

**CHESTER UPLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
SPECIAL MEETING**

**June 29, 2015
5:02 P.M.**

A Public Meeting of the Elected School Board of Directors of the Chester Upland School District was held this evening at the Administration Building of the Chester Upland School District located at 1720 Melrose Avenue, Chester, Pennsylvania.

School Board Members Present: Mr. Anthony Johnson, President
 Ms. Joan Neal, Vice President
 Mr. William Riley, Treasurer
 Ms. Beverly Harris, Member
 Ms. Wanda Mann, Member
 Ms. Tyra Quail, Member
 Mr. Charlie Warren, II, Member

By Phone: Mr. Cephus Richardson, Secretary
 Ms. Bettie McClairen, Member

Solicitor: Leo A. Hackett, Esquire

The Board of School Director's meeting opened with a call to order by President, Anthony Johnson and the Pledge of Allegiance.

NOTICE OF ADVERTISED MEETING

(COPY OF ADVERTISED NOTICE ATTACHED)

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

President Johnson asked if any of the Board members had any questions or concerns before the vote.

Bettie McClairen – asked if he meant concerns about the passing of that tax bill.

Wanda Mann – Yes

Bettie McClairen - Has had a lot of phone calls from seniors that have not filled out that Homestead bill and I truly believe that with the things that they have already not done and the things that are going on as far as how they are paying each other, and not putting that money towards what it needs to be, I don't even think we should raise taxes until we know that the money is going to the curriculum. We have top heavy administrators and I believe there are people there that we don't even know we're paying. I disagree with raising the taxes.

Wanda Mann – I agree with you, Bettie. The seniors are upset about this. I am a senior, I'm upset about it. A lot of seniors in our community can no longer put up with higher taxes. They have nothing now, they are not getting anything from the city, and I just think we need to dock some of these salaries. I agree with you. We have some tremendous salaries here that don't make sense, for a school district that is totally failing and a school district that has no money.

Bettie McClairen – Everybody talking about what we have, what we don't have, we just raised last year. I think we should at least skip a year. All you read in the paper is how it's not working and how much would it really increase the revenue. If we need \$9 million and we are only going to get half, I totally disagree with it and I want to be on record as saying it.

President Johnson asked if there were any other questions or concerns.

Tyra Quail – I have a concern. My concern comes from the fact that we, as a Board, have asked this administration for an organizational chart with titles, positions, salaries, and we have - I think we have been asking since March – and we have yet to receive that. That plays a part in my decision, particularly salaries and positions that we are unaware of.

Mr. William Riley signaled for the floor. President Johnson acknowledged Mr. Riley.

William Riley – I'd like to say this. When it comes to taxes, we – for 20 years- have been living on that process of not taxing (unintelligible). In order to have schools, all those things that other cities have, we have to pay taxes. We don't like it, we don't have the base that other communities have. Sure, I'm on a fixed income, but I realize that in order that my grandson, his friends and all to be educated, we have to step-up and mature and pay taxes. That is what got us here now. For 20 years, we've had them saying, 'Look here, we're holding your taxes' and all they were doing was hurting us. Because all around us they're building new schools, they're doing all these other things, because they were willing to pay taxes

because they know that was the only way to have a thriving community. So, we're going to have to live with this and start doing it. And, you know, I hate saying to the public that you have to pay taxes, but you have to pay taxes, it's just that simple.

Bettie McClairen – It's really not that simple when you think about...

President Johnson banged his gavel at this point and asked Ms. McClairen to please address the Chair.

Bettie McClairen – OK, cause I really can't hear everything and I apologize, but if he is done, sir President, I would like to say something.

Mr. Johnson – Go ahead.

Bettie McClairen – I understand what Mr. Riley is saying, about 20 years, but we can't do it consecutively for 20 years. We have to address the issue that we don't have the tax base that other communities have. You only have a few people paying an increase and most of them, as I have heard from last year, are seniors. So, while yes, we need more revenue and we need to be stronger in what we're doing with what we have. If you are going to raise taxes, then tell those people that you are going to reduce salaries. Tell people that you are going to send out that form that they need to fill out or show them how to fill it out so they can get the rebate. Do something else besides singing the song about what we need to do to raise money. We know that we're poor, but it should not be on the backs of the older people.

