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PUBLIC MEETING  
REGARDING CLOSURE OF HAMBRIGHT  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
  
September 6, 2011  
Starting at 6:20 p.m.  
Penn Manor Administrative Office

APPEARANCES:

Kegel, Kelin, Almy, & Grimm, LLP.  
By: Rhonda R. Lord, Esquire  
24 North Lime Street,  
Lancaster, Pennsylvania 17602

Solicitor for Penn Manor School District

Also present:

Dr. Richard Frerichs  
Dr. Michael Leichliter  
Chris Johnston, Business Manager

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 DR. FRERICHS: Take our seats,  
3 please, and we will get started. Call this  
4 meeting to order. My name is Rich Frerichs. I am  
5 president of the school board, for people that do  
6 not know me.

7 We want to welcome our guests here  
8 from the public, thank you very much, and our  
9 people that are here from Hambright.

10 Hambright is a special place for all  
11 of us. We have had many, many meetings to discuss  
12 what we are going to do with Hambright School.  
13 Should we renovate the school? Should we build a  
14 new school here behind Manor Middle?

15 And tonight is an opportunity to hear  
16 all of the discussions that we have had that have  
17 brought us to some of the conclusions that we are  
18 going to make at one of our upcoming school board  
19 meetings. This is your opportunity to weigh in,  
20 to say, here is what I think about your  
21 suggestion, to ask any questions, to make any  
22 comments that you would like.

23 I would like to introduce the school  
24 board members, for those people who do not know  
25 them. Our vice president, Johnna Friedman, Frank

1 Hoke, Donna Wert, Kirk Schlotzhauer, Amber Green,  
2 Chris Straub, Carlton Rintz, Ken Long. Thank you  
3 very, very much for all the time you put in this.

4 We had many visits to schools around  
5 the county. We spent a considerable amount of  
6 time making these decisions.

7 So tonight is your opportunity to  
8 weigh in. Thank you very much for coming here and  
9 taking time out of your busy schedules.

10 This is Rhonda Lord, one of our  
11 solicitors. She will conduct the meeting, talk to  
12 you about what we are going to do and the format  
13 of the meeting.

14 Rhonda, it's all yours.

15 ATTORNEY LORD: Thank you very much.  
16 We are here tonight because of the School Code,  
17 under Section 788 of the Public School Code,  
18 there's a requirement for school districts  
19 considering closing a public school to have a  
20 public hearing at least 90 days prior to making  
21 any formal decision on closing of this school.

22 Because of that, we are having this  
23 hearing, even though there's been other meetings  
24 to discuss this, as Dr. Frerichs said. This is  
25 your opportunity for you to make public comment

1 and give your suggestions.

2 Another requirement of the School  
3 Code is that there needs to be an advertisement  
4 for this hearing of at least 15 days prior to the  
5 hearing.

6 And, for the record, I do need to  
7 read this advertisement into the record. But we  
8 do have proof of publication that it was  
9 advertised on August 18th of 2011 in the Lancaster  
10 New Era and Intelligencer Journal.

11 The actual content of the  
12 advertisement is as follows: The Penn Manor  
13 School District is proposing to construct a new  
14 Hambright Elementary School next to the Manor  
15 Middle School campus and to take the current  
16 Hambright out of service.

17 Section 780 of the Public  
18 Pennsylvania School Code requires that the school  
19 board hold a public hearing prior to the permanent  
20 closing of a public school building.

21 The school board has determined to  
22 hold a public hearing on September 6, 2011 at 6:15  
23 in the Manor Administrative Office, 2950  
24 Charlestown Road, Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

25 The public hearing shall be for the

1 purpose of considering and receiving public  
2 comment on the proposed closing of the Hambright  
3 Elementary School building at the conclusion of  
4 the 2013-2014 school year. As I stated, that ad  
5 was published on August 18th.

6 The school board will consider this  
7 at a board meeting on December 5th. That is 90  
8 days after today's hearing, again, in compliance  
9 with section 788 of the School Code.

10 At this point, I am going to turn it  
11 over to Dr. Leichliter who is going to go over the  
12 reasons and the consideration for the closing.  
13 And then we are going to go back and have board  
14 questions and any public questions.

