

NORTHERN LEHIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board Minutes

Slatington, PA

April 5, 2004

PURPOSE

The regular meeting of the Northern Lehigh Board of School Directors was called to order by the President, Mr. Mathias J. Green, Jr., at 7:35 p.m. on Monday, April 5, 2004 in the middle school auditorium.

ROLL CALL

Members present: Mr. Franklin D. Beers, Mr. Robert J. Cox, Mr. Bryan C. Dorshimer, Mr. Raymond J. Follweiler, Jr., Mrs. Lauren A. Ganser, Mrs. Lori H. Geronikos, Mr. William H. Hazzard, Ms. Angelique M. Papay, Mr. Mathias J. Green, Jr. (9)

Members absent: None (0)

Non-members present: Dr. Nicholas P. Sham, Sr., Mrs. Lynn B. Fedorcha, Mr. Philip Bertolino, Dr. Linda Marcincin, Mrs. Karen Nicholas, Mr. John Hrizuk, Mr. David Papay, Mr. Robert Mack, Mr. Brian Geiger, Ms. Christine Stafford, Attorney Charles Stopp (Solicitor), Ms. Laurie Newman, Ms. Amberly Gable, Ms. Ashley Kunkle, Mrs. Sherri Molitoris

VISITORS

Approximately 120 visitors attended the meeting, in addition to Terry Ahner, reporter for The Chronicle newspaper and Stacey Duck, reporter for The Morning Call.

PUBLIC

Mr. Green informed the public that anyone wishing to address the board on any agenda items should approach the podium, state their name and address, and whether they are representing an organization.

COMMENT

ON AGENDA

Each individual will be allowed five minutes to address the board.

SPECIAL

BOARD

REPORTS

Lehigh Career and Technical Institute -- Mrs. Lori H. Geronikos

Mrs. Geronikos reported on the LCTI meeting she attended. She indicated that Dr. Hornberger has been invited to attend one of our May board meetings to discuss the LCTI budget.

Carbon-Lehigh Intermediate Unit -- Mr. Bryan C. Dorshimer

Mr. Dorshimer indicated that CLIU lost one of their board members due to health reasons.

He reported on the items listed on the CLIU Board Brief, which was distributed to all board members.

Lehigh Carbon Community College -- Mr. Mathias J. Green, Jr.

Mr. Green reported that the State is doing basically the same thing with the college that it is doing with the school districts with regard to the money allocated to the college. The college will not be receiving the amount of money it was told it was going to receive initially.

Committee Reports and/or Meetings

All board members received copies of the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on February 23, 2004, the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on March 22, 2004, the minutes of the Technology/Buildings and Grounds Committee meeting held on March 3, 2004, and the minutes of the Policy/Education Committee meeting held on March 15, 2004.

Mr. Green reported that the Board and Administration participated in an Educational Seminar held at Lehigh Career and Technical Institute on April 2 and 3, 2004. Friday evening Business Manager Chris Stafford headed an educational seminar on finance. On Saturday morning there were two sessions. Kim Talipan from CLIU conducted a seminar on mission building and Mr. Donald Owens, from Pennsylvania School Boards Association, conducted a seminar on goal setting.

Mr. Cox requested permission to talk about a meeting he attended on March 31, 2004 at the Vigilant Fire Company in Slatington. One of our board members spoke at that meeting. He stated that when board members go out in the community and they make statements, people believe what is said. The newspaper quoted that the board is "padding the pockets of the administration". Mr. Cox stated that to make a statement like that in public as a board member is ludicrous and it sounds as though there are things going on that shouldn't be. He stated that everything the board does with respect to raises and compensation is above board. The district had an impeccable audit the last time they were audited. The

president of the organization also was speaking at the meeting. Mr. Cox commented that if you are president of an organization and you speak to a crowd you are responsible for what that crowd does. He stated that it was discussed that certain board members should be removed from the board and there would be ways to try to do that. He reported that he overheard comments made at that meeting and he indicated that these individuals need to be responsible for the things that they incite people to say and do. We all have differences of opinion, however, we need to talk out those differences and come to a conclusion. We cannot do it with threats. We are here to help the students in our district and try to balance that with our taxpayers needs.

Student Representatives To The Board Report -- Ms. Amberly Gable and Ms. Ashley Kunkle gave their student representative reports for the month.

