

**BETHLEHEM AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD FACILITIES COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
MONDAY, JULY 14, 2009**

Mrs. Michele Cann, Facilities Chairperson of the Board of School Directors, called the meeting of the Board Facilities Committee to order at 6:46 p.m. on Monday, July 14, 2009, in the Dining Room of the Education Center. Present were School Board members Dr. Craig Haytmanek, Judith Dexter, Charlene Koch, Loretta Leeson, Rosario Amato, Michele Cann, Irene Follweiler, and Eugene McKeon. Also present were Dr. Joseph A. Lewis, superintendent of schools; Stanley Majewski, assistant superintendent for finance and administration; Scott T. Gilliland, director of facilities and operations; Arif Fazil and James Hanna, district engineers (D'Huy Engineering, Inc.); Thomas Washington, assistant superintendent for human resources; Richard Agretto, director of special education; Anne Morton, assistant director of business affairs; Joseph Santoro, principal of Broughal Middle School; Joseph RaHS, principal of Northeast Middle School; Frederick Harris, Freedom High School athletic director; Samuel Senneca, Liberty High School athletic director; Donald Spry II, solicitor; and representatives from the press.

Mrs. Cann apologized for the late start of the meeting; an executive session was held prior to the facilities meeting in order to discuss personnel issues and other matters.

The following items were discussed:

**COURTESY OF THE FLOOR TO VISITORS –**

Karen Dolan, 55 Bridal Path Road, Bethlehem: Mrs. Dolan expressed concern over the cost associated with the Broughal Middle School proposed athletic fields. She stated that \$250,000 was an estimated average field cost and that \$6 million was too much to pay to have the fields constructed. She also said that the new athletic field plan that was being discussed tonight has not yet been approved by the City of Bethlehem. Mrs. Dolan said that the new plans need to be submitted for approval since they have been revised. The new plan includes a high retaining wall as well as other items such as the elimination of the field hockey field. Mrs. Dolan also said that the district has broken promises to the community in the sense that these new fields being proposed are only practice fields; no games will be played there. When will the community and the students be told that no games will be held there? She said that the fields seemed to lack spectator space and the retaining wall behind the football end zone was dangerous.

Phillip Richardson, 2231 Easton Avenue, Bethlehem: Mr. Richardson approached the board with a packet of information containing paperwork from leases recently held at Liberty High School. Mr. Richardson said that these were obtained by him through Pennsylvania's Right to Know law. He stated that he was attending this evening's meeting to bring to the board's attention that the district athletic directors, director of facilities, and administration were out to "defraud the district". After reviewing the information that was provided to him, he found violations of School Board Policy 707. Mr. Richardson said that prices were switched in order to defraud the district; these leases were charged "\$1,200 in fees when a minimum of \$15,000 should have been

paid". He said that these were "serious accusations he was making" and that they should be taken very seriously by the district.

Peter Crownfield, 569 Brighton Street, Bethlehem: Mr. Crownfield stated that he agreed with Mrs. Dolan and supported her statements. He also said that he was upset to find out that the proposed fields at Broughal Middle School were not going to be regulation size. He said they were substandard. Mr. Crownfield felt that the fields were dangerous because of the retaining wall and expensive. He asked the board to reconsider the demolition of the old Broughal Middle School as it was a valuable asset.

Roger Hudak, 1256 E. 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Bethlehem: Mr. Hudak said that he was a teacher for thirty-two years with Bethlehem Area School District before retiring and also had two children who attended Broughal Middle School. He asked the board to save the building as it is a historical building. Mr. Hudak asked the board to "mothball it, let it sit for awhile". He asked if it would be against the contract to do so.

William Scheirer, 1890 Eaton Avenue, Bethlehem: Mr. Scheirer recommended that the board obtain an independent evaluation of Broughal Middle School as he thought there was a lot of utility left to the building. He also suggested reevaluating the contract costs as he felt the numbers were not accurate.

Stephen Antalics, 737 Ridge Street, Bethlehem: Mr. Antalics asked the board when the exact date of demolition was scheduled for the old Broughal Middle School. He also stated that the district would be in better "shape" if it was "well organized and run properly".

Mary Pongracz, 321 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Bethlehem: Ms. Pongracz said that she was opposed to the demolition of the old Broughal Middle School. In referring to the agenda packets, she noted that the amounts shown for the Broughal Middle School demolition did not show the total amount that was being spent on the project. She stated that she wanted to see the "bottom line". Ms. Pongracz said that the children of the district need to learn how to read, write, and think logically, not play sports. The community will lose history if the building is torn down. Ms. Pongracz also stated that she was upset that the meeting did not start on time because she has "wasted forty-five minutes of her life" waiting for it to start.

