

**SCHOOL DISTRICT OF BOROUGH OF MORRISVILLE**  
**Morrisville, Pennsylvania**

A special meeting of the Morrisville Board of School Directors was held in the Large Group Instruction room located in the Morrisville Middle/Senior High School, 550 West Palmer Street, Morrisville, Pennsylvania on Thursday, June 19, 2008, after due notice of the meeting had been given as required by law. Mr. William Hellmann, President, called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm with the following members present on roll call:

**SCHOOL DISTRICT OF BOROUGH OF MORRISVILLE**  
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A special meeting of the Morrisville Board of School Directors was held in the Large Group Instruction room located in the Morrisville Middle/Senior High School, 550 West Palmer Street, Morrisville, Pennsylvania on Wednesday, May 21, 2008, after due notice of the meeting had been given as required by law. Mr. William Hellmann, President, called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm with the following members present on roll call:

Mr. Kemp; Mr. Hellmann; Mr. Farrell; Mrs. Reithmeyer; Mr. Radosti, Mrs. Worob and Mrs. Mihok. Mrs. Heater was not in attendance.

*Quorum Present.*

Also attending this evening's meeting Michael Fitzpatrick, Esq., Solicitor.

**PUBLIC SESSION**

**Kathy Panzitta**, 401 Hillcrest Ave.

This is Mrs. Panzitta's personal opinion. Her thought is that holding interviews the same night as the appointment does not permit public comment to serve its purpose.

Where is the current working budget available? Does it include any proposed cuts that were made in any budget work sessions or meetings with board members? ***Mrs. Reithmeyer's response was inaudible. Mrs. Worob stated that tonight's meeting is specific to the appointment of a board member; Mr. Hellmann confirmed this and added that the budget is on the website. He will discuss this with the Business Administrator tomorrow.***

**Mrs. Mihok** thanked the individuals whom applied for the board vacancy. Candidates will be interviewed in alphabetical order for a 15 minute period. Mrs. Mihok requested that the other candidates have a seat outside the board room.

**Mr. Fitzpatrick** advised that this is a public meeting and it would be up to the individual if they choose to leave the room.

**Mrs. Mihok** asked if it would be fair to ask different questions of the candidates.

**Mr. Fitzpatrick** stated the board could ask any questions they wanted.

**Interview Candidates for Vacant Seat on Board of School Directors**

*In-depth interviews during this meeting may be viewed on the cable educational channel.*

Candidates Interviewed for the vacant seat:

**Jack Buckman** is a long time resident of Morrisville and has education two children in this system. He outlined his prior experiences and accomplishments as they relate to serving on the board.

My concern is the money and getting the best education for the money that can be achieved. He is willing to serve on any committee assigned by the board president.

His background affords him knowledge and experience with the SAT program with both regular education and special needs requirements.

The role of a school director is to oversee the management of the finances and assure the best education possible with those resources.

My background in education is serving as a prior 4 years as a school board member and my 8-11 years experience with ETS. It was my choice not to run for a second term.

Mr. Buckman would like to see an enumerator hired to investigate the 19067 state subsidy issue.

Mr. Buckman outlined his facts related to the homestead rebate.

**John Cenaviva** likes this community and would like to see it prosper. He would like to see more business thrive in Morrisville. He is a six year resident and has no children in the system.

Educators are not fond of NCLB not only because it forces teaching to the test but also because it forces non-funded mandated results. Some funds come federal and state but it is not enough. Morrisville is not alone in this struggle.

Mr. Cenaviva is a math teacher, at a private school in Yardley.

There is a need to get emphasize the basics; to get students to read, write and balance a checkbook by adding and subtracting. They need to know something about their government and realize that learning is something they should do for the rest of their lives. Try to instill a love of learning in our students.

The role of the school director is the pivot point between the school and the school board. It is not a popular position. The administrators look to the board for help and the board expects them to do it for less money.

Mr. Cenaviva spoke at a recent school board meeting. Even though he used drama to get his point across what he wanted to bring attention to is that in a budget you can not slim it in areas where there is need. He is concerned that under funding special education would be a major problem.

Considering our limited resources and the physical condition of the schools, as a school board member I would take a look at the work that has been done already. Go through a bidding process, see what needs to be done and make an assessment based on this.

**Victor Cicero** is a 32 resident. His daughter attended MHS. I have been in public service most of my adult life. I would like to bring that experience to the board, including oversight of financial programs. I retired from public service and have been performing substitute teacher services in this district. I'm not an expert in education but I do have a vision. Education as we know it today is going to take some giant steps in the near future. Part of the school board's role is to be prepared for that. I'd like to be part of that process. I'd like to add my expertise to the districts current problems.

In many respects the state has abandoned their financial responsibilities. We need to hold them responsible. They have turned much of their job over to PDE. Only elected officials should make those decisions. PDE has too much authority in terms of financial distribution.

The role of the school board is to provide the best education you can with the resources you have. We have an absolute duty to provide an education. We want these kids to be productive in our society. They

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oversee the district policies and hire the upper echelon to do their job. We are not financial managers we hire the right people to manage our money. We should depoliticize; it has no place as a school director. It should be strictly to get things rolling, and develop funds to provide quality education.

If appointed, I would resign as substitute teacher. It would be an honor to serve as a school board director.

Since most of the kids in school now are removed from my time of service as police chief, this would not be a problem.

