ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Call to Order; Pledge of Allegiance

President Alan C. Earnshaw called the regular meeting of the East Penn Board of School Directors to order at 7:30 p.m. in the Board Room located at 800 Pine Street, Emmaus, PA, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Solicitor: Marc S. Fisher, Esq., Worth, Magee & Fischer
Board Secretary: Cecilia R. Birdsell
Superintendent of Schools: Dr. Thomas L. Seidenberger
Business Manager: Debra A. Surdoval

Press Present: Loretta Fenstermacher, East Penn Press reporter

Mr. Earnshaw announced that the EHS Robotics Team, under the direction of Chemistry Teacher John Bradley, has qualified for the World Robotics Championship to be held in Atlanta this spring. Over the weekend the team competed in Hartford, CT and won the national title and the Inspire Award. In the words of the judges, “The Emmaus team is the prototype of what other teams should strive to be.” Last year the Steel Hornets team finished 13th in the world. Mr. Earnshaw said that the team is wished all the best in Atlanta.

2. Presentation:

-AIA Award of Merit for Eyer Middle School - Architects Paul Felder & George Moore, The Architectural Studio

Mr. Felder indicated that the Eyer project began as a collaborative effort with the Board, community, administration and faculty. He noted that Eyer faculty members Will Pike and Bill Weiant developed the prototype. He introduced George Moore, project architect, and, former EHS graduates and associates in The Architectural Studio, Ryan Kennedy and Heather Schmidt, Eyer Principal Dr. Doug Wells, and Will Pike. One of the major complaints about Eyer was the windowless, open concept format. The enrollment also doubled since the school was built so the building needed to be larger. The way the school was sited also posed security issues as well. Areas for storage and mechanical systems were put under the building. Using a series of slides, he noted how the architects had addressed opening the building up to natural light.

In May 2005, Plancon D for Eyer was developed and the cost was 24.5 million dollars. The building was actually bid a year later and came within 3% of the estimate. It was completed with the total change orders totaling $86,000. He felt that the building not only works for the children who go to it but also the taxpayers as well. He thanked the Board for the opportunity to work on the project. Adding it was a terrific project to work on. He received a round of applause.

Having children who attended before, during, and after the renovation, Mr. Earnshaw commented that it was a fantastic facility for education. He also noted that Dr. Wells and the staff did a wonderful job with working with the construction during the renovation to minimize the impact on students.

Mr. Policano wanted to know if there was information about how much the children’s scores have improved. Dr. Wells said scores have increased and can be found on the PDE website. He further stated that there was more behind the improvements than just the scores.

-Option for EHS Baseball Field - Craig Neeley, Emmaus Borough Manager

Using the attached power point presentation, Dr. Seidenberger highlighted the history of the baseball field project that had been approved by the Board on June 25, 2007. He explained that the original project was to be in Wescosville School and described the problems that arose that escalated the costs considerably.

Borough Manager Craig Neeley said the Emmaus Borough Baseball Field at Community Park has become somewhat standadard over the years. Dr. Seidenberger contacted Mr. Neeley and suggested that this might be an opportunity for the Borough and East Penn to work together for a mutual benefit. He said the first concern was how it would be funded. He indicated that he had contacted Lehigh County because the Borough had $500,000 allocated to it from the Green Future Fund established by Lehigh County as the result of a referendum. He advised Borough Council that at some point a use would need to be designated. He was told by the County that the baseball field project would be an acceptable use for these funds. He contacted baseball field designers and the Borough engineer looked at the site to determine how the field would be situated. He presented a drawing that was submitted showing the site. It was determined that the cost could go as high as $950,000 but, if pared down, it could be done for $750,000. He said $300,000 from the Green Future allocation could be used and the district could fund $300,000. In the 2010 Borough budget, $100,000 was allocated plus another $50,000. It is felt the $750,000 is an appropriate figure based on the economy and the needs of the Borough and the school district. From the Borough’s standpoint, it is a great opportunity to upgrade the fields and bring high school baseball back to the Borough of Emmaus. He felt it was a Win-Win situation. The school district will be granted the priority right to use the field and it would give the district a premiere facility for
baseball at a substantially less cost than the Wescosville site. The Borough would obtain an upgrade of the field, coupled with the great atmosphere of Community Park, and a top-notch facility that is available for school district use, Emmaus Youth Association, the people of Emmaus, and surrounding areas. It will bring people into town for all the right reasons. He said one Borough Council member did not support the concept but his question dealt with whether this is the best time to build a baseball field. He said the vast majority of Council supported this, adding that now is the time to do it if it can be done.

