

**MUHLENBERG SCHOOL BOARD**  
**Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes – January 6, 2010**  
**Muhlenberg High School First Floor Lecture Hall**

**Call to Order**

The Committee of the Whole Meeting of the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District was called to order on Wednesday, January 6, 2010 at 7:03 p.m. by Board President, Mr. Donald B. Raifsnider, Jr. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**Members Present**

President – Donald B. Raifsnider, Jr.  
Secretary – K. Scott Long  
Treasurer – Richard E. Hoffmaster  
Member – John A. DelCollo  
Member – Cindy L. Mengle  
Member – Barbara A. Nagle  
Member – Lee R. Reiniger  
Member – Otto W. Voit, III  
Solicitor – James M. Lillis, Esq.  
Recording Secretary – Brenda A. Stein

**Members Absent**

Vice President – Terry L. Heckman (work commitment)

**Administration Present**

Superintendent – Dr. Theresa D. Haught  
Assistant Superintendent – Dr. Vlacica Z. Campbell  
Business Manager – Diane E. Lucchese, CPA  
High School Assistant Principal – Mike Mish  
Middle School Principal – Donna Albright  
Cole Intermediate School Principal – Ryan Giffing  
Elementary Center Principal – Barbara Moyer  
Technology Director – Daniel Houck  
Special Education Supervisor – Michael Barr  
Food Service Coordinator – Tony Brochu  
Buildings/Grounds/Transportation Coordinator – Greg Schneider

**Visitors**

Jodi Bieber	Libby Guldin
Dr. Joseph S. Yarworth	Josh Rebello
Camilla Schaeffer	Keith Allen
Sheron Stapleton	Jennifer Wentzel
Gale Kocis	Nicole William
Jessica Bilello	Colleen Russo
Shalaya Jibs	Paola Rozzi
Shu Stevens	Vicki Seidel
Jennifer Seymour	Kachina Martin
Lee Gallagher	Michele Weaver
Deian Segrow	Sean Hogan

Dr. Haught welcomed Dr. Yarworth's class from Albright College in attendance at the meeting.

## Education Presentations

- A. Middle School Construction Project Update – Mr. John Hill, Muhlenberg Greene Arch.,  
Mr. Jerry Myers, Reynolds Construction

Mr. Myers presented Monthly Progress Report #11 for December 2009 (Exhibit A) for the Middle School. As reported by Mr. Myers, the new wing addition is 99% complete. The punch list is being completed by Muhlenberg Greene Architects. The only work remaining is adding fire/smoke dampers as required by the Laureldale Borough Code. The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor in Area D is being finalized with lighting replacements and painting. Area D 1<sup>st</sup> floor guidance and nursing areas will be complete by mid-January. There is additional site work to be completed in the spring for blacktop installation. The current projected contingency amount is (\$193,493) with the estimated and negotiated change orders pending approval.

Mr. Schneider reported the district will be submitting a request to the Laureldale Borough to obtain reimbursement from the \$750,000 escrow amount originally submitted to the Borough for building inspections, etc.

### Discussion

Mr. Voit questioned the total cost of the Middle School project in comparison to the PlanCon financial document submitted to the state.

Mrs. Lucchese reviewed the Middle School expense report (Exhibit B). The district planned revenue sources of \$9.7 million bond and a forward funding of a \$2.2 million bond. Since the district did not issue the \$2.2 million as part of the construction project, the district has been using funds in the Capital Reserve account for the project. As of December 18, 2009 costs of \$3.8 million have been charged to Capital Reserve.

Mr. Voit stated he feels the district needs to issue the \$2.2 million bond at this time.

With the consensus of the Board, Mr. Raifsnider requested the administration contact Mr. Scott Kramer from RBC Capital Markets to present costs for the bond at next week's meeting. Also requested is an update to the 5-year facility plan and energy conservation plan.

### Soccer Turf Field

Mr. Hill reviewed the proposal for the soccer turf field as addressed in September 2009. The estimated cost of \$750,000 for the field plus fees for design work, engineering and advertising of bids from Muhlenberg Greene Architects in the amount of \$21,500. The PIAA requirement for girls' soccer as a fall sport has been delayed another year until 2012.

