POTTSTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
January 6, 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, January 6, 2011 at 7:30 PM in the second floor LGI room of the Pottstown Middle School with President Richard C. Huss presiding. Upon roll call, the following members were present: Ms. Valerie Harris, Mr. Thomas J. Hylton, Mrs. Michele Pargeon, Mr. Dennis Wausnock, Mrs. Polly M. Weand, Mr. Nat White and Mrs. Julia Wilson. Absent was Mr. Robert Hartman, Jr. Also present were Superintendent, Dr. Reed Lindley; Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Jeffrey Sparagana; Substitute Board Secretary, Mrs. Penny O'Donnell; Solicitor, Mr. Stephen Kalis; Mr. John Armato, Ms. Terri Lampe, Ms. Pamela Bateson, Mrs. Danielle McCoy, Mr. Matthew Moyer, Mr. Scott Ware, Mrs. Loretta Hoch, Mrs. Gail Cooper, Mrs. Robert Giering, Mr. Stephen Rodriguez, a member of the press, and interested citizens.

MR. HARTMAN ARRIVED AT 7:32 PM.

AWARDS

Dr. Angela Tuck introduced Mrs. Ferguson, a Kindergarten Teacher at Edgewood and Ms. Pasquale, a Grade 4 Teacher at Edgewood Elementary.

Mrs. Ferguson and Ms. Pasquale introduced the Edgewood Elementary Writing Award winners. Each student read their award winning writings and was presented a medal by the Board President.

K-5 - Mackenzie Hall
1st Grade - Jon Engleman
2nd Grade - Aaliyah Gourzong
3rd Grade - Madison Friedman
4th Grade - Zachary Bright
5th Grade - Abigail Richter

Dr. Tuck and the students of Edgewood Elementary presented flowers to each Board Member in recognition of School Board Appreciation Month.

Dr. Lindley presented the 2009-2010 Keystone PSSA AYP Awards to the principals of each building.

COMMUNICATIIONS

Dr. Lindley advised the Board that the district is preparing a Community Survey to be distributed to all district parents. The purpose of the survey is to evaluate communications between the school district and parents. He asked that the Board Members return the recent Community Schools survey handed out at the last Board meeting.

Dr. Lindley spoke about a correspondence he received regarding Pottstown teachers touring the Limerick Generating Plant during an In-Service day. He reviewed his response and quotes from the teachers supporting the tour and its benefits to education. Dr. Lindley stressed the importance of connecting textbook information to community and real life applications.

Dr. Lindley thanked Dr. Tuck and the students of Edgewood for the flowers presented to the Board Members. He introduced Mr. Moyer to speak about School Board Appreciation Month. Mr. Moyer thanked the Board for all their hard work, commitment and dedication to the education of the students and to the community. He spoke about the impact the School Board had on his life while growing up in Pottstown. Mr. Moyer emphasized the importance of the decisions made by the School Board and how their actions demonstrate the value of voluntary public service.

PRESENTATIONS

None.

THE BOARD ADJOURNED FOR AN EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF PERSONNEL AND PROFESSIONAL AGREEMENT AT 8:06 PM.

THE BOARD RECONVENED AT 8:38 P.M.

REPORTS

Mrs. O'Donnell presented the minutes of the regular meeting held on December 16, 2010 to be placed on the January 20, 2011 Board Agenda for approval.

HEARINGS FROM PATRONS OF THE SCHOOLS

Mrs. Zahora stated she was pleased to attend the DECA competition. Approximately 16 students placed in the State competition. Mrs. Zahora asked for an update on the teachers contract. Mr. Huss responded that an update will be provided later in tonight's meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee

Mr. Wausnock stated the committee did not meet last month. The next meeting Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for January 13th.

Facilities Committee

Mr. Hartman stated the Facilities Committee meeting scheduled for Monday, January 10th is cancelled. He reported the committee is working on organizing to review the Energy RFQs submitted in November. Dr. Lindley asked Mr. Hartman to meet with him to discuss the committee's recommendation regarding the Community Garden project.

PSBA Representative

Mrs. Pargeon presented a U-Tube video on the importance of integrating technology into the curriculum program. She shared her perspective on the value of allowing students to utilize the technology that is available.