President Johnson acknowledges Charlie Warren, II.

Charlie Warren, II – You know, it is discouraging for me and I would imagine politicians in Harrisburg are laughing at us – we are not willing to pay what we can pay to help our children. What message are we sending? First of all, we are here to talk about taxes, not about somebody else's job that's in place. That's for another day. We are here to talk about how we are going to fund education and give our children the opportunity to excel. 20 years everybody was saying we didn't pay taxes, no tax increases. That's sort of asinine the way that I look at it. You didn't pay taxes then you complain because your schools aren't good schools. Yes, we have a limited tax base, but Harrisburg has a responsibility where we fall short, and that's our job again to make sure they do make us whole, but we need to pay our share and I can't understand anyone not willing to pay their share for their children and their children's children to have access to education. I didn't come here this evening to talk about somebody's salary. I came here to talk about whether or not we're willing to move forward with educational excellence and that means are we willing to pay more taxes.

President Johnson acknowledges Wanda Mann.

I understand that but I also agree with Bettie with the fact that OK, I have been here for 20 years and I've seen for 20 years salaries – you say salaries don't have anything to do with this – but it's about the school district and building the school district. The salaries we pay people are ridiculous. People can sit at this table and see a million dollars sitting in front of this table. These senior citizens don't have kids here. You know, most of the parents that have kids in the school district don't pay taxes, they don't own

their home – most of them – I am not saying all of them, and I understand what you're saying, 20 years is a long time, but we are not the other school districts. We don't have the money the other school districts have. The people that had money in this school district have left this school district - have left this area and we can pay someone \$150,000. We are not a \$150,000 worth of students here, we are not that big. Everything is closed up, we have given away everything, except these salaries. You know, you want the community to give, the school district needs to give too. These salaries are ridiculous, Mr. Warren, and you know, I understand exactly what you're saying, but, you know, I am on the side of the senior and I know what it's doing to people around here because I've seen letters sent out to people here that are being sue now because of taxes, trash collections. These people are being sued because they don't have the money to pay one tax bill, a tax bill that may be \$112 has now gone up to \$800 dollars for trash. How do they turn around and pay these taxes. They just don't have the money and if we cut back on these salaries in the school district – and I know these salaries, we don't have to talk about these salaries – they're ridiculous.

President Johnson – Alright, we can run this around but...go ahead Beverly.

President Johnson acknowledges Beverly Harris.

Beverly Harris – I understand what you're saying Ms. Wanda and Mr. Charlie, but, right now, we can't do anything about salaries anyway. There is nothing we can do right now to change it. We have now

Ms. Harris was interrupted by Wanda Mann saying 'what do you mean there is nothing we can do about salaries'?

Beverly Harris – there is nothing we can do at this meeting, nothing we can do now. We have to wait until another time to do it, because we are not able to do that anyway, we can only pass taxes.

Ms. Harris was interrupted again (several people talking)

President Johnson – Let's not get into a debate about that now. My comment, and this is the last comment, and it is based on as Mr. Warren said adequately, 20 years we didn't raise taxes, and so if you want to add it up, and that was even before the index, we could be out of this deficit if we raised taxes in the early 90's when the economy was booming. This little bit of taxes is only going to total \$550,000, not even a million, so the people don't even see it on their tax bill. I live in a community, Toby Farms that still has a little bit of elder people, you know, retired, and they haven't even asked me why have you raised my taxes, because they haven't even noticed it. With the Homestead – this is why the Homestead came in effect with the Casino; we get the biggest chunk of the Homestead money, so if we get that information out, this little bit of taxes they don't even see it on their bill.

Ms. Mann interrupted saying "I see it."

