

UNIONVILLE-CHADDS FORD SCHOOL DISTRICT
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SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Minutes
April 18, 2005

The April meeting of the Unionville-Chadds Ford School Board was held on Monday, April 18, 2005 in the Unionville High School LGI. Mr. Wandersee, President, called the meeting to order at 7:37p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Wandersee requested that the group stand for the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

The following members were present: Edward Wandersee, Keith Knauss, Kathleen Brown, Stephen McClaskey, Bruce Swayze, Corinne Sweeney, and Timotha Trigg. Also present were Dr. John Kenney, District Superintendent, Dr. Brenda O'Hern, Robert Cochran, David Dickens, Rich Hug, Thomas Marinelli, Dr. Jim Price, Charlene Stone, Bruce Vosburgh, Meghan Manning, substitute student representative, community residents, members of the press, and Denise Miller, recording secretary.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Wandersee introduced and thanked Meghan Manning for substituting as our student representative for Tim Minella this evening. Tim is visiting a college of his choice.

Mr. Ted Diehl, East Marlborough Township resident, stated that he would like us to keep Unionville-Chadds Ford number one and to keep our tax base fair by saying no to Act 72. Our school system is doing well (not broken) so don't fix it. School referendums will lower school quality. If referendum is as good as our government thinks it is, why doesn't our state budget go up for a referendum every year and why didn't Act 72 go up for public referendum?

RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

Mr. Diehl commented that he had resided in a school district that was very similar to ours and what went first under referendum were the sports and music programs, etc. Only the most wealthy of the wealthy would be able to keep their children playing football if the school couldn't fund it. He added that Referendums also distract school boards from doing their job and concentrating on the school system. He believes that Act 72 will not control school costs since it is just another unfunded mandate. As stated in the Board meeting last week, costs (i.e. medical) are rising at a greater amount than the index. As soon as you have to negotiate a contract, that will fall out of a loophole and when costs rise above the index, we won't be able to make that up. In essence, this is another unfunded mandate.

Mr. Diehl feels it's best when our school district is controlled by the people in it, not by the state. If gambling money becomes a reality, we'd be the last to get any of it since we are determined to be a wealthy school system.

**RESIDENTS'
COMMENTS
(Continued)**

The legislation is titled as a tax reduction act but for many people in this district, it will be a tax increase. If a 2-1/2% Earned Income Tax came true, everyone who nets over \$85,000, for every \$10,000 of that, they would see a \$250 tax burden (for a \$2,000 net increase in their taxes for a two-income family of about \$165,000). This is bad because many residents who work in Delaware may choose not to live here, which would result in everyone's house value decreasing. If you had a \$400,000 home and the value decreased by 5%, it would be as though someone took \$20,000 out of your pocket. He doesn't feel that is fair for people who made an investment based on certain rules that are now being changed by the government.

Mr. Diehl does not believe the gaming revenue is likely to occur because other states will do the same thing with gaming. He's seen evidence from the Board about what makes a school district perform well:

1. Pupil spending
2. Education level of the population
3. Poverty level

Our district does fairly well because the populous is well educated and most are pretty good income earners. The people who are employed at Aztra-Zeneca, DuPont, and in the banking business in Delaware will stay in Delaware and put their children into private schools there. This would hurt our school system and our property values.

He realizes that some people in our district do need help but it's not fair to place that burden on the backs of the current income earners. The government could have taken the excess gaming revenue and pointed it directly toward those people who need help. We are already paying 7.5% Social Security tax and may not see any of that money. Pensions are being diminished. Those on fixed incomes complain about the taxes but also their property values have skyrocketed quite a bit because of the current house prices. Therefore, they do have equity that could be liquidized.

If the system were to levy a tax on income, it would be more fair to tax total income not only earned income. Those who are working hard should not be penalized. He'd like U-CF to stay number one and hopes we do not experiment with the school district by opting in to this act.

Mr. Wandersee thanked him and stated that his comments were appreciated and that he has researched this well. He stated that if others in the audience wished to make comments, they should make them at the meeting on May 16th prior to the vote on Act 72. Also, the Board would appreciate e-mails whether they are pro or con.

**RESIDENTS'
COMMENTS
(Continued)**

Jack McDonough, East Marlborough Township resident, thanked the Board and the Superintendent's office for the addition of four modular classrooms. He also thanked the Superintendent's office for the staffing recommendations; particularly, to Dr. O'Hern for her recent assistance to the departments who were very badly in need of textbooks, etc. He asked the Board to carefully consider these well thought-out recommendations from the administration and accept them.

