POTTSTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
May 5, 2011 - 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, May 5,, 2011 at 7:30 PM in the Auditorium of the Pottstown Middle School with President Richard C. Huss presiding. Upon roll call, the following members were present: Ms. Valerie Harris, Mr. Robert H. Hartman, Jr., Mr. Thomas J. Hylton, Mrs. Michele Pargeon, Mr. Dennis Wausnock, Mrs. Polly M. Weand, and Mrs. Julia Wilson. Absent was Mr. Nat White. Also present were Superintendent, Dr. Reed Lindley; Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Jeffrey Sparagana; Board Secretary, Mrs. Linda S. Adams; Solicitor, Mr. Stephen Kalis; Mr. John Armato, Ms. Terri Lampe, Mrs. Gail Cooper, Dr. Robert Stevens, a member of the press, and interested citizens.

AWARDS

Mrs. Gail Cooper and Dr. Robert Stevens introduced Mrs. Pettine who present the students and their writings. Each student approached the microphone and read their writing. The Board President presented each student with an award.

6th Grade - Xaiver Campbell	7th Grade - Imani Mims	8th Grade - Sara Pargeon
6th Grade - Hunter Taylor-Williams	7th Grade - Matthew Creasy	8th Grade - Nicolas Muriel
6th Grade - Heather Swanson		

PRESENTATION

Mrs. Adams shared a Power Point presentation on the 2011-2012 Tentative Budget. The total of the 2011-2012 Tentative Budget is $51,077,760. Mrs. Adams explained the financial summary indicating a decrease in state and federal revenue of $3million. To balance the Tentative Budget there is a need for additional revenues of $537,710. The Tentative Budget includes an increase in real estate millage of .6863 from 36.1240 to 36.8103, a 1.9% increase, as permitted by the Act 1 published index. The average residential property in Pottstown is assessed at $73,963; thus, an increase of .6863 mills in real estate taxes amounts to $50.76 per year or $4.23 per month to the average residential property owner. The Homestead Tax Relief approved applications total 4,377, which will realize, to the extent possible, a $369 reduction in real estate tax for 2011. The net effect on the average residential approved property owner will be a tax increase of $52.76 /year or $4.40/month. Mrs. Adams reviewed the 2011-2012 tentative budget reductions as indicated at the April 14, 2011 Regular Board meeting. She explained that the instructional programs are reductions and not eliminations of non-mandated programs.

SPECIAL REPORT

Dr. Sparagana reviewed the Customer Satisfaction Survey summary. He stated that 2,000 surveys were sent to the students homes and parents had the opportunity to respond on-line. The district received 260 responses; 65% of the responses were from the parents of the secondary level and 35% from the elementary level. The results of the survey determined, as a school community, the district is doing pretty well. Mr. John Armato highlighted questions from the survey. Dr.Sparagana spoke about the district's plan to distribute the survey during parent conferences in the fall in order to pursue a wide demographic of the population.

REPORTS

Mrs. Adams presented the minutes of the regular meeting held on April 14 2011 to be placed on the May 19, 2011 Board Agenda for approval.

HEARINGS FROM PATRONS OF THE SCHOOLS

An elementary student read a letter signed by students at Franklin Elementary asking the Board to keep the art, gym, library and music and the teachers.

Mrs. Eames, 880 N. Evans Street, supports her children who signed the petition and presented it to the School Board.

Mrs. Judyth Zahora, 806 N Franklin Street, questioned how this preliminary budget supports the Board's responsibility to educate the students of Pottstown. She spoke about how the arts have impacted her children and provided opportunities to succeed. Mrs. Zahora suggested the district close buildings, not opportunities for the students.

Mrs. Heather Zaborsky, 976 Park Drive, asked the Board to stop taking away from the students and start giving more.

Mrs. Lindi Vollmuth, 717 E High Street, presented 2 documents to the Board outlining fewer cuts to programs and ideas for reductions. She suggested that the district make cuts that do not affect students directly.

