

## CARLYNTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

### Regular Voting Meeting November 18, 2010 Carlynton Jr.-Sr. High School Library – 7:30 pm

#### MINUTES

The Carlynton School District Board of Education conducted its Regular Voting Meeting Thursday, November 18, 2010 in the library 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 Janet Burkardt, Business Manager Kirby Christy, Director of Pupil Services Lee Myford and Principals Laura Burns, Jacie Maslyk, Robert Susini and Christopher Very. The audience was comprised of 95 individuals and two members of the press.

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**CALL TO ORDER** - *The meeting was called to order by President Brown at 7:30 pm. Crafton Elementary student Claire Schriver was invited to lead 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:** *President Brown began public comment by reading Policy No. 903 – Public Participation in Board Meetings – which outlined appropriate conduct and behavior for board meetings.*

*Crafton resident David O'Brien came forward to state he is in favor of a task force. He said it has been difficult to grasp the perspective of school board members and he would like to know what is being considered and why. He closed by saying his son's desire to learn has been inspired by great teachers and he is thriving at Crafton Elementary.*

*Nicole MacMurdo, of Crafton, said she was puzzled by the blanks left in Finance Items 2, 3 and 4. President Brown stated the board will vote on companies to fill in the blanks, but noted that Item 4 would be removed from the agenda. President Brown shared that interviews were conducted with prospective companies with much discussion. Mrs. MacMurdo asked if the stated agenda item of a "potential elementary building project" dismissed the potential for renovation. President Brown said the statement, speaking from his own personal standpoint, does not preclude renovation. Mr. Brown went on to explain the purpose of the bond counsel and an underwriter.*

*Crafton resident Megan Schriver asked the board to table the motion for the task force in light of the fact that Director Wilson was absent from the meeting. Parent Jim Schriver said he felt the board "pulling back" at the end of the last board meeting and questioned if voting for a bond counsel and underwriter was premature. Additionally, he asked if this was necessary if the board chose to renovate by using only the current surplus monies in the budget. President Brown said the board will take these steps now as advised by the solicitor and as part of the PlanCon process. Mr. Schriver asked again if this was necessary for a renovation project and President Brown said no.*

*Crafton resident Becky Heffner said she sensed a division among the board and*

the community. She went on to say that the board needs to make an attempt to reestablish trust with those they represent: the taxpayers and the children of the district. She pleaded for the board to listen to the public and to valid their decision by forming a task force to gain a fair and balanced decision. She suggested the board might be overwhelmed and should therefore delegate. Going on, she stated that there is a perception within the community that the board is not listening and, as a result, this has dug a hole of bitterness. In closing, she implored the board to vote positively on the task force.

Ed Stewart, of Crafton, urged a vote in favor of a task force. He added that he appreciates the challenges the board faces and understands the difficulty of their job.

Carnegie resident Mark Popovich came forward to state he has a professional background in community real estate. He said he has tried to look at this issue objectively and believes Kimball's work was thorough and complete. Going on, he stated that the board needs to focus on what is most educationally sound, and he believes it is building a new school, with the best available option at the athletic field in Crafton. Mr. Popovich said renovating the schools would not be the optimal decision; a new school would attract new families. The impact to children while renovating could be a huge hindrance, he added, as well as safety issues. Mr. Popovich proposed that renovation could bring surprises with more expenses. He suggested that a new construction would bring unity among students and parents from all three communities and would build a stronger district. And he stated that a benefit would be gained to the district by putting Crafton Elementary on the tax rolls, adding that Carnegie could become a sports complex with additional parking. In closing, Mr. Popovich commended the board for their work and diligence and cautioned that interest rates will soon rise.

Director Walkowiak asked Mr. Popovich where he heard about a sports event center. Mr. Popovich said that by leaving the gym end of the building and improving parking, the facility could be an asset to the community.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Director McCartney moved, seconded by Director DiPietro, to approve the minutes of the November 4, 2010 Agenda Setting/Committee/Voting Meeting as presented. **By a voice vote, the motion carried 7-0-1**, with Director Walkowiak abstaining due to absence.