Montgomery County Legislative Representative

Mrs. Pargeon spoke about a recent article featured in the newspaper regarding the Pennsylvania Information Management System. She referenced Senator Piccola's objections to the security of the system and his opposition to state funding of the data submitted by the post secondary and higher education facilities. Mrs. Pargeon talked about the importance of this data to the Pottstown School District. She stated she will write a letter stating a different point of view.

Montgomery County Intermediate Unit Representative

Mr. Hartman reported there was no meeting in December. The next MCIU meeting is scheduled at the end of January.

Community Relations Committee

Mrs. Pargeon reviewed various events taking place in the school district and topics featured in the Berks-Mont Community Connection.

Dr. Lindley stated that he will add to the parent survey a question regarding what technology access parents have available in the home.

Mrs. Pargeon asked Mrs. McCoy to speak on behalf of the upcoming Career & Technology Open House scheduled for January 26th. Mrs. McCoy presented open house invitations to the Board Members. She reviewed the itinerary for the event.

Co-Curricular Activities Committee

Mr. Hartman stated the committee did not meet in December. He provided an update regarding a Middle School Girls Softball Team. Mr. Hartman stated that the Co-Curricular Activities Committee recommends the formation of a Middle School Girls Softball Club. A meeting is being scheduled to meet with Mr. Bathurst to review the details of forming a club.

Technology/Curriculum Committee

Mrs. Wilson reported the Technology/Curriculum Committee discussed a Keyboarding Pilot Program for elementary students to take place at Franklin Elementary, Internet Safety guidelines, and an Elementary Jazz Band Proposal for fifth graders. The committee members were given updates on the Treasure's Reading Program and the progress of the Social Studies Curriculum adoption. Mrs. Wilson stated that Mrs. Wolfe presented a Technology budget report.

Policy Committee

Mrs. Pargeon reported the committee did not meet in December. She stated that the January meeting is cancelled and that the committee is looking forward to finalizing the Co-Curricular Policies 122 and 122.1 at the February meeting.

Personnel Committee

Mrs. Weand asked Ms. Harris to provide a report from the last committee meeting. Ms. Harris reported on the topics that were discussed at the December 14th meeting:

- The committee reviewed the hiring process for employees in the district, including the costs of utilizing various advertising methods to post for teacher substitutes.
- Dr. Sparagana provided an update on the recruiting efforts of the district. His report included information regarding recent interviews with prospective student teachers from Lincoln University, a schedule for student teachers to visit and shadow teach part of a class and a list of upcoming job fairs that the district will participate in.
- The committee agreed the current structure for reimbursement for Missed Planning Time is the most cost effective for the district.

Mrs. Weand announced the cancellation of the January Personnel Committee meeting. She asked the committee members and the Board to think about the goals they would like to set for the Personnel Committee for this New Year.

Mr. Kalis provided an update on the status of the teachers' contract. He reported that representatives from the Federation of Teachers and the School District have been meeting for approximately14 months and despite everyone's best efforts an agreement has not yet been achieved. A request for Fact Finding has been submitted by the Federation. A Fact Finder was appointed by the Department of Labor and a Fact Finding hearing is scheduled for January18th. Mr. Kalis explained the Fact Finding process under Act 88. The Fact Finder will be required to submit his written findings and recommendations to both parties before January 31st. Each party is required to take the findings to his group for a vote. Both parties have the opportunity to vote and negotiate a settlement two times before the findings and recommendations would be made public. Mr. Kalis concluded that negotiations are on-going and is hopeful that the issues will be resolved. He advised the Board that during the upcoming week the administration will focus on preparing for the Fact Finding hearing. He will provide an update of the Fact Finding hearing at the January 20th Regular Board Meeting.

Mr. Huss asked Mr. Kalis what is the cost to the taxpayer for the Fact Finding process. Mr. Kalis stated that each party is responsible for its own costs for preparation. The Fact Finder fee is split: 25% is paid by the school district, 25% by the Federation and 50% by the state. Mr. Huss stated the total cost to taxpayers would be 75%.

Ms. Harris asked if the Fact Finder fee is in the budget. Mr. Kalis stated that the Fact Finder fee is undetermined at this time. He confirmed that the school district is responsible for 25% of the fee.

Mr. Huss reminded the Board that there are legal fees in addition to the Fact Finder Fee.

LIST OF BILLS

Mrs. Zahora presented the list of bills to be placed on the January 20, 2011 Board Agenda for approval.