Mrs. Leeson explained that the meeting started late due to an executive session being held prior to the start of the facilities meeting.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS –**

Dr. Lewis stated that the board would move item 4 on the agenda, "Old" Broughal Middle School Demolition, to the first item of discussion being that so many of the public were here to address that item. He said that he also wanted to clarify some misinformation. The plan that was included in the agenda packet tonight and the prior plan that was submitted to the City of Bethlehem were regulation size fields. PIAA identified the athletic field at Broughal Middle School as a "useable" field. The retaining wall behind the end zone should not be an issue. Dr.

Lewis said that there is concrete within close proximity to the Liberty High School track; there are concrete depressions and structures that have never posed a safety hazard. Dr. Lewis said that the public's statements were a "gross exaggeration of safety". Fencing would also be installed on the top of the retaining wall that would be at least 48" high. Dr. Lewis also said that a field hockey field at Broughal Middle School was never discussed and is not an option; however, the teams can practice field hockey on the field. The plan to relocate the building and all discussions relative to alternate sites was abandoned publicly. The school board has given the public several opportunities to speak about this project and at this point, the district is now eighteen years from when discussion began on building a new Broughal Middle School. Dr. Lewis noted that several meetings have been held over the years with Lehigh University and various community service individuals have been contacted to determine if anyone had interest in buying this building. All of the concerns of the contract have been reviewed with the solicitor; discussions have also been held with the contractor. When the Broughal Middle School project was bid, an alternate bid was placed in the contract to exclude the demolition of the old building. That was denied by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) and was required to be made part of the project.

Mrs. Leeson asked Mr. Spry to explain the details of the Broughal Middle School contract that were discussed in the executive session.

Mr. Spry said that the board does have the power to stop the project, but there would be a cost involved. In April 2007, it was attempted to bid the demolition as an alternate option, but was denied by the Commonwealth. If the decision is made to keep both the old and new Broughal Middle School buildings, the project would have to be resubmitted to the Commonwealth to include both buildings. The bid was awarded with the demolition included. Mr. Spry stated that the district approached Skepton Construction, Inc. about not demolishing the building and Skepton said that they cannot cancel as the contracts for the demolition have already been awarded to various subcontractors. If the board decided not to demolish the old Broughal Middle School, the estimated \$3.5 million of reimbursement may have to be given back to the Commonwealth. The permits issued are only for one building and there would be zoning issues. It would be costly to the district to cancel the demolition; litigation from the contractors and the Commonwealth could result.

Mr. Fazil said that he wanted to clarify the fact that when the project was bid, the board decided against selecting the option for saving the original entry way of the old Broughal Middle School as it was too costly. It was also decided by the board that the retaining wall adjacent to the athletic fields would be a modular wall instead of concrete to save money. The submittals for the athletic field are in place; no elevations of the field have been changed since they were submitted. The minor adjustments to the plan layout were as a result of the alternates selected and to coordinate with the selected modular wall. PDE said that bidding the alternate [keeping the existing building] was not an option permitted by PDE at the time when the project was being bid. Mr. Fazil said that all the costs of the Broughal Middle School project were identified at the time the project was bid. Mr. Fazil said that the existing contract costs are from the project schedule of values, they were not made up. The memo prepared by him and handed out as part of the facilities agenda identified items 1 and 2 which are contracted. The rest of the items are estimates and would be dependent on what happens with the existing building and what the

approval agencies will require. Mr. Fazil said he was not sure where the \$6 million number reported during public comments comes from.

Mr. Gilliland then showed the board a section of the fence that would be installed by the retaining wall.

Mr. Fazil said that the fence would be approximately forty-eight inches high and would be “capped” to prevent any sharp edges from protruding.

Dr. Lewis said that the drawing of the athletic field was provided to the board for their review and that Mr. Fazil was here to answer any questions about the plan.

Dr. Haytmanek asked, “If both buildings are left, what happens?”

Mr. Fazil said that some version of a “green” area still would need to be implemented but it would be very small.

Dr. Lewis stated that a portion of the former field at Broughal Middle School was referred to as “the bank” as it was a treacherous drop-off at one end of the field. That was there for years and there were never any safety or liability issues. The new field is much safer.