15 Thank you.

16 DR. LEICHLITER: As has been stated  
17 before, two years ago, the Penn Manor School Board  
18 commissioned a master facility to look at all  
19 buildings in the district, the condition of the  
20 buildings, and the recommendation for the future.

21 After a year of study, the board  
22 accepted that master facilities plan in the fall  
23 of 2010. And, as a result of that hearing, it was  
24 determined that Hambright was the building in most  
25 need of repair and required our immediate

1 attention.

2 There were a number of options that  
3 were considered. And the options, they covered  
4 three areas. The areas that were covered were to  
5 renovate the building, build a new building, or to  
6 do what we call a patch and repair job on  
7 Hambright Elementary, to fix it, to bring it up to  
8 code and to give us another five years on the  
9 building.

10 Because this is a momentous decision,  
11 the school board asked the administration to  
12 conduct a public hearing. And before you on the  
13 overhead are the number of public hearings that  
14 were held to weigh all the options and to gauge  
15 the interest in our community of either renovating  
16 or building a new building.

17 In addition to that, there were a  
18 number of advertisements in local papers, number  
19 of news article, publications on the web site that  
20 also addressed our concerns for Hambright and  
21 seeking public comment. So the board attempted to  
22 get as much input as possible.

23 When we looked at the facts related  
24 to Hambright, we looked at all ten buildings. And  
25 ~~this slide shows the facility condition index,~~

1 which is conducted through the help of our  
2 architectural firm Gregory Barr and Associates.

3 And the architectural firm,  
4 engineers, and our building and grounds director  
5 assessed each building independently and compared  
6 the results.

7 On a scale of zero to a hundred, with  
8 zero being excellent condition and 100 being the  
9 worst possible condition, Hambright's facility  
10 condition index was 60.887.

11 To put that in perspective, the  
12 second closest building, Conestoga Elementary,  
13 came in with a score of 23.88, which indicated a  
14 large spread and did indicate that Hambright was  
15 in great need of attention and bordered on whether  
16 we should cost effectively renovate or build a new  
17 building.

18 Again, the three recommendations that  
19 were considered were renovate the build, new, or  
20 defer renovation. Processing this through with  
21 our design team as well with the board, we removed  
22 three as an option, to defer renovation because of  
23 the indepth needs of the building, especially in  
24 the area of heat, the furnace, and internal  
25 controls with the HVAC system.



1 So we were left with the two options  
2 of either renovating or building new. And this is  
3 why we conducted our numerous public hearings and  
4 discussions concerning the Hambright fate.

5 Option number one was to renovate the  
6 building facility. And this is similar to what  
7 Penn Manor School District has done with other  
8 buildings, most recently Central Manor Elementary  
9 School.

10 This would be a full life-cycle  
11 renewal of the building, which the Department of  
12 Education will reimburse us for every 20 years.

13 Working on this option, we developed  
14 some site schematics of what we could do with  
15 Hambright School, how we could modify it to meet  
16 current code.

17 And, in looking at the site, we  
18 determined that need to put a separate parent  
19 entrance in which would take away considerable  
20 amount of playground space. And we also  
21 determined that, because of the site of the  
22 building, because of current zoning requirements,  
23 we were limited to a very small addition on the  
24 west side of the building.

25 Analyzing this option, we took a look

1 at some advantages and disadvantages. The  
2 advantages is it would maintain the current school  
3 location, which has been used since the 1930's,  
4 that it would renew and bring up-to-date our  
5 entire facility, all components of the facility,  
6 that it would extend the functional use of the  
7 building for at least another 20 to 25 years, and  
8 that we would be able to experience lower  
9 operating costs, and it would be also a less  
10 extensive option than building a new building on a  
11 new site.

12 The disadvantages include the site  
13 minimum, which is below what the Department of  
14 Education recommended for an elementary school.  
15 The site is a little larger than five acres and  
16 minimum required for the Department of Education  
17 is a minimum recommended requirement is 10 acres  
18 for elementary schools.

19 There is a lack of space, as  
20 mentioned in previous slides, to accommodate  
21 future additions. There would be disruption to  
22 the educational process. We have to do phased  
23 construction because of the size of the population  
24 at the building.