Mrs. Elisabeth Yoder, a staff member, distributed art information materials to the Board. She asked the Board to take time to look at the things that are being accomplished in the art program.

Mrs. Candi Haas-Simmons, 30 W. Fifth Street, expressed her disappointment with the lack of information and materials available to the public to speak out against the Governor's budget cuts. She spoke about the importance of the arts. As a taxpayer, she would like to see her money go to the classroom and students that support education.

Kristopher Horsey, 64 Beech St, (a high school student) spoke about the importance of maintain the arts at the elementary and secondary levels.

Matthew Corson, 544 Jefferson, (a high school student) would like to see the other students have the same opportunities and memories that the arts have given him.

James Rodgers III, 166 N. Evans, (a high school student), asked the Board not to take away their dreams.

Mr. James Rogers, 166 N. Evans, expressed his support for his son. He suggested the Board look at expenses that could be cut. He spoke about the importance of classroom assistances.

Chloe Francis, (a middle school student), asked the Board to try to find a way to keep band and arts in the schools.

Cera Emmlil (a middle school student) asked the Board to keep music.

Mrs. Amy Bathrust-Francis, 249 Chestnut Street, asked the Board to look at creative ways to resolve the budget cuts. She suggested they look at the largest salaries, look at buildings not programs and consider partnerships with private and public organizations.

Yuliza Cruz, 505 Spruce Street, (a middle school student), spoke about her goal to be an artist and the scholarships that help students go to college.

Rachael Levengood, (a middle school student), spoke about how the arts help students socially and physically.

Kyli McKee, 1326 South Street, (a middle school student), asked the Board to keep art, music and physical education. She spoke about how the arts help students express their feelings, share talents and encourages students to keep good grades. She asked the Board to look at other ways to make cuts.

Alivia Lopez, 383 N. Charlotte Street, (a middle school student), stated how important band is to the students. The arts provide college opportunities and can lead to great jobs. Cutting back the arts takes away the lower grade levels opportunities to succeed.

Mrs. Jayne Pollock, 103 Logan Street, spoke about the value of the arts. The programs have a positive influence on learning. She asked the Board to seriously consider if reducing these programs is the best course and to look for other ways to balance the budget.

Mrs. Valerie Yost, 813 Poplar Street, talked about cuts made four years ago. The students know the value of the programs. She asked the Board to find other things to cut.

Mrs. Jennifer Christman, 525 N. Evans Street, spoke about how band and music have enhanced her son. She asked the Board to find somewhere else to make cuts.

Sally House, Music Director, asked the Board if the same programs will be taught with 2 to 3 less staff. She does not see how that can be possible. The arts teach important qualities and offer the students a way to better themselves. She asked the Board not to give the students less as so many already have less.

Alesha James, 34 East Fourth Street, (a middle school student), stated that band teaches students to work for something; gym helps student to release energy and keep fit; music and art provide goals to achieve. She asked the Board to look for other ways to cut.

Mrs. Bridgette James, 34 East Fourth Street, expressed her disappointment in some Board Members who have not shown the courtesy to listen to the public comments. She supports the teachers and the influence they have on the students. She suggested the Board think outside the box.

Mr. Alvin James, 34 East Fourth Street, suggested most things change from the top. The proposed budget cuts appear to be starting from the bottom. He stated that there are people willing to donate to the Pottstown cause. He asked if the public really knows what the cause of the budget is.

Alaina James, (a middle school student), stated that band is not just extra-curricular. Students learn something new everyday. Students know they need to be well rounded to get into college.

A Pottstown student suggested the Board make cuts to field trips, summer school and free ipods.

Mrs. Jen Greene, 800 Franklin Street, stated that the arts offered at the Pottstown School District influenced their decision to move to Pottstown. She spoke about how art, music and band help students

express themselves and give them direction in life. The proposed budget cuts are impacting student progress. Mrs. Greene asked what cuts are being made in IT. She suggested the Board ask for donations and to look at other things to cut.

A band member read a statement written by a teacher who could not attend the meeting. The letter talked about how art builds students' self-esteem, provides opportunities for self-expression and the preservation of the arts in our schools.