Mrs. Dexter wanted clarification that the proposed retaining wall would be approximately fifteen feet high with an additional four foot fence on top of it. She felt that the wall and the fence would create an “attractive nuisance” to students and passer-bys. Mrs. Dexter also said that when the plan for Broughal Middle School was submitted, the board movement was toward demolishing the old building. PDE has now come up with new ideas for reuse of old school buildings and are encouraging districts to do so. She also felt that continuing with the asbestos abatement would be a positive as it may be attractive to a buyer for reuse of the building. Mrs. Dexter stated that she would like to investigate if Lehigh University has a genuine interest in the old building. She also asked if someone could contact PDE to see what was required of the district if we decided not to proceed with the demolition. Mrs. Dexter said that she would like to see a valiant effort made by the board this time because the time was never set aside to address the communities’ concerns. She would like to see the historic Broughal Middle School saved.

Mrs. Leeson said that she would be happy to look at the alternatives for demolition if, and only if, the alternative does not exceed the current cost. Other alternatives were looked at in 2007. Mrs. Leeson asked where the district stood in the project timeline for Broughal Middle School. She wanted to know if the district had the time to look into alternatives. She felt that if we do have time to explore other options, than do so. Mrs. Leeson said that she would only be willing to look at other options if it did not cost the district any additional money.

Dr. Lewis stated that a preconstruction meeting regarding the project timeline of Broughal was going to be held tomorrow.

Mr. Fazil explained that all the project milestone dates were in the contract. Asbestos abatement of the building was scheduled to start on July 20, 2009. It was estimated that the abatement would take approximately five weeks, and the demolition would take place after asbestos abatement was complete. Mr. Fazil continued to say that the project milestone dates have been in the contract for two and a half years, and he expected the project to be completed by May 2010.

Dr. Lewis asked Mr. Fazil to explain to the board how the asbestos abatement is done in the fact that there is no regard to the sub surfaces when it is removed.

Mr. Fazil said that the areas that commonly contain asbestos are pipe insulation, floor tile, and plaster ceiling sections. When asbestos is removed from buildings that are going to be demolished, not much care is taken in regard to the sub surfaces. They are typically damaged in the removal process; the pipes would have to be reinsulated and the floors would have to be repaired in order to reuse the building.

Mrs. Leeson asked those board members who toured the area where the new Broughal Middle School athletic field was going to be installed as to what their thoughts were.

Mr. McKeon felt that the design would prohibit spectators on one side, but also that there was an adequate amount of end zone room. The soccer field is larger than the football field, but Mr. McKeon also felt that this would not be an issue as soccer players do not typically reach the speeds a football player does when approaching an end zone.

Mrs. Cann said she did not like the height of the retaining wall. She did say that she was reassured when she was told that a fence would be installed.

Mrs. Dexter stated that she felt that the safety concerns were addressed in the design of the field. She said that she did not like the idea of the retaining wall.

Mr. Amato said that no matter what you do, you cannot please everyone. The contracts that were signed with PDE approval were signed in good faith. Mr. Amato also said that he felt that no one else worked harder than Dr. Lewis in trying to arrange a deal between the district and Lehigh University. Mr. Amato asked the other board members who exactly from Lehigh University was interested in Broughal Middle School. He said they should provide their names to the rest of the board so they could be contacted by the district.

Mrs. Cann said that she did not speak with anyone directly associated with Lehigh University; it was simply speculation.

Mrs. Follweiler suggested that the board take the next week before the asbestos abatement commences to find out if Lehigh University is truly interested in the property. She said that many people in the community speculate that Lehigh University is interested in Broughal Middle School, and the board should take this last week to find out if they truly are or not.

Mrs. Leeson said that she would call Dr. Alice Gast to see if there is any interest and to get a response from Lehigh.

Mrs. Dexter felt that Mrs. Cann should call being that she is the Facilities Chairperson. Mrs. Dexter also asked what the legalities of breaking the demolition contract were.

Mrs. Koch stated that Lehigh University has been contacted numerous times over the past few years to see if they were interested in Broughal Middle School. She said that making a phone call to one individual person would not help as individuals cannot make decisions by themselves; a decision like this must be taken before their Board of Trustees. When discussions were held with Lehigh University, they would not commit to keeping the building. Mrs. Koch said that they wanted the land. She said that the building is not in good condition; the façade is crumbling in places and the interior is in poor condition.

Mrs. Cann said that Lehigh University may now have different reasons for being interested in the building.

