

NEW HOPE-SOLEBURY SCHOOL DISTRICT
December 7, 2015

A Reorganization Meeting of the New Hope-Solebury School District Board of Directors was held in the District Office Conference Room on Monday, December 7, 2015. Mr. Lechman, Board Secretary, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and announced the meeting was being audio recorded. The 8th grade cyber pilot students led members and guests in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Secretary then called roll.

Members present: Mrs. Deussing, Mr. Dougherty, Mrs. Keyes, Mrs. Weisbrot

Members absent: Mr. Adar, Mr. Harraka, Mr. Hayden, Mr. Kearney, Mr. Kelley

Administrators present: Mr. Hansel, Mrs. Keller, Mr. Lechman, Mr. Lieberman, Dr. McKenna, Mr. Radaszkiewicz, Mr. Silver, Dr. Yanni

Board Reorganization

A. Elect Temporary President

Mr. Lechman asked for nominations for Temporary President. Mrs. Keyes nominated Mrs. Deussing.

Upon a motion by Mrs. Keyes, the Board voted to close nominations and elected Mrs. Deussing as Temporary President. Mrs. Deussing was seated.

B. Oath of Office Administered to Elected Board Members

Mrs. Deussing administered the Oath of Office and presented Certificates of Election to new board members.

C. New Board Members Were Seated

D. Elect School Board President

Public Comment

Mr. Marcus commented that the policy in place provides that a board member must have one year prior service; stated it systematically disenfranchises all of the new board members; stated the policy is unfair and inconsistent with the statute that provides specifically that the President and Vice President be selected from the members of the Board, not those that have been in place for one year.

Mr. Band commented the policy in place now is a one size fits all policy and does not speak to individual differences; stated the policy believes that all new members of the Board are not ready to take on the role of Board President; stated to deny those people ready now for the opportunity, denies the children of their

expertise; stated all board members are seen in the eyes of the law as equal, duly elected and should have equal opportunity.

Mrs. Deussing asked for nominations for Board President.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Capriotti, seconded by Mr. Cowell, the Board voted per Policy 003, subsection Suspension, to suspend Policy 005, subsection Officers, for this meeting with a recommendation that such suspension be permanent.

Board Discussion

Mr. Dougherty commented that this has been a policy since 1993, initially suggested by the Pennsylvania School Boards Association, it has been standard board operating procedure for over 22 years, it was revised and updated in 2006; commented that to change it now would fly in the face of precedent and is a divisive move; commented that directors come and go and in his time on the Board has seen five; commented this would establish a pattern of jumping back and forth; stated it is on the books to establish continuity from one board to the next; commented there is also a learning curve, and until you are on the Board for at minimum six to nine months and have been through executive sessions, you do not realize the full responsibility and the amount of information you will be absorbing; commented that Pennsylvania is not New Jersey and the rules and policies are different; commented that this is for the benefit of the district.

Mrs. Deussing commented that there is without a doubt at least a six month learning curve; talked about attending a weekend of board training; commented there is institutional knowledge that takes some time to learn; commented that New Hope-Solebury is different than any other school district and that is something to seriously consider.

Mr. Cowell stated the motion is to suspend for this meeting; commented that those on the board have been there for two years and would think that two years make you skilled enough to run a Board of Education; stated the superintendent is expected to advise regarding educational issues, not the board members; stated we have a solicitor here tonight because a solicitor knows Pennsylvania School Law better than any of the board members; stated the motion says suspend, not to change it forever.

Mrs. Deussing discussed reorganizing every year, that next year if the nine board members decide someone has gathered enough institutional knowledge, understands New Hope-Solebury, understands the kids wants and needs, and the Board decides that someone else is fit to be president for the next year, that is why the Board organizes from year to year; commented it gives new board members the opportunity to gain institutional knowledge, to go to board trainings, to learn what New Hope-Solebury in its executive session is about for all of our children, and then to say next year you are fit and we would be proud to have you represent our Board as President.

Mr. Cowell asked if executive sessions in this district are different than any other school district.

Mrs. Deussing stated they are specific to this district.

Mr. Dougherty discussed that there have been board organizations over a 22 year period and that this has never been done before; questioned what the incoming members believe is so special about changing this policy at this moment; stated it sets a bad precedent and is a divisive start.

Mrs. Deussing stated that we are a team of nine and that we will agree to disagree on many issues but we are here to do what's best for the students and the community, so if on day one you are coming in thinking that this is a 5-4 split and this is how we are going to work through the next year, it's very divisive.

Further discussion ensued concerning the experience of board members and the pros and cons of suspending the policy.

Public Comment

Mr. Marcus reiterated that the state statute specifically states that at the organization meeting the Board shall select from its members, not the members that have been in office a year, and does not require a one year of prior experience as a condition precedent.

