

**CHESTER UPLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT
MINUTES OF THE RECEIVER'S
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PUBLIC**

**August 13, 2014
6:30 P.M.**

A Public Special Meeting of the Receiver of the Chester Upland School District was held this afternoon at the Administration Building of the Chester Upland School District located at 1720 Melrose Avenue, Chester, Pennsylvania.

Executive Staff Present: Mr. Joseph Watkins, Receiver
 Mr. George Crawford, CFO
 Ms. Claudia Averette, Chief of Staff
 Ms. Andria Saia, Assistant Superintendent

Solicitor: Leo A. Hackett, Esquire

The Receiver's meeting opened with a call to order by Receiver, Joseph Watkins and the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mr. George Crawford, CFO

NOTICE OF ADVERTISED MEETING

(COPY OF ADVERTISED NOTICE ATTACHED)

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Anthony Johnson – Vice President of School Board asked if Mr. Watkins would explain the Transitional Loan

Joseph Watkins explained that the loan is from the Commonwealth. They have money available for fiscally distressed districts, but they may not have a lot left for us. Maybe only \$2.75 million available this year. But we may be able to use it this year to help our cash shortfall. This spring we were short of cash and if we had gotten the transitional loan for 2013-14 and the BEF loans would have been forgiven we would not have had to go to PDE and ask for funds to tide us over. He also spoke about the \$8.5 million we are paying out to cyber schools and the 119 so far that have signed on to our cyber program.

Mr. Johnson then stated to the room at large that we are paying the charter schools in excess of \$60 million and we need the reimbursements from the state for the charter fees. If we received that we would be in the black and not have a \$12.5 million deficit. If we could get the cyber children back into the district, that would be another \$8.5 million surplus. He believes that the Board needs to be ready to take the baton and run with it and that they need to start acting as one and not individuals. He believed that all of the kids are Chester's children, even those in the Charters and that Joe trying to get a partnership with the Charters to count those children as in the public school system is a good thing. He said that that way we would not be paying Charter school fees for those children anymore and would save a lot of money. He believes Joe is right on target

Laurence Hamm said that he agreed with Mr. Johnson and had some questions about the transitional loan also. He wanted to know how long we have been eligible and when we first got a transitional loan.

Mr. Watkins explained that since he was appointed Chief Recovery Officer in 2012. We got a loan then but did not get one in 2013-14 because the money had already been allocated to other districts.

Mr. Hamm asked if we need any collateral, such as buildings or assets, to secure this loan.

Mr. Watkins answered no.

Mr. Hamm then asked if we are having problems with the charter school fees, why can't we set them.

Mr. Watkins answered that we cannot set the fees. They are set by the Commonwealth and PDE.

Mr. Hamm asked if Mr. Watkins was appointed by the Governor.

Mr. Watkins answered that he was actually appointed by Ron Tomalis who was the then Secretary of Education, as the Recovery Officer, but he was sure that Governor Corbett had a hand in it, but that when he was appointed Receiver, it was President Judge Kenny of Delaware County who did that.

Betty McClairen, President of School Board asked about the status with the partnership school and if we will hear this year.

Mr. Watkins answered that he had a meeting with those charter schools today and everything went very well. He believes that they see the benefits and advantages of a partnership with the public schools. He said that he would speak with the Board more on this at a later date.

William Riley – Treasurer of School Board asked if the Receiver had power over the cyber schools to revoke or recall their charter.

Mr. Watkins said that he did not have the power over the cybers as he does the charter schools. The Secretary of Education has the power to revoke or recall their charter and he has asked her to review them and to pull their charters if they are not performing well. She is poised to act once the scores are in

Mr. Riley asked about the children that were registered at these cyber schools but were not actually living at the places or were abandoned or empty lots, etc.

Mr. Watkins answered that we investigated these and 20% of the cyber children we are paying for are not verifiable and we will not be paying for them anymore.

