

## CARLYNTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

### Agenda Setting/Committee/Voting Meeting

March 3, 2011

Carlynton Jr.-Sr. High School Cafeteria – 7:30 p.m.

### MINUTES

The Carlynton School District Board of Education conducted its Agenda Setting/Committee/Voting Meeting on March 3, 2011 in the cafeteria of the junior-senior high school. Those in attendance included President Thomas Brown, Vice President Patricia Schirripa and School Directors Thomas DiPietro, Sandra Hughan, Ronald McCartney, Nyra Schell, Betsy Tassaró and Raymond Walkowiak. Also present was Superintendent Michael Panza, Solicitor Ira Weiss, Director of Pupil Services Lee Myford, Business Manager Kirby Christy and Principals Laura Burns, Jacie Maslyk, Robert Susini and Christopher Very. The audience was comprised of 33 individuals and two members of the press.

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**CALL TO ORDER** - *The meeting was called to order by President Brown at 7:31 pm. Crafton Elementary student Will Ford led the Pledge of Allegiance.*

**ROLL CALL** – *The roll was called by Recording Secretary Michale Herrmann. Director Wilson was excused from the meeting.*

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON BUSINESS BEFORE THE BOARD:** *Crafton resident Mike Sunny came forward to say he was worried about the economic foundation and future of the Carlynton School District. He told the board he could not afford any changes within the district and asked them to not take the district into debt. He repeatedly asked the board to make the right decisions for the kids, stating it was the right and responsible thing to do.*

*Crafton resident and council member April Weitzel said the board has alienated two of the three communities within the district. She informed the board that Crafton council voted to begin the process to secede from the district. She asked if council's action caused the district to dissolve, what effect it would have on obtaining a bond. President Brown referred the question to Kirby Christy, the business manager. Mr. Christy stated that a lending agency would take all information into consideration, but at this time, no formal action has occurred. President Brown said he hoped the district would not have difficulty obtaining the necessary funds to build. He added that the board has yet to hear from the Rosslyn Farms community of any plans to secede.*

*Crafton resident Jim Schriver said an outcry has been heard through all three communities. President Brown asked why anyone would believe the board would be irresponsible with the taxpayer dollars when they have been careful thus far. Director Schirripa concurred, adding that the board has not raised taxes in many years and intends to hold the line in the most responsible manner. Mr. Schriver asked for clarification of the wetland investigation report. Solicitor Weiss said that PlanCon requires a wetland survey and indicated that it is a starting point for the building process. Director Schell further explained that the survey looks at the impact of storm water run-off and other factors of the property.*

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Director McCartney moved, seconded by Director DiPietro, to approve the minutes of the February 17, 2011 Regular Voting Meeting as presented. **By a voice vote, the motion carried 8-0.**

Minutes – February 17, 2011

Before voting, Director Tassaro shared some concerns with the minutes because they failed to include the \$26.7 million figure that was provided in the proposals from Kimball. She said she believed it was to the public's benefit to include a number. Director Brown said the motion only approved the site and to consolidate the two schools, stating that the fee could go up or down. Director Tassaro asked if a "not to exceed" clause should be included, again expressing concern that the public had a right to know how the board intended to spend. Solicitor Weiss said the monetary figure was not mentioned at the last meeting within the motion, so the board could not go back and change the motion at this point. With further regard to the minutes, Director Tassaro asked that the name of Director Schirripa be removed from the comments regarding a working session held on February 3 and Director Schell's name be included, as Mr. Schirripa was not at the meeting. The change was made and is reflected within the minutes.

## **REPORTS:**

- **Executive Session** – President Brown stated that employment, legal and labor issues were discussed in executive session, all within the guidelines of Section 11 of Board Policy .006.
  - **Principals' Reports** – The elementary principals shared news of upcoming events and student achievements; the high school principals also shared good news about students and called attention to two donated diplomas from the Carnegie High School era. The diplomas will be displayed in the high school. All principals distributed a newsletter that itemized details of events and recognition of students.
  - **Director of Pupil Services' Report** – Mrs. Myford announced that a parent night to discuss autism and asberger's will be held in the upcoming week. She also reported that transition coordinator Maggi Mishkin has been awarded a grant to support the transition program and provide a career day for high school students in April.
- **Superintendent's Report** – Dr. Panza shared the calendar of upcoming events, noting that the spring musical is just three weeks away. He congratulated all those involved with the success of the Tied to the Arts night as well.