Solicitor's Report -- Attorney Charles Stopp

Attorney Stopp reported on an article he received from the National Schools Boards Association about the Government Accounting Standards Board that addressed looking into the future funding costs of post retirement benefits and how to actuarially determine the cost to the districts with respect to recording those transactions on financial statements.

Legislative Report -- Mrs. Lori H. Geronikos

Mrs. Geronikos announced that she received an invitation from the Lehigh Valley Business Education Partnership inviting board members to a community forum on referendum on April 16, 2004 from 7:30 – 9:30 a.m. at the Four Points Sheraton on Airport Road in Allentown.

Federal and Other Programs Update -- Mrs. Lynne B. Fedorcha

Mrs. Fedorcha distributed a written Curriculum and Instruction report and reported on its contents.

Superintendent's Report -- Dr. Nicholas P. Sham, Sr.

Dr. Sham's report included the following:

- He announced that Stephen Geiger was selected to receive the Wildlife Information Center's 2004 Student Ecologist Award.
- He presented a 2003 School Board In-service Education Award to Mr. Robert Cox.
- He acknowledged School Psychologist's Day, which was held on April 2, 2004.
- He introduced the National Junior Honor Society who reported on their Senior Prom Project for senior citizens in our community.

Executive Session

An Executive Session was held at 7:00 p.m. in the Middle School Main Office Conference Room for personnel issues.

PERSONNEL

Mr. Dorshimer made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Cox, that the Board of Education approves the following personnel items:

Appointments
Instructional

Diane Saeger
Assignment: Temporary Vacancy Replacement Teacher
Peters Elementary – Grade 2
Replacing Jennifer Hilbert who is on a sabbatical leave of absence.
Salary: \$35,800 (Pro-Rated) (Step 1 Bachelors on the 2003-2004 CBA Salary Schedule.)
Effective Date: January 19, 2004
Termination Date: On or About June 16, 2004

Gail Barilla
Assignment: Temporary Vacancy Replacement Teacher
Special Education Learning Support – Grade 10 in the
senior high, replacing Andrea Edmonds who resigned.
Salary: \$37,500 (Pro-Rated) (Step 1 Masters on the 2003-2004 CBA Salary Schedule.)
Effective Date: March 22, 2004
Termination Date: On or About June 16, 2004

PERSONNEL

(Con't.)

Non-Instructional	<p>Heather Tift Assignment: Temporary Vacancy Replacement Clerk/Receptionist – District Office Replacing Judy Mack who is absent due to medical reasons.</p> <p>Salary: \$28,439 (Pro-Rated)</p> <p>Effective Date: March 11, 2004</p> <p>Termination Date: May 7, 2004</p>
Unpaid Leave	<p>Approve the request of Catherine Grega to take a two-day leave, without pay, on May 24 & 25, 2004. This day will be used in conjunction with her 3 personal days to attend the graduation of her son from the United States Naval Academy. Her request will not be considered a precedent for future requests per correspondence received from the Northern Lehigh Education Association.</p>
Extension of Unpaid Leave	<p>Approve the request of Tammy Fristick to be granted an extension of her unpaid childrearing leave of absence. After taking a family medical leave during a portion of the 2003-2004 school year, she was granted an unpaid childrearing leave of absence for the remainder of the school year. She currently is requesting an extension of her uncompensated leave for the first semester of the 2004-2005 school year.</p> <p>Approve the request of Debra Bealer to be granted an extension of her unpaid childrearing leave of absence. Mrs. Bealer's original date to return to work was May 3, 2004. She currently is requesting an extension of her uncompensated leave until May 10, 2004.</p>
Resignations Instructional	<p>Accept the resignation of Jane Englert from her position of high school librarian, effective as soon as a replacement can be found for her.</p>
Non-Instructional	<p>Accept the resignation of Jacqueline Lebrun Ehrich from her position as a one-on-one aide in the special education department at the high school, effective April 8, 2004.</p>
Substitutes Non-Instructional	<p>Approve the following substitute aide for the 2003-2004 school year at the substitute rate of \$7.25 per hour: Dorothy E. Weber</p> <p>Approve the following substitute custodian for the 2003-2004 school year at the substitute rate of \$7.25 per hour: Dorothy E. Weber</p> <p>Approve the following substitute cafeteria worker for the 2003-2004 school year at the substitute rate of \$7.25 per hour: Dorothy E. Weber</p>
Summer Custodial/Maintenance Employees	<p>Approve to employ twelve (12) regular and two (2) alternate summer custodial/maintenance employees to work from June 7, 2004 through September 5, 2004. Rate per hour is \$5.50 for first time employees and \$5.75 for returning employees.</p>
MS Intramural Girls Basketball Coach	<p>At the March 1, 2004 school board meeting, Mr. Eugene Roberts was hired as the middle school girls' intramural basketball coach. Mr. Roberts will not be physically able to begin his coaching duties but intends to return as soon as possible. Mrs. Rene Evans has agreed to assume Mr. Roberts' responsibilities and will remain with the program until its completion. Approve the recommendation of the administration to employ Mrs. Evans as an additional coach for the middle school girls intramural basketball program with the provision that the stipend of \$1,010.00 is equitably divided between Mr. Roberts and Mrs. Evans based on hours each worked.</p>

