

**BETHLEHEM AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD FACILITIES COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JULY 12, 2010**

Mrs. Michele Cann, Facilities Chairperson of the Board of School Directors, called the meeting of the Board Facilities Committee to order at 6:03 p.m. on Monday, July 12, 2010, in the Auxiliary Gym of Broughal Middle School. Present were School Board members Loretta Leeson, Judith Dexter, William Burkhardt, Michele Cann, Rosario Amato, Irene Follweiler, Aurea Ortiz, and Eugene McKeon. Also present were Dr. Thomas Persing, acting superintendent of schools; Stacy Gober, assistant to the superintendent for finance and administration; Scott T. Gilliland, director of facilities and operations; Arif Fazil, D'Huy Engineering, Inc.; Ann Behers, operations manager; Edward Docalovich, principal of Broughal Middle School; and representatives from the press.

The following items were discussed:

A presentation of the Broughal Middle School Planetarium was shown to all attendees. Mr. Joseph Santoro, retired principal of Broughal Middle School, Mr. James Kelly and Ms. Serena Calario explained and demonstrated how the planetarium projector and software worked. Mr. Santoro stated that curriculum was written for Broughal Middle School students specifically for the software that is used in conjunction with the projector. He also explained that staff members who will be using the planetarium are currently being trained or will be trained through the Spitz Institute.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR TO VISITORS –

None.

DISCUSSION ITEMS –

Mrs. Cann asked Mr. Santoro if there were any additional items that he would like to discuss regarding the planetarium [item number three on the agenda, Planetarium Discussion].

Mr. Santoro answered that no further discussion was necessary.

Mr. Gilliland then explained item number four on the agenda, Liberty High School Baseball Netting. He said that based on recent incidents involving foul balls at the field, the district's insurance carrier has suggested installing a dome backstop or netting system that will help to prevent foul balls from leaving the field area. As of this date, the insurance company has stated that they will not pull the district's policy if this project is not completed, but they do highly recommend that this is done as the foul balls create a liability. Mr. Gilliland explained that the project being suggested will be a forty foot high netting system at an estimated cost of \$40,000.

Mr. Amato stated that there were similar issues with a baseball field at Wilson High School. They installed a netting system as well, and now think that the better option would have been to

extend the backstop into a dome. He suggested extending the existing fence into a dome backstop that will prevent the fly balls from leaving the area rather than to invest money in the netting. He also believed that extending the existing backstop would be a less expensive option.

Mr. Fazil said that he did investigate both options, but the existing backstop would need to be removed and replaced as it will not support the additional fencing that would need to be added to create a dome backstop. The netting was determined to be the most cost effective option.

Mr. Amato was concerned that the netting will deteriorate over time and requested Mr. Fazil to investigate the cost of replacing the existing backstop with a dome-like backstop. He said that it may be cheaper in the long run to replace the backstop.

Mr. Fazil said that he will conduct additional research and will bring the estimated costs back to the board for their review.

Mrs. Leeson asked how this proposed project will be funded.

Mrs. Gober said that it could be funded through bond funds.

Mr. Burkhardt said that the baseball field has been used for over eighty years. He wanted to know why the foul balls were just now becoming an issue.

Mr. Gilliland said that insurance carriers are “stepping up their efforts” and are reviewing accident reports and claims as well as conducting site visits. Mr. Gilliland said that the insurance company cannot require the district to install the nets, but they are urging us to.

Mr. Burkhardt asked if all three incidents with the foul balls have occurred within the last year. He also asked if the nets will be on a pulley system.

Mr. Gilliland answered that the incidents have taken place over the past few years.

Mr. Fazil said that the nets will be able to be removed, but will more than likely stay up for the entire baseball season. The option that he was considering was a permanent netting system, but overtime, the nets do deteriorate and are less permanent than fencing.

Mr. Amato asked if Freedom High School has the same problems with their field.

Mr. Gilliland said that the baseball fields at Freedom High School are less congested. The fencing was also raised by the seating area to prevent balls from leaving the field.

Mr. McKeon said that he would like to see the permanent dome installed rather than the netting.

Mrs. Cann requested Mr. Fazil to further research the cost of a dome backstop and bring the cost back to the board for their review.

