MARPLE NEWTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2006
BOARD ROOM
MINUTES

PRESENT:

Board: President Edward Partridge, Mr. Richard Carpenter, Ms. Carol DeLuca, Mr. David McGinley, Mr. Robert Moldoff and Dr. Jeffrey Shapiro. Vice President Won Shin arrived at 7:05pm. Absent: Mrs. Nancy Galbraith. Mrs. Galbraith joined the Board meeting via speakerphone from 7:41pm to 7:54pm.

Student Representatives: 0

Principals: 0

Solicitor: Mr. Mark Sereni, Esquire

Administration: Mr. Joseph Driscoll and Mrs. Merle Horowitz

Press: 3

Audience: 15

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER and 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Partridge opened the meeting at 7:00pm, welcomed all in attendance and led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

Mr. Driscoll stated that all Board members are present except for Mrs. Galbraith, Mr. Shin and one vacancy.

Mr. Partridge stated that Mr. Shin would be a little late and Mrs. Galbraith will be joining us via speakerphone for the vote to fill the Board vacancy.

4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mr. Moldoff made a motion and seconded by Ms. DeLuca to approve the agenda.

Mr. Moldoff made a motion and seconded by Ms. DeLuca to amend the agenda to include a motion to approve the agreement with Omicron of 1700 Market Street, Philadelphia PA for on-site network support services including but not limited to stabilization of the network infrastructure, network services, remediation of information technology issues and resolution of and user trouble tickets. Omicron services will be billed on a time and materials basis for a rate of $1,200 per day not to exceed 36 days or maximum of $43,200.00. The School Board reserves the right to cancel the agreement within two days notice prior to the expiration of the agreement without penalty.

Mr. Partridge called for a voice vote. All present voted affirmatively except for Mr. McGinley. Motion carried 5-1.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No comments were made.

6. INTERVIEW OF CANDIDATES TO FILL THE SCHOOL BOARD VACANCY CREATED BY THE RESIGNATION OF MR. MICHAEL YOUNG

Mr. Partridge stated that we will take a two-minute opening statement from each candidate, the Board will ask some questions and then the candidate will make a two-minute closing statement. The Board will then go through the nomination and election process. We will then bring in Mrs. Galbraith via speakerphone who has all of your resumes. She cannot take part in the interview process but feels that she has enough background information to participate in the vote.

Gary Becker stated that he has lived in this community for over 40 years. I have been a taxpayer and a homeowner for the last 27 years. Now that my parents are in their late 70's and early 80's they are living on a very fixed income. I am acutely aware of the financial burden that we place on our community and especially on our senior citizens in trying to fund a very high quality public education. I hope to participate in helping to achieve the best value of education and the corresponding high values of real estate that our entire community can support. I would like to be a member of the Board that specifically enables Mrs. Horowitz to academically direct us through the many challenges that you as a Board face within this district. I believe that with her guidance we can reclaim the status of being a unified community who can boast of having one of the best school districts in the state just as it was in 1972 when I graduated from here. I live my life by seeking success via working as part of a team and not as an individual. Because of the extensive volunteering that I have done and the leadership that I have had the chance to have I have earned the respect of some of the people in the current administration and some of you on the existing Board. It is my belief that this existing respect that I have earned would help me to contribute much sooner than later in the process. As someone who currently leads the rejuvenated Marple Newtown Athletic Hall of Fame, who as last year's co-chairperson of the Breakfest Event that provided a safe environment for over 300 students, who sat on various boards of directorship, participated as a community volunteer in the pre-selection process of a former superintendent, a high school vice principal and numerous athletic coaches in the high school, someone who has achieved record setting corporate success and who tries to promote the positives of Marple Newtown School District which is not done enough and who has come to you after living his entire adult life here in this community as an active volunteer I hope you will appoint me to the Marple Newtown School Board of Directors.

Bonnie Callahan stated that she resides in Marple Township and has lived in this district for 13 years. I have two sons. One attends Worrall and one attends Paxon Hollow. My husband and I are active in the community and in the schools. I grew up in Rochester, NY and am a product of and a strong supporter of public education. I am proud of the fact that my high school has on more than one occasion been listed as one of the top 100 public schools in the country by U.S. News and World Report. While I am quite pleased with the education my children have received so far, I would like to see the school district grow and improve. As I am sure all of you hear consistently Radnor, Lower Merion and Conestogo high schools are named as the best public high schools in this area on a regular basis. I do believe there is some things that our district can do better but I also believe that part of it is a perception that Marple Newtown is not on the same level as the other school districts. I would love to see our district added to this group of schools. Just down the street from my house there is a house for sale and above the for sale sign is a sign that in big letters reads "Radnor Schools". Every time I drive by it I think "How often do we see a house that is for sale with a sign above it that says 'Marple Newtown Schools'?" Not very if ever. Being considered a lesser school district affects property values, college admission and community pride. I think the hiring of Mrs. Horowitz has been a step in the right direction. I would welcome

the opportunity to work with her as a Board member to continue to improve the education received by our students as well as the perception of the district in the larger community.

