continuing declining tax base and continuing increase in expenditures versus the rate of inflation.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

None

## **INFORMATION**

Pottstown Pride: Winter 2016-2017

## **FEDERATION REMARKS**

Mr. DiDonato thanked Mr. and Mrs. Weand for leading the Save the Lights Campaign and Senator Mensch for his support in making this grant available to the district. He recognized the Girls on the Run program for its successes in promoting social and emotional learning support. The Pottstown teachers are preparing for the SEL program next year and are excited about the positive feedback they received as a result of the pilot program. Mr. DiDonato invited Board Members to attend the various year end activities and is looking forward to the Teacher of the Year awards on Monday.

## **ROUND TABLE**

Mr. Heidel supports the Auxiliary Field Lighting project and is in favor of feeder programs that would boost the PSD Athletic program.

Mrs. Weand thanked the administration for supporting the Save the Lights Campaign.

Mrs. Lawrence congratulated Mrs. Weand for her commitment to the Save the Lights Campaign.

Mr. Williams congratulated Mrs. Weand for a successful fundraising project.

Ms. Parry stated that Mrs. Weand's compassion inspired her at the first Board meeting she attended.

Mr. Patel thanked Senator Mensch and the Weand family. Their hard work is greatly appreciated.

Mrs. Stilwell was glad the lights are going up. She thanked Mr. Rodriguez for his advocacy and looks forward to continuing to seeking funds to support the district.

Mr. Hylton – no comment.

Ms. Bearden thanked everyone for their collaborative efforts to get the lights back.


Mr. Wilkerson thanked Mrs. Weand for her commitment. He congratulated Mr. Rodriguez and Mrs. Jampo on their new positions.

Mr. Rodriguez thanked everyone for their dedication to getting the lights back up. He will be participating in the advocacy trip to Harrisburg and the opportunity to address the concerns of the district. He reminded everyone about the May 30 Superintendent Forum "Why are my taxes so high and what can I do about it?".

Mrs. Francis was proud of the commitment to get things done. She thanked everyone for their dedication. She reminded the Board there will be an Executive Session at the close of the meeting for the purpose of litigation.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

It was moved by Mr. Wilkerson and seconded by Mr. Heidel that the Board adjourns. All members present were in favor. None opposed. The meeting adjourned at 8:19 pm.

  
Linda S. Adams  
Board Secretary