Concerns from the Board:

- revenue sources for the cost of the field in addition to 5 year plan and energy plan
- raised field for drainage
- rock excavation issues
- relook at grass versus turf
- time frame for field – artificial field not critical; natural field would take more time
- reduce use of off campus fields
- money could be spent for educational items

The Board shall review the district's 5 year facility plan before continuing discussion on the turf soccer field.

**B. Electrical Energy Report – Mr. Greg Schneider**

Mr. Schneider reported he has contacted the Berks County Intermediate Unit regarding a joint supplier for electrical energy. In addition he is checking into government program for utility funding and he is working on district policy.

**C. SmartBoard Use – Mr. Adam Miller, Grade 4 Teacher**

Mr. Miller used a power point presentation to demonstrate how students in his Fourth Grade classroom use the smartboard. Mr. Miller stated benefits from the use of the smartboard technology include:

- 1) Interaction chalkboard for student participation
- 2) Teacher lesson plans
- 3) Review of classroom instruction
- 4) Enhance present technology

**Hearing of Visitors** - Muhlenberg School District taxpayers and residents have an opportunity, at this time, to comment on matters of concern, official action, or deliberation which are or may be before the Muhlenberg School Board. The Board retains the option to accept all public comment at this time. Presentations should be limited to two minutes per person. In the event that the Board determines that there is not sufficient time for residents or taxpayers of the School District to comment, the Board may defer the comment period to the next regular meeting.

No public comment at this time.

**Board Business**

**A. Personnel** – Personnel items to be discussed in Executive Session following the meeting.

**B. Management**

1. Memorandum of Understanding for *Race to the Top* Application

Dr. Haught announced that Muhlenberg's letter of intent for the *Race to the Top* competitive grant was submitted to the State Department of Education in December. Dr. Gerald L. Zahorchak, State Secretary of Education, sent to school district superintendents the Memo of Understanding that districts will need to complete the grant application. If Pennsylvania is selected as one of the states to participate in the *Race to the Top* federal program, Muhlenberg could receive between \$200,000 to \$500,000 in funding. The grant money would be supplied over a four-year period. Dr. Haught is recommending the Board authorize the district's participation in this program.

*Race to the Top* Application (continued)

States will be notified in April upon their selection in the program. When selected for the program, districts will have 90 days to implement plans for comprehensive strategies in:

- 1) Adopting standards and assessments that prepare students for college and workplace success
- 2) Implementing data systems that measure student success and inform instruction
- 3) Creating and supporting effective teachers and principals and ensuring equitable distribution
- 4) Turning around lowest achieving schools

In addition to the *Race to the Top* initiative, the federal government is introducing a reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind initiative to establish modified targets for attaining student academic proficiency rather than the No Child Left Behind requirement of 100% proficiency in the year 2014. The Pennsylvania Department of Education has posted each school district's modified targets of accountability.

2. Health Insurance Trust Agreement

Dr. Haught announced that the Trust Agreement will be included on the agenda for formal approval at next week's meeting. She will be discussing the agreement with both labor union representatives next week. The deadline to sign the agreement is January end of month.

**C. Physical Plant and Transportation**

**D. Budget and Finance**

1. Financial Reports

Fund	Treasurer's Report	Financial Report	Bills Paid Month	Investments	Budget Transfers
General	Nov 09	Nov 09	Dec 09 #22645-22887	Nov 09	Dec 09
Capital Reserve	Nov 09	Nov 09		Nov 09	
1996 Series "A"	Nov 09	Nov 09		Nov 09	
2003 Construction	Nov 09	Nov 09	N/A	Nov 09	
2007 Construction	Nov 09	Nov 09	N/A	Nov 09	
2008 Construction	Nov 09	Nov 09		Nov 09	
Cafeteria	Nov 09	Nov 09	Dec 09 #1358-1398	Nov 09	
Activity Fund	Nov 09	Nov 09		Nov 09	

## **E. Education**

1. Receipt of Grant from Berks County Intermediate Unit Youth Day Program in the amount of \$1,000.00
2. Receipt of Gifts as in accordance with Policy 2.1, "Gifts":
  - a) Alvernia University - \$50.00 gift card for C. E. Cole Intermediate School
  - b) Mayer Pollock Steel Corporation – donation of \$1,000.00 to be used for "Fuel for Families"
3. Participation in Asian Studies Program with BCIU

Dr. Campbell reviewed the student survey for the district's participation in a Mandarin Chinese language program sponsored by the Berks County Intermediate Unit (Exhibit C). Of the 636 high school students surveyed, 75 students gave positive responses to a Chinese language course. The survey will be completed tomorrow for any other additions. There was a teacher concern in that whether we could supply enough resources with the current foreign language program – i.e. Spanish for native speakers. The district is currently working on this curriculum. Mr. Vanino checked with Twin Valley and Wilson School Districts for any concerns from teachers – 4 teachers responded it benefited the foreign language program and 1 teacher was opposed.