Mrs. Koch said that the district has been asking Lehigh University if they have been interested in purchasing the building for the past sixteen years. Now the district decides that we want to change our minds at the eleventh hour? She said that at this point in the project, we cannot stop the process.

Mr. Amato asked what would happen if we were to stop the project. Would there be issues with the contracts?

Mr. Fazil said that there would be costs from the contractors that the district would have to pay, these costs would have to be negotiated per the contract.

Dr. Haytmanek reminded the board that the vote to keep Broughal Middle School on the south side of Bethlehem only passed by one vote. He said that the board kept in consideration that if the school was built somewhere else in south Bethlehem, the students would have to be bused to school.

Mr. McKeon felt that our board members should not be the ones to contact Lehigh University, but rather our current administration. If interest is expressed by Lehigh University in the property, the asbestos abatement contract should be changed so greater care is taken in removing the asbestos from the sub surfaces. He said that Lehigh University should know that the asbestos abatement will start within the next week.

Mrs. Cann said that the district would talk to Lehigh University about damages caused by the asbestos removal only if they were interested. Mrs. Cann asked Mr. Fazil to contact PDE to find out what would need to be done at this point if it was decided that the project needed to be changed.

Dr. Lewis asked the question that if Lehigh University does have interest in Broughal Middle School, what do you [the board] want to do. He told the board to be realistic; the district will incur costs. The district will own those damages because we will not pass them on to anyone else. Dr. Lewis also said that the district is not fiscally sound to do those changes.

Mrs. Dexter said that she is asking the community to come forward within the next week with any ideas. She suggested that they make the contacts and bring it to them.

Mrs. Koch said that the district would not wait on a potential buyer to obtain financing. Unless a buyer comes forth with a check, the offer should not be considered.

Mrs. Follweiler stated that she liked the idea of making one more call to PDE. She agreed that anyone that has interest in Broughal Middle School should come forward within the next week. She requested the reporters publish this in the newspapers.

Mrs. Dexter said that she felt that not much effort was made by Dr. Lewis last time Lehigh University was contacted about Broughal Middle School. She stated that "new blood was needed" and suggested that Dr. Persing make the contact with Lehigh University.

Dr. Lewis said that he was still the superintendent of the district and that he would work side by side with Dr. Persing.

Mrs. Cann said that Dr. Lewis and Dr. Persing would work together on contacting Lehigh University. She requested Mr. Fazil to contact PDE.

Mr. Fazil questioned if the board has a committed desire to investigate this option.

Mrs. Cann asked, "In case there is late interest, what would be their response?"

Mrs. Dexter directed Mr. Fazil to tell PDE that the district is attempting to reuse the building.

Mrs. Koch asked if we have established that the board wants to reuse this building or not.

Mr. Shearer then presented item number two on the agenda, Financing Updates. He first reviewed the "General Overview" section that explained that the district currently has three variable rate debt issues that are outstanding. Two of there are bond issue and the third is a Wachovia Bank loan. Mr. Shearer said that overall, the packages are not performing badly; improvement has recently been seen. He told the board that they must make a decision in the next few months as the series of 2005 bonds liquidity provider expires in January 2010. He then reviewed the cost of fund summaries. Mr. Shearer said that the cost of funds has dropped to around three percent or a little less. Interest rates have been up and down and this was due to the fact that approximately one week ago, there was an acquisition between two bond insurers and they are now operating under one umbrella. Mr. Shearer reviewed the details of the 2005 variable rate bonds and then the options for the board to consider. He told the board that he did not need a decision tonight as to what they wanted to do, but was looking for the next date that

the board wanted him to come back to discuss these options in more detail. He asked them to consider what risks they wanted to eliminate in the future. Mr. Shearer said that he has received positive feedback from Wachovia/Wells Fargo about providing a letter of credit. He asked the board to read through this information and it would be discussed at a later date. Mr. Shearer asked the board to be ready with a decision by September or October as rates tend to be higher at the end of the year.

Mrs. Cann said that the idea was to change the makeup of what the district currently has. Option two [issue new Variable Rate Bonds with Wachovia/Wells Fargo to refund the 2005 Variable Rate Bonds] does not seem that much different from what is currently in place. She asked what bank would be interested in option one [issue fixed rate bonds to refund 205 Variable Rate Bonds and pay swap termination amount].

Mr. Shearer said that option two is different in the fact that the banks that would issue the variable rate bonds would be much more stable than the ones they currently have. He said information could be submitted to various underwriters and a decision would be made as far as what bank would fund option one.