Dr. Seidenberger said one of his goals when he came to East Penn was to build a better working relationship with the Borough and Lower Macungie Township. He noted the examples of collaboration that have taken place over the years with the Borough and the school district. Mr. Neeley reviewed the scope of the project that will include regarding and replanting the field, a drainage system, bleachers, lights, and fencing. A snack bar and restrooms are currently in place and would not be incorporated with the baseball facilities. Dr. Seidenberger said an additional $100,000 would be allocated so another project would be to provide upgrades to the Williams Street softball field.

Dr. Seidenberger recapped the advantages of this collaboration - district use of the fields from the first day of practice to throughout the season, the attraction of District XI playoff games, and government cooperation. He noted that the jayvee baseball teams will still be able to play at Church Lane in Lower Macungie Township. Mr. Neeley said this is an example of governmental cooperation and how to save taxpayers money.

Mr. Earnshaw said the Board is not approving nor authorizing the project this evening. This is an informational presentation. Mr. Ballard thanked Mr. Neeley and Dr. Seidenberger for the spirit of cooperation, noting that the Borough and the district have a history of cooperation. He said this might be the time to get the best price for this work when contractors are looking for work. Ms. Gannon asked about the lease and costs involved. Mr. Neeley said it would be a very basic lease and cost would be minimal. Dr. Seidenberger said District Solicitor Marc Fisher and the Borough Solicitor could work together on drawing up an Agreement that would subsequently be acted on by the Board and Borough Council. It will probably be very simplistic. Ms. Gannon asked what would happen if the project has a cost overrun. Mr. Neeley said the project will be bid out and, if the project comes in higher, then they would not proceed with the project. In answer to a question from Ms. Heid, Dr. Seidenberger said at the June 25, 2007 meeting the Board authorized bid specifications and bids far exceeded the approved amount so the project did not move forward. As a seated board member at that time, Ms. Fuller said discussions began long before June 2007 and it was an issue that the Board was wrestling with for a number of years. There were impediments to the Wescosville site that were never anticipated and created an increase in costs. She thanked Mr. Neeley for the Borough’s cooperation in helping to meet the needs of all the children in East Penn. Mr. Stolz asked where the money would be coming from. Dr. Seidenberger responded that it will be coming from the Capital Reserve fund. Mr. Stolz asked if this would impact taxes. Dr. Seidenberger stated that the money has already been collected from taxpayers.

The audience applauded the presentation.

3. Requests to Address the Board

Mrs. Kathleen Mintzer, 524 North Street, Emmaus and President of the Emmaus Youth Association, spoke on behalf of the baseball community in support of the baseball field project. She thanked Dr. Seidenberger and Mr. Neeley for creating the partnership that will allow for the renovation and utilization of the field in Community Park. It will be a huge asset to the community and to the economy for the interest it will attract. It will also be great to have the Emmaus HS baseball team playing in Emmaus. She received a round of applause from the audience.

4. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Ballard, Seconded by Stolz
RESOLVED, That the East Penn Board of School Directors approve the minutes of the February 22, 2010 Board Meeting.

Mr. Policano said that Dr. Seidenberger said the Borough Manager would be attending this meeting but the minutes reflect Craig Neeley’s name and he did not think the name was mentioned.

This resolution was unanimously adopted by voice vote.

5. Report of the Superintendent of Schools - Dr. Thomas L. Seidenberger

1. District Update

In response to Mr. Policano’s question under the minutes, Dr. Seidenberger said he had mentioned Mr. Neeley’s name in reports to the Board.

Dr. Seidenberger said at the last meeting Mr. Tibbits had made comments and he contacted him after the meeting and had a pleasant conversation with him. He has a standing invitation to come in and meet with him. Dr. Seidenberger is still waiting to hear from him.
He called attention to the Shoemaker Art Club under the direction of Art Teacher Jeff Shreck and the art work on display at Rave Movie Theatre. On March 25 at 7:00 p.m., the Upper Perkiomen Board of School Directors is having a community forum on the pension issue.