President Johnson – continued. And we have to stand up. That is why the state is controlling us. You know, we are under Receivership because we won't stand up on our own. And part of standing on your own is paying your dues. I mean, other communities, Southeast Delco, William Penn, they're struggling, they're no richer than us, Yeadon, in the 70's and 80's was the top African American community in Delaware County. Go to Yeadon now! But they paid and that was before the index. One year, Southeast

Delco's tax raise was almost 12% because that was how much they needed to raise for their schools and the people did it. We don't want to stand up, we want to holler and scream at the state. They've been here 21 years. We don't want them here, we want to stand on our own but we want them to give us \$21 million and we can't vote on a little bit of taxes, which we need, because if we don't vote it is plain to see that Joe (Watkins) can raise them and here we have another person being us and then we get mad at Joe. Why is Joe doing this? Because we won't stand up. That is why the Receivership is here, people. Not because they want to be here. They have not respect for us because we won't stand up as a community and say, 'this is what we want for our children, we don't want a hand out no more'. So what you're saying when you say don't vote for taxes is that they have to give us an EXTRA \$500,000 because you won't stand up. Then we'll be mad at Joe if he votes yes. See Joe's the bad guy! C'mon! We are adults. Everybody swore that when we ran for these positions, that we would, for the children, not for salaries and all that, that have nothing to do with it. It has to do with us voting for the extra \$500,000 for these children – they might get a book out of it – but then when we go after the state, they can say, 'OK, you raised taxes, you didn't just keep asking for hand outs'. It has to stop. And then Wolf's proposal next year not to have school taxes, so this might be the last year we have to do it, but not to do it because we're worrying about people's salaries, c'mon y'all. Even the judge, when we were there said "Do not cut! It has nothing to do with the structural deficit." If you can understand it, we can lay off everyone and only keep Mr. Shannon, we would still be \$24 million in debt because of the structural deficit.

Ms. Mann interrupted saying "I'm still saying the money we are spending in salaries is a smack in the face to the elderly people in this community that don't have children (the rest was unintelligible)."

President Johnson – continued. We can continue to debate this, but we are going to put it out to the vote. Can I get a motion on **Business Agenda A-1**?

BUSINESS AGENDA

A-1 Approval of Resolution to levy and raise real estate taxes for the 2015-2016 school year

WHEREAS, the School District has been declared a school district in severe financial recovery pursuant to Act 141 of 2012 (the Act) on August 14, 2012; and

WHEREAS, a Receiver for the School District has been appointed pursuant to the provisions of Act 141 of 2012 by the Court of Common Pleas of Delaware County on December 13, 2012; and

WHEREAS, the authority to levy and raise taxes remains with the Board of School Directors pursuant to Section 672-A(a)(2) of the Act; and

WHEREAS, the Receiver has directed the Board of School Directors of the Chester Upland School District to levy and raise real estate taxes for the 2015-2016 school year pursuant to Section 672-A(b)(4) of the Act; and

NOW THEREFORE, the Board of School Directors does hereby levy and assess millage for real estate tax purposes for the 2015-2016 fiscal year as follows:

57.7993 mills in the City of Chester,
24.6928 mills in the Borough of Upland, and
24.6928 mills in the Township of Chester.

Executive Sponsor: Karen DeShullo

Charlie Warren, II – I so move.

William Riley – Second

President Johnson – call the roll.

Joan Neal – Vice President – Yea
Cephus Richardson – Secretary – Yea
William Riley – Treasurer – Yea
Beverly Harris – Yea
Wanda Mann – Nay
Bettie McClairen – Nay
Tyra Quail – Yea
Charlie Warren, II – Yea
Anthony Johnson, President – Yea

The Yea's have it in a 7-2 vote

BUSINESS AGENDA ITEM A-1 WAS APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS.

*Bettie McClairen asked that the Role be called, because she did not hear who was at the meeting.
President Johnson asked for a call of the role.*

Anthony Johnson – President – Present
Joan Neal – Vice President – Present
Cephus Richardson – Secretary – Present (via phone)
William Riley – Treasurer – Present
Beverly Harris – Present
Wanda Mann – Present
Bettie McClairen – Present (via phone)
Tyra Quail – Present
Charlie Warren, II – Present

There being no further business, *President, Anthony Johnson* adjourned the meeting at 5:25pm

CHESTER UPLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT
PRESIDENT OF BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS

Anthony Johnson, President

Date