25 There would be, during the

1 construction and afterwards, additional  
2 neighborhood traffic congestion even with the size  
3 of the student drop off for parents. It's still a  
4 very tight space. You would enter onto Hawthorne  
5 avenue, very close to Columbia Avenue.

6 Finally, many of the rooms at  
7 Hambright, which was built in the 1930s, are very  
8 small. If the district were to use a geothermal  
9 system as we have in other buildings to maintain  
10 the heat pumps in the classrooms, we have to cut  
11 into the existing classroom space. That's option  
12 one, which was considered.

13 Option two is to construct a new  
14 elementary school building on the campus of Manor  
15 Middle School, 120 acre campus at the corner of  
16 Charlestown Road and Ironstone Ridge Road.

17 And working with our architects and  
18 engineers, we developed a schematic layout of what  
19 the building would potentially look like to the  
20 rear of the building. You can see the space at  
21 Manor Middle School, Ironstone Ridge Road, the  
22 proposed location for the new elementary school,  
23 would be to the rear along Charlestown Road  
24 sharing many of the common parking areas and also  
25 some of the existing infrastructure while

1 maintaining a separate campus with some of the  
2 features that would be on the site, constraints of  
3 the current building.

4 Considering this and talking to our  
5 design team, the advantages would be that we would  
6 be able to develop a new school, new Hambright on  
7 the Manor Middle School campus.

8 There would not be disruption to the  
9 students during school because we would be able to  
10 maintain the current Hambright until the new  
11 building is completed.

12 This new school building would be  
13 designed to meet specific program needs rather  
14 than add onto like we have done with Hambright.  
15 The school could be designed to accommodate future  
16 expansion for coming years. The district needs,  
17 population growth that we have been experiencing  
18 in the last few years.

19 Disadvantages. The cost. The cost  
20 would be more than to renovate the building  
21 facility by about \$5 million. We would need to  
22 dispose of the current facility, Hambright School,  
23 Temple Avenue.

24 The new site may need additional work  
25 before we could actually start construction. It

1 would also need to go through the land development  
2 process with Manor Township.

3 Finally, we would lose the current  
4 school location and bring the eastern most school,  
5 elementary school, closer to the central part of  
6 the district.

7 They were the main points that were  
8 considered, the pros and cons through numerous  
9 public meetings. And through all the  
10 conversations we had, we were very surprised with  
11 the general feedback.

12 General feedback from parents and  
13 community members was that we should build a new  
14 school building, that we should abandon the  
15 current Hambright Elementary site, and we should  
16 begin planning for a building that would meet  
17 future need.

18 As a result, we consulted with the  
19 solicitor. We have consulted with the  
20 architectural firm and the administration. And it  
21 was recommended to the board that we close our  
22 current Hambright Elementary School to begin  
23 design on the new building.

24 At that point, that ends our formal  
25 presentation regarding options considered and the

1 present status of the building.

2 At this point, we will open the floor  
3 for questions. The first portion will be  
4 moderated by myself. And we are looking if there  
5 are any questions from our school board members or  
6 nonmembers tonight.

7 Are there any questions or items  
8 considered that have not been raised before?  
9 Please feel free to ask any questions you have.

10 BOARD MEMBER HOKE: This isn't a  
11 question. It hasn't been asked or answered. I  
12 think it needs to get into the record. What is  
13 the cost of the new building going to be?

14 DR. LEICHLITER: The first question  
15 is what is the cost differential between the new  
16 building and how will it impact taxpayers?

17 The answer to that: In the study, we  
18 compared the estimated cost for renovation, which  
19 at the time, one year ago, was \$9.5 million to  
20 renovate the existing building.

21 We compared that with the cost to  
22 construct an elementary school comparable in size  
23 to the current Hambright Elementary, which has  
24 approximately 450 students today.

25 The estimated comparable cost for a

1 new Hambright is \$15.5 million for the study. So  
2 the differential was around \$6 million between the  
3 two.

4 However, in further discussions, one  
5 of the questions was raised in building a new  
6 school is whether we should expand the size to  
7 make it a greater capacity building to accommodate  
8 for future growth.