He reported that Mrs. Kristen Campbell had a meeting with the local day care providers and discussed how the transition will take place. While the district will work with parents, there is a limit on the district’s responsibility. East Penn will probably provide some type of after school care at Willow Lane and work with a community group to accommodate the need.

He called attention to several articles in the Morning Call dealing with budget and pension issues.

2. Personnel

Motion by Ballard, Seconded by Richwine
RESOLVED, That the East Penn Board of School Directors approve the following personnel items:

Resignation

-Jessica Malewicz, Instructional Assistant at Wescosville School, effective March 8, 2010 (Exhibit 1)

Temporary Professional Employee Appointment

Name/Address: Angela Miksits
4440 Calvert Street, Center Valley 18034
Education Level: B. S. Degree (2007)
M. S. Degree (2009)
Undergraduate School: Kutztown University
Graduate School: East Stroudsburg University
Certification: Instructional I: Speech and Language Pathologist
Assignment: Speech Teacher, LMMS
Vacancy created by E. Wildonger resignation.
Effective: March 9, 2010
Experience:
6/07-6/09: Sayegh Pediatric Therapy Associates
10/00-4/03: Lifepath
Salary: $51,510 (Year 1, Col. M)

Additions to the 2009-2010 List of Per Diem Substitutes

- Sheryl Krissinger, Instructional/Staff Assistant
- Kathryn Higgins, Special Education, Elementary
- Rudolf Kline, Health/Physical Education
- Andrew Rohmann, Mathematics
- Teresa Bauernschmidt, School Nurse

Leave as Per Collective Bargaining Agreement

Employee: Megan Dunton
Elementary Teacher, Shoemaker School
Effective: March 29-June 18, 2010

General Leave of Absence

Employee: Jane Sullivan
Instructional Assistant, Eyer MS
Effective: March 8-31, 2010
Reference: Board Policy 539, General Leave

Co-Curricular Appointments

Erin Knecht
LMMS Softball, Volunteer
Alicia Essex
EHS B/G Track Volunteer

Educational Conferences (Exhibit 2)

That the East Penn Board of School Directors approve the estimated expenses for the individuals attending the educational conferences listed on Exhibit 2.

These resolutions were duly adopted by the following roll call vote:
Aye: Ballard, Earnshaw, Fuller, Gannon, Heid, Policano, Rhodes, Richwine, Stolz----------------------9

6. Other Educational Entities

-Carbon Lehigh Intermediate Unit

T. Richwine

Mr. Richwine announced that Dr. Elaine Eib, currently Superintendent in the Upper Dauphin School District, has been elected the new Executive Director. She is also an East Penn resident and will begin her tenure at the IU in April.

1. 2010-2011 Operations and Programs Services Budget

Motion by Richwine, Seconded by Stolz
RESOLVED, That the East Penn Board of School Directors approve the 2010-2011 Operations and Programs Services Budget of the Carbon Lehigh Intermediate Unit for the first year July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011.

Mr. Richwine explained that this is the only part of the IU budget voted on by sponsoring school districts. It is a formula driven budget. East Penn's share is $137,672 which is an increase of 2.9%.

This resolution was duly adopted by the following roll call vote:
Aye: Ballard, Earnshaw, Fuller, Gannon, Heid, Policano, Rhodes, Richwine, Stolz-------------------9

-Lehigh Career & Technical Institute

F. Fuller
A. Earnshaw
R. Heid
T. Richwine

Ms. Fuller said there was a lively discussion about the budget. However, the Southern Lehigh Board that is a strong supporter of LCTI voted against the budget because they did not feel that school districts were being asked to pay enough and felt there should be a larger contribution from each district to support the quality of the program. The JOC reaffirmed the PSBA Standards for Effective School Governance. The Summer Fun Camp for middle school students will begin this summer. It is a way for students to get an understanding of the many offerings at LCTI. She announced that Philadelphia Mayor Nutter and the Philadelphia Superintendent of Schools will be touring LCTI to see how the school is educating students.

