

Minutes of the Board of School Directors
Special Meeting May 21, 2008

These minutes have been corrected to include information requested and approved at the June 25, 2008 meeting.

**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 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 (arrived a few minutes late); Mr. Radosti, Mrs. Worob and Mrs. Mihok. Mrs. Heater and Mrs. Reithmeyer were not in attendance.

Quorum Present.

Also attending this evening's meeting was Dr. Elizabeth Hammond Yonson, Superintendent; Mrs. Reba Dunford, Business Administrator; Mrs. Melanie Gehrens, Secondary Principal; Mrs. Karen Huggins; Elementary Principal; Mrs. Kimberly Myers, Supervisor of Pupil Personnel Services/School Psychologist; and Michael Fitzpatrick, Esq., Solicitor (Mr. Fitzpatrick did not stay for the business meeting).

PUBLIC SESSION

Mr. Hellmann called an executive session to discuss a conduct and discipline issue.

Ann Perry, 43 Fairview Ave.

Mrs. Perry has concerns about the budget; namely, special education including charter schools and alternative schools. Two meetings ago you asked for the names of our special needs children. Mr. Hellmann, what will you do with that information? What do you plan to do with that detailed information?

Johanny Manning, 449 Stockham

You are not planning on replacing Mrs. Huggins which will be taxing on Ms. Taylor. Is someone else going to be taking care of curriculum? You are also cutting the gifted program in the high school. Does that mean they are no longer being serviced? ***Dr. Yonson advised Mrs. Matika is not a secondary teacher and can not teach 9th grade.*** Mr. Fox is not going to be replaced; how are we going to teach science? Cutting the grant writer – everyone was concerned about our 501 status what good is it if we do not have anyone trying to get money into it? Special Ed – what happens when we need the money that is being cut?

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For the folks in town that did not vote, you are just as guilty that we have a school board like this. For those that voted because you thought they might be okay – let me introduce you to your new school board president. “I personally consider him the anti-Christ, but that’s another story.” For those that voted because of the almighty dollar, kiss that money away because our property values continue to drop between folks like this and the decisions our borough council makes.

Gayle Haug, 260 Harper

I don’t understand why you are cutting a grant writer. At the same time, you want to increase the tax collector who has, on a few occasions, messed up my taxes and others in town. Since the charter schools get paid no matter what, why would you cut it in the budget? I don’t think it is proper to bring some of the alternative students back into the school when they are there for a reason; it can certainly be a safety issue. Cutting mandated special ed costs will cause higher taxes next year and a fine by the state auditors if we go over the budget. Our school and administration will be blamed when it is not their decision; it is your decision. Once again you prove that you don’t care about the education in this town.

Peter Eisengrein, West Hendrickson

I’d like to remind you that you are a school board not a taxpayer’s advocacy. As such you are charged with running the business of the school. As in any business budget cuts can be necessary; I understand that. If you can find places to cut that do not affect the education of our children I will be in favor of it.

Cuts in the budget I am concerned with are: 36% English supplies; 100% technology supplies; 76% math; 37% autism; 69% contract special ed secondary and the removal of the budget reserve. As you know, nothing can be spent out of it unless it is board approved. On paper it looks good but you need this buffer.

You can’t bring back students from alternative schools that could be harmful to our students. If you can find cuts that don’t impact education that would be great. But please don’t cut the education.

Melissa Petro, 515 Hamilton Blvd.

I’d like to congratulate the teachers and coaches for the great things that have been going on in this high school. The PSSA scores are not the only measure of a school.

Greta O’Keefe, 195 W. Maple

You are not replacing an elementary principal at Reiter. Is school consolidation in the works? Why the severe cuts in special education? These are state mandated. Where will the money come from if the money runs over? Elimination of the grant writer eliminates increased revenue – something you promised in your campaign. Why was general property liability removed from the budget? Why are we spending less in maintenance on buildings? Are we consolidating our schools?

RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENTS

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Members of the Board of School Directors will take this opportunity to respond to comments recently brought to the attention of the School Board.

Mr. Farrell

I agree with the philosophy that all schools should have the same curriculum. The representative from PDE that attended the last board meeting said that a GCA cost \$5,000,000; one is funded by a grant. I questioned the exit tests in Texas and Massachusetts. She said it wasn't that bad in Massachusetts. I think that NCLB is destined to fail. Texas graduates 33% of their kids. I am for a uniformed curriculum. Students going to college requiring remedial reading and math are a problem. I'm for education, but I don't have the answer. Morrisville is a town that is struggling. We all know that. This is a small town with a limited tax base.