The only item from the high school that did not make it was the guidance counselor. Mr. McDonough asked that the Board consider that position. We have about five counselors for each 250 students, which is the national average. Many of our students apply to more colleges than in other schools, which makes it more difficult for our counselors. They are our ambassadors in cultivating relationships and helping to get that student into that school. He understands there are difficulties with that now because they just don't have the time. Mr. McDonough thanked the Board very much and stated that their work is quite an example of public service. He asked that they push the ball to the goal line.

Mr. Wandersee thanked Mr. McDonough and stated that he appreciated his comments and the information that he had provided to them earlier. He realizes that Mr. McDonough was at the Work Session on Monday night and observed that there are competing demands.

Bruce Yelton, Pocopson Township resident, commented that the longer he listened to the administrator's budget last week the more he realized it was more a wish list and not a budget proposal. He expects the Board to sharpen its pencils and make the hard but necessary decisions needed to restore responsible financial management to our district. Over a decade of operating fund increases that exceeded inflation by 50% annually is unacceptable. He would challenge the Board to adopt a 2005-2006 budget with no increases in expenditures. This is an achievable goal that should not affect the education of our students.

Mr. Wandersee thanked him for his comments and stated that he was also there at the Work Session to see the key needs and hear the discussion. What we saw were opposite points of view, which is healthy for a democracy.

Katy Donovan, East Marlborough Township resident, commented regarding the field situation. She stated that the 7th and 8th grade girl's field was turfed, so it's pretty much unusable. They're trying to use other fields. The 9th grade girl's lacrosse field is half a softball field so it's not entirely grass. Varsity field hockey uses a slanted field. Mrs. Donovan suggested that we should at least commission a study regarding conditions, use, and to plan forward, even if it does not make it into this budget.

Mr. Wandersee thanked Mrs. Donovan and stated that her comments were appreciated.

Sheila Himes, Pocopson Township resident, offered an opposing view regarding the budget. She suggested that when compiling the budget we make sure that we have a clear perspective of the class size at Hillendale Elementary. The solution at grade 3 was probably the best at that time but she hopes we properly budget for the right number of teachers. Although this means salaries and benefits, she is hoping we are not moving to a situation where we are going to allow 30 student per classroom knowingly and opt for part-time teachers just to reduce our budget. Unfortunately, it's not that easy to divide out the number of kids by the number of classrooms. Mrs. Himes hopes the Board and administration will focus on those ideal numbers that are better for our kids.

Also, she was not able to find this year's budget on the web site. Mr. Hug stated that the budget is not posted on the web site but is available at the District Office.

Mr. Wandersee thanked Mrs. Himes for her comments and stated that many Board members share her concerns. He stated that there would also be an opportunity at the close of the Board meeting for any additional comments.

It was moved by Dr. Sweeney and seconded by Mr. McClaskey to approve the Minutes for the March 28, 2005 Regular Meeting (pp. 3.a.1-18).

Motion carried (7-0).

The following committee meeting minutes were reviewed:

1. Curriculum Committee Meeting – April 11, 2005 (pp. 3.a.2.1-2)
2. Facilities Committee Meeting – March 9, 2005 (p. 3.a.2.3)

Mr. Wandersee requested that the Secretary file the committee minutes.

The following financial statements and reports were reviewed:

1. General Fund Treasurer's Report – March, 1005 (p. 3.b.1)
2. Year-to-Date Summary of Revenues – March 31, 2005 (p. 3.b.2)
3. Year-to-Date Summary of Expenditures – March 31, 2005 (p. 3.b.3)
4. Capital Projects Fund Report – March, 2005 (p. 3.b.4)
5. Construction Project Reports – March, 2005 (pp. 3.b.5-12)
 - a. Unionville Elementary School Project (pp. 3.b.5-6)
 - b. Chadds Ford Elementary School Project (pp. 3.b.7-8)
 - c. Pocopson Elementary School Project (pp. 3.b.9-10)
 - d. Stadium / Track Project (pp. 3.b.11-12)
6. Capital Projects Fund Report – March, 2005 (p. 3.b.13)
7. U-CF Cafeteria Service Profit & Loss Statement – February, 2005 (pp. 3.c.1-2)

Mr. Wandersee asked that the Secretary file the financial statements and the reports.

**RESIDENTS'
COMMENTS
(Continued)**

**MINUTES
APPROVED**

**FINANCIAL
STATEMENTS**

It was moved by Mr. McClaskey and seconded by Mr. Swayze to approve the Bill List dated April 7, 2005 in the amount of \$905,168.65 (pp. 3.d.1-17).

Motion carried (7-0).

