

Lehigh Area School District

Lehigh, Pennsylvania

Building Committee Workshop Meeting
Monday, November 4, 2013
7:00 PM
Administration Board Room

Minutes

I. Pledge of Allegiance

II. Call to Order

III. Roll Call

	Present	Absent
Mr. John Finnegan, Member	X	☐
Mr. William J. Hill, Jr., Member	X	☐
Mr. Dave Krause, Member	☐	X
Mr. Hal Resh, Vice-President	X	☐
Mr. Larry Stern, Member	X	☐
Mr. Wayne Wentz, Member	X	☐
Mr. Andrew Yenser, Treasurer	☐	X
Mr. Thomas Zimmerman, Member	X	☐
Mr. Rocky Ahner, President	X	☐
Mr. Michael Malay Jr., Business Manager	X	☐
Mr. Jonathan Cleaver, Superintendent	X	☐
Attorney William Schwab, Solicitor	X	☐
Ms. Bonnie Cortese, Recording Board Secretary	☐	X
Mrs. Melissa Wagner, Sub. Record Bd. Secretary	X	☐

IV. Review meeting with PDE regarding Plan Con submission.

Mr. Cleaver asked the board if there were any questions (none) and then proceeded with the brief PowerPoint presentation. Mr. Cleaver spoke to public and board regarding building scenarios.

V. Presentation on building proposals (including proposed costs).

Mark Barnhart, EI Associates, Inc., presented a PowerPoint to the board and public.

VI. Board discussion ONLY on proposed building projects:

- East Penn Elementary
- Mahoning Elementary
- Franklin Elementary
- Shull-David Elementary
- Middle School
- High School
- Multi-purpose Stadium

Mr. Ahner spoke to the public first. Apologized to Coach McCarroll for the petition that was passed to the football players before the game on 11/1/13. Wants the cost of the stadium and renovations to be based on facts. Numbers in feasibility study do not match the presentation from EI Associates. How much is the stadium really going to cost? Wants estimates, not "guess"timates. Extra-curricular activities are important for students to keep them off the streets. It is the responsibility of the board to make the right decisions for students and taxpayers. Renovations should have started by now. Does not want to close any buildings, i.e. Shull David. Mr. Ahner asked each board member to present their opinion on the buildings and multi-purpose stadium.

Mr. Hill asked Atty. Schwab if any motions could be made at tonight's meeting. Atty. Schwab stated that the meeting was only for discussion and no actions could be taken at this meeting.

Mr. Wentz:

He has been dedicated to kids in this community for years. The old stadium was dedicated in 1940. The game on 11/1/13 was a great community event. Sports builds morale and character. We are a senior citizen community and do not draw young people. We need to give back to the kids of the community with a multi-purpose stadium. We are going to a new league that will draw new people. We are unable to host anything here at our stadium. Districts close to us have revamped their facilities (Palmerton, Northern Lehigh, Northwestern Lehigh, Jim Thorpe). We need a suitable field to play on. We need to build a new stadium.

Mr. Resh:

Has been to Harrisburg twice to meet regarding Plan Con. We need to decide what updates are needed and need to get to the end of project. Decide how to use some of the fund balance. We have not had a tax increase for the last 2 years, but have had increases prior to this. Let's spend the monies (fund balance) on the kids.

Mr. Ahner:

Bonds will run out in 2016. Stadium is not refundable, funded 100% by taxpayers. Need to start work on 2 elementary buildings (EP & MA). Use fund balance for stadium. Will still need repairs to old stadium since new would be 2-3 years to completion.

Mr. Resh:

We do not want to sell buildings. Told that 1st Ward and 3rd Ward were not suitable for students, but both are housing special education students.

Mr. Hill:

Asked Mr. Malay, business manager, about millage. Is not in favor of closing SD, not in favor of K-6 or 7-12. We need good, basic, wholesome schools to learn and have students ready for the adult arena. What can traffic bear in this area? Construction needs to be done in phases. Need to bond, borrow and use fund balance. Alleviate any millage if possible. Do what is right for students and taxpayers.