A high school student spoke about his experience in band and the positive influence it has had for him. He asked the Board to look for ways to keep the programs for future grades.

A high school student talked about looking forward to his senior year. He asked the Board to find other ways to make cuts.

Mrs. Kelli Wolfel, 508 Fairveiw Street, spoke about the excellent education her children have received in the district. She expressed her support for the teachers. She asked the Board what affect the reductions will have on her children. She was disappointed that the public and teachers were not asked for their input during the budget preparation.

Mrs. Kathy Yeagle, 38 W. Fifth Street, stated that she heard the Coatsville School District is proposing a 4 day school week. She presented posters made by her students in a Head Start Program. She talked about the positive affect art has on the students. She asked the Board to work with the public and to do what is right for everyone.

A Pottstown resident, 141 Reynolds Ave., spoke about the responsibility of parents to provide more opportunities for their children than they had.

Mrs. Gayle Aquino, 1073 N. Washington Street, spoke about how the special need students benefit from art and music. Children learn through music. Art is very important to special education. Successful people experienced art in their childhood.

Nayeli Cruz, an elementary student, talked about how taking away the art will affect her future.

Mr. John Barber, a Pottstown resident, spoke about the negative effect of cuts in early childhood education. As a probation officer, he feels the cuts could lead to more juvenile placements. He asked the Board not to make the proposed cuts.

Mr. Huss thanked everyone for their comments and concerns. He stated that the budget presented tonight is a tentative budget and hopefully they can come up with other options.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Hartman suggested that the Committee Reports be omitted from tonight's agenda due to the time needed for the Hearings from Patrons of the Schools. All members agreed.

LIST OF BILLS

Mrs. Zahora presented the list of bills to be placed on the May 19, 2011 Board Agenda for approval.

CONSENT ITEMS

Personnel

Dr. Sparagana reviewed the personnel items as presented to be placed on the May 19 2011 Board Agenda for approval.

Professional Leaves

Dr.Sparagana reviewed the professional leaves as presented to be placed on the May 19, 2011 Board Agenda for approval.

Contracts

Mrs. Adams reviewed the contracts to be placed on the May 19, 2011 Board Agenda for approval.

Bid Awards

Mrs. Adams explained that the Bid Awards for Physical Education Supplies and the MCIU Bid Awards are being prepared in accordance with awarding to the lowest bidders meeting the required specifications and will be placed on the May 19, 2011 Board Agenda for approval.

NON-CONSENT

Mrs. Adams reviewed the Designation of Depositories required by School Code to approve the financial institutions as the

Mr. Huss asked the Board Members to consider a candidate to serve as the Board Treasurer for the term July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012 to be voted on at the May 19, 2011.

Mr. Kalis reviewed the motion to approve a special education agreement to be placed on the May 19, 2011 Board Agenda for approval.

Dr. Sparagana reviewed the textbook adoptions to be place on the May 19, 2011 Board Agenda for approval.

Mr. Kalis reviewed the motion to approve an agreement for the sale of 423 Chestnut Street as presented to be placed on the May 19, 2011 Board Agenda for approval. Mr. Kalis explained that school code requires a two-thirds vote for the sale of a property. Mr. Hylton asked if there was any discussion that the property be tax exempt. Mr. Kalis stated that the property is currently tax exempt and there was no discussion requesting the property be put back on the tax roll. Mr. Hartman stated that the Finance Committee looked at all options and it was determined that there was no financial gain to put the property back on the tax rolls.

Mrs. Adams reviewed the bid award and contract for the Recoat Foam Roofs at Edgewood Elementary and Franklin Elementary as presented for Board approval.

HEARINGS FROM PATRONS OF THE SCHOOLS (limited to the Non-Consent Bid Award and Contract)

None.

BID AWARD

The Superintendent recommends that the purchase order or contract be awarded to the lowest bidder meeting the required specifications as listed:

Recoat Foam Roof s – Edgewood Elementary and Franklin Elementary

It was moved by Mr. Wausnock and seconded by Mr. Hartman that the Board approve the Non-Consent Bid Award as presented and a copy be filed in the Secretary's office as addendum #2010-2011-075.