Ken Leith stated that most of the people on the Board know me from my prior service. This is a good opportunity for me to bring my experience to the Board. I look forward to the opportunity to serve on the Board again. I have knowledge of the School Board law and some things that take a while to come up to because of the limited term here. It's an opportunity to take advantage of some of this depth of knowledge in the school code and the budget process. I appreciate the pressures that the Board faces in maintaining a low millage as well as having a difficult process where we have so little control over what goes on in the budget because so much of it is mandated and controlled by our contracts. I appreciate that budget process and that experience will make me an easier participant in the budget process. I am interested in what is happening in Act 1 and have been following it. I have been actively involved in keeping up with what's going on in the school district. Hopefully that experience would be a benefit to the Board.

Richard Sokorai stated that he is a trial lawyer in Norristown, PA. I am a Newtown Square resident. I am a product of a public school education and a Temple University graduate for undergraduate and law school. I love the public school system in general and I love the idea of it. I think that it is one of most important functions that we provide as a society. I truly believe in community service at every level. What the Board does is one of the most important functions that a citizen can do in their local community. The responsibilities are tremendous both on the educational level and on the other side, the taxing authority. I think that I am the person who can help you out. I am a hard working individual. When we are done here, I have to go back to the office and will probably be there all night. It's a $30 million class action lawsuit and expert reports are due and you have to get them done. I am familiar with large numbers and familiar with budgets. I am familiar with making tough decisions. I know how to work as a team. I will be happy to serve with you.

7. NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF THE CANDIDATE

Mrs. Galbraith joined the meeting via speakerphone at 7:41pm.

Mr. Carpenter nominated Richard Sokorai to fill the vacant Board seat.

Dr. Shapiro nominated Bonnie Callahan to fill the vacant Board seat.

Mr. McGinley nominated Ken Leith to fill the vacant Board seat.

Mr. Moldoff nominated Gary Becker to fill the vacant Board seat.

Mr. Shin made a motion and seconded by Mr. McGinley to close nominations.

Mr. Partridge called for a voice vote. All present voted affirmatively. Motion carried 8-0.

Mr. Shin stated that anything that he says with respect to any candidate is purely his feeling with respect how he feels that candidate can serve the Board. It is not a reflection of their personality. I asked the same question to all four candidates because I wanted to gauge what their philosophy would be on how to address facilities knowing that facilities is a major issue for our district in the upcoming year both in a planning perspective. I think that it is important to appreciate those candidates that were able to recognize those aspects of facilities. I believe that Rich was the only one that said that he would go to all facilities to see what we were talking about which I considered identification. He talked about prioritizing which I considered planning. He talked about budget which I considered funding. The other answers that I got, I don't think were as deep. I believe that Rich provided the answer that I liked.

Mr. McGinley stated that these are the best four candidates that we have had. It is great to see such great people step forward and say, "Let me do this." This is a pretty thankless job and all the people that came here to apply know that and they know the hard work that is involved. I appreciate you coming out.

Dr. Shapiro stated that to be fair to Rich as well as the other candidates, the other candidates have either been on the Board and know the condition of the schools or have kids in schools in various levels. The fact that they said that they wouldn't go around I don't think ought to be a ding on them.

Mr. Moldoff stated that all of you are very qualified and this will be one of the hardest decisions that we will be making. Irrespective of the outcome, you have earned the respect of everyone in this room and the community should thank you for putting your name in and going through the process. Irrespective of the outcome, I ask that you stay involved.

Mr. Partridge called for a roll call vote to elect Rich Sokorai as Board Director.
Aye: Mr. Carpenter, Mr. McGinley, Mr. Shin, Mrs. Galbraith, Mr. Partridge and Ms. DeLuca
Nay: Dr. Shapiro, Mr. Moldoff
Motion carried 6-2.

Mr. Partridge stated that Rich Sokorai is elected to the Board. Congratulations.

Mrs. Galbraith left the meeting via speakerphone at 7:54pm.

Richard Sokorai thanked everyone. I really look forward to working with everybody. I am sure that I won't let you down. I am a member of the Local Tax Study Commission and unfortunately I can't do both. Only one Board member is allowed and Mr. Shin is the Chairman. I would respectfully ask to resign from the Local Tax Study Commission.

7.01 RESIGNATION OF R. SOKORAI FROM THE LOCAL TAX STUDY COMMISSION

Mr. McGinley made a motion and seconded by Mr. Carpenter to accept the resignation of Richard Sokorai from the Marple Newtown School District Local Tax Study Commission.

Mr. Partridge called for a voice vote. All present voted affirmatively. Motion carried 8-0.

8. HUMAN RESOURCES AND POLICY COMMITTEE

8.01 Appointments

ADMINISTRATIVE

Dr. Shapiro made a motion and seconded by Mr. McGinley to approve the administrative appointment, item 1.