Mr. Fazil then explained item number five on the agenda, Energy Update. He showed the board a PowerPoint presentation that outlined the schedule, tasks, and education portion of the energy plan. He said that D'Huy Engineering, Inc. (DEI) will be working with the board in the near future to compile and implement an energy policy and guidelines. Mr. Fazil also noted that DEI has ordered sample educational packets that will be reviewed with the Curriculum and Instruction office to see how energy education can be built into the curriculum. The energy audits have also been started, and the district's energy data will be input into the SchoolDude Utility Direct software. The data will then be uploaded from Utility Direct to the Energy Star software. Mr. Fazil said that the district has recently received word that the grants for solar projects have been awarded. He noted that it was fortunate that the board made a prompt decision to allow the administration to apply for the grants as there are now no more funds available under that particular grant. Mr. Fazil said that more information will be provided to the board on the grant awards as it becomes available.

Mrs. Dexter asked if the district applied for a grant to cover the cost of the energy audit.

Mr. Fazil answered that DEI met with PPL key account executives to discuss the incentive programs. It was determined that the Custom Incentive Program, the program designed by PPL for offsetting the cost of energy audits, is not tailored toward the types of studies that the district is doing. He explained that that program was designed toward industrial commercial systems that are not part of the standard incentives that are offered. Mr. Fazil said that there were other rebates that were offered that DEI was going to be pursuing, but the district is not eligible for a grant to cover the cost of the energy audit.

Mr. Gilliland said that he recently attended a conference at Tangent Energy Solutions, Inc. He said that if any board members were interested in viewing the type of solar panels that the district will be installing, he would arrange for another conference at Tangent. Mr. Gilliland said that in the agenda packet, he has included information on the grants that were recently awarded throughout Pennsylvania as well as a summary of the district's grants.

Mrs. Follweiler said that she had concerns about the fact that the grants that were recently awarded are now no longer available. She asked if that statement was correct. She also wanted to verify the estimate of \$1.8 million was what the district was going to receive toward the solar projects, and also that the \$7.1 million project cost would be paid back over the full length of the project.

Mr. Fazil answered that the grant applications for the next deadline are no longer being accepted as there is no more money to be awarded. The estimated \$1.8 million will be used toward the approved five solar projects. The \$7.1 million is being financed through Tangent Energy Solutions, Inc. The grant allows Tangent to offset the cost that the district will pay for energy per kilowatt hour which has been defined in the approved agreement with Tangent Energy Solutions, Inc. The agreement is \$0.09 per kilowatt hour for all projects except Freedom High School, which will be billed at the rate of \$0.10 per kilowatt hour.

Mr. Gilliland then introduced agenda item A, Authorization to Restore Capital Reserve Funds – Railing Repairs – Freedom High School – Change Order Deduct. He explained that the district will be receiving a credit of \$2,088 from A.P. Houser, Inc. Agenda item B, Quotations for the \$5,800 - \$15,200 Cost Category, is for items that must be completed annually. The third quote for the Freemansburg Gravity Vent is an item that must be fixed as the vent is not able to be repaired. The district will submit this item to the insurance company and will pay the \$5,000 deductible; the insurance company will pay the remainder portion.

Mr. Fazil outlined agenda item C, Authorization to Expend Bond Funds for Freemansburg Elementary School Moisture Damage Remediation and Restoration – Change Order. He explained that the moisture affected areas are being removed and evaluated. Through this process, there have been additional areas of damage found that are beyond what was defined in the original scope of work. Mr. Fazil said that all the areas should be removed and evaluated within the next two weeks. He said that he estimates the work will cost an additional \$5,000, but there are still two more areas that need to be investigated. An actual amount will be provided to the board before the Regular Board Meeting.

Mr. Gilliland explained agenda item D, Authorize the Administration to Submit the Pennsylvania Department of Education Self-Certification Approval – Broughal Middle School Planetarium Fixed Seating Installation. The administration would like to have this item approved.

Mrs. Follweiler asked how the planetarium seating would be funded.

Mr. Gilliland answered that the seating would be paid for out of the money that was allocated for the furniture and supplies for Broughal Middle School that was not spent.

Mrs. Follweiler asked that if the bond money was not spent on seating for the planetarium, what would it be used for?

Mr. Gilliland answered that the money would remain in the bond fund.

Mrs. Follweiler asked if the money could be used to pay down the district's debt.

Mrs. Gober answered that she would have to check with bond council because it depends on how the initial resolution was worded.

Mrs. Follweiler said that before she will vote on this item, she would like to first find out if the money could be used to pay down the debt. Secondly, she said that she would like to see the layout of the seating.

Mrs. Leeson believed that the planetarium was going to be sponsored by outside benefactors and items such as the seating would be added as funds became available. She was under the understanding that any part of the planetarium would not be paid for out of district funds.