#### **REPORTS:**

- Executive Session – President Brown noted that contractual, legal and labor issues were discussed in executive session, all within school code guidelines.
  - Principals' Reports – Mrs. Burns reported that she and Mrs. Maslyk attended CPI training. Dr. Panza said the staff is being trained as well. Dr. Susini announced that Steven Bevan, Luis Garcia and Chris Williams were selected to participate in a regional football game at Southside Stadium and three students will represent the high school at District Chorus. He also noted that the fall play, "The Visit," will be held the weekend of December 3, and a Cougar Night to recognize the Winter Sports' teams will be held December 2,

Minutes of the November 4,  
2010 Meeting

*preceded with a chili cook-off. Mrs. Maslyk thanked Mrs. Hugan, who visited Crafton Elementary as a “mystery reader” and read to students. She also reported that the school received a small fruits and vegetable grant, similar to that at Carnegie Elementary.*

- Director of Pupil Services’ Report – *Mrs. Myford announced that a Transition Night will be held at South Fayette High School on December 2. The program will offer planning for special education students who would like to consider post-secondary education.*
- Business Manager Report – *Mr. Christy noted that the State House of Representatives passed a pension reform bill that places a cap on increases; the reform requires new teachers to pay more out of pocket but will not affect current employees.*
- Superintendent’s Report – *Dr. Panza quickly reviewed a calendar of upcoming events and reported that requests for proposals for the Carnegie Elementary gymnasium floor will be sent out in the next packet, as well as information about the marching band’s proposed spring trip. President Brown commented that five student athletes participated recently in a sports’ symposium with the opportunity to listen to experts in the sports’ arena. President Brown said that according to Athletic Director Dave Oddi, it was an excellent program and our students offered some great comments.*
  - PSBA-Legislative – *Director Walkowiak confirmed the comments made by Mr. Christy regarding pension reform, noting that the contribution rate by new employees will be 22.4 percent by the year 2014-15.*

## **BUSINESS BEFORE THE BOARD:**

### **I. Miscellaneous**

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

- C...M.Priore...Carnegie Mellon U...Music Curric. PD...11/23
- C...R.Gevaudan...Airport Marriot...Apple Products PD...11/30
- C...M.Sywy... ProSoft Technologies...Payroll PD...12/14
- C...L.Burns...PATTAN...Required Prof. Development...12/14-15, 2/2
- C...L.Burns...IU 3, 7, 1...Principal Induction Requirements...1/19-20, 3/15-16, 5/3-4, 6/1-2
- C...C.Very...IU3...Supervisory Workshops...1/27, 2/24, 3/24
- C...R.Susini...IU3...Supervisory Workshops...1/27, 2/24, 3/24
- FT...F.Zebrasky...Walmart/Cici’s Pizza...Out-based Ed...11/19
- FT...Harrity/Rupert...Carnegie Art Museum...Out-based Ed...12/6
- FT...M.Ferro...Pgh.Internat’l Airport...Choral Performance...12/9
- FT...R.Susini...CONSOL Energy Ctr...Penguins Practice/Positive Behavior Reward...12/9
- FT...Carnegie Gr. 4...Heinz Hall...Pgh Symphony Orchestra...12/9
- FT...M.Ferro...Rotary Luncheon Choral Perf...Nevillewood...12/16
- FT...C.Eddy...Carnegie Music Hall...Repertory Theatre...12/17
- FT...Smoller/Veri...The Aviary...GATE...1/12
- FT...M. Smoller...Soldiers & Sailors Hall...World Quest...2/4
- FT...M.Smoller...Carnegie Science Ctr...Nat’l Engineering Day...2/18
- FT...Carnegie Gr. 6...Heinz Hall...Pgh Symphony Orchestra...2/23
- FT...Smoller/Veri...Southside Works Theater...Film Fest...2/23
- FT...M.Smoller...Carnegie Science Ctr...Sci-Tech Day...3/20