CONSENT ITEMS

Personnel

Dr. Lindley reviewed the personnel items as presented to be placed on the January 20, 2011 Board Agenda for approval.

Professional Leaves

Dr. Lindley reviewed the professional leaves as presented to be placed on the January 20, 2011 Board Agenda for approval.

Field Trips

Dr. Lindley reviewed the field trips as presented to be placed on the January 20, 2011 Board Agenda for approval.

Contracts

Mrs. O'Donnell reviewed the contracts as presented to be placed on the January 20, 2011 Board Agenda for approval.

Real Estate Tax Exoneration

Mrs. O'Donnell reviewed the Real Estate Tax Exoneration Resolution to be placed on January 20, 2011 Board Agenda for approval. She stated that the Tax Office is in the process of completing the 2010 liened tax information and is expected to have the results prior to the January 20th Board meeting.

NON-CONSENT

Termination of Employee

Mr. Kalis explained the motion to approve a Resolution under Section 5-514 of the School Code accepting the charges charges of the Administration against a non-professional employee and appoint Bruce Goldenberg, Esquire to serve as the hearing officer for any hearing that might be requested by the employee.

Hearings from Patrons of the Schools (limited to the motion to approve a resolution for termination of an employee.)

None.

It was moved by Mrs. Pargeon and seconded by Mrs. Weand that the Board approve the resolution accepting the charges of the Administration against a non-professional employee and appoint Bruce Goldenberg, Esquire to serve as the hearing officer for any hearing that might be requested by the employee and a copy be filed in the Secretary's office as addendum 2010-2011-046.

Upon roll call, all members present vote aye. Ayes: nine, Nays: none. Motion carried.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Policy 122: Interscholastic Athletics and Co-Curricular Activities for Pottstown High School and Pottstown Middle School
2. Policy 122.1: Co-Curricular Awards and Recognition for Co-Curricular Participation

Dr. Lindley reported that progress is being made to resolve these policies.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

INFORMATION

1. Parent Conference Summary
2. Monthly Meeting Notice: January revisions
3. Middle School Girls Softball

FEDERATION REMARKS

Mr. Decker expressed his thanks to the School Board for the time they devote to the district and their participation in student activities and events.

ROUND TABLE

Mrs. Pargeon extended her appreciation to all the Board Members for the time they spend serving on the School Board. She is looking forward to running for another term. Mrs. Pargeon enjoyed listening to the students writings.

Mr. Hartman congratulated the students, staff and principals for all their efforts in making AYP. He was pleased to see that technology is moving forward in the district. Mr. Hartman thanked Dr. Lindley for his update on the visit to the Limerick Power Plant.

Mrs. Weand congratulated all the schools for making AYP. She expressed her appreciation to the teachers and principals for all their hard work.

Mr. White appreciated the writing awards and he congratulated the schools that made AYP. He reminded the Board Members that they elected Dr. Lindley as the administrator for the district and the Board should refrain from interfering in the day to day operations.

Mr. Hylton – no comment.

Mrs. Wilson expressed her thanks to the Edgewood students for a wonderful job. She congratulated the Schools for making AYP. Mrs. Wilson thanked Mr. Moyer for his comments to the Board.

Ms. Harris thanked Dr. Tuck and staff for their hard work. She congratulated all the schools that have made AYP. Ms. Harris thanked Mr. Decker and Mr. Moyer for their kind comments. She thanked Dr. Lindley for sharing the citizen's letter regarding the Limerick Generating Tour and for his remarks. She enjoyed the district's Christmas concerts.

Dr. Lindley stated that he received letters of apology from the students who pulled the fire alarm at the concert. He spoke on internet safety guidelines. He addressed the opportunities to develop social networking groups and the restrictions that are encountered due to the district's security filters. Dr. Lindley suggested that the Technology/Curriculum Committee begin to evaluate the need to make changes to the current safety guidelines.

Mr. Huss thanked everyone for expressing their support and appreciation to the Board. The students are the reason for serving on the Board. He thanked the community and the teachers for giving their time and money to support the students. Mr. Huss expressed his wish to move forward with negotiations and to come to an agreement that will be in the best interest of the students and taxpayers.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mr. Wausnock and seconded by Mr. Hartman that the Board adjourns. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:37 pm.

Penny O'Donnell

Penny O'Donnell
Substitute Board Secretary