7. Legislative

C. Ballard

Mr. Ballard said the State Legislature has been recessed until today (March 8). They have been holding hearings on the state budget and the pension crisis. PSBA has asked that Board's adopt the following resolution:

Motion by Ballard, Seconded by Richwine
WHEREAS, the Board of Directors of the Pennsylvania Public School Employees Retirement System (PSERS) has voted to increase the employer contribution to the system for the 2010-2011 school year to 8.22%, a 72% increase over the 2009-2010 rate; and

WHEREAS, the employer contribution rate is projected to increase sharply in the next four years, reaching a peak of 33.60% in the 2014-2015 school year; and

WHEREAS, the employer contribution rate is projected to remain over 30% until the year 2020; over 25% until the year 2027 and over 20% until the year 2032; and

WHEREAS, the projected increases in employer contribution would cost the East Penn School District and its taxpayers an additional 28 million dollars between the 2010-2011 school year and the 2014-2015 school year, and

WHEREAS, these projections present critical problems that effectively force the addition of significantly higher financial burdens on taxpayers, school districts and the commonwealth and consequently demand both a short-term and a long-term solution; and

WHEREAS, a meaningful solution to these problems must involve the identification of another funding source for PSERS, decreasing or cutting the costs/liabilities of the system, including benefit levels, and deferring the system's liabilities.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the board of school directors of the East Penn School District calls upon the General Assembly to begin immediate consideration of school employee pension reform with the dual purpose of reducing projected employer contribution rate increases over the next four years and reducing projected costs to school districts, taxpayers and the commonwealth over the next two decades, while maintaining an appropriate pension benefit school employees; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the General Assembly approve HB 2135 or SB 1185, both of which would make PSERS a hybrid defined benefits/defined contribution system for future school employees, as a potential solution to the long-term cost issues presented by projections in the employer contribution rate.

Mr. Stolz asked if there was any problem since the resolution was not on the agenda. Solicitor Fisher said there is no problem. In response to a question from Mr. Policano, Mr. Earnshaw indicated that this resolution is not binding and it is just urging the Legislature to take action. Ms. Gannon asked where the 28 million dollar figure originated. Business Manager Debra Surdoval indicated that she had given the figure to Mr. Ballard.

This resolution was duly adopted by the following roll call vote:
Aye: Ballard, Earnshaw, Fuller, Gannon, Heid, Policano, Rhodes, Richwine, Stolz----------------9

Mr. Ballard asked if the Board would be supportive of him being the PSBA Lehigh County Legislative Liaison, replacing Bob Bold of Parkland. The school district would host the Legislative Meeting for Lehigh County where local legislators are invited to attend. It is a chance for school directors to directly engage with legislators. Ms. Fuller said that after attending a number of these sessions she would welcome the opportunity to have it hosted at East Penn and to hear and voice concerns. There were no objections to Mr. Ballard pursing this opportunity.

8. Business Operations

1. Approval of Bill List

Motion by Ballard, Seconded by Stolz
RESOLVED, That the East Penn Board of School Directors approve the attached bill list, including the addenda, and that the Treasurer be authorized to issue checks and vouchers in the amounts indicated.

Ms. Fuller pointed out Headlands Realty Tax Assessment Refund on the addendum for the bill list for $158,071.84. Dr. Seidenberger indicated that all districts are facing this kind of activity, noting Southern Lehigh is in court on a case. Mr. Ballard pointed out the $100,000 in charter school payments. He said just the tax assessment refund and the charter school payments represent approximately a quarter million dollars in taxpayer’s money.

Disbursement of Funds - Exhibit 3
RESOLVED, That the East Penn Board of School Directors authorize the disbursement of funds from the 2009 GOB Issue as listed on Exhibit 3.

This resolution was duly adopted by the following roll call vote:
Aye: Ballard, Earnshaw, Fuller, Gannon, Heid, Policano, Rhodes, Richwine, Stolz----------------9

9. Announcements

Monday, March 8
7:30 p.m.-Board Meeting, Board Room
Staff In Service Day - No School for Students

Sunday, March 14
Daylight Savings Time Begins (Turn Clocks Ahead)

Thursday, March 18-20
EHS Drama Department presents “Sweeney Todd School Edition”
Thursday, March 18 - 8:00 p.m.
Friday, March 19 - 8:00 p.m.
Saturday, March 20 - 2:00 p.m. & 8:00 p.m.

March 22-26
Kindergarten Registration
Please see East Penn Website (eastpennsd.org) for registration Schedule and Details.

10. Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned, upon motion at 8:35 p.m.

Cecilia R. Birdsell, Board Secretary

March 8, 2010