Mrs. Leeson asked how the current fixed rate bonds were priced today.

Mr. Shearer referred the board to page eleven of the packet which displayed the bond rates. Currently, they are about five percent.

Mrs. Leeson stated that the “killer” was the termination fees. She asked if there was any indication of where the termination fees would be by September because awhile back, the termination fees were actually a positive number. Would the district see that again anytime soon?

Mr. Shearer said that the ten year treasury would have to rise to approximately five percent or higher to get to a positive number. He believed that there is a slim chance that will happen by October.

Mrs. Leeson asked Mr. Shearer if he had a recommendation for the district.

Mr. Shearer answered that right now, he would recommend Option 3a [issue fixed rate bonds to refund a portion of the 2005 Variable Rate Bonds and pay the related termination amount; issue a loan through the Emmaus Bond Pool or as a standalone Variable Rate Bond Issue to refund the remaining portion].

Mrs. Cann explained item three on the agenda, Sale of Monocacy Building.

Dr. Lewis stated this item was being brought before the board as the administration was seeking direction from the board on this item.

Mr. Majewski said that there were numerous ways the property could be sold; it could be done through private sale, auction, or sealed bids. The district was able to utilize a real estate agency

or broker, but was not allowed to pay any commissions on the property until it was sold. The receipts of the sale must go to either the general operation budget or debt service.

Mrs. Follweiler asked if the district decided to go with sealed bids, could a minimum price be set.

Mr. Majewski said that yes, a reserve price could be set and that would be disclosed in the terms and conditions of the agreement.

Mrs. Follweiler said that she favored the sealed bid option.

Mr. McKeon said that the Vo-Tech uses an auction company to sell the homes that the students build. He said that you are able to establish a reserve with the auctions as well.

Mrs. Leeson suggested that a decision on whether to sell the Monocacy building or not should not be decided now, but later when the district knows what the state budget may be. She said that the district may have to reorganize after the budget is released. Mrs. Leeson said that we should not limit our options by selling the building.

Mrs. Dexter asked Mr. Gilliland to refresh the board's minds about the problems they have encountered with the Monocacy building.

Mr. Gilliland said that building is in need of a new heating system, energy efficiency needs to be addressed, and the fire alarm system needs to be updated. There is no question that if the building is going to continue to be used, it will need work.

Mrs. Koch said that she also liked the idea of sealed bids. She felt that it was an efficient way of buying and selling property.

Mrs. Cann asked what the fees were that were associated with each type of transaction.

Dr. Lewis stated that choosing sealed bids would be the least expensive option.

Mr. Majewski said that the district would not have to pay a commission if they decided to choose sealed bids; they would only have to pay for the cost of advertising. With whatever option is chosen, a commercial appraisal will still have to be done.

Mrs. Cann asked the board what selling option they would like to choose.

Dr. Lewis asked the board for their permission to have a commercial appraisal completed.

Mr. Majewski said that with the board's approval, he would ask the solicitor to compile a resolution.

Mr. Gilliland explained number five on the agenda, "Old" Northeast Middle School Demolition Site Plan Update. He said that a timetable was included in the packets and that the athletic director and principals helped design the fields.

Mr. Fazil said that the diagram of the athletic fields in the agenda packet was not the most recent design. He handed out an updated diagram and explained that this new diagram was two weeks newer. Mr. Fazil stated that numerous options were reviewed by the team and the option being proposed was determined to be the most cost effective and feasible plan. The proposed athletic fields at Northeast Middle School are designed to serve the middle school's needs and would also be a community benefit. The changes on the new diagram primarily consisted of some accommodations for site grading and Mr. Fazil reviewed the layout of the combination football/soccer field; softball field; field hockey field; utility building and parking lots. The plan includes fencing by the parking area off Pembroke Road as well as fencing on the corner of the fields by Minsi Trail Street.

Mr. Amato asked if the goal line to the end line was thirty feet. He also asked if there was a swale built into the design for water drainage.

Mr. Fazil said that it was thirty feet to the end line and there is additional runoff beyond. He also said that the football field was designed with a crown for water runoff and there will be perimeter swales with catch basins to collect water runoff. Mr. Fazil also told the board that with the athletic fields at Northeast Middle School, there is adequate acreage. The entire area that will contain the two fields and school is approximately sixteen acres; Broughal Middle School's entire lot, including the school, is only 4.3 acres.

Mr. Amato asked how far the fields were from Pembroke Road.