PERSONNEL

(Con't.)

Middle School Substitute Administrative Detention Supervisor Approve to appoint Jonathon DeFrain as the substitute administrative detention supervisor in the middle school. He will work Monday and Wednesday from 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. throughout the 2003-2004 school calendar year that warrants detention coverage on an as needed basis. Salary will be \$16.00 for each day worked.

Senior High Substitute Administrative Detention Supervisor Approve to appoint Sandra Michalik as the substitute administrative detention supervisor in the senior high school. She will work Tuesday and Thursday from 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. throughout the 2003-2004 school calendar year that warrants detention coverage on an as needed basis. Salary will be \$24.50 for each day worked.

Unpaid Volunteers Approve the following individuals as unpaid volunteers for the 2003-2004 school year:
Peter Konek – Girls Softball
Michele Roth – Aide - Peters Elementary School

Public Comment Jane Kropf – Slatington Borough – Questioned retro hiring date of instructional employee.

ROLL CALL: YEA: Mr. Cox, Mrs. Ganser, Mrs. Geronikos, Mr. Hazzard, Ms. Papay,
Mr. Green (6)
NAY: Mr. Beers, Mr. Dorshimer, Mr. Follweiler (3)

Motion carried.

POLICY

Mrs. Geronikos made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Cox, that the Board of Education approves the following items listed under Policy:

Conferences Approve the request of Dr. Maura Roberts to attend a Teaching and Learning Consortium conference from April 29 to May 1, 2004 in Philadelphia, PA. Expenses for this conference include \$389.00 for registration, \$90.00 for meals, \$410.00 for lodging, and approximately \$25.90 for travel for a total cost of \$914.90 and will be funded through Psychology Department Funds. Room and registration reflects a discount because Dr. Roberts is being registered as an affiliate with Lehigh University.

Approve the request of Laurie Newman to attend a Lorman Education Services conference on April 30, 2004 in Bethlehem, PA. Expenses for this conference includes \$279.00 for registration and approximately \$10.00 for meals and \$15.00 for travel for a total cost of \$304.00 and will be funded through Special Education Department Funds.

Board Policy – 2nd Reading Approve new board policy #135: Programs – Parental Permission For Research Involving Students, as amended after second reading.

Approve revisions to existing school board policy #333 – Administrative Employees—Professional Education, as presented after second reading.

Approve revisions to existing school board policy #433 – Professional Employees – Professional Education, as presented after second reading.

Field Trip Requests Approve Slatington Elementary 5th grade students to take a class field trip to the State Museum of Pa in Harrisburg, PA on May 14, 2004. They will be leaving Slatington Elementary at 7:30 a.m. and will return at 2:30 p.m. The PTO will pay for costs of this trip.

Approve Peters Elementary 5th grade students to take a class field trip to the Philadelphia Zoo on June 2, 2004 with a rain date of June 3, 2004. They will be leaving Peters Elementary at 8:00 a.m. and will return at 4:00 p.m. Cost of this trip will be paid for by the PTO.

POLICY (Con't.)

Administrators Approve to designate and authorize the following administrators to sign student summary offense notices for district students for the 2003-2004 school year:

Approved To Sign Summary Offenses

Mrs. Karen Nicholas, Peters Elementary Principal
 Dr. Linda Marcincin, Slatington Elementary Principal
 Mr. Robert Mack, Middle School Principal
 Mr. Philip Bertolino, High School Principal
 Mr. David Papay, High School/Middle School Assistant Principal
 Mr. Robert Kern, High School Dean of Students

YEA: Mr. Beers, Mr. Cox, Mr. Dorshimer, Mr. Follweiler, Mrs. Ganser, Mrs. Geronikos,
 Mr. Hazzard, Ms. Papay, Mr. Green (9)

NAY: None (0)

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Bethesda Agreement

Mr. Cox made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Ganser, that the Board of Educations approves the following items listed under Curriculum & Instruction:

Approve to authorize proper officials to enter into an agreement with Bethesda Day Treatment Center and the Northern Lehigh School District for the purpose of furnishing educational services for disruptive youth for the 2004-2005 school year.