Conference and Field Trip  
Requests

- FT...Smoller/Veri...Downtown Pgh...History & Landmarks...4/11
- FT...Carnegie Gr. 2...Heinz Hall...Pgh Symphony Orchestra...4/15
- FT...MBVeri...Pgh Playhouse...Theater Performance...5/11
- FT...Smoller/Veri...Pgh Playhouse...Diary of Anne Franks...6/2
- C...W. Palonis...Greensburg/Salem HS...Sci. Collaborative...11/23
- FT...T.Longo/F.Zebrasky...Elem. Schools...Puppet Show...11/24  
(Miscellaneous Item #1110-01 REVISED) **By a voice vote, the motion carried 8-0.**

## II. Finance

Director Walkowiak moved, seconded by Director Tassaro, to approve Resolution #440-10 indicating continuation of membership in the Joint Purchasing Board for the 2011-2012 school year along with the Allegheny Intermediate Unit and other local school districts, which will empower the district to make bulk purchases of selected items for its use. It is further recommended that the appropriate Carlynton School District official be authorized to sign the Joint Purchasing Agreement and that Mr. Kirby Christy be named said representative to the purchasing board and Dr. Michael Panza named as the alternative; (Finance Item #1110-01)

Resolution – Joint Purchasing Board for the 2011-2012 School Year

The August/September 2010 cafeteria operating report as submitted by Aramark Education; (Finance Item #1110-02)

August/September 2010 Cafeteria Report

The Athletic Fund Report for October 2010 as submitted; (Finance Item #1110-03)

October 2010 Athletic Fund Report

The Activities Fund Report for October 2010 as submitted; (Finance Item #1110-04)

October 2010 Activities Fund Report

*And* the Borough of Carnegie Real Estate Tax Refunds as submitted. (Finance Item #1110-05) **By a ROLL CALL VOTE, the motion carried 8-0.**

Carnegie RE Tax Refunds

Director Hughan moved, seconded by Director McCartney, to name Wayne Gerhold as Bond Counsel for a potential elementary building project; **By a ROLL CALL VOTE, the motion carried 6-2, with Directors Schell and Tassaro dissenting.**

Wayne Gerhold - Bond Counsel

Director McCartney moved, seconded by Director Hughan, to name PNC as Underwriter for a potential elementary building project; **By a ROLL CALL VOTE, the motion carried 7-1, with Director Tassaro voting NO.**

PNC - Underwriter

Name \_\_\_\_\_ as ~~Construction Manager for a potential elementary building project;~~ **REMOVED FROM THE AGENDA**

\_\_\_\_\_ ~~Construction Manager~~ **REMOVED**

Before voting on the item below, regarding the formation of a district-wide Local Task Force, Director Tassaro moved, seconded by Director Schell, to TABLE the motion until the return of Director Wilson. **By a ROLL CALL VOTE, the motion failed 3-5, with Directors Brown, DiPietro, Hughan, McCartney and Schirripa voting NO.**

Formation of a Local Task Force

*Prior to voting on the formation of a local task force, the board held a discussion to suggest the date for a task force committee to report back to the board. Board members decided on the second board meeting in January.*

Director Walkowiak moved, seconded by Director Schell, to approve the formation of a district-wide Local Task Force to discuss a potential elementary building project. This committee would be charged to report back to the Carlynton School District Board of Directors by the second school board meeting in January 2011. **By a ROLL CALL VOTE, the motion failed 2-6, with Directors Brown, DiPietro, Hughan, McCartney, Schirripa and Tassaro voting NO.**

*Preceding the vote, considerable discussion took place. Director McCartney read a statement, giving his reasoning for voting no to a task force. He said he is tired of the sounding off and bullying by the SOS organization with little or no regard for education. Mr. McCartney added that he believed the board must move forward before costs rise.*

*Director Hughan thanked everyone for their emails and phone calls. She said she has listened carefully and understands what it feels like to be attached to a building, adding her own personal experiences. She said she has digested all the information prepared by Kimball, and come to the conclusion that she must vote to move forward because she believes it to be the best decision.*