It was moved by Mr. Knauss and seconded by Mrs. Brown to approve the Interested Parties for Summer Employment and the Returning Summer Employees for Buildings and Grounds as on the attachments (pp. 4.a.1-2). Mr. Wandersee commented that this is the first year that there is not a need to conduct a lottery since we need to employ all 20 individuals.

Motion carried (7-0).

Mr. Knauss reported that we are in the beginning stage of the High School HVAC Project. You will see a couple of construction trailers there for the project. We will come to the May meeting for the funds to furnish those classrooms that we just purchased.

Mrs. Brown stated that there were no action items for Curriculum this evening. There will be some things at the next meeting.

It was moved by Mr. Wandersee and seconded by Dr. Sweeney to approve the Chester County Intermediate Unit #24's 2005-2006 Core Services Budget in the amount of \$11,029,347. Mr. Wandersee commented that Chester County School Districts' Contribution to Core is \$603,727 (U-CF's share is \$44,312 – U-CF's share in 2004-05 was \$44,312 for a 0% increase/decrease).

Motion carried (7-0).

It was moved by Mr. Wandersee and seconded by Mr. Knauss to approve the 2005-2006 Occupational Education Budget in the amount of \$15,255,927. Mr. Wandersee commented that Chester County School Districts' Contribution to Occupational Education is \$12,555,077 (U-CF's share is \$213,078 – U-CF's share for 2004-05 was \$215,814 for a decrease of 1.3%).

Motion carried (7-0).

BILLS PAID

FACILITIES:

**Summer
Maintenance
Employees**

**H.S. HVAC
Project**

CURRICULUM

FINANCE:

**C.C.I.U. Core
Budget for
2005-06**

**Occupational
Education
Budget for
2005-06**

It was moved by Dr. Sweeney and seconded by Mrs. Brown to approve the following personnel item (agenda item 7.a):

- a. Professional Conferences
 - 1. Approve attendance at Professional Conferences as on the attachments (pp. 7.a.1-2), with the exception of Item 2. on p. 7.a.1 (11 conferences total)

Motion carried (7-0).

It was moved by Dr. Sweeney and seconded by Mrs. Brown to approve the following personnel items (agenda items 7.c. through 7.f and 7.g.2-3):

- c. Resignations (4)
 - 1. Mary Ellen Garvin – Unionville Elementary School Paraprofessional, effective May 13, 2005
 - 2. Lancaster Womack – Chadds Ford Elementary Custodian, effective April 1, 2005
 - 3. Deborah Dougherty – Bus Driver, effective April 8, 2005
 - 4. Donna Conner – Unionville High School Paraprofessional, effective April 7, 2005
- d. Reclassification (1)
 - 1. George Konstantopoulos – from part-time Bus Driver to full-time Bus Driver, effective March 1, 2005
- e. Substitutes (2)
 - 1. Linda Demrick – Support Staff
 - 2. Judith Benner - French
- f. Supplemental Contracts (6)
 - 1. Roxanne Seidel – High School Winter Cheerleading Coach
 - 2. Charlie Lewis – High School Assistant Track Coach
 - 3. Wendy Wells – Middle School Track Coach
 - 4. Syd White – High School Indoor Track Coach (partial)
 - 5. Dori Ray – High School Earth Club (aka SAVE)
 - 6. Nancy Downs – Mentor (1/2 year)
- g. Employ (2)
 - 2. Claude Davis – Patton Middle School Custodian, effective March 7, 2005, at a salary of \$12.22 per hour
 - 3. Leon Bartley – Unionville High School Custodian, effective March 21, 2005 at a salary of \$11.86 per hour

Motion carried (7-0).

PERSONNEL:

**PROFES-
SIONAL
CONFERENCES**

RESIGNATIONS

M. Garvin

L. Womack

D. Dougherty

D. Conner

**RECLASSIFI-
CATION:**

**G. Konstanto-
poulos**

SUBSTITUES

**SUPPLE-
MENTAL
CONTRACTS**

EMPLOY:

C. Davis

L. Bartley

Personnel (Continued)

It was moved by Dr. Sweeney and seconded by Mrs. Brown to approve the following personnel item:

- g. Employ (1)
 - 1. Clifton Beaver – Unionville Elementary Principal, effective July 1, 2005, at a salary of \$102,000

Mr. Wandersee requested that Mr. Beaver and his wife stand. They were welcomed to the district.

Motion carried (7-0).