New Middle School Texts

Approve to adopt new textbooks for the middle school for the 2003-2004 school year:

Title	Course	Publisher/ Copyright	Qty	\$ Amt.
Timeless Voices, Timeless Themes, <i>Bronze and Silver Levels</i> (Anthologies)	English and Reading – Grades 7 and 8	Prentice Hall, 2002	200 copies per grade	\$22,188.00
<i>Validation:</i>	Through our Language Arts Curriculum Committee, we have selected the Prentice Hall Literature series, <i>Timeless Voices, Timeless Themes</i> . This textbook replaces a variety of texts that have been used by the English Department to teach reading, including <i>Bright Glory</i> , Houghton Mifflin, 1993.			
Writing and Grammar Book, <i>Bronze and Silver Levels</i>	English – Grades 7 and 8	Prentice Hall, 2002	200 copies per grade	\$8,000.00*
<i>Validation:</i>	Through our Language Arts Curriculum Committee, we have selected the Prentice Hall writing and grammar series that is correlated with the anthology <i>Timeless Voices, Timeless Themes</i> . This textbook replaces the current grammar book <i>Wariners English Grammar & Composition</i> , published by Harcourt 1986.			

*Approval is being requested for this purchase, however grade 7 and half of the grade 8 materials (\$6,000) will not be ordered until the next budget year.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jane Kropf – Borough of Slatington – Asked why the district would wait to purchase these textbooks – are they for this year or next year?

YEA: Mr. Beers, Mr. Cox, Mr. Dorshimer, Mr. Follweiler, Mrs. Ganser, Mrs. Geronikos,

Mr. Hazzard, Ms. Papay, Mr. Green (9)

NAY: None (0)

**OLD
BUSINESS**

Mrs. Ganser made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Hazzard, that the Board of Education approves to allow MESH to administer a developed nutrition survey, as presented, to all district students.

YEA: Mr. Beers, Mr. Cox, Mr. Dorshimer, Mr. Follweiler, Mrs. Ganser, Mrs. Geronikos,
Mr. Hazzard, Ms. Papay, Mr. Green (9)

NAY: None (0)

**NEW
BUSINESS**

Don Owens
Follow-up
Presentation

Mr. Dorshimer made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Cox, that the Board of Education approves to have Mr. Donald Owens, who was a presenter at the board retreat held on April 2 and 3, 2004 return to finish his presentation on board policy. Mr. Dorshimer recommended that this follow-up meeting be held on Monday, April 19, 2004 beginning at 6:00 p.m. in the boardroom. Mr. Dorshimer amended the motion to change the start time to 5:30 p.m. Mr. Cox agreed with the amendment.

ROLL CALL: YEA: Mr. Cox, Mr. Dorshimer, Mr. Follweiler, Mrs. Geronikos,
Mr. Hazzard, Ms. Papay, Mr. Green (7)

NAY: Mrs. Ganser, Mr. Beers (2)

Motion carried.

FINANCIAL

Mr. Cox made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Ganser, that the Board of Education approves the following financial items:

PC Abatements Approve abatement and exonerations of per capita taxes, as presented, for the residents that fall within The guidelines.

Construction Account Bills Approve payment of bills from the Construction Account, as presented.

Extended Construction Account Bills Approve payment of bills from the Extended Construction Account, as presented.

Portfolio Summary Approve the Arthurs Lestrange Cash Management Portfolio, as presented, for the month of February 2004.

PlanCon Part K Bond Refinancing Approve the submission of PLANCON PART K for Northern Lehigh School District's General Obligation Bonds, Series A and AA 2004. PLANCON K is a required form for bond re-financing.

Portnoff Law Associates Delinquent Real Estate Tax Collectors Approve to authorize the Northern Lehigh administration to authorize Portnoff Law Associates, Ltd. to issue liens against 2003 delinquent real estate taxes as warranted.