Mr. Ahner:

We will have other costs too such as healthcare and raises. Entire board has worked really good with money-saving options. Unfunded mandates from the states cost the district monies.

Mr. Stern:

The project has been talked about and a problem for 17 years. Once again it is stalled. We need to move forward with as low and feasible cost as possible. It will be pride for our community. Proud of our students on the field. We need to be engaged with booster clubs. Sports team and band will benefit from multi-purpose stadium. Mr. Cleaver and Mr. Ahner need to meet in the middle with planning. Meeting since 2011 on this issue. Need to "fish or cut bait". Do not waste anymore time.

Mr. Finnegan:

This stadium piece serves to confuse us. We have a \$13,000,000 fund balance and no capitol improvement since 1992. Let's get this off the table and take monies from fund balance for stadium. This is a wonderful area, good air, good water, beautiful community, but no jobs. Most important buildings in our community are our school buildings. Professionals are not going to move their children to these "educational cottages" i.e. portable buildings. We need to invest in equality of school buildings. We would be walking away from a \$25,000,000 gift from the state. Pay for stadium out of fund balance. Prefers one elementary center. Get on it and do it soon or we will lose our tax base.

Mr. Zimmerman:

Children are paying elderly parents taxes. Wrong to raise taxes.

Mr. Wentz:

Multi-purpose stadium could be used for band competitions. Keep kids involved. Best teachers, our kids come first.

Mr. Hill:

May be agreeable to new stadium if not a burden to taxpayers.

Mr. Resh:

If we commit to a dollar amount, we need to stick to these amounts. Environmental quality important in buildings. Talk to employees in buildings. Buildings need to be upgraded for staff and students.

Mr. Cleaver:

Applauds the board for time and making these tough decisions. Six (6) buildings need major renovations. Looking for direction from board. Need to show them different options to make these decisions. School board is here for the students. They will make decisions that are best for the school.

VII. Public Comment (limited to three (3) minutes as per board policy).

1. *Wallace Putkowski – Appreciates what school board does. Concerned about millage increase. How much can we lose on this deal? Monies from state are a promise, not a definite. Give the public some hard numbers and put in a booklet for purchase. What other cost besides renovations are expected to be footed by the taxpayers?*
2. *James Blakeslee - 30 years in community, daughter in activities, employee. Community and school board needs to listen to facts. In favor of stadium. Need to make improvements now. Need to attract professional families.*
3. *Thomas Wertman – Previous school boards ignored the problem. Give students every opportunity. Cannot push wheelchair in current stadium. Go ahead with stadium and do it now.*
4. *David Bradley – Commended the district for a good education. Need to maintain buildings properly. Pension and healthcare costs to rise. Private funding can be used for stadium. Publish letter from Jim Vogel. Don't count on payments from state.*
5. *Chuck Pollock – Have seen every athletic facility in area. Lehighton's is the worst. HS gym smaller than MS, not PIAA sanctioned. Track should have been 8 lanes, not 6. Do the stadium right or don't do at all. Need people to move in to the district. The longer you wait the more it will cost.*
6. *Fenna Millen – Realignment will cause some issues with extra-curricular arts programs, i.e. music.*
7. *Wilmer Everetts – A lot of people who are not here at the meeting need to be convinced and be on the up-and-up. Want the best for the kids, but can we afford it?*

VIII. Adjournment

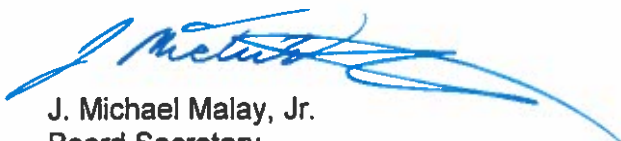
Next regular scheduled meeting is Monday, November 18, 2013 at the Administration Building.

A. MOTION by Mr. Zimmerman, SECONDED by Mr. Wentz to adjourn the meeting.

VOTE: YES - 7 NO - ABSENT - 2 ABSTENTIONS -

TIME: 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted


J. Michael Malay, Jr.
Board Secretary

(Minutes of November 4, 2013 include Pages 1 through 4)