Mrs. Dexter said she does not want to use the bond money to fund either the tennis court project or the baseball field project. She wanted to see if the district was limited to using the bond money specifically for Broughal Middle School, or if the money could be redirected to another project.

Mrs. Gober said that she will check with bond council to see what the original resolution was. She believed that within the Broughal Middle School project, the planetarium seating would fall within a contemplated use of those funds.

Mr. Gilliland said that he estimates that \$218,000 worth of supply money was not used that was originally budgeted. The seating can be paid for using this money.

Mr. Fazil said that he agreed with Mrs. Leeson's statement as the planetarium was an alternate bid on the Broughal Middle School project. The board elected to select this alternate bid and money was allocated for the planetarium projector, software, and furniture. Mr. Fazil further explained that this project fell at a time when the district was reviewing its finances very critically; the board then asked the administration to reevaluate every line item for the Broughal project. The planetarium was cut and it was decided that this project would be privately funded. Mr. Fazil noted that without the proper seats installed, it could become a safety issue. It was always intended to have reclining seats installed in the planetarium. He also said that the Broughal Middle School project never used the \$1 million contingency fund.

Mrs. Cann requested that the information about the bond funds be brought to the board before a decision was made. She said at this time, this item will not appear on the agenda.

Mr. Burkhardt suggested pricing molded plastic seating instead of the cloth seats to save money.

Mrs. Dexter said that while she is respectful of safety issues, she believes there are many safety issues within the district that need to be addressed. She said that the district needs to prioritize what projects need to be completed first.

Mr. Gilliland then explained agenda item E, Authorize the Administration to Submit the Pennsylvania Department of Education Self-Certification Approval – Liberty High School Tennis Court Repairs. This item has not been bid yet; the self-certification must be approved before the project can be bid.

Mrs. Dexter stated that she asked some people who are "experienced and very knowledgeable" about the condition of the tennis courts and they informed her that this project could wait.

Mr. Gilliland said that he understands Mrs. Dexter's concerns, but this project has been on the capital improvement plan since 2005. He said that from conversations with the tennis coaches, he found that this court was resurfaced approximately fifteen years ago. The courts typically last between seven and ten years. If this project is delayed too long, the court will have to be completely resurfaced at an approximate cost of \$200,000.

Mr. McKeon asked that if the board authorizes the self-certification, does the board have to follow through with the project?

Mr. Fazil answered that the board does not have to bid the project if the self-certification is approved, but there is no point in submitting the paper work if they do not intend on completing the project.

Mrs. Gober said that the only restriction for this project is that it must be approved by the board before the district can award bids.

Mr. Amato said that Saucon Valley School District is currently paying approximately \$250,000 to have their courts resurfaced as they did not fix theirs when repairs were needed. He believed that the district should either fix the courts or suspend the tennis program.

After a poll of the board, it was decided that this project would not appear on the Regular Board Meeting agenda.

Mr. Gilliland then explained agenda item F, Authorization to Expend Bond Funds for Old Northeast Middle School Demolition and Site Work – Change Order. He said that a number of sinkholes have appeared that must be fixed as a result of the heavy rains over the weekend.

Mr. Fazil said that there was also a sinkhole that also appeared at East Hills Middle School this past weekend. The board would be receiving more information on this shortly. Mr. Fazil said that the three sinkholes at the old Northeast Middle School demolition site are significant; they need to be excavated, cleaned out, backfilled, and remediated. The current demolition contractor will complete the repairs of the sinkholes.

Mrs. Cann asked if this project needed to be bid; she asked if this would be included with the contractor's current "duties".

Mr. Fazil answered that it would be a change order to the contract as it is additional work. The contingency funds for the old Northeast Middle School demolition project would be used to pay for the repair of the sinkholes.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE JULY 26, 2010, REGULAR BOARD MEETING –

After discussion, the board committee agreed to bring the following agenda items to the July 26, 2010, Regular Board Meeting:

- A. Authorization to Restore Capital Reserve Funds – Railing Repairs – Freedom High School – Change Order Deduct
- B. Quotations for the \$5,800 - \$15,200 Cost Category

- C. Authorization to Expend Bond Funds for Freemansburg Elementary School
Moisture Damage Remediation and Restoration – Change Order
- D. Authorization to Expend Bond Funds for Old Northeast Middle School
Demolition and Site Work – Change Order

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR TO VISITORS –

None.

OPEN FORUM –

None.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:22 p.m.

Minutes prepared by:

Kristen M. Snyder, Secretary to the Director of Facilities and Operations

Scott T. Gilliland, Director of Facilities and Operations