Real Estate Refunds Approve the following real estate refund due to duplicate or overpayment during the discount period:

1. USDA Rural Housing Service in the amount of \$1,494.64 for the following property:
 - a. 3907 East Grant Street, Washington Township

Approve the following real estate refund due to reassessment:

1. Randy & Lillian Bird in the amount of \$595.05 due to reduction in taxable assessment

from 13,500 to 800 effective July 1, 2003 on the following property:

- a. 7802 Center Street, Washington Township

FINANCIAL (Con't.)

School Based ACCESS Program Authorize the appropriate district officials to file application to participate in PA SBAP (School Based ACCESS Program) beginning with the 2004-05 school year.

ROLL CALL: YEA: Mr. Dorshimer, Mr. Follweiler, Mrs. Ganser, Mrs. Geronikos, Mr. Hazzard, Ms. Papay, Mr. Cox, Mr. Green (8)
NAY: Mr. Beers (1)

Motion carried.

Appoint Local Auditors Freeh, Mr. Dorshimer made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Cox, that the Board of Education approves the local Certified Public Accountant auditing proposal provided by Hutchinson, Gorman &

P.C. for the 2004-05 through 2006-07 school year audits with the following fees:

	<u>2004-05</u>	<u>2005-06</u>	<u>2006-07</u>
Base Fee- standard audit	\$18,450	\$18,925	\$19,400
Earned Income/OPT Tax Office Audit	1,275	1,300	1,360
Single Audit Fee	2,300	2,350	2,400
Hourly fee for additional work	68	70	72

PUBLIC COMMENT Jane Kropf – Slatington Borough – Asked for clarification as to why the district didn't go with the firm that came in with a lower bid? Chris Stafford indicated that the district went with the firm that was the most qualified and would be working more hours.

ROLL CALL: YEA: Mrs. Geronikos, Mr. Hazzard, Ms. Papay, Mr. Cox, Mr. Dorshimer, Mr. Green (6)
NAY: Mr. Follweiler, Mrs. Ganser, Mr. Beers (3)

Motion carried.

Student Transportation Contract Mr. Cox made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Geronikos, that the Board of Education approves the Student Transportation contract with Laidlaw Transit, Inc. for the school years 2004-2005, 2005-2006, and 2006-2007 at the proposed rates as presented.

PUBLIC COMMENT David Edwards – Washington Township -- Asked whether anyone told the companies that there would be a detour when they submitted their bids?

Donna Kulp – Washington Township – How different are the current numbers from the contract that we are currently under. How was reconfiguration taken into account?

Jane Kropf – Slatington Borough – How many buses do we currently have today in use and how many currently go over 60 miles in a day? How many of the buses for next year will go over 60 miles? If the board would choose to go with another company how would that decision affect the current drivers?

ROLL CALL: YEA: Mrs. Ganser, Mrs. Geronikos, Mr. Hazzard, Ms. Papay, Mr. Beers, Mr. Cox, Mr. Dorshimer, Mr. Green (8)
NAY: Mr. Follweiler (1)

Motion carried.

**INFORMA-
TION**

Board members received copies of the minutes of the Carbon Lehigh Intermediate Unit Board of Directors meeting held on February 19, 2004, the minutes of Lehigh Carbon Community College Board of Trustees meeting held on March 4, 2004, and the Minutes of the Lehigh Career & Technical Institute JOC meeting held on February 25, 2004.

RECESS

President Green called for a five-minute recess at 9:05 p.m. The board reconvened at 9:15 p.m.

**BUDGET
DISCUSSION**

Mr. Green opened the floor to budget discussion. He indicated that some information was presented to the board at the board seminar held on April 2 and 3. In light of the fact that it was a workshop, no decisions or questions could be entertained. Chris Stafford summarized what the present budget reflects and what changes may occur.

**PUBLIC
COMMENT**

David Edwards – Washington Township -- Can we get a copy of proposed budget to prepare taxpayers? (Mr. Green responded that a copy of the proposed budget will be made available to the public the first meeting in May when it is approved).

Jane Kropf – Slatington Borough -- Stated she recently read about alternative ways to raise revenue such as selling advertising on busses, freezing salaries and energy management system. (Mr. Green responded we do have an energy management system in place).

David Edwards – Washington Township -- Does anyone go the Harrisburg to get money for us? (Mr. Green responded that Lori Geronikos, as well as others, go to Harrisburg to see if we can get money).