Mr. Band stated that when the new board members were sworn in that they swore to uphold the laws of the United States Constitution and the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the four board members elected two years ago took a similar oath; stated it is incumbent upon all to uphold the law.

Mrs. McDonough commented that as a member of the public she sees very talented people sitting at the table but is seeing this division and that all should realize they are here for the same purpose....to do what is best for the school district; stated that things change all the time and that many times change can affect the world in a positive manner.

Additional Board Discussion

Mrs. Deussing asked Mr. Cowell how he would feel if in two years when new board members come on, if there is a gentlemen who feels like he has more experience than you; commented that if the policy was suspended for this appointment, that in two years you would be covered.

Mr. Dougherty commented that the board you start with is not necessarily the board you finish with; stated there could be a new board member taking the oath within six months and there will be pressure on that person on how they would treat this board operating procedure.

Mr. Capriotti clarified that his motion was suspension of the policy for this meeting with a recommendation that such suspension be permanent.

Mrs. Deussing asked Mr. Capriotti if a new person comes on the board within six months that he would be okay with suspending this policy.

Mr. Capriotti stated that it would be a year from now that it could be a brand new person to the board that the Board would vote collectively to pick a person.

Mr. Dougherty stated regarding policy changes, it normally originates with the Policy Committee where it is discussed and reviewed and check with administration with their position towards it; it normally takes weeks or months to go to the board level; stated upon taking your oath you are dropping this process, without any of the normal vetting.

Mr. Cowell stated it is a board by-law not a district policy.

Additional Public Comment

Mrs. Stiefel stated as a member of the public she understood that a substantive change would be on the agenda ahead of time, and people who wanted to discuss that would show up at the Board meeting or the Policy Committee meeting; stated having no notice to the public is concerning to her.

Mr. Cowell stated that at any board meeting a policy can be suspended and gave an example.

Mrs. Learmonth stated that this one of those times to use common sense, practicality, and judgement and to adhere to something just because it is there is purposeless; commented that it may be that the four sitting board members came to the meeting with a certain expectation and that the expectation is dashed.

Mr. Marcus stated the recommendation that the suspension be made permanent would have to be presented to the Policy Committee, it would have to be put on the agenda at a subsequent meeting and voted upon; stated tonight's suspension is not permanent and the recommendation that it be made permanent is not with this vote; it would have to go to the Board and be put on the agenda.

Mr. Lechman clarified that a yes vote is to **suspend** the policy:

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Capriotti	Yes
Mr. Cowell	Yes
Mrs. Deussing	No
Mr. Dougherty	No
Mrs. Gormley	Yes
Mrs. Keyes	No

Mr. McDonough	Yes
Mrs. Povacz	Yes
Mrs. Weisbrot	No

Motion passed.

Mrs. Deussing asked nominations for Board President.

Mrs. Weisbrot nominated Mr. Dougherty.
Mr. Capriotti nominated Mr. Cowell.

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Keyes, seconded by Mr. Cowell, the Board voted to close nominations and vote for either Mr. Dougherty or Mr. Cowell.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Capriotti	Mr. Cowell
Mr. Cowell	Mr. Cowell
Mrs. Deussing	Mr. Dougherty
Mr. Dougherty	Mr. Dougherty
Mrs. Gormley	Mr. Cowell
Mrs. Keyes	Mr. Dougherty
Mr. McDonough	Mr. Cowell
Mrs. Povacz	Mr. Cowell
Mrs. Weisbrot	Mr. Dougherty

President final count is:

Mr. Cowell – 5 votes
Mr. Dougherty – 4 votes

Mr. Cowell was elected President and seated.

E. Elect School Board Vice President

Mr. Cowell asked for nominations for Vice President.

Mrs. Deussing nominated Mr. Dougherty, seconded by Mrs. Weisbrot.
Mrs. Povacz nominated Mr. Capriotti, seconded by Mrs. Gormley.

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Keyes, seconded by Mrs. Deussing, the Board voted to close nominations and vote for either Mr. Dougherty or Mr. Capriotti.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Capriotti	Mr. Capriotti
Mr. Cowell	Mr. Capriotti
Mrs. Deussing	Mr. Dougherty
Mr. Dougherty	Mr. Dougherty
Mrs. Gormley	Mr. Capriotti
Mrs. Keyes	Mr. Dougherty
Mr. McDonough	Mr. Capriotti

Mrs. Povacz Mr. Capriotti
Mrs. Weisbrot Mr. Dougherty

Vice President final count is:

Mr. Capriotti – 5 votes

Mr. Dougherty – 4 votes

Mr. Capriotti was elected Vice President and seated.

New Business

Discussion/Information Item

- Proposed 2016 School Board Meeting Schedule

Mr. Yanni discussed that the proposed 2016 School Board Meeting Schedule was attached and would be brought forward for Board action at the December 21, 2015 Board meeting.