## **I. Miscellaneous**

*Recommend the following:*

Draft # \_\_\_\_\_ of the 2011-2012 school year calendar as presented; (Miscellaneous Item #0311-01) **PLACE ON AGENDA**

*Responding to Director Walkowiak's inquiry, Dr. Panza said the favorable calendar appears to be Draft 3.*

The revision to the 2010-2011 school year calendar to reflect April 21, 2011 as the make-up snow day for the missed day of February 22, 2011. (Miscellaneous Item #0311-02) **PLACE ON AGENDA**

Director McCartney moved, seconded by Director DiPietro, to approve the list of conference and field trip requests as presented and approved by administration:

2011-12 School Year Calendar

Revision to 10-11 Calendar –  
Snow Make-up Day

Conference and Field Trip  
Requests

- FT...M.Mishkin...AIU...Transitional Training...3/25
- FT...J. Bhuta...Crafton Elementary...Soccer Recruiting...3/4
- FT...J.Dodd...Quaker Valley HS...PMEA Elem Sing Fest...4/8
- FT...M.Mishkin...AIU...Transitional Training...5/3

(Miscellaneous Item #0311-01 REVISED) **By a voice vote, the motion carried 8-0.**

## II. Finance

~~\_\_\_\_\_ as construction manager for the elementary school building project;~~ **REMOVED FROM THE AGENDA**

\_\_\_\_\_ -  
Construction Manager

Director McCartney moved, seconded by Director Hughan to authorize PNC Financial to continue the process to obtain a bond rating for the district, at a cost not to exceed \$13,000; **By a ROLL CALL VOTE, the motion carried 5-2-1, with Directors Schell and Tassaro voting NO, and Director Walkowiak abstaining.**

PNC - Obtain Bond Rating

*Before voting, there was considerable discussion. Director Hughan asked if \$13,000 was a fee or an actual cost. Dr. Panza explained it is for a rating, and once the rating is issued, the district will pay the fee to the rating agency. President Brown said the rating is based on the history of the district and said he hopes the district will earn a bond rating of AA, which is the best one can receive. Solicitor Weiss noted that this process is done by companies such as Standard and Poors or Fitch Rating.*

*Director Walkowiak made known that his vote would be reflective of his position to the building project.*

*Director Schell asked if the rate would be affected if the site was found not suitable for building. Solicitor Weiss replied that the rating is based on creditworthiness and not the feasibility of a project.*

*Director Tassaro asked if a number has been determined for the costs of the project. Solicitor Weiss explained that a cost range would be determined prior to obtaining a bond. Director Tassaro then asked if the vote should be delayed because the board had yet to determine a range. Mr. Weiss said this is all part of the building project phase and once the board determines a cost, the funds can then be provided. Director Tassaro questioned if funds would be lost if the board decides to halt the project; Mr. Weiss said yes, some costs will be lost.*

Director DiPietro moved, seconded by Director Schirripa, to direct administration to obtain a contractor (engineer) to complete a full survey of the Carnegie Elementary property at a cost not to exceed \$14,000;

Contractor to Survey  
Elementary Site

And direct administration to obtain a contractor to complete a Wetland Reconnaissance Investigation Report at a cost not to exceed \$8,200;

Wetland Reconnaissance  
Investigation Report

*There were some questions before the vote took place on these two items. Dr. Panza said the best quotes were submitted by Beirworth Barton and Associates. Director Schell questioned if the board was moving on this now, given that documentation was only provided in the earlier executive session. She said she understood this was an important part of the process, but would like more time to review the information. Dr. Panza*

*said that three bids were submitted. Director Tassaro asked if the work should have been advertised and bid out; Solicitor Weiss said it was not necessary because it was considered professional services. President Brown said the motions could be combined and moved upon on in a single vote. Solicitor Weiss offered an amended motion:*

Direct administration to obtain the services of Bierworth Barton and Associates to conduct a survey of the Carnegie site and complete a Wetland Reconnaissance Investigation Report at a cost not to exceed \$8,200. Director DiPietro moved to approve the amended motion, seconded by Director Schirripa.