### Discussion from Board members:

Mr. Voit is not in favor of the program – parents' jobs are being displaced by Chinese culture.

Mr. DelCollo stated that students may take Chinese at college level.

Mrs. Nagle stated it is a great opportunity; easier to learn at a younger age; reasonable price.

## **F. Student Activities**

### **Minutes**

Board members reviewed minutes of the Special Meeting, Annual Organization Meeting, and Committee of the Whole Meeting of December 7, 2009; and the Regular Meeting of December 16, 2009.

### **Old Business**

1. Soccer Turf Field

(Previously reviewed in Educational Presentations.)

## New Business

### 1. Proposed Preliminary Budget for 2010-11

Mrs. Lucchese reviewed the preliminary proposed budget worksheets (Exhibit D). The Act 1 index for Muhlenberg is 3.7% or a cap of .93 mils for an increase in the 2010-11 budget.

Revenues include a 17% increase in basic education funding for next year. Real estate collections are expected to remain at 95%. Federal and state revenue can be zeroed out since those funds will be expended in designated programs.

Expenditures are 4.5% greater than the 2009-10 fiscal year budget. New staff requests total \$1 million in additional costs. The PSERS rate for 2010-11 is increased to 8.22% (was 4.8% in 2009-10). Medical benefits are budgeted at a 10% increase. The district's staff salaries and benefits comprise 63% of the proposed budget for 2010-11. An analysis of the potential staff retirements indicate a (\$307,000) adjustment in staff salaries.

The administration's recommendation is to adopt a resolution not to exceed the Act 1 index of 3.7% or .93 mils. There are some exceptions to Act 1 index that the district may apply for in order to increase the budget above the index. One of the exceptions is for the retirement contribution – a potential of \$370,000 in additional revenue.

#### Discussion from Board Members:

Mr. Raifsnider questioned the line item under revenues for delinquent taxes in that previous budgets were estimated at \$600,000 not the \$1,000,000 amount. He recommends the administration change the estimate to \$600,000 as a safer estimate.

Mr. Voit requested the administration research other options for cost savings including index exceptions for taxpayer benefit.

The proposed preliminary budget will be updated for next week's meeting.

## Board Action

### 151 Memorandum of Understanding for *Race to the Top* Application

Moved by Voit and DelCollo that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District authorize the signatures of the Board President and Superintendent for the submission of the Memorandum of Understanding for the *Race to the Top* competitive grant to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (Exhibit #112).

Yeas: DelCollo, Hoffmaster, Long, Mengle, Nagle, Raifsnider, Reiniger, Voit.  
Motion carried unanimously.

**Hearing of Visitors**

Presentation is limited to approximately two minutes per person. Should any citizen require more than the two minutes allocated, please contact the Superintendent prior to the meeting. She will coordinate such requests for the Board. Citizens addressing the Board should be aware that the meeting is being taped.

No public comment at this time.

**Board Visitor of the Month**

September – Donald Raifsnider  
October – Lee Reiniger  
November – Rick Hoffmaster  
December – Scott Long

January – Barbara Nagle  
February – Otto Voit  
March – Terry Heckman  
April – John DelCollo  
May – Cindy Mengle

**Review of Board Meetings and Calendar of Events**

January 6	7:00 p.m.	Committee of the Whole Meeting
January 11	6:30 p.m.	RMCTC Committee & Regular Meetings
January 13	7:00 p.m.	Regular Meeting
February 3	7:00 p.m.	Committee of the Whole Meeting
February 8	6:30 p.m.	RMCTC Committee & Regular Meetings
February 10	7:00 p.m.	Regular Meeting

**Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

An Executive Session was held following the meeting to discuss personnel matters.

Attest:

K. Scott Long  
Board Secretary