Mr. Cowell thanked everyone for their support; stated we have a big job ahead of us, especially in the areas of finance, facilities, and policy; stated committee work is critical and that there will be some changes in how that work will be accomplished; encouraged anyone from the public who would like to become a member of a committee to please let the Board know; stated he is looking toward everyone on the Board to work together and that we are all here to make the district the very best; stated the new leadership of the Board sits before you tonight and through conservative fiscal management, strategic planning, educational vision, parental input, and just plain hard work will make this district the best it can be; stated he will pass out a committee information sheet for review with the Board and all committees need to meet as close to the monthly board meeting as possible; asked that the Board submit committee membership and chairman requests as soon as possible but no later than Thursday; stated that there will be a Finance Committee meeting scheduled for next Wednesday; asked the Superintendent to reach out to last year's committee members to see if they wish to continue serving on the committee; asked for a resolution to reappoint all of last year's Finance Committee members pending their wish to serve.

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Povacz, seconded by Mr. Capriotti, the Board voted to reappoint all of last year's Finance Committee members pending confirmation of their wish to serve. Those members include: Jeffrey Kearney, Ellen Steifel, Marcus Peckman, James Trammel, and Scott Kelley.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Capriotti	Yes
Mrs. Deussing	Yes
Mr. Dougherty	Yes
Mrs. Gormley	Yes
Mrs. Keyes	Yes
Mr. McDonough	Yes

Mrs. Povacz	Yes
Mrs. Weisbrot	Yes
Mr. Cowell	Yes

Motion passed.

Mr. Cowell also requested that at the Finance Committee meeting he would like to have a budget transfer report ready and would suggest how to do that.

Mr. Cowell stated that after this meeting, the Superintendent, Vice President and President will need to choose one day a week to meet.

Mr. Cowell passed out information about the committees for 2016 and read it aloud. The committees are:

- Finance
- Facilities
- Policy and Human Resources
- Special Education
- Curriculum Advisory
- Student Athletics/Activities

There will also be representatives for:

- BCIU
- MBIT
- PSBA

The Community Engagement Committee will be considered Ad Hoc until its purpose can be explained.

Board Discussion (Agenda Items Only)

Mrs. Deussing stated she liked the new committees and asked if we need to vote on adding/deleting new committees.

Mr. Cowell stated a vote was not necessary.

Public Comment (Agenda Items Only)

None

Agenda Action Items

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Deussing, seconded by Mrs. Weisbrot, the Board voted to accept all agenda items as noted.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Capriotti Yes
 Mrs. Deussing Yes
 Mr. Dougherty Yes
 Mrs. Gormley Yes
 Mrs. Keyes Yes
 Mr. McDonough Yes
 Mrs. Povacz Yes
 Mrs. Weisbrot Yes
 Mr. Cowell Yes

A. Finance

1. Appoint the elected Board President, Mr. Cowell, and the elected Board Vice President, Mr. Capriotti, as check signers on the General and Capital Reserve Funds.
2. Appoint the School Board Secretary, Mr. Lechman, as signer on all other funds with elected Board President, Mr. Cowell, and the elected Board Vice President, Mr. Capriotti, as alternate signers.

B. Personnel

1. Ratify/approve the following personnel actions, contingent upon meeting all requirements of law and district policy:

RESIGNATION	POSITION	EFFECTIVE
Lewis, Jan	Cafeteria Worker	1/18/16

REASSIGNMENTS/ TRANSFERS	FROM	TO	EFFECTIVE	SALARY
Karidas, Maria	Instructional Assistant MS	Special Education Teacher - Grade 7 MS LTS	10/19/15 – TBD	\$248.25 per diem
McBride, Joyce	Non-Instructional Assistant – 4 hour MS	Admin. Assist. To Principal Full time MS LTS	11/23/15-1/4/16	\$17.77/hour
McCloskey, Mary	Registered Nurse Substitute	Registered Nurse - Part Time (.5)	12/7/15	\$24.05/hour

APPOINTMENTS	POSITION	REASON	EFFECTIVE	SALARY	BENEFITS
Kopp, Mark	Instructional Assistant UES LTS	Student need	10/19/15- 1/22/16	\$14.34/hour	No
Wallace, Patricia	Registered Nurse Substitute	Substitute	12/8/2015	\$22.00/hour	No

Public Comment (Non-Agenda Items)

None

Board Discussion

None

Superintendent Yanni welcomed the five new board members and stated he was looking forward to working with all board members. .

Adjournment

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Deussing, seconded by Mrs. Weisbrot, the Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:17 p.m.

The Board convened an Executive Session following the meeting to discuss legal matters.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Lechman
Board Secretary