**Kevin Leather** currently works as a project manager for direct voice response systems used in political trails. It requires me to provide a product within my own budget. I work with rules and regulations within many entities and I must ensure they are followed. We define our projects and work toward a common goal.

Lowering taxes is a clear goal in the district and I want my taxes lowered. This needs to come from Harrisburg. Recent studies found that 471 out of 501 school districts are under funded. State contributions have dropped from 75% to 36%. That means we are responsible for the entire burden. This board should coordinate with other boards in the region and present a united front to the legislators demanding the state take back its fair share of our burden. I believe this school system can be turned around without sending the high schoolers away. I am proud of this district and the education that my two children have received. We need to explore new avenues of revenue. This also means encouraging investment in the future of the Borough. We need to explore cost savings. You're doing the right thing by bringing down some of our costs. You need to be working together to bring everybody on the same page. Sometimes the taxpayers and the parents don't have the same expectations. I propose to bring everyone together.

The purpose of public education is to create the citizen of the future. We need to make learning available and fun and provide for the different needs of the individual students.

The role of a director is to oversee not to manage. They are here to make sure the managers are doing their job.

In answer to the question how would you modify costs, Mr. Leather stated he didn't know because he does not have the information that the board has access to but he'd be willing to take a look.

I can make a difference. My children have benefited from this education and I want other children to benefit. I want to be a part of that.

### **Damon Miller**

Mr. Miller read his application letter for this position. Included in this information were his qualifications for the position. Attending school board committee and business meetings affords him knowledge of the difficult decisions needing to be addressed by the board and taxpayers. He has attended many sports and arts programs and volunteered his time and been involved in fundraising. I have also worked as a per diem substitute. These experiences have allowed insight into the district. Volunteering on the steering committee for student achievement planning allowed me to be part of the vision for the district in the next 5 years. Although this vision may not be shared by all I believe we can reach a compromise for the district.

My work experience involves management and living within constraints of a budget. With this experience a greater scrutiny can be achieved with future budgets of the district. Having an additional person on the school board with this experience can be valuable throughout the school year tracking budget expenditures and no unreasonable increases pass on to future budgets. My experience in the media industry would help to build a better reputation for Morrisville.

I believe I have the experience required for a board member. I am able to offer insight by my involvement with the district and my employment experience but also as a parent who is involved daily in my children's academic progress. The Morrisville SD is facing many issues ranging from taxes, test scores,

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facility issues, parental involvement and reputation. These issues create an uphill struggle to agreement and resolution I certainly feel that Morrisville can turn out to be the little district that could.

The time to act on the funding issue is now. It certainly adds strength to the fight if other districts are brought into it. Having been involved with the district for a while, I feel that our administration is turning around our test scores. They have improved. Our third grade scores were the top in the county. It's a matter of attrition. We need to keep working with the students to improve the results.

The definition of public education is to provide a free education versus a private education to every child of school age. A student should be afforded every opportunity to learn and round out to be a productive member of the community that will hopefully pay back to the community.

The role of a school director is to act as a liaison between the administration and the taxpayers. They need to represent everyone as well as the students. Their primary focus is to maintain a high level of education maintaining that the students are being provided for.

Currently we have a grant funding our preK program. If the grant ceases I would want the board to investigate thoroughly the possibility of continuing the program within the boundaries of the budget.

Mr. Miller is a videographer and MSD has been a past client of his. As a school board director I would forego that endeavor.

There were two more candidates for this vacancy -- Greta O'Keefe who is on vacation and Ann Perry who had to withdraw.

Several members of the board met prior to this evening's meeting.

Mrs. Reithmeyer asked why several of the candidates presented their resumes to Mr. Hellmann and did not send them to the school as advertised. Mr. Fitzpatrick informed the board that anyone could fill the vacancy including those that were interviewed tonight or anyone that is nominated from the floor if voted by a majority. The legal advertisement was done to solicit candidates for the school board. Mrs. Reithmeyer stated this is a bad precedent that we re setting and I request that in the future if a deadline is on an advertisement it be adhered to.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **1. Election/Appointment Board Member**

#### **1.1. Nomination of Candidate(s) for Board Vacancy**

The President of the Board of School Directors solicits nominations of candidate(s) for vacant seat on the Board of School Directors.

Mrs. Worob nominated Jack Buckman; seconded by Mrs. Mihok

Mr. Kemp nominated Damon Miller; seconded by Mrs. Reithmeyer

#### **1.2. Motion to Close Nominations**

The Board approved a motion to close nominations.

Motion to close nominations by Mr. Hellmann; seconded by Mr. Radosti

Passed by a roll call vote of 7 ayes.

#### **1.3. Motion to Appoint/Elect Member to the Board of School Directors**

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The Board approved a motion to appoint/elect John “Jack” Buckman to an unexpired term on the Board of School Directors, effective June 19, 2008 until first Monday in December 2009.

Mrs. Worob motioned to appoint Mr. Buckman to an unexpired term on the Board of School Directors, effective June 19, 200 until first Monday in December 2008; seconded by Mr. Hellman. Passed by a roll call vote of 5 ayes; 2 nays. Members voting nay were Mr. Kemp and Mrs. Reithmeyer.

*Mr. Hellmann thanked all the qualified candidates for their interest in filling this vacancy.*

1.4. Adjournment

A **MOTION** is in order to adjourn this meeting.

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William R. Hellmann, President

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Marlys Mihok

Transcribed by Jeanne Corrigan