Steve Bandzi – Washington Township – If we are falling behind in taxes then the field house renovations should be “scrapped” and do only the minimum that needs to be done and forget the Taj Mahal fix?

Carol Evans – Washington Township -- Would like to have next month a report from the entire board on what they have looked at to reduce the budget. (Dr. Sham responded indicating that that is exactly what is going to be done. The board is well aware that they need to ask the administration to go back and look at the budget and reduce the millage. He was cut off during his response.)

Tara Beltz – Slatington Borough -- How could Dr. Sham’s raise, field house and everything else be approved when you knew the budget was coming soon? (Mr. Green responded stating that the money for Dr. Sham’s raise was in the budget from last year).

Steve Bandzi – Washington Township -- Originally talked about having been at many budget meetings before and said he knew the type of cuts he would see would be \$100,000 in textbooks cut here, \$25,000 in textbooks cut from another area, but then a \$35,000 soccer program remains in the budget. He would like the board to revote on the Field House Project and get another bid on just bringing up the maintenance and making it livable and get it back down to a \$1million project instead of a \$2.5 million project because the people in Washington Township and Slatington are really against it. (Mr. Green responded that the board voted on that and decided that the extra-curricular program was important. The vote has been done and the contracts have been signed, and people are working on it. If we back out now we will still have to pay the money and get nothing. Vote was 8 – 1. Even if we vote again it, will not matter.

Kim Davenport - Washington Township – Before she asked her question she wanted to address the fact that one person on the board, who she knows for sure is on their team, has been belittled by Dr. Sham. She feels it’s pretty obvious and she’s watched him disrespect her. Her question was with regard to Special Education classes asking whether the district is going to enlarge or anything or are they going to do anything about those classes because she knows that some of them are being taught in former closets. She believes they deserve as much education as everyone else does. Would anyone mind addressing that? (Dr. Sham responded that there are no special education classes being taught in closets. He

indicated that there are certain regulations that go along with special education and we are up to code on these regulations).

Who makes sure they have adequate space you or the IU? (Dr. Sham responded that it is up to us but there is also a “watch dog” agency called the Facilities Plan Committee, from the Carbon Lehigh Intermediate Unit, that also makes sure we are within regulations.)

David Edwards - Washington Township -- Is it true that if one of you “good board members” tables the field house budget it can be re-voted on? Isn't that true or don't you know? (Mr. Green responded that if it is brought up again and someone wants to re-vote on it again, yes it can be brought up, but he explained that it is a contract and that a contract cannot be brought up and voted on again because the contracts have already been signed. If we bring it up again and re-vote on it we will be in the same position Catasauqua was in with a half-done school they wanted to stop).

What do we stand to lose if we revote on it? (Mr. Green looked to the solicitor for comment and he responded that he personally hadn't reviewed the contracts yet). Mr. Green indicated that Mr. Edward's five minutes for his public comment was over and he asked for the next person to step to the podium.

Audience Members Yelled Out – Who signed the contracts? (Mr. Green responded that the contracts are signed with the contractors.)

Let the people who signed the contract pay for it not the taxpayers.

Did you people ever think of asking the Vo-Tech kids to do that?

Why not ask them to come and help? (Mr. Green responded that some citizens were looking at doing that and there were a lot of things beyond the scope of what vo-tech students could do in the course of a day.)

Julie from Washington Township – Did I understand correctly that the increases in salary were in last year's budget? Were the 33+ percent and 27+ percent salary increases in the budget? Is there ever a surplus in the budget from year to year? What happens to that, does it get used for increases in salary or for whatever you choose? (Mr. Green responded that there is surplus and that it gets rolled back into the budget as surplus and the district can use it the following year.)

Brian Schock – Borough of Slatington – Had a question for the solicitor, stating “I don't know how you can sign a contract without even reading it. Apparently it wasn't read to see if there were any loopholes to get out of it.” To the remainder of the board he stated – “I have a half decent job and I don't want to pay these high taxes, but I want every one of you board members to go to these elderly people who are losing their houses because you people decide you want to raise the taxes every year. You look them straight in the eye and tell them they have to sell their houses because they can't pay their taxes”.

Steve Bandzi – Washington Township -- Wants big ticket items like the field house project to have to go on the voting ballot so that they can have a referendum vote to take it out of the school board members hands.