*Director Schell said that although the issue at hand has been discussed from all sides, she believes that a “true” renovation option has not been provided. She announced that she would vote “yes” to a task force as a sign of good will or an acknowledgement that she wants to view and dissect all possible options. Going on, she said she is not comfortable with where things are now, and believes the report and none of the discussions have provided compelling proof to subject the district to the drastic measures of consolidating the elementary schools and constructing a new building. Mrs. Schell said the task force will allow the board to gain the perspective of others.*

*Director Tassaro stated she was disappointed that the board voted to move forward on this motion without waiting for Director Wilson’s return. She said she is in favor of a task force, and then asked the solicitor if she could bring forward another motion for a local task force at the December meeting if she voted in favor of the task force now. The solicitor informed her she must vote with the majority in order to bring the motion forward a second time.*

*Director Brown said that although the matter of a task force was brought up two weeks ago, he has yet to hear how it will be established and has not viewed any guidelines with rules, voting procedures, who will serve, how individuals will be selected to serve, and whether school board members would serve on the committee. For that reason, he planned to vote “no” for the task force.*

*Director Schell submitted that the perimeters should be ascertained by the board once they decide to offer the opportunity. She said a priority would be equal representation of opinions.*

Director Walkowiak announced that he would vote in favor of a task force, noting that the board has involved the public early on. He agreed that a protocol has yet to be established, but could easily be put together with equal representation, community leaders, parents, administrators and staff, with an informal report provided to the board by the agreed-upon date. He added that he feels the community has not fully been heard.

### III. Personnel

Director Schell moved, seconded by Director DiPietro, to approve the additions to the 2010-2011 Substitute List per review and recommendation of the administrative staff:

- Amanda Dernosek – Elementary, K-6
- Harold Kaufman – Elementary / Environmental Sciences K-12
- Alicia Lombardo – Secondary English
- Hayley Quadri – Elementary, K-6
- Randy Kuny – Custodial  
(Personnel Item #1110-01)

The addition to the 2010-2011 Supplemental Athletic List as recommended and presented:

- Timothy Bonner – Varsity Assistant Girls' Basketball Coach  
(Personnel Item #1110-02)

And name Susan Brossman as the long-term substitute for the secondary health and physical education position, in accordance with the terms and conditions to the Carlynton Federation of Teachers Collective Bargaining Unit Agreement. **By a voice vote, the motion carried 8-0.**

1. ~~Name \_\_\_\_\_ as an instrumental music teacher/band director in accordance with the terms of the Carlynton Federation of Teachers Collective Bargaining Unit Agreement.~~ **REMOVED FROM THE AGENDA**

\_\_\_\_\_ First; \_\_\_\_\_ Second; \_\_\_\_\_ Vote

### IV. Policy

Director McCartney moved, seconded by Director DiPietro, to approve the first reading of Policies 210 and 210.1 (Medications and Possession/Use of Emergency Medicines per the review and modifications of the solicitor. (Policy Item #1110-1) **By a voice vote, the motion carried 8-0.**

**OLD BUSINESS:** Director Walkowiak, calling attention to the revised Facility Study report of September 9, 2010, said that while reviewing the option for ES 5 and ES 1, he noticed a big difference in the number of classrooms. Dr. Panza said he will ask Kimball to be present at the next meeting so the questions can be directed to them.

Additions to the 2010-2011  
Substitute List

Addition to the 2010-11  
Supplemental Athletic List

Susan Brossman – LTS in  
Health/Physical Education  
Position

~~\_\_\_\_\_ Instrumental  
Music Teacher/Band Director~~  
**REMOVED**

First Readings – Policies 210  
and 210.1

Director Tassaro posed the question, “What size school is too big?” She shared that upon reviewing a Pittsburgh Business Times publication with county and surrounding county PSSA information, she found that schools with a lower population tend to perform better on the PSSA. Going on, she reported that out of 79 elementary schools with an enrollment over 800, only three performed well on the PSSA. She said that by combining Carnegie and Crafton, enrollment would be near or over 800. Director DiPietro asked for the Beaver School District scores. Mrs. Tassaro found them to be in the middle range. President Brown spoke up and said that with a larger enrollment, he would conceive classroom sizes would remain at 25 students or lower. He added that he grew up in the Beaver area and noted the school district has consolidated, but would need to review the report to gain a greater perspective.