Mr. Fazil answered that they were located about thirty feet from the road. He said that fencing was designed to be placed on the corners of the athletic field which is noted on the plan.

Mr. Amato asked if the field hockey field was regulation size.

Mr. Fazil answered that yes, it was. The field hockey field measurements are sixty yards by one hundred yards. Broughal Middle School does not have a field hockey field because there is no way to get the sixty yard width needed. Mr. Fazil also said that the additional grading on the athletic field is included in the design on this plan that was handed out tonight. The grading was not completed in such detail two weeks ago.

Mrs. Leeson asked if the parking lots on the diagram were existing lots.

Mr. Fazil said that all the parking lots shaded on the diagram would be new. The lot in the corner by Pembroke Road is currently only thirteen spots. Originally, the plan was drawn with that lot containing twenty-six spaces. It was reduced as it was thought that not that many spaces would be needed. If the board wishes, that lot can be made larger.

Mr. RaHS said that the administration thought that reducing the lot size was not only fiscally responsible, but was also reduced in size for safety reasons. Mr. RaHS said that ample parking is available in the school's regular lot.

Mrs. Leeson asked if any of the lots were handicapped accessible.

Mr. Fazil said that there is one handicapped spot included on the plan in the lower lot off of Pembroke Road, but more can be added if the board wishes. The handicapped spots were designed into this lot because this lot is connected to the eight foot wide paved maintenance access road that cuts through the athletic fields.

Mrs. Koch asked if Northeast Middle School currently had any parking problems.

Mr. RaHS answered no. He said that the bigger issue was not having athletic fields available at the school.

Mr. McKeon asked if public parking was available on Fernwood Street. He also wanted to know if a baseball field was to be included in the field design.

Mr. Fazil said yes, public parking is available on Fernwood Street. A baseball field was studied with the options and was not included in the athletic fields due to space limitations. They tried to design a baseball field into the plan, but it did not work because of the close proximity of the building and overlaps on the middle school required fields.

Mr. RaHS noted that adding a baseball field would compromise the other fields. He also said that baseball is not a middle school sport; this field would only be used by members of the community.

Mrs. Dexter said that due to the district's current financial state, the parking lots may be an additional expense that could be eliminated. She asked if that money saved could be placed back into the capital reserve.

Mr. Majewski said that this project was not being paid for out of capital reserve accounts. The project was being funded by bond funds only.

Mrs. Dexter asked that if the parking lots were not built, could that saved money be used for Broughal Middle School instead.

Mr. Majewski answered, yes, it could.

Mr. Fazil said that the parking lots can be reduced in size to save on cost.

Mrs. Dexter asked approximately how much each lot will cost to build.

Mr. Fazil said that the thirteen space lot will be approximately \$35,000 to \$40,000. Both lots would be about \$100,000.

Mrs. Dexter asked if that money could possibly be put to better use to pave a student drop-off lot at Liberty High School.

Mr. Majewski said yes, it could, but it would be easier to install the lot at the corner of Pembroke Road to keep the existing curbing.

Dr. Lewis said that to close the egress and install a sidewalk would cost the district some money. The district wants to keep that curbing because once the egress is closed, it will be difficult to get curbing for that area approved in the future by PADOT if it is needed.

Mr. Majewski said that if the bond money was not used for this purpose and was instead used for debt reduction, there could be problems with the IRS.

Mrs. Leeson asked if this decision could wait. She stated that she remembered a prior conversation between the board and the administration that the money borrowed from the bond funds, if not used, could be used for debt reduction.

Mrs. Follweiler agreed that she remembered that discussion as well.

Mr. Fazil suggested including the parking lots as an alternate bid on the athletic field plan. He said that they could always be deleted from the project at a later time if the board wishes to not have them installed. Mr. Fazil reminded the board that the lots will provide maintenance and emergency personnel access to the athletic fields.

Mrs. Dexter stated that the district needs to “look and balance” the accounts before a decision can be made.

Mr. Fazil asked Mrs. Dexter if she wanted both parking lots bid as an alternate. He also wanted to know if the board wanted the base bid to include no parking lots at all or just less spaces per lot.

Dr. Lewis asked the board if the alternate bid could include six spaces instead of thirteen in the smaller lot off of Pembroke Road and twelve spots instead of twenty-four in the upper lot by Minsi Trail Street.

Mr. McKeon asked if it would be possible to also have the proposed utility building/field house bid as an alternate as well. He asked what the approximate cost of the field house was.