Upon roll call, all members present vote aye. Ayes: Eight. Nays: None. Absent: One. Motion carried.

CONTRACTS

The Superintendent recommends the Board approve the following contract:

J.J.D. Urethane Co. Inc.

It was moved by Mr. Hartman and seconded by Mrs. Weand that the Board approve the Non-Consent Contract as presented and a copy be filed in the Secretary's office as addendum #2010-2011-076.

Upon roll call, all members present voted aye. Ayes: Eight. Nays: None. Absent: One. Motion carried.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Policy 122: Interscholastic Athletics and Co-Curricular Activities for Pottstown High School and Pottstown Middle School, 2nd Reading (no action to be taken)

2. Policy 122.1: Co-Curricular Awards and Recognition for Co-Curricular Participation, 2nd Reading (no action to be taken)

3. Policy 707: Use of School Facilities, 2nd Reading (no action to be taken)

NEW BUSINESS

None.

INFORMATION

1. Third Marking Period Honor Roll Comparisons
2. Administrative Annex Potential Use
3. PCTV Spotlighting Pottstown School District
4. Customer Survey Summary
5. Technology Reports: Jan./Feb.
6. PSERS Election for a School Board Member
7. MCIU Board Member Ballots

FEDERATION REMARKS

Mrs. Yoder asked that the cuts not be made to the arts. She spoke about the importance of the arts and the impact of the arts to education. Mrs. Yoder asked what affect the cuts will have on what part of the program. She asked for a collaborative effort to fix the problem presented by the state legislators. Mrs. Yoder presented information to write to the state representatives.

ROUND TABLE

Mr. Hylton asked if the district received any complaints when the school district went from a 5 day cycle to a 6 day cycle and how that impacted the number of students per class and less planning time for the teachers. Dr. Sparagana reported that there were some concerns from the staff and stated that he would submit a report to the Board at the next meeting.

Mrs. Wilson expressed her appreciation of the excellent music program. She talked about the importance of praying as a community, to find a better way to resolve the budget problem. She is interested in hearing what the teachers can live without and not impact the students.

Ms. Harris echoed many of Mrs. Wilson sentiments. She looks forward to seeing what other options may be available with the least impact to the students.

Mrs. Weand stated that her top priority is to watch every penny spent by the Board. The residents and students are important. She expressed her disappointment in a recent newspaper article implying that the School Board does not know where the money goes. The Finance Committee has scrutinized the budget. A clear budget was presented and explained tonight.

Mr. Hartman thanked everyone for coming out tonight. He suggested that the state legislators respond best to the voices of the public through telecommunications and power point presentations recorded on DVDs. Mr. Hartman spoke about the opportunities for public input at Dr. Lindley's Superintendent Forums. He encouraged the public to attend the Task Force meetings. Mr. Hartman expressed the importance of this year's election and its impact on Pottstown.

Mrs. Pargeon spoke about the many benefits her family has experienced as active members of band and participation in the arts. The Board faces a difficult decision on keeping Kindergarten versus reduction in the arts.

Dr. Sparagana congratulated the Middle School students for their outstanding writings and the teachers for their level of instruction.

Dr. Lindley commended the students and staff who participated in the Science Expo for their great job. He expressed his appreciation to all the speakers for their thoughtful and intelligent manner in presenting their concerns. Dr. Lindley spoke about the process of developing the budget during teacher negotiations and was pleased to report that after the Fact Finders report the Federations is demonstrating a willingness to discuss cost savings with the Administration and School Board.

Mr. Wausnock – no report.

Mr. Huss congratulated Mrs. House on her retirement. He thanked everyone for voicing their concerns. Mr. Huss announced there would be a brief executive session for negotiations.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mr. Wausncock and seconded by Mr. Hartman that the Board adjourns. None opposed. The meeting adjourned at 11:10 pm.

Linda S. Adams

Linda S. Adams
Board Secretary