

SALISBURY TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

Buildings, Grounds, Transportation, & Finance Subcommittee Meeting Administration Building, Monday, March 12, 2007-7:00 P.M.

Board Members Present: Mrs. Feinberg, Mr. Gatanis, Mr. Giordano (7:14), Mrs. Heffelfinger (7:12), Mr. Manz, Mrs. Miller, Mr. Pauloski, Mrs. Ziegler

Board Members Absent: Mr. Reinsmith

Also Present: Mr. DelPriore, Mrs. Famularo, Dr. Wright, Mrs. Denise Steiger

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Pauloski at 7:02 p.m.

II. Lehigh County Assessment Office – Joseph Yaros

Mrs. Feinberg introduced Mr. Yaros and solicitor Richard Somach, who were present to discuss the general process of assessing properties. No specific property was mentioned. Mr. Yaros stated that properties are valued by the base year, 1991, value. The property is treated and valued as if it existed in 1991. Everything is factored back to the base year. Mr. Yaros and Mr. Somach stated that they annually report all validated sales that occur in the county to the state tax equalization board.

The purpose of the state tax equalization board is to establish a common level ratio of assessed value to market value for each county for the prior calendar year. In June or July the state tax equalization board sets the common level ratios as a fraction. If the ratio is below 42.5% or above 57.5%, then the county uses the common level ratio multiplier. This formula is used against market value. Appeals are created when the ratio falls below 42.5%. Mr. Somach stated that the common level ratios drop because property values have gone up. Inflation rates are almost identical between residential and non-residential properties. Mrs. Feinberg asked if a building was built but not fit out and the tenant was paying rent, would the building be appraised at the shell value. Mr. Yaros stated that it would be appraised at the shell value if it were unoccupied.

Mr. Somach stated 3 approaches used to determine market value: the first being cost, then income, and lastly the market. Once a property is leased the income approach is used. Mr. Yaros does keep a database of appeals and common pleas. The county office does use other sources other than building permits to assess properties. Mr. Somach believes it is not the best thing to initiate appeals or to challenge appeals. In the long run one loses money. Mr. Giordano asked who and what drives the decision to initiate reassessment.

II. Lehigh County Assessment Office – Joseph Yaros (continued)

Mr. Somach stated that the county executive would drive the decision. Assessment appeals are not to the district's advantage. The whole system lies with the state legislature.

Dr. Wright asked if the agenda order could be modified to allow Mr. Russ Leibensperger to address a safety concern. The Board agreed.

X. Other (taken out of turn)

Dr. Wright introduced Mr. Russ Leibensperger, president of Paragon Transit. Mr. Leibensperger is concerned with the visibility issue at the corner of Emmaus Avenue and Gaskill Road. Mr. Leibensperger would like to put up a 20-foot pole with a mirror so that bus drivers would be able to have a clearer view of oncoming traffic before the bus drivers pull onto Emmaus Avenue. Paragon Transit will cover all expenses. PennDot suggested Mr. Leibensperger get approval from the property owner to put the pole up. The land is owned by the Salisbury Township School District. A letter granting the request will be rendered after Board approval at Wednesday's Board meeting.

III. Floor Replacement Projects

Mrs. Famularo stated that at the last meeting permission was granted for capital expenditures for the summer of 2007, but there are still some items that need to be determined such as the flooring replacements. Originally \$60,000 was estimated for the replacements. Mr. DelPriore was sent to re-evaluate the needs.

Mrs. Famularo went over the handout pointing out that the computer lab at Western Salisbury Elementary was not on the original list and some other items were removed. This list is more refined and is based solely on safety issues. The flooring replacement will be done over the summer. The total estimated amount is \$36,500. Mrs. Famularo will prepare bid documents because it is over \$25,000 and is asking the Board for permission to go ahead with the repairs. Permission was granted.

Mrs. Miller asked what was found at the computer lab. Mr. DelPriore stated that there are worn areas on the rugs that may be hazardous and the computer wires can be rewired to the ceiling preventing a trip hazard.

IV. Cafeteria Issues

Based on a questionnaire completed by the students it has come to the administrators' attention that the cafeteria is ranked low on a satisfaction scale. To further investigate the issue Mrs. Famularo stated that she, Mrs. Steiger (Director of Food Services), Mr. Hume (High School Principal), and Mrs. Morningstar (Assistant High School Principal) met with 15 high school students, some of whom have participated in an AFG focus group, to discuss the cafeteria issues. Mrs. Famularo asked Mrs. Steiger to attend to elaborate on certain issues.