Mr. Swayze reported for Transportation regarding:

1. Clean Diesel for Kids Grant – Has been approved and the filters will be installed over the summer. He stated that there was a lot of work involved by Gail Wolfel in obtaining this grant in excess of \$200,000. Thirty-one buses will be retrofitted and many of the 23 remaining buses are scheduled to be retired and our new buses will already be outfitted with this new filter system. The grant also pays \$350 of the \$6,016 cost to fuel each bus with new ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel.
2. Chester County Safety Competition – 14 of our bus drivers will compete this year on Saturday, April 30 at CAT-Brandywine in Coatesville. The public is welcome to watch and cheer for the drivers (160 from 12 school districts in Chester County). The top scoring drivers will represent Chester County at the state competition at Penn State in June.
3. Commemorative Postage Stamp – A national campaign has been started to recognize the nation's school bus drivers. This would be in memory of a driver from Tennessee who was shot and killed by a student on her bus on March 2, 2005.
4. House Bill 641 – Would require all school buses to be equipped with a device mounted in the inside rear of the school bus to be deactivated by the driver after the school bus is turned off (NTSA has concerns for children who have been left on school buses in recent years).

Mrs. Trigg stated that there were no items regarding Policy tonight.

**PERSONNEL
(Continued)**

EMPLOY:

**C. Beaver –
Principal/
Unionville
Elementary
School**

**TRANSPOR-
TATION**

BOARD POLICY

Meghan Manning, Student Representative substitute, reported regarding the following items:

1. Student Congress – the high school is in the beginning stage of creating this so that instead of bringing all of their complaints to the Board, they could solve them within their building through the teachers, administration, paraprofessionals and custodial staff. Letters will go out this week and we'll be meeting in May with the newly-elected Student Council President, parents and Mr. Batchelor, who will be the head of this group.
2. School Board Representative – We'll have a new representative at the next meeting after elections.

Meghan thanked everyone for inviting her tonight. She stated that Mrs. Brown has really helped the students with how they can be a liaison to the Board as well.

There was no report for the Center for Arts and Technology/ Special Education/Intermediate Unit this evening.

Mr. Wandersee reported for Communications regarding the rescheduled date for the P.T.O. Advisory Committee meeting (from May 2). It is tentatively scheduled to be held on Monday, April 25, 2005 at 7:30 p.m. in the Unionville High School Library Classroom. Mr. Baker will confirm this to the committee members. They should e-mail any agenda items to Mr. Baker.

Mr. Wandersee reported for Legislation regarding the following items:

1. Legislative Breakfast – May 13 at the Sheraton Great Valley. Board members who will be attending should advise Denise Miller regarding registration. It is important for Board members to attend this meeting since we do get a pretty good attendance by legislators from our state in our area and county.
2. PSBA – Held their Region 15 meeting for Delaware County and Chester County on April 7, 2005. Mr. Wandersee attended the dinner as the U-CF representative. Although there was not a formal vote, all of the school districts individually opposed Act 72 in a general sense.

The bigger thing to report for the Board's interest as well is for PSBA in their suit to postpone the Act 72 requirements for one year. They feel strongly about that but are in a difficult position with 501 school districts who have a broad cross-section of economic and education backgrounds across the state.

**STUDENT
REPRESENTATIVE
REPORT**

**C.A.T./
SPECIAL
ED. / I.U.**

**COMMUNI-
CATIONS**

**LEGISLATIVE
REPORT**

Legislative Report (Continued)

At that meeting, for information purposes, two-thirds (2/3) of the school districts felt that we should have the vote and get it behind us. One-third (1/3) of them would like more time. It appears that there will not be a postponement until next year. We will take our vote on Act 72 at the Board meeting on May 16, 2005.

3. Other Items – Other things are basically slow except the argument over the Governor’s budget, which is not gong to affect us one way or the other. We’ll receive 1-1/2% in basic education and special education.

Dr. Kenney provided the Superintendent’s report:

1. Sam Bressler, Korona Doraswaimi – Their book reports were published in The Daily Local News (Supernaturalist – Sam; The Diary of Anne Frank – Korona). Congratulations!
2. PSSA’s - Across the district, you may have heard a giant exhaling because the tests are over. We indicated in the last newsletter that Unionville-Chadds Ford was #1 in the state but we were looking for confirmation of our analysis. In the past, Pennsylvania had involved Standard & Poors in calculating proficiency levels, scaled scores, how districts spend their money, etc. The state no longer does that but the Gates Foundation has donated a lot of money towards that cause. The website is SchoolMatters.com. It is good to look for the better performers, and in his review, Dr. Kenney found zero school districts with higher performance in overall reading and math!