Greg Williams –Borough of Slatington -- Is there any standing committee, individual, or anything on the board or outside the board that is responsible for looking at alternative revenue increases, and if not is this something that could be handled by a committee or something so that it is not up to one individual to come up with an idea and present that to 8 others and try to convince them? (Mr. Green informed him about grants and the Finance Committee that meets once a month).

Is it possible to have a committee of the board, say the Finance Committee, have a special meeting to sit down and get community involvement to see if there are some other ideas? (Mr. Green responded that the Finance Committee meetings are open to the public and that the board started the budget process 3-4 weeks earlier than usual to get public input).

Ruby Owens – Washington Township – Told the board that she has an income of \$1,200 a month and asked the board how is she suppose to use five months of her income to pay her taxes and still live? “Are you going to show me how to rearrange my budget so I can live?” (Mr. Dorshimer responded stating that we do not get the money from the state that we need. He explained about the field house projects and the regulations that we need to comply with to bring the stadium up to code. We have a volunteer group that is willing to help out as much as they can. The field house right now does not meet the codes we need to run athletics in the district. We are supposed to have a locker room for both boys and girls and it is not there. We allotted \$1.5 million to renovate the stadium and due to the fact that steel and gas costs have gone up drastically it will cost us just over \$2 million, not \$2.5 million. The money for the stadium is covered under our debt service and is not added into the 2004-2005 budget. When people begin to “churn the pot” and try to get our community “stirred up” they should make sure that they are giving the correct information. Here is where you find the correct information as much as we possibly can give you. The budget document for next year is changing continually and we don’t have all the numbers yet. The board will work off of a “cafeteria style” menu to make cuts to the budget and then the board will work through them working it down, mill by mill, and then it is up to the nine board members to get a majority as to what they are willing to cut, and at some point in time they will say “enough is enough” even though they want the millage increase to come down to 0, there is no way that this can be done because the health costs have increased tremendously.

Melvin Gildner – Washington Township – Does the district take into consideration when they are figuring a budget looking at the percentage of the people in our district who are on a fixed income? Do we have any figures on what that percentage would be and if so can I know what that is? We need to realize that one day we might be in their shoes and unable to pay our taxes. (Mr. Green responded that he did not have a percentage but that he knew it was high approximately five years ago.)

He asked that when board members vote that first of all they should stop to think and take a stand as an individual and don’t worry about what the board member next them thinks. He doesn’t mind being asked to speak properly when he speaks or watch what he says, but he would also ask that board members take that into consideration because what we all say and do as adults is a reflection on our younger generation. With regard to the cost of the field house – if we keep putting our taxes up we won’t need a field house we can take our elderly who cannot afford their homes and just put them in there.

Kerry Reinhart - Slatington Borough – Critical need in the budget should be the children’s education , not necessarily athletics, not what kind of Taj Ma Hal we can build. Critical need should be the only factor used when spending our money.

Margaret MacKrinkle – Slatington Borough – Wanted to let the public know that a lot of things that the school board must abide by are dictated by the state. The people should be contacting is their State Representatives. They are the ones who make the rules and regulations the board needs to abide by.

Linda Ratz – Slatington Borough – She was notified that her son was accepted in advanced calculus next year and she wanted to know if the district is going to keep it in the budget for next year? (Mr. Bertolino responded that it would be his recommendation to the board to keep it in the budget for next school year).

**Board Member
Comment**

Angelique Papay -- At a previous board meeting she did vote against Dr. Sham’s raise because she knew that it would be an issue now, she also stated that at our last meeting there was a Resolution on the agenda to adopt indicating that the board was in favor of not supporting Referendum and she also voted against that. She stated that if there is anything she can do for a community member she is always open to listen to both sides.

**RECOG-
NITION OF
GUESTS**

Jane Kropf – Slatington Borough – Talked about not being able to attend the board retreat on Friday evening, April 2. Aren’t all the board meetings and committee meetings open to the public? She stated that she is the elected president of the newly formed League of Taxpayers. In

reference to Mr. Cox's comments earlier, she stated that she does not condone any ill behavior toward anyone. The organization is not for personal attacks, but rather to come up with rational solutions to our problems. If there were any violations of the Sunshine Law with regard to the board's educational seminar she would like it addressed. (Mr. Green responded that all committee meetings are open to the public. He indicated that the agenda distributed for the board retreat does not indicate budget, it indicates *Educational Seminar on Finance* that dealt with the basics of how a budget is built. Mr. Green stated that neither he nor Dr. Sham announced that this meeting would be open to the public. If other board members sent emails indicating that it was, he didn't think that it was done on behalf of the entire board). Mr. Green informed everyone that on Monday, April 12 there would be a public meeting where anyone in the public could attend to make comments. He also stated that there will be two school board meetings in May where the public can attend to make comments, and that the public is welcome to attend the Finance Committee meeting which will meet on the fourth Monday in May when discussion will take place about the budget. The first and second Monday in June are scheduled board meetings and the fourth Monday in June there will be another Finance Committee meeting. They are all open to the public to discuss budgetary concerns at those meetings.