Mrs. Famularo stated the a la carte prices have been raised due to the requirements of the National School Lunch guidelines. The Type A lunch is subsidized by the federal government in 2 ways, there are cash incentives that are given to the district and donated commodities, which do not have to be used to work into the pricing. With Type A lunches there are 3-5 components that must be purchased to deem the lunch type A: protein, grain, milk, vegetable, and fruit. These components allow the district to utilize subsidies to reduce the price of the a la carte lunch. Even though some items may contain donated commodities the district must fully price out the products in an a la carte offering. If a student purchases 2 slices of pizza it is considered an a la carte purchase, in which case the total price changes. The student could turn the a la carte pizza lunch into a Type A lunch if they add fruit, milk, etc. Mrs. Famularo stated the students seemed to understand this concept when it was discussed in the focus group, the students feel the price differences should be more clearly stated. Mrs. Famularo stated that Mrs. Steiger has modified the message board in the cafeteria to better communicate the student's options. Mrs. Steiger stated that pamphlets were sent home with the applications explaining lunch options. She is currently working with Mr. Hume and students to produce posters that will be hung in the cafeteria to inform the students of the advantage of purchasing a Type A lunch.

Mrs. Famularo moved onto the issue of the second lunch period having insufficient choices. Mrs. Famularo stated that the students felt that if they arrived later, there would be a poor choice of selections. First period lunch did not have this complaint. Mrs. Steiger stated she is working with the cafeteria to improve this situation in terms of quantities prepared. Mrs. Steiger stated that the staff tries to determine what leftovers are safe to be reheated and that there are always 4 items that are consistently on the menu.

Next Mrs. Famularo addressed the speed of the lunch lines. One problem may be that the items that were taken out of the vending machines are now in the lunch lines. Discipline issues may be another matter possibly affecting the lines, Mr. Hume is addressing these matters. Also if the student uses cash instead of tickets to pay for their lunch it slows down the line. Mrs. Famularo stated Mrs. Steiger is rearranging schedules to eliminate 2-hour positions at all schools. The High School has been operating with a lower staff.

IV. Cafeteria Issues (continued)

Mrs. Steiger has one 2-hour substitute to assist in the cafeteria. Dr. Wright stated they are looking at the other schools to see if there is an excess of help and if so then some staff may be re-allocated. Mrs. Famularo stated some long-term solutions such as creating a student advisory board and purchasing a point of sale system. As of March 5, Mr. Hume has been present during both lunch periods and has not heard any further complaints from the students.

Mrs. Famularo stated that the garbage disposal at Western Salisbury Elementary has broken down and asked permission of the Board to purchase a new one. A new garbage disposal will cost \$3,500 and will come out of the capital fund. The Board concurred.

V. Real Estate Tax Installment Payment Plan

Mrs. Famularo presented a proposed tax installment payment plan to the Board. Because of the requirements of Act 1 a resolution is needed by June 30. If the Board agrees with the terms on the handout Mrs. Famularo can supply the proposed resolutions to the solicitor. The payment plan recommendations are as follows: the installment plan is made available only to approved homestead/farmstead properties; there are 3 installment due dates, which the Board can change if they wish to; and the process is initiated by making the first installment by the suggested due date. If a payment is late, the taxpayer will lose the opportunity to participate that year.

Mr. Pauloski asked if the due date meant the payment must be received by then, not postmarked. Mrs. Famularo stated that the due date would be specifically stated on the tax bill, but that it must be in hand by the due date. Those who are not approved homestead/farmstead property owners will not see the installment portion on their bill. Business owners are not eligible for the homestead/farmstead option; these owners will only see one payment on the bill. Mrs. Famularo will present the payment plan to the solicitors and will bring the resolution back at a later meeting for approval.

VI. Tax Bill Printing and Tax Collection Software

Mrs. Famularo stated that due to Act 1 there many restrictions on how the tax bill looks. The current printer is unable to do the necessary changes. Lehigh County has the software system needed where taxpayers could keep track of their payments, but Lehigh County is getting out of that business. Mrs. Famularo has looked at three providers to print and track the new bills: Berks County Intermediate Unit, Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit, and Berkheimer Associates. The lowest cost and best solution would be Berks County Intermediate Unit but Berks County IU needs a 3-year commitment.