Dr. Kenney watched our kids participate on our grass fields and they are doing quite well. There are about 44 days left for students. We’re looking forward to the end of the school year for the young people who are a little tired.

Katy Donovan, East Marlborough Township resident, commented that she had been a member of the Search Committee for the Principal of Unionville Elementary School and wanted to officially welcome Mr. Beaver to the district. She is very excited to have him with us. Mrs. Donovan thanked Mr. Marinelli and Dr. O’Hern and feels that we got the best candidate.

**LEGISLATIVE
REPORT
(Continued)**

**SUPER-
TENDENT’S
REPORT**

**RESIDENTS’
COMMENTS**

Vic Dupuis, East Marlborough Township resident, stated that he was thinking earlier this evening about the constituencies we represent; mostly, the students, and the teachers, the rest of the district staff, parents and taxpayers. He is hard pressed to find any of them who are advantaged by Act 72. When you look at the limitations that it places on the Board to increase revenue without a General Election vote as far as referendum is concerned, it will force the Board to up the budget to the index limit each year just to reserve funds for those tougher years.

For instance, how is a teacher going to benefit from a plan that prevents the School Board from increasing taxes unless retirement expenses increase more than 7-1/2%? He knows how the state pension plan works and there is no surplus in the plan right now. There is still not enough of a deficit that they're going to increase beyond 7-1/2%. Clearly, the state is going to look politically to avoid the problem of tax increases by limiting increases in assessments to 7-1/2% or less. How about the students in the IEP and Gifted Programs where we would have to increase it more than 10% before we could get an exception?

There are way too many constituent problems with Act 72. Some would benefit from a short-term tax savings but the reality is that any savings they realize will be evaporated. He encouraged the Board to vote against Act 72. Mr. Dupuis encouraged everyone to come to the Walk-through (for After-Prom) on May 21st.

Mr. Wandersee thanked Mr. Dupuis for his comments regarding Act 72.

Mrs. Trigg thanked Meghan for her update and letting them know what she is working on with the Student Congress. She also welcomed Mr. Beaver to the District.

Dr. Sweeney thanked Meghan Manning for substituting as Student Representative this evening. She stated that it was a pleasure to have her here. Dr. Sweeney also extended her welcome to Mr. Beaver as our new Principal.

Mr. McClaskey welcomed Cliff Beaver to U-CF. He stated that it was a pleasure to serve on the Search Committee that interviewed four very well-qualified individuals for the position. We're fortunate to have Cliff join our three other outstanding principals.

He announced the upcoming budget meetings on May 2 (7:00 p.m., Unionville High School LGI room) and on May 16 (7:30 p.m. in the UHS LGI Room). The regular meeting on May 16th will include the big vote on Act 72 and Mr. McClaskey encouraged everyone to attend the meeting. He also encouraged parents who have middle and high school students to attend the ongoing parent liability discussion on Thursday at 7:30 p.m.

**RESIDENTS'
COMMENTS
(Continued)**

**BOARD
MEMBERS'
COMMENTS**

Mr. Knauss thanked Meghan for substituting this evening. He stated that we are glad to have Mr. Beaver as our new Principal at Unionville Elementary School.

Mr. Knauss commented regarding Act 72, stating that the most contentious portion is the referendum. It was very interesting two weeks ago when Senator Brightbill introduced legislation that would limit the Governor's spending to an inflationary index. The Governor was quoted in the Philadelphia Inquirer as saying that referenda for him are bad and would be characterized as an albatross but yet he thinks it's just fine for us.

Mrs. Brown welcomed Mr. Beaver to Unionville-Chadds Ford and looks forward to having him in our school system. She asked that members of the community let the Board know their feelings about Act 72 as soon as possible. She has received very little input from anyone and would like to be able to say that most of her constituents felt a certain way. She can't see how we're going to get through everything in the next month. She asked that everyone contact her by e-mail or by phone.

Mr. Wandersee thanked Meghan Manning for being here tonight. He welcomed Mr. Beaver to his new position as Principal of Unionville Elementary School. Mr. Wandersee commented regarding the history at Chadds Ford Elementary on Thursday night. He was very pleased with everyone who worked with the Chadds Ford Historical Society. The event was well attended and he appreciates Charlene Stone's support and help. If anyone has an opinion regarding Act 72, the Board would love to have it. He agrees with Mrs. Brown that we need to feel comfortable about what we do.

Mr. Wandersee thanked the teachers for being here this evening. He wishes they would come out every night and not just when we hire a principal.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen M. Brown
Secretary

**BOARD
MEMBERS'
COMMENTS
(Continued)**

**MEETING
ADJOURNED**