9 So one of the points for  
10 consideration now is to expand the size from the  
11 current amount to approximately 775 students,  
12 which would be equivalent to the current size of  
13 Central Manor Elementary School.

14 Under the financing options, we do  
15 have some slides to illustrate the financing  
16 options. And I would ask Mr. Johnston, who is the  
17 district business manager, to briefly review the  
18 financing.

19 MR. JOHNSTON: As we went through the  
20 several meetings that we have had concerning this,  
21 this is the biggest question to me, from my point,  
22 is how we pay for the options. As we go through,  
23 I have used these slides showing our current  
24 school debt.

25 ~~And the colors represent different~~

1       bondages we have in the district. The debts are  
2       mortgage payments we have on hand right now.

3               As you can see, the roughly \$7  
4       million roughly per year in debt. And it's made  
5       up of several different issues. What we do when  
6       we have a new issue that would come up and borrow  
7       money, we wrap that around. So you can see what  
8       we did with the series of 2010 A, purple, we added  
9       that. And when we added that debt, it wrapped  
10      around.

11             Currently, our debt is scheduled to  
12      be fully paid off in '17-18. That is a very quick  
13      pay off period. If we would go in, it shows we  
14      had to borrow money for the renovation, as  
15      Dr. Leichliter described.

16             By doing that, you would level out  
17      the debt coming years and extra debt would be  
18      wrapped around at the end of that actually adding  
19      with a little bit more each year to what we have  
20      to pay, should we have to go out and get more debt  
21      for the building of the new building. It extends  
22      it out one more year keeping that wrapping.

23             So we are not necessarily adding to  
24      the tax burden each year because that debt is  
25      already built into the tax base that we have. We



1 are extending the debt out extra years.

2 DR. LEICHLITER: Thank you. Any  
3 other school board members? Any other comments?

4 BOARD MEMBER SCHLOTZHEUR: Is there  
5 any difference in operating costs to renovate  
6 Hambright at its current site versus building new  
7 and co-locating here near this middle school?

8 DR. LEICHLITER: There is a  
9 difference in operating costs. There would be a  
10 small differential with heating cost, with the  
11 facility. The one advantage of moving here is we  
12 could share equipment. We could share facilities  
13 in many cases.

14 One recent example is Hambright  
15 Elementary was in need of a new tractor. We would  
16 not have to buy that replacement equipment. We  
17 could make use of both because there's one site  
18 that they are maintaining to reduce the acreage  
19 currently has. So there would be some advantages  
20 in consolidating. There's no strong disadvantage  
21 to consolidating.

22 BOARD MEMBER WERT: For the record,  
23 what is the justification for building a new  
24 building slightly larger than the current  
25 Hambright?

1 DR. LEICHLITER: When we take a look  
2 at where the growth has been, Penn Manor is -- and  
3 if Mr. Johnston can give me my clicker back, I  
4 have an illustration.

5 At the regular school board meeting,  
6 I will present a report of open enrollment for  
7 this year. What it shows is that three of our  
8 four northern elementary schools have experienced  
9 growth. And one of those four schools experienced  
10 a slight decline by only five students. Our three  
11 southern schools have experienced a decline.

12 So in taking a look at our current  
13 facility and our future use, we felt it was  
14 important for us to consider additional movement,  
15 especially in the northern end. One area that we  
16 discussed indepth in our meetings was the  
17 Armstrong property, which is off of Charlestown  
18 Road, catte-corner to this building.

19 That property was close to being  
20 developed about 10 years ago and is currently not  
21 on the market, but that could change depending how  
22 the economy progresses.

23 In taking a look at that property,  
24 which is very sizable, I included a map of the  
25 ~~proposal from ten years ago for residential~~

1 housing. The area in yellow is the current area  
2 of Armstrong World Industries. Other areas, ten  
3 years ago, they were considering selling off.

4 At that point, if that land would  
5 have been developed, eventual build-out would have  
6 resulted in 405 additional single family detached  
7 homes, 375 semi-detached homes, 124 manor homes,  
8 which are buildings with 4 to 6 dwelling units in  
9 each, 440 condo units, and 125 apartment units.

