



Southern Lehigh School District

Board of School Directors
Special Board Hearing Meeting

October 24, 2013

The Special Board Hearing meeting of the Board of School Directors of the School District of Southern Lehigh was held at 7:35 p.m. on the above date (October 24, 2013) at Southern Lehigh High School, Center Valley, PA.

PRESENT: Dimmig, Gunkle, McLoughlin, Hayes, Lindsay, Lycett, Quigley, Stelts,
ABSENT: Mohr
OTHERS: Christman, Lewis, Melber, Katz, Bergey, Donahue, Farris, Limpar, Jordan, Rizzo (Morning Call), Popichak (Patch) and approximately 90 other members of the community.

OPENING PROCEDURES

Mr. Dimmig read the following statement to the audience:

“Good Evening. I am Jeff Dimmig, Board President and the moderator of tonight’s hearing.

On September 23, 2013, the Board of School Directors adopted a motion, which authorized a hearing for closing of the elementary schools. As a result of that decision, it is possible that either Hopewell or Lower Milford Elementary School will be closed. In order to allow the community a full and complete opportunity to provide input into this closure before the Board makes a decision, the Board has convened tonight’s hearing. Also, this hearing has been convened in order to comply with Section 780 of the School Code. In the event that Hopewell or Lower Milford Elementary School is closed permanently, tonight’s hearing will constitute the public hearing required by Section 780 of the School Code before a school is permanently closed. In order to be sure that it has met its obligations under Section 780 of the School Code in the event that the closure is decided to be permanent, this hearing is convened. Notice of this hearing was given in a newspaper of general circulation at least 15 days prior to tonight’s hearing. The notice with date of publication will be identified as Exhibit 1 and will be included in the record of this proceeding. The hearing is not a public debate. It is an opportunity for the public to hear a presentation concerning the possible closing of Hopewell or Lower Milford and for the Board to receive and record comments and observations. All the comments will be transcribed.

The agenda is as follows:

1. A review of the building issues and options.
2. Public Comment on the possible closure of Hopewell or Lower Milford Elementary School.

When we reach public comments, each person, when called upon, please approach the nearest microphone/podium. First state your name and address and whether you are a resident, parent and/or employee of the District for the record. Please keep comments to about 3 minutes to allow all persons an opportunity to speak. No person will be recognized a second time until all persons who wish to speak have spoken. Please limit

the length of your comments to three minutes or less as a courtesy to others who may wish to speak.

Written comments or testimony may be submitted to Diana S. Millman, Board Secretary. The District will receive written comments until 4:00 PM on November 27, 2013. We now will proceed with the presentation followed by public comment.”

The Board met in Executive Session prior to this meeting to discuss a student discipline matter.

SPECIAL HEARING

Mr. Bergey, Mr. Melber, and Mrs. Christman gave a presentation that included information regarding different options for building closure and construction, transportation, the costs associated with the potential closing of an elementary school, and curricular and programmatic information with regard to the districts elementary programs.

VISITORS

Jennifer Phillip spoke on behalf of the Hopewell PTA in favor of re-building Hopewell and closing Lower Milford.

Mike Snovitch spoke regarding the response time of emergency services in Lower Milford, the estimated costs for improvements to Lower Milford, population growth, per pupil costs and transportation. Mr. Snovitch also requested that the Lower Milford engineer review the estimates.

Nancy Smillie spoke on behalf of the Hopewell staff regarding the need to re-build Hopewell.

Lori Sickenberger questioned the accuracy of the report and in support of not closing Lower Milford.

Jim Dickey spoke about the importance of this decision as well as the many factors involved.

Tom Parsons questioned the accuracy of the costs of the different options and the capacity being diminished if an option to close one of the schools is chosen.

Tim Kramer spoke questioning the costs, reducing capacity and the need to take a closer look at factors making one option the best.

Ellen Deebe asked about the plan for the third grade when Hopewell is being re-built.

William Roy spoke about Lower Milford being the Red Cross evacuation site and being in favor of keeping Lower Milford open.

Eric Knies spoke about his concerns about the costs of the different option and what the life expectancy of the renovated buildings would be.

Mark Rizzo spoke about the population density at Hopewell and how closing the school would discourage residents from living in the area.

Mr. Dimmig thanked everyone for coming to the Public Hearing.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED BY Quigley and 2ND **BY** McLoughlin to adjourn the meeting.

VOICE VOTE: "YES" - Unanimous - Motion Carried

ABSENT: Mohr

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

ATTEST: *Kristen Lewis* Assistant Board Secretary