Mr. Fazil said that assuming an average price per square foot, the building would cost about \$350,000, maybe less.

Mr. RaHS said that the field house would not only be for storage, but it will also contain locker rooms and bathroom facilities. He stated that currently, Northeast Middle School's locker rooms cannot accommodate the athletic teams, specifically the football teams. There is also no storage for the sports equipment anywhere in the school. Building the field house would provide additional locker rooms, much needed storage space for equipment, and additional bathrooms for the groups and spectators who use the fields. He asked the board not to eliminate the field house because if there are no bathroom facilities available on the athletic fields, Northeast Middle School will be forced to open the school building to allow for access to the bathrooms when sporting events are going on. Eliminating the field house will create more wear and tear on the school than necessary.

Mr. McKeon asked how the district knows that the athletic field plan will pass with the city.

Mr. Fazil said that he felt reasonably confident it would pass, of course there may be some minor changes based on the various reviews.

Mr. Amato said that he would like to see one of the two fields bid as an alternate item as well.

Mrs. Leeson asked if there was a cost to have these items bid as alternates.

Mr. Fazil said that it was a possibility it may cost more to have all four items bid as alternates.

Mrs. Cann, wanting confirmation of what was to be bid as alternates, listed the four alternate items as the smaller parking lot located off of Pembroke Road, the larger parking lot located by Minsi Trail Street, the field house/bathroom facilities, and one of the two athletic fields.

Mr. McKeon said that if the field house is built, Northeast Middle School will be the only middle school that has a field house.

Dr. Lewis said that a field house is not needed at Broughal Middle School because of the school's proximity to the proposed athletic field. He said that Broughal's locker rooms are able to house a football team and also has room for equipment storage in the parking deck area.

Mr. Fazil said that the field house is not going to be an expensive feature; it is simply a building with four walls, loose benches, and two toilet rooms.

Mrs. Cann asked the board if they wanted to see all four items as alternate bids.

After a vote, it was decided that none of the items would be bid as alternates and all would remain in the base bid.

#### **COURTESY OF THE FLOOR TO VISITORS –**

Dana Grubb, 2420 Henderson Place, Bethlehem: Mr. Grubb said that he was upset to find out that Northeast Middle School's locker rooms were built without enough room for sports teams to

dress and also that no storage was built for equipment. Mr. Grubb also asked the board to consider revising the athletic field plan to include basketball courts somewhere in the athletic field plan, and also to reconsider the plan to include baseball fields. He understands that baseball is not a middle school sport, but these fields could be used by the community. Mr. Grubb said that he knows that the City of Bethlehem just installed a pole building that included bathroom facilities on their grounds for far less than \$350,000. He asked the board to consider the installation of a pole building. Mr. Grubb said he heard the board and administration say that Northeast Middle School's athletic fields would be a benefit to the community; what about Broughal Middle School's field? He did not hear anyone say that the fields at Broughal would be a benefit to the community. He stated that the people's confidence in the district is at an all-time low. The most important concern is the welfare of the public and the students.

Anne Evans, 464 Monclair Avenue, Bethlehem: Ms. Evans said that she voted to keep Broughal in the city instead of moving it to Lehigh University's property that was offered to the district years ago. She said she feels upset and deceived to find out that these athletic fields would not be regulation size. Where are the spectators going to sit? Where is the community benefit of the Broughal Middle School athletic field?

Peter Crownfield, 569 Brighton Street, Bethlehem: Mr. Crownfield said that the original plan for Broughal Middle School's athletic field which included the field hockey field is on file with the City of Bethlehem. He stated that the fields at Broughal Middle School do not begin to compare with the fields at Northeast Middle School. Mr. Crownfield also said that he felt it was a waste of time trying to get Lehigh University to get a commitment from their Board of Directors within a week.

Dr. Lewis said that he wanted to clarify that Broughal Middle School's field was not substandard. The field was regulation size; this was confirmed by PIAA. He said that the district never anticipated designing a field hockey field on this plan. Games can be played on this field; there is no reason that they cannot be played there. There is room for spectators as well. There is room at the field for at least four spectator bleachers whereas most other athletic fields only have one.

Karen Dolan, 55 Bridal Path Road, Bethlehem: Mrs. Dolan asked if PIAA has seen the plans for Broughal Middle School's athletic field. She questioned the shaded area at the bottom of the plan saying that this area was a concrete handicapped accessible area that juts out into the field. She believed that this can be hazardous.