10 So in trying to build capacity for  
11 the future, we are trying to provide future school  
12 boards and administrations with options. And,  
13 again, that would be important. One of the other  
14 pieces of consideration would have the new  
15 building sized appropriately so that if we  
16 experience very large population growth, we could  
17 build a second elementary school near it that  
18 could possibly house two populations with the  
19 building under consideration now being potentially  
20 a four to six classroom facility.

21 Questions from the members?

22 BOARD MEMBER STRAUB: Talking about  
23 the closure of Hambright, what school year would  
24 we anticipate that Hambright would actually be  
25 closed?

1 DR. LEICHLITER: We would anticipate  
2 moving into a new building September 2014. So  
3 three years from today. So we would potentially  
4 look to close that building in three years. In  
5 the meantime, we would work with a commercial real  
6 estate agent to try and sell that property.

7 Hambright is currently zoned  
8 residential; however, it borders commercial right  
9 behind it on Columbia Avenue. So it could be  
10 prime for someone seeking that site.

11 BOARD MEMBER STRAUB: The proceeds  
12 that --

13 DR. LEICHLITER: The proceeds would  
14 go back into the district to help offset the cost  
15 of building a new school.

16 ATTORNEY LORD: At this time, we are  
17 going to open it up for public comment. If  
18 anybody in the public has any statement they would  
19 like to make, you can stand up and do so now. I  
20 will be asking you to state your name and address  
21 for the record.

22 Anybody have any comments they would  
23 like to make?

24 MR. PETER ANDERS: 1748 Manor Drive.  
25 ~~My youngest of three girls is at the district~~

1 elementary school now. And this is not a  
2 question, but comment.

3 My kids would be there for the  
4 renovation and the purchase of the new property.  
5 However, I think it's appropriate -- and I talked  
6 to numerous other parents that live in the  
7 elementary school area.

8 As you are aware, the school is  
9 definitely outdated and small and restricted, land  
10 locked. School functions, you feel like you are  
11 cramped in. There are quite a few people that  
12 went there and parents went there, which is pretty  
13 cool.

14 But, that being said, I think we can  
15 do better for the district. And the area I live  
16 in, we do see growth. I am very willing to see  
17 the debt continue on the capital end, as was given  
18 today and at public meetings, so that the students  
19 that are in that area will have better schooling.

20 I think it will help teachers that  
21 have asked for transfers. I think part of that  
22 was the condition of the school. I really  
23 appreciate the teachers that have stayed there for  
24 the students because I think we have a great  
25 staff. Thank you.

1 ATTORNEY LORD: Any other public  
2 comment or questions?

3 MS. PEG MERK: 119 Hamilton Drive. I  
4 am a Penn Manor taxpayer. My son just graduated  
5 this past year, another son is a senior. This is  
6 my 24th year at Hambright as a first grade  
7 teacher.

8 I just want to take this opportunity  
9 to say thank you to Dr. Leichliter, Mr. Johnston,  
10 and all of the school board members, not only for  
11 all the time that you put into this, but sharing  
12 the public information.

13 As a taxpayer, even if I were not a  
14 taxpayer, I was totally informed. As a teacher, I  
15 love it. You really wanted our feedback. It was  
16 so, you know, heartfelt that we felt it was very  
17 sincere.

18 I do support a new school. As many  
19 of you know, I teach in the smallest classroom in  
20 the school. It's really tough. No air. No heat  
21 sometimes, let alone all of the minor issues. We  
22 do a great job with what we have. We will  
23 continue to, but I just really appreciate the  
24 commitment of our administration and school board  
25 for all that they have done to bring us up to

1 really giving those kids 21st century learning  
2 skills. Thank you for that.

3 ATTORNEY LORD: Any other questions?

4 No other questions tonight. You can submit  
5 written questions to the board. They will be  
6 making a decision at their December 5th school  
7 board meeting.

8 If anyone wants to submit questions  
9 or comments, feel free to send them those. If  
10 there are not more questions, we can adjourn this  
11 meeting.

12 Thank you.

13 (The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.)  
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CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the proceedings  
and evidence are contained fully and accurately in  
the notes taken by me in the proceedings in the  
above cause and that this copy is a correct  
transcript of the same.

-----  
Michelle S. Parke,  
Court Reporter, Notary Public