**By a ROLL CALL VOTE, the motion carried 6-2 with Directors Schell and Walkowiak voting NO.**

*The following five items were approved in one motion:*

Director Hughan moved, seconded by Director Schell, to approve the Roof Conductor Rerouting RPF to direct the roof water run-off at Carnegie Elementary School and to advertise accordingly; (Finance Item #0311-01)

*Director Walkowiak clarified to the public that the RPF was being sought to address the root of the problem to the gym floor at Carnegie Elementary.*

The contract agreement between the district and the Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit for programs and services as submitted; (Finance Item #0311-02)

Resolution No. 158 representing the 2011-2012 General Operating Budget of the Parkway West Career and Technology Center in the amount of \$6,197, 257 as submitted. The district portion of this amount is \$354, 167 as compared to \$470,593 for the current school calendar; (Finance Item #0311-03)

*Director Schirripa questioned where the overall budget increases will come into play. Dr. Panza said that while the district's share is less (due to a fewer number of Carlynton students enrolling at the school), the overall budget is higher because Parkway is hoping to implement and offer a new program with mechatronics/robotics in the upcoming year. Director McCartney, Parkway representative, said he voted against these additional funds at the Parkway board meeting. He said he did this because the school currently has outside companies that plan to support the program, but should enrollment be slight, the funding may not be available next year and he did not want to "pull the rug out from under the students."*

*This said, Director Schirripa asked Director McCartney if the board should vote "no" on Resolution No. 158. Director McCartney said no, not on the budget itself, further explaining that if the money for the new program is not used, the district will most likely get a refund. Solicitor Weiss further explained that Parkway is forming this program cooperatively through the community college. He said the school is presently recruiting and surveying students to learn if there is enough interest.*

*Director Walkowiak commented that Parkway offers great programs, adding that he, while in high school, chose to attend a vocational school.*

RFP – Carnegie Elementary  
Roof Water Run-off

Agreement with NEIU

Resolution No. 158 – PWCTC  
General Operating Budget

*The skills he gained helped him get a job, which ultimately paid for his college education.*

Resolution No. 159 representing the 2011-2012 General Operating Budget of the Alternative Education Program at Parkway West Career and Technology Center in the amount of \$1,038, 234 as submitted. The district portion of this amount is \$49,627 as compared to \$45,622 for the current school calendar; (Finance Item #0311-04)

Resolution No. 159 – PWCTC  
AEP Budget

And Resolution No. 160 representing the 2011-2012 Building Rental Budget of the Parkway West Career and Technology Center in the amount of \$456,492 as submitted. The district portion of this amount is \$21,076 as compared to \$16,385 for the current school calendar; (Finance Item #0311-05) **By a ROLL CALL VOTE, the motion carried 8-0.**

Resolution No. 160 – PWCTC  
Building Rental Budget

### III. Personnel

Director Walkowiak moved, seconded by Director Hugan, to approve the following addition to the 2010-2011 Day to Day Substitute List as presented and recommended by administrators:

- Chad Buerk – Secondary Mathematics  
(Personnel Item #0311-02)

**By a voice vote, the motion carried 8-0.**

Addition to the Day to Day  
Sub List

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** *Director Tassaro said that many individuals have concerns with the financial end of the building project. She asked why a budget has yet to be set, or a “not to exceed” dollar amount. She also asked if the Crafton site could still be considered if the Carnegie site is not found to be suitable. President Brown said that the board has yet to learn if the Carnegie site will work best, adding that if Carnegie does not work, he would look into other options. He said he did not want to move the field and he wanted the best option at the best price.*

*Director Tassaro noted that Governor Corbett will be releasing the budget soon with rumors of significant cuts. She said she would like to set some benchmarks so the taxpayers can have some assurance and the board can illustrate they are being reasonable and responsible. Director Tassaro said that she and Director Walkowiak took a walk on the site and they can not visualize how a school can be built on the named site. She said that members of the board and the communities have expressed both favorable and unfavorable reasons for a building project, but the common topic has been costs. Saying this, she added that the affordability of a new school needs to be proven to the community.*

*President Brown agreed, and referred to earlier comments expressed by Director Schell that said the board now needs to stand together and work toward the best solution while containing costs and remaining cautious. Director Schirripa concurred, saying the board is committed to being responsible, as it has been in the past, by not raising taxes. She added that the board has no plans to raise taxes this year. Director Schell said that the economic times are difficult. Going on, she noted that the district has had a good history with saving, but cautioned that the board needs to be sure the site is suitable, and if not, then address the next step.*

*Director Tassaro said she would like to see budget projections, similar to those Director Walkowiak put together, and forecasting into the next five years.*

Referring to Director Schirripa's comment of no tax increase this year, she asked about next year, and the years following. Director Brown said he too would like to work toward not raising taxes. Director DiPietro said he would still like to see pricing at both the high and low level of the project. Director Walkowiak said he respectfully disagreed and asked Director DiPietro to listen to the tape when he offered his cost projections. He said that Dr. Panza did indicate and showed him a mistake in his numbers, but even still, the five year projection was not favorable.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Director Schell asked for an update on the balcony in the Crafton Elementary auditorium. Dr. Panza said that when Kimball and Thomas & Williamson did a walk-through of the school, they expressed concern with the balcony. He then had a representative from the district insurance agency look at the balcony and they too said it was unsafe. Dr. Panza said he is meeting with Crafton officials, including their building code officer, to examine the school. In addition, Director Walkowiak called attention an issue with the building's incoming power source and nearby water puddles on the floor. He said this, too, needs to be addressed.