VI. Tax Bill Printing and Tax Collection Software (continued)

Mrs. Famularo stated that Salisbury Township School District would have to pick up the cost for the software system, which would be an additional \$700. The first year outlay will be an additional \$3,500 but \$2,000 of it would be a first time cost. Mrs. Famularo needs to make a commitment by March 22 and needs Board approval to sign paperwork.

The Board concurred to add the issue to Wednesday's Board Agenda to approve Berks County IU as the printer for the 2007-2010 tax bills and to accept the software cost.

VII. Procurement Card Policy

Mrs. Famularo stated the procurement card could be used as a debit card for small purchases and also to replace credit cards. The card will allow administrators to have better control over approvals. Mrs. Famularo went over the basic recommendation policy and implementation form.

The single transaction dollar amount was left blank so that the Board can decide on an amount. Dr. Wright suggested the amount be high enough to cover administrative conference expenses. Mrs. Ziegler asked if different levels would be set for the different levels of administrators. Dr. Wright stated that there would be different levels set once all the security details have been worked out.

Mrs. Feinberg asked if the district pre-approved training sessions. Dr. Wright assured the Board training sessions are pre-approved. Mrs. Miller stated that in the past the Board would receive a monthly report listing which teachers went to what conferences. The list would be used for the Board's capsule reports. Mrs. Feinberg stated that in the past the Board also received monthly reports on what was happening in the schools such as absentees, etc. Just like the Board receives at the end of last school year. Mrs. Miller stated that the conference list would be helpful in answering some questions from the community as well as seeing how the teachers are achieving self-improvement.

Mr. Pauloski had a few wording suggestions for the two forms. Mr. Pauloski suggested the forms be more specific. Dr. Wright stated the policy and implementation still have to be reviewed by the district's solicitor. Mrs. Miller was concerned that random auditing would not be sufficient for purchases used with the procurement card. Dr. Wright assured her that accounts payable would be reviewing purchases in addition to review by the supervising administrator and business administrator

VII. Procurement Card Policy (continued)

The Board will authorize the list of employees given permission to use the card. Board approved that the single transaction dollar amount would be \$3,000. Mrs. Famularo will make revisions and present both forms to the solicitor.

VIII. Suggested Rental Rates for Facilities Use Policy

There will be 2 readings, one in April the other in May. Mr. Pauloski asked why the High School outside concession stand rental was more than the indoor stand. Mrs. Famularo stated the outdoor stand is larger. The Board concurred to set the High School Gymnasium concession stand rental fee at \$25.00 per rental per day and the High School outside concession stand rental fee at \$50.00 per rental per day.

IX. High School Library Copier Lease

This matter is also listed on Wednesday's Board meeting agenda. Mrs. Famularo stated the copier is currently coin operated and the lease has expired. The High School is looking to purchase a new black and white copier with a 60-month lease under state contract.

It would cost \$40 more than the current copier. The charge will remain at 10¢ a page. The Board agreed to the lease.

X. Other

Mrs. Famularo addressed 2 questions that Mr. Gatani had at the last regular school board meeting. There was a property that received a large reduction in assessed value. The assessment reduction is about ½. It was a court order reduction. The original assessment appraised the property as if it were a flat piece of land. The homeowner contested it and the reduction was based on the topography of land, which is very mountainous. Mrs. Famularo also stated that in the 2nd quarter cafeteria treasury report the milk expense was a bit higher because the September milk bill was paid in October; but the percentage is not far off from historical average.

Mrs. Famularo stated the audited financial statements were ready for Board acceptance. Mrs. Miller asked why the list of bills contained the Donely Award of Excellence. Dr. Wright stated that the fee the district paid was part of a membership fee. If the district were not considered a member the children would not be eligible for the award.

X. Other (continued)

Mrs. Miller questioned why the expenses for driver's education were not factored into the expenses year-to-date. Dr. Wright stated that it was and needs to be moved from contracted services with the IU.

Dr. Wright stated the Board would receive the budget books a few days prior to the April 21st meeting.

Dr. Wright handed out a possible solution for the backstop at the Middle School. The purchasing piece and its dimensions were listed in the handout.

XI. Citizen's Comments

None.

XII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Susan H. Famularo
Business Administrator