Mr. Gilliland said that yes, PIAA has seen the plan. It has been emailed to them.

Mr. Fazil said that the concrete handicapped accessible area will be cut back with concrete saws so it is not hazardous to anyone using the field. The plan is drawn to scale with the handicapped accessible area cut back in the diagram.

Mrs. Dolan asked the board why they were "tying themselves to this project". She told the board to be skeptical of the numbers that they have been given. Mrs. Dolan said that bullying does not

just stay with children; there is an obvious case of bullying evident here as well. She also believed that the asbestos abatement contractors should minimize as much damage as possible and a third party should be hired to “overlook costs”. Mrs. Dolan said that Broughal Middle School’s athletic field is inadequate.

Phillip Richardson, 2231 Easton Avenue, Bethlehem: Mr. Richardson approached the board with newspaper articles and pictures from the Liberty High School Football Camp. Mr. Richardson said that the football camp was advertised in the newspaper as being held at Frank Banko Fields; however, the application for lease stated that the group would be using the football practice field. Mr. Richardson said that the district told him that the group was using the stadium because the sod on the practice field was too wet. He said that this was not possible because the “grass was cut that Monday”. If the grass was that that wet, it would not have been able to be mowed. Mr. Richardson also stated that he went down to the stadium during lunchtime. He said that the camp was no where to be seen, which means that they were using Liberty High School for their lunch hour. He said that the pamphlet clearly states that the group would have classroom time to view videos. Mr. Richardson was upset that this group was not charged a fee for using the classrooms, cafeteria, or the district’s video equipment. Mr. Richardson said that this information was clearly printed in the camp’s advertisement pamphlet. He passed around photographs to the board showing the mowed grass and the empty stadium at lunch time.

Stephen Antalics, 737 Ridge Street, Bethlehem: Mr. Antalics said that Lehigh University does not want the Broughal Middle School building even if it were given to them. He said if the district gives them the building, it would just be done to please the community; it would not be in the best interest of the district. He further said that refusing to build the new Broughal Middle School on the property offered by Lehigh up on the hill did two things; it kept the school in the community as the community requested and also kept “Broughal at Broughal”. He also believed that Lehigh University would have torn the building down.

William Scheirer, 1890 Eaton Avenue, Bethlehem: Mr. Scheirer suggested building a community center inside the old Broughal Middle School. That would be a huge benefit to the community, although he has also heard that the building is no longer sound. He also believed that the district should investigate the cost of terminating the demolition contract.

#### **OPEN FORUM –**

Mrs. Dexter said that she has heard that Lehigh University has interest in the building, not just the land. She also said that no person on the board or in the district’s administration is “ill motivated” as everyone sits in meetings no less than five hours every week discussing district issues. Mrs. Dexter said that it was only suggested that the district have an “interest meeting” with Lehigh University to see if they were interested in purchasing Broughal. At this point in time, no one in the community has come forth with a viable option for the building, and “mothballing it” is not an option. It still costs money to let a building sit vacant. She said she was trying to figure out what was a necessity as opposed to a want because the district has so many other needs right now. Mrs. Dexter also said that she “will not apologize” for the lengthy

discussions at the meetings; this was a public meeting and the board was there to discuss options, issues, and problems. She stated that they have been “productive” in that matter.

Mrs. Leeson questioned some of the cuts in the budget. She said it was not the intent of the board to cut the core subject areas.

After a discussion with Dr. Lewis and Mr. Washington, it was decided that this matter would be further discussed at a later time.

Mrs. Koch said that she recently attended a PSBA meeting in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania at no cost to the district. She said a discussion was raised regarding Keystone Exams. These exams were proposed by the Obama administration for the twelfth grade to determine if the “No Child Left Behind Act” was working. Mrs. Koch said that there will be validation costs associated with these exams; the state has said that they will pay half these validation costs. She was concerned about this as districts have been promised half the costs before and in all actuality, they have only received ten to twenty percent of the costs. She told the board that she will be sending out more information on this in the near future.

Mrs. Follweiler requested that someone review the paperwork that Mr. Richardson provided to the board to see that the proper policies were enforced.

Dr. Lewis said that Dr. Donaher and Mr. Gilliland are conducting a meeting this week to review the lease policies. He said that it is a possibility that Policy 707 may need to be reviewed again. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:10 p.m.

Minutes prepared by:

---

Kristen M. Snyder, Secretary to the Director of Facilities and Operations

---

Scott T. Gilliland, Director of Facilities and Operations