Is it not true that the Morning Call did an article last year and took pictures from that meeting and took comments from administrators and board members? (Mrs. Geronikos responded about the retreat stating that it is at the discretion of the board whether the board retreats are open to the public or not. She also stated that Policy Committee meetings are open to the public.)

Ed Ziegler - Commented that Mr. Follweiler should have tabled the vote on the school bus contract for Laidlaw so that the board could have had time to study the contract.

Sheryl Giles – Washington Township – Commented that in the last four years the public was never denied access to the board retreat. If it was considered an “executive session”, would you not have had to give notice that this retreat, session, or workshop was an executive session with six days notification and shouldn't we have been told this was an executive session? If the seminar was closed to the public shouldn't we have been notified? At what point in time did it go from the public being allowed to not being allowed?

(Mr. Green responded to her that it was not an executive session. He explained the two times you can have private meetings as a board are – Executive Sessions and Educational Seminars. In order to comply with the law you have to announce that you had one at the next meeting.) (Dr. Sham responded that before Chris started to talk about the budget he started the session letting everyone know that there would be absolutely no discussion on the budget.)

Can we ask the solicitor for an opinion on the Sunshine Law on this issue? (Mr. Green asked the solicitor if we can have an educational seminar and he responded that under the Sunshine Law – yes).

How many board members before that night knew that it was a private session? (Mr. Green responded that he was not going to poll the board but if they wanted to ask individual members after the meeting they may do so).

What was the reason for security that night? (Mr. Green responded that we were responsible for that building that night). Mrs. Giles, a former board member, wanted to make one additional comment: She stated “I think it was so unfair that you could sit there and comment on another board member making a comment at the taxpayers meeting when three years ago I was at a meeting of the same organization which was active at that time and you stood there at the podium speaking on and on and on about your goals, ambitions, what you would like to see happen and what you want. I felt nothing remotely close to what you were saying but you stood there and you spoke for me and every other board member at that time, but yet you can sit there and condemn someone else for doing the same exact thing you did.”

Margaret MacCrimble – Slatington Borough – She stated that she didn't know if everyone was aware of a letter that is being circulated in the district. It is a very nasty letter about the board and Dr. Sham. She stated that she is not going to read the accusations because quite honestly if they are not true she felt that they are libelous. This is the kind of thing our district has been reduced to. One thing she hates to do is open the paper after every Northampton and Catasaquua school board meeting and read about their

meetings. She always felt glad that she did not live in a school district like that. After hearing things tonight, we are going to be right there in the third column right next to them. The district obviously has a problem. She stated that this letter is the kind of thing, which was not signed by anyone, when she read it her first feeling was that they are like little cockroaches. They do all their dirty work in the dark, make accusations, but when the light is turned on they scurry into a dark corner. That is what is happening with things like this. She indicated she heard enough here, sitting in the back, hearing all kinds of little comments as people get up to speak. It seems as though we've lost our dignity for other people. We should allow people to speak, we all have our own opinions. We don't agree with one another and that's a good thing, because through diversity we get the best. But when someone else is speaking, even if you don't like what they are saying or what they stand for I think there is a matter of common courtesy and some people in this room should learn that. Our school district deserves the best. We all have differences of opinion, but lets try to solve them with dignity and decorum.

Because of employment obligations, Mr. Dorshimer left the meeting at 10:00 p.m.

**ADJOURN-
MENT**

Ms. Papay made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Geronikos, that the regular meeting of the Northern Lehigh Board of School Directors be adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

YEA: Mr. Beers, Mr. Cox, Mr. Follweiler, Mrs. Ganser, Mrs. Geronikos
Mr. Hazzard, Ms. Papay, Mr. Green (8)

NAY: None (0)

Respectfully submitted,

Bryan C. Dorshimer
Secretary

ATTEST: _____ President
Mathias J. Green, Jr.