Jean Arnold asked Joshua Culbertson to speak about the new Tenex replacement system. Wanted to know the benefits of it. Will we be getting better access to transcripts and records? She also asked about the new Dell laptops and desktops and if they would help with reinstating the GED program since they need desktops.

Joshua Culbertson explained that the new system is a Sungard E-Schools Plus Student Information System. He said that a wide variety of people here, admin, school and security based, looked at and compared different systems. Tenex is a limited system and not able to create reports easily. Sungard allows ease of reports for individual users and has better functionality in all realms. We will be ramping up, phasing in. It should be fully functional by mid-year.

Mr. Johnson asked if we had been using Tenex all through as he remembered that they were changing systems back in 2009.

Mr. Culbertson answered that yes they were and only the financial system had been changed.

Mr. Culbertson also answered Ms. Arnold's second question about the computers. He said that no they were not for the GED program, but that these were being used for the schools and being paid by different grants, but by having these paid by grants we would be saving money and that could go toward the computers for GED.

Tyra Quail, Secretary for the School Board asked why the order for the uniform shirts was so much larger for STEM than the High School since there were fewer students at STEM.

Claudia Averette answered that the High School had already done a bulk purchase of their uniform shirts and STEM hadn't gotten any.

Ms. Quail asked if these were the ones that were being sold at the schools. And would the money go back into the budget?

Mr. Crawford answered yes.

Beverly Harris, Member, School Board asked if, since we are bringing children back from Cyber schools to a brick and mortar, there is room here (in our schools) for them.

Mr. Watkins answered yes. They will be housed at the High School which has plenty of room and the good thing is that it will be at no cost to us.

Ms. Harris also asked about buildings that had been sold that were owned by the District.

Mr. Watkins answered that Stetser and the Administration Building had been sold to Widener and we are leasing them, the school for \$1 a year and the Administration Building year by year. We have also sold Pulaski and the Vocational Building and that Wetherill had gone at auction. William Penn had not been sold yet. All of the money came back into the district's budget.

BUSINESS AGENDA

A-1 General Fund Budget: \$23,169.63. Approval of list of payments

RESOLVED, that the attached list of payments of the various accounts totaling for all accounts and funds the grand sum of \$23,169.63, of which General Fund payments total \$23,169.63, and Food Services Fund payments total \$0, a copy of which has been given to the Receiver, acting as the Board of School Directors, and a copy of which is now before the Receiver, be APPROVED, and that said list of payments be incorporated into the August 13, 2014 Minutes.

(LIST OF PAYMENTS ATTACHED)

Executive Sponsor: George Crawford

A-2 Approval of Resolution regarding Interest in a loan from the Financial Recovery Transition Loan Program

RESOLVED, that the Receiver of the Chester Upland School District (hereinafter “School District”) hereby approves the attached Resolution regarding the District’s interest in a 2014 loan from the Financial Recovery Transition Loan Program.

Executive Sponsor: George Crawford

A-3 Approval of the Sungard Student Information System (SIS)

RESOLVED, that the Receiver, acting as the Board of School Directors, enter into a 3-year business agreement with Sungard K-12 Education for the purchase of a Student Information System to replace the existing Tenex system currently used by the Chester Upland School District.

Payable from: 2014-15 General Fund Budget

Cost: 91,236.70

Executive Sponsor: Joshua Culbertson

A-4 Approval to enter into a business agreement with Dell Financial to purchase desktop and laptop computers

RESOLVED, that the Receiver, acting as the Board of School Directors, enter into a business agreement with Dell Financial Services for the purchase of desktop and laptop computers for the 2014-2015 year.

Payable from: Various Grants
Cost: \$463,788.49
Executive Sponsor: Joshua Culbertson

BUSINESS AGENDA ITEMS #A-1 THROUGH #A-4 WERE APPROVED BY JOSEPH P. WATKINS, RECEIVER

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business *Receiver, Joseph P. Watkins* adjourned the meeting at 5:50 pm.

**CHESTER UPLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT
FINANCIAL RECOVERY RECEIVER**

Joseph P. Watkins

Date