Director Schell said she has found a new movement in educational reform for smaller schools and increased community-wide relationship with those schools. She said it is possible to make a larger school work, but much work is involved with a greater commitment by administrators and staff. She went on to explain some of the research she has read to substantiate her findings. President Brown stated it is a disservice to the professional staff to imply they will not perform as well as they do now should the schools be combined. Director Schell said she was not suggesting the teachers would give less, declaring the district has many great educators. She went on to say that when two separate schools join, there is a “honeymoon” period or season of adjustment. The teachers will need support and the opportunity to form a bond. Director Schirripa noted the teachers have asked for team meetings and uniformity between the schools; combining the schools could provide the opportunity.

The administrators were excused at 9:17 pm.

**NEW BUSINESS:** None

**OPEN FORUM:** Betsy Martin of Crafton came forward to ask if the board had discussed the pros and cons of building in Carnegie or Crafton. Director Walkowiak said that they have, and referred to the Facility Study which illustrated “collateral” expenses, citing that if the school was built in Crafton, a ball field would be lost. To build at Carnegie, the stadium would then be lost, at a much greater expense to replace. Mrs. Martin asked if the nearness of the shopping center to the Crafton site would be a negative. The board mentioned several other school districts where the same situation occurs. President Brown said the level acreage at Crafton Athletic Field makes it much more appealing. Mrs. Martin asked for the projected costs for new construction versus renovating. Director Schirripa said it will cost some \$29 million to build and about \$36 million to renovate. Betsy Martin stated it is much greener to recycle a school than to build.

Mark Popovich came forward again, commending the board for their work and calling attention to the fact that the district currently has no debt and holds a cash surplus. He agreed that small class sizes are proven to better learning and asked the board, given the tangible facts, to move forward, vote and bring this matter to a close so more focus can be given to the educational value of the district. He added that he has some concerns about an ad hoc task force and how it would be established.

David Roussos, of Crafton, said he was disappointed in the board's decision to vote against the task force and sees it as reluctance by the board to listen to the public. Mr. Roussos stated there is too much inconsistency in the information being put out for the public and believes the board is truly missing out by not offering a task force to the community. Going on, he said that he, along with the community, feels bullied, stating that the community wants what is best for the kids too. President Brown brought up a recent article in the Signal Item that stated the board's proposal to consolidate and build a new school could result in a 60 mil tax hike. Mr. Brown said the public is providing misconceptions to the media, further citing that the article was quoting a statement made earlier by Mr. Roussos. Mr. Roussos said he never suggested such a tax hike but did state that ultimately the money will come from the taxpayers. Director Schirripa declared that now the board must defend this article, adding that the board is and has been fiscally responsible. She called attention to the fact that the board has not raised taxes in six years.

Director DiPietro said the board only wants what is best for the district now and 20 years from now, but they also realize whatever decision they make, someone will not be happy.

Mr. Roussos said the board consistently points to the facility study as legitimate, but asserted that a renovation option was yet to be properly reviewed or considered.

Maureen Nelson, district employee and a resident of Collier, commented that the room was filled before Item 5 under Finance (on the agenda) was voted upon, but now the room was nearly empty. She asked, "If you are truly interested in what's taking place, where are you?" She went on to say that the public was the one to vote the school directors into office to be a voice for them, citing that the job is not an easy one, and insisted that if anyone from the public had better ideas, let them be the ones to "take the plunge." Mrs. Nelson called attention to a comment made at an earlier meeting by Director Schell, suggesting Mrs. Schell implied that children with free and reduced lunches are less intelligent. Mrs. Nelson said the teachers have been given little or no credit, stating they stand firm in a belief that the educational experience will not be compromised.