Mr. Kemp

Mr. Farrell, you're for education but you are supporting these budget cuts. Mr. Hellmann, to not respond to these parents and these citizens is disrespectful especially since these are your cuts. To make these cuts and not explain how these kids will be educated at the same level they were last year is really rude. These budget cuts will be taking away from the kids that need it most. The idea is to lift the kids up. Cutting alternative schools, and bringing these kids back, makes the schools less safe. I also would like to know what the plan is, what is going to happen to our schools in the future.

Marlys Mihok

We do not plan to eliminate the grant writer but rather put it on a commission basis. There is no increase to the tax collector. We have an 8% fund balance left (1.7 million dollars) which is the highest allowed by the state.

Mrs. Worob

I would like to see additional measurement means besides the PSSA for student progress. We could discuss how to do that at a future meeting.

There is a meeting on May 27 at 7:30 to talk about what we are going to do with the buildings.

The Solicitor was here specifically to attend an executive session. He attends business meetings but not agenda meetings.

Earl Stalker, employee benefits

Mr. Stalker provided the board with printed materials on their offerings. Additionally, he explained the process of securing a health care provider. Specifically, at this time we are dealing with Blue Cross.

Reba Dunford, Business Administrator

Mrs. Dunford presented a powerpoint explanation of the proposed revised budget. This information is available to the public and will be posted on the website.

Dr. Yonson distributed another copy of our current special education students' needs breakdown to the board. She advised the Board that the special education costs reflect students currently in the district. Additional students that may move into the school have not been factored into the budget. These costs are related directly to current student IEP requirements.

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Mrs. Dunford suggested that taxes not be decreased this year. This would allow for a lesser tax increase next year. Dr. Yonson agrees with this suggestion. These are difficult times. Oil increases are expected to be \$100,000 more.

Mr. Hellmann wanted to table the motions for this evening. Dr. Yonson explained that this is a proposed preliminary budget and must be voted on to meet the time requirements.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Approval, 2008-2009 Proposed Final General Fund Budget for Programs and Services

The Board approved a motion to approve the proposed final general fund budget for programs and services for the School District of Borough of Morrisville for the 2008-2009 school year in the amount of \$19,673,414.

Moved by Mr. Farrell; seconded by Mr. Kemp; passed by a unanimous roll call vote of 6 ayes.

Mr. Kemp stated he is not happy with this but we need to move the process forward.

With regard to charter schools, Mrs. Worob stated parents have the right to send the students. We still have time to make changes since we were just given this information.

Dr. Yonson advised that the only thing that is different are the changes we were just handed yesterday and the \$100,000 that we were told about today.

Mr. Hellmann again suggested tabling the motion.

2. Approval, 2008-2009 Proposed Final Capital Reserve Budget

The Board approved a motion to approve the proposed final capital reserve fund budget for the School District of Borough of Morrisville for the 2008-2009 school year in the amount of \$1,000,000.

Moved by Mr. Hellmann; seconded by Mr. Radosti; passed by a unanimous roll call vote of 6 ayes.

3. Approval, 2008-2009 Proposed Final Capital Projects Budget

The Board approved a motion to approve the proposed final capital projects budget for the School District of Borough of Morrisville for the 2008-2009 school year in the amount of \$2,200,000.

Moved by Mr. Hellmann; seconded by Mrs. Worob; passed by a unanimous roll call vote of 6 ayes.

4. Approval, 2008-2009 Proposed Final Cafeteria Fund Budget

The Board approved a motion to approve the proposed final cafeteria fund budget for the School District of Borough of Morrisville for the 2008-2009 school year in the amount of \$419,336.

Moved by Mr. Hellmann; seconded by Mr. Radosti; passed by a unanimous roll call vote of 6 ayes.

5. Approval, 2008-2009 Proposed Final Athletic Fund Budget

The Board approved a motion to approve the proposed final athletic fund budget for the School District of Borough of Morrisville for the 2008-2009 school year in the amount of \$20,000.

Moved by Mr. Hellmann; seconded by Mrs. Worob; passed by a unanimous roll call vote of 6 ayes.

Mr. Hellmann stated he wants everyone to realize that the projection for next year will be horrendous. We are talking about a 45 mill increase next year.

Dr. Yonson stated that both our boys and girls baseball teams are BAL champions. We are very proud of them. Boys are playing at 4:00 pm at Williamson Park tomorrow.

6. Adjournment

By a voice vote the Board approved a motion to adjourn this meeting around 8:00 pm.

William R. Hellmann, President

Marlys Mihok