**OPEN FORUM:** Crafton resident Alan Dorfield noted that Crafton Borough has three wards. He suggested the board pass a resolution to specify that a school board member be named from each ward so equal representation is given at board meetings. He also suggested that Crafton and Rosslyn Farms seek to merge with the Montour School District. In closing he offered that a solution might be to renovate one elementary school at a time, based on needs. In closing, he said the vote of February 17, 2011 was won by a narrow margin and it could destroy the tax base of one community.

Mike Kozy, of Crafton, said he looked at the Carnegie site and questions its viability. He said he is also concerned by the discussions about money, but his main concern is the education of children. "You're destroying a damn good school," he stated. He said the board is making sacrifices by jamming the building into a questionable site and there appears to be no checks and balances. Director Brown assured Mr. Kozy that the board will watch for direction from the architects. Director DiPietro said, in agreement with Director Tassaro, that he will not allow anyone to jam a building behind the football field, but he is willing to wait and see what is best. Mr. Kozy said he also has concerns with the construction quality and "bells and whistles." President Brown said that PlanCon has to approve all the decisions of the board as a safeguard. With that said, Director Schell reviewed the steps of the PlanCon process to allow for a better understanding of when and how things would take place, stating that the district must adhere to the process.

Mr. Kozy, referring to the vote for the survey and wetland report, said he felt the board was moving too fast. Director DiPietro countered by pointing out that the board decided to hold off on hiring a construction manager. Director Tassaro said she wanted to be sure the board did not short-change the students, adding that a three story building is already compromising the project, especially since the architect mentioned during the early stages of planning that an elementary school should not be more than two stories.

Carnegie resident Mark Popovich asked if the board had a five year pro forma plan. He said this would enable the board and taxpayers to look at other alternatives, such as renovating both schools. Director Tassaro said an

alternative could be to do nothing. Mr. Popovich said he did not believe that was an option, given the needs of the buildings. Director Walkowiak said his numbers have gauged the cost to renovate both schools, and that option appears to be the most expensive; full renovation could potentially mean an immediate tax increase of 2.5 mills or more. “In the end,” Mr. Popovich continued, “the costs need to be weighed against the advantages to our children.” Director Walkowiak summarized his data analysis from memory. He then said that he believes Director Tassaro is asking for a financial analysis at a firm cost, so taxpayers can see what lies ahead. Director Schell interjected, saying the board needs to investigate the costs of what has been already approved at the prior meeting by a majority vote.

Rosslyn Farms resident Steven Tassaro began by stating that the board will get through this process, but in terms of the audience, he is hearing confusion. He suggested a firm number be settled upon for the building project, thereby putting the community at ease. The confusion, he said, is created in absence of a number. Mr. Tassaro went on to say that a Power Point presentation by Dr. Panza at an earlier meeting, which strove to illustrate how the project could be completed in a financially responsible manner, was then followed by a report from Director Walkowiak which indicated the numbers do not work. Mr. Tassaro asked the board to put together a projection with a budget – and he used the \$26.7 million figure as an illustration because it was an estimated figure given at the former meeting. He said this would help to put the community at ease. President Brown said he would be happy if the number comes in at \$26.7 but added that the board does not know where the figure will come in. Mr. Tassaro suggested the board hire a financial analyst to run the numbers based on the \$26.7 million figure to provide a better financial picture.

Crafton resident Jim Schriver, directing a comment to Director McCartney, said the robotics program at Parkway sounds promising, given the local connections with CMU. Director McCartney said the program is being considered because of demand by employers. President Brown said Parkway is seeking student interest before spending dollars. Director Walkowiak asked if the school offers a projection to students to illustrate the value of their programs based on available careers in the area. Director Hughan, former Parkway representative, said the school does do that. She added that high school guidance counselors need to stop pushing students toward college when they can get a jump start on a career now without a tuition cost. Director McCartney said the goal of the mechatronics program is to earn college credit while in high school, opening the way for college. Mr. Schriver said the program sounded visionary and promising from an educational standpoint.

**ADJOURNMENT:** With no further comments or business to discuss, Director Hughan moved, seconded by Director McCartney, to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 pm. **By a voice vote, the motion carried 8-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

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Kirby Christy, Board Secretary

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Michale Herrmann, Recording Secretary