1) Joseph P. Violanti – Director of Technology
   Gauntlett Center
   BS – St. Joseph's University; Instructional Technology Specialist – Penn State University; MBA – Western Governors University (anticipated 12/06)
   Salary: $95,000
   Effective: To be determined
   Reason: Replaces Don Ash (retired)

Mr. Moldoff stated that after reviewing his resume, he is a very well qualified individual. I have seen since that time some correspondence that appears that he is going to hit the ground running. He does have a vision where he wants to help us take informational technology. I think he will take a vital role in moving us forward.

Mr. Partridge called for a voice vote. All present voted affirmatively. Motion carried 8-0.

9. OTHER REPORTS

9.01 Omicron

Mr. Moldoff made a motion and seconded by Ms. DeLuca to approve the agreement with Omicron of 1700 Market Street, Philadelphia PA for on-site network support services including but not limited to stabilization of the network infrastructure, network services, remediation of information technology issues and the resolution of and user trouble tickets. Omicron services will be billed on a time and materials basis for a rate of $1,200 per day not to exceed 36 days or maximum of $43,200.00. The School Board reserves the right to cancel the agreement within two days notice prior to the expiration of the agreement without penalty.

Mr. Moldoff asked if Omicron is aware of the two-day notice and are they okay with that.

Mr. Driscoll replied yes.

Mr. Moldoff stated that the condition of the network is not complete. There are certainly some challenges. Essentially, this consulting service effort will be to help remediate some of the effects of that as well as hold the fort together until Mr. Violanti comes on board.

Mr. Partridge called for a voice vote. All present voted affirmatively except for Mr. McGinley. Motion carried 7-1.

9.02 Appoint Local Tax Study Commission Member

Mr. Partridge stated that we have to appoint someone to fill the vacancy left by Rich Sokorai on the LTSC. We have two potential candidates who have been reviewed by the Budget and Finance Committee, Mr. Shin, Mr. Driscoll and Mrs. Horowitz. Do we have any recommendations for a replacement?

Mr. Shin stated that the fact that one of the applicants for the Board vacancy was a member of the LTSC, it was prudent upon the Board for the Board to look to see if that was going to happen what do we do about the LTSC. We turned to the people who already expressed interest in the first round but had expressed interest past the deadline. There were three individuals who expressed interest. We contacted them and one was unable to make the meeting on October 18th. Because the October 18th meeting was a fairly important meeting, we felt that this person was not going to be a viable candidate. Mr. Glen Seagraves and Mr. Mike Carson were both interested in this vacancy and both were available for the meetings. Everyone on the Board received information on these two candidates. The law requires that certain demographics be represented on the LTSC. In my opinion, after reading the letters from both individuals and comparing the demographics that left the commission my recommendation is that Mike Carson be selected to replace Rich Sokorai based on the fact that I believe that he represents the same demographics.

Dr. Shapiro stated that he has been reading very closely what the PSBA is saying about demographics. I don't think that we are in any way, shape or form bound by their thoughts or opinions. It does seem that a lot of districts say that they are experiencing challenges with the demographic provisions of Act 1. Rich is from Newtown Square and these two candidates are from Broomall. Do you, Mr. Shin see that as an issue which would potentially cause us to reopen, re-advertise or postpone the meeting to try to respect that aspect of the

demographic?

Mr. Shin replied that it is a very good point but time does not allow us to advertise. Mr. Carson works in Philadelphia. The earned income tax does not apply to those who work in Philadelphia because they work in Philadelphia and pay the city wage tax. As of now, I am the sole person who sits on the commission that works in Philadelphia. If we could bring in another person who works in Philadelphia to bring in their point of view that would be beneficial.

Mr. McGinley made a motion and seconded by Mr. Carpenter to appoint Michael Carson to the Marple Newtown School District Local Tax Study Commission effective October 11, 2006 to fill the vacancy of Richard Sokorai.

Mr. Moldoff asked if all the previous materials will be given to Mr. Carson and is there any other educational opportunities to get Mr. Carson up to speed.

Mr. Shin replied yes.

Mr. Partridge called for a voice vote. All present voted affirmatively. Motion carried 8-0.

10. COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

No comments were made.

11. COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD

Mr. Moldoff stated that he would like to thank everyone that did put his or her name in. Please stay as involved as possible. Mrs. Horowitz, could you please get my and Rich Sokorai's name submitted to the Pennsylvania School Board Association so that we can get the mailings? I think it would be beneficial to be on the mailing list.

Mrs. Horowitz agreed.

Mr. Partridge thanked all the candidates. We had four great candidates who all had different skill sets and who could have all added value to the Board. Congratulations to all of you and Mr. Sokorai. Mr. Sokorai will get sworn in at the October Board meeting.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Partridge adjourned the meeting at 8:16pm.

Respectfully submitted

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Joseph J. Driscoll, Board Secretary