Director Schell said she did not mean to imply such a thing and expounded on research that indicates that students with free or reduced lunches perform better in small classes. She went on to provide further reasoning for her statement, based on research, and said she was not making a judgment. She added that she took offense to a comment made by Mr. Popovich, regarding children's safety around construction workers, indicating that her father is a construction worker with a sound reputation.

Crafton resident Susie Kozy posed a question to Director Schirripa, asking her to define special education students and an earlier statement that most are sent to Carnegie. Director Schirripa deferred to Dr. Panza, who explained that Carnegie Elementary has three special education classrooms and Crafton has two.

Megan Schriver, of Crafton, said she remained frustrated with Kimball's report. She stated requests have been consistently made for a viable renovation option but specifics have not been provided for what is truly needed to be done. Referring to earlier comments made by Mark Popovich, she said she disliked hearing the school referred to as "real estate." She pronounced the benefits of a



*small school, where everyone knows one another, and begged that the school not be viewed as a business.*

*Steven Russell, of Crafton, stated that a task force would serve at the pleasure of the board and the board would establish the scope of the committee. He said he believes that the offering of a task force is a major public relations move.*

*Crafton resident Crystal Boehm thanked the board for the job they are doing. She then stated she has a concern for the teachers and was worried there might be an impact when two separate groups of teachers come together under one roof and try to adapt. She urged the board to rethink its stance on the task force and to welcome the idea.*

*Nicole MacMurdo, of Crafton, said she appreciated hearing discussion among the board, adding that it is important for the public to hear everyone's views.*

*Crafton resident Joe Appel asked if Representatives Deasy and Smith were given a tour of Crafton. Dr. Panza said it was extended to them. President Brown added that he and Dr. Panza met with Representative Kotik. Mr. Appel asked if all board members were invited and President Brown said he believed they were. Director Walkowiak said he was not aware of the meeting. President Brown said they met at the request of the representatives. Director Schirripa said there was no quorum at any of the meetings.*

*Carnegie resident and Mayor Jack Kobistek said he appreciated the board's hard work. He brought forward five emails, reading them aloud. One reminded the board that there has been no social security increase in five years. Another was from a business owner who said he has yet to recover from the flood several years back. Mr. Kobistek cited the Carnegie Municipal Building and the burden it has placed on Carnegie Borough, asking the board to be certain a new construction will not place future burdens on the communities. He also asked the board to remain cognizant of the partnerships already in place between the schools and community organizations and leaders.*

*David O'Brien stepped forward to state that money breeds greed and asked why it is so difficult to spend money on educating a child. He asked how the board's decisions will affect his child and what effects will the communities feel if the schools remain empty. He went on to say he believes his son will do well in a larger sized classroom, but he still had concerns. Director DiPietro asked why so many think that a school with 800 equals larger class sizes. He added that his perception will be to maintain the smaller classrooms. Referring to his own experiences as an educator, Mr. DiPietro offered that he can glean much from his colleagues, especially when they gather to share ideas.*

*Dr. Panza spoke up to say that the public seems to believe that property values will go down if a new school is built. He said he spoke with several superintendents in the county with recent new constructions and no one said they realized a negative effect. Dr. Panza added that several teachers, at the last in-service day, stated they would welcome the opportunity to work together and share ideas.*

*Carnegie resident Renee Vonada asked what would happen to the schools if the board decided to renovate and then discovered that something major needed to be repaired or replaced in five to 15 years. President Brown said it would then be at the expense of the district. Dr. Panza cited that new construction is reimbursable but the district could not borrow within a 20-year period.*

*Director Tassaro stated that it needs to be understood that the reimbursable rate is not great. She offered that if the district spends what they have in reserve now, and does not incur anymore debt, then more money would be available for additional teachers or other needs. She went on to say that the district has two nice neighborhood schools that work well, and suggested the board needs to step back and review the issue.*

**ADJOURNMENT:**

With no further comments or business to discuss, Director Hughan moved, seconded by Director DiPietro, to adjourn the meeting at 10:27 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