

On December 5, 2016 the Board Meeting of the Board of School Directors of the Spring-Ford Area School District was called to order at 7:49 p.m. in the cafeteria of the Spring-Ford High School with the following in attendance:

Region I: Dr. Edward T. Dressler, Bernard F. Pettit and Kelly J. Spletzer
Region II: Dawn R. Heine, Todd R. Wolf and Colleen Zasowski
Region III: Mark P. Dehnert and Thomas J. DiBello
Presiding Officer: Joseph P. Ciresi
Superintendent: Dr. David R. Goodin
Chief Financial Officer: James D. Fink
Solicitor: Mark Fitzgerald, Esq.
Student Reps.: Daniel J. Ciresi and Taylor Stevens

I. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

The following members of the public spoke in support of the High School Expansion Project for the Music Areas and the Athletic Areas.

Clinton Fetterman, Limerick Township
Joe Domin, Upper Providence Township
Kimberly Florence, Upper Providence Township
Julie Kuerschner, Upper Providence Township
Diana Phifer, Limerick Township
Christina Melton, Limerick Township
Rebecca Landry, Spring City Borough
Sharon Oleski, Limerick Township
Joe Oleski, Student from Limerick Township
Karen Davis, Upper Providence Township
Deb Sanford, Upper Providence Township
Kathleen Major, Upper Providence Township
Michael Platchek, Limerick Township
Liz Brull, Limerick Township
Devi Spletzer, Student from Royersford Borough

Andreina Erwin, Linfield Area, stated that today she had a meeting with Representative Tom Quigley and she extended an invitation to him inviting him to attend the board meeting this evening. Mrs. Erwin stated that Mr. Quigley emphatically disagreed with being present at this school board meeting. Mrs. Erwin stated that she spoke with Mr. Quigley on several issues such as tax timing not only for Spring-Ford but for all of the districts in Pennsylvania. Mrs. Erwin reported that Mr. Quigley advised her that the state not having a budget in place until June 30th should not have much impact on school district budgets since the state normally contributes the same amount. Mrs. Erwin felt that Mr. Quigley should be the one present tonight to stand at the podium and state this to the School Board and the constituents. Mrs. Erwin next spoke about the standing of the United States with regards to the Program for International Students Assessment

(PISA). She advised that the United States performed below average. Mrs. Erwin added that this reflects the social and economic problems that we have in the country. Mrs. Erwin invited the community to get involved with finding solutions.

II. FINANCE

Mr. Pettit made a motion to approve Items A-C and Mrs. Heine seconded it.

Mr. Fitzgerald commented that Items A-B are two more assessment appeals and are very positive resolutions for the Board as there will be net positive revenue coming out of these two resolutions. Mrs. Heine asked if these two positive outcomes were a result of the fact that we were able to go to battle with these folks to negotiate this change and Mr. Fitzgerald replied that he would prefer to speak to the specifics of each case separately possibly in an executive session. Mrs. Heine stated that the only reason she asked was due to the pending legislation and impacts that it could have based on these resolutions. Mr. Fitzgerald agreed that potentially that is correct. Mrs. Heine added that we had a better outcome than if we were prohibited from doing anything by having our hands tied by the pending legislation. Mr. Fitzgerald replied that in this scenario we likely would have had the ability to defend the valuation of the property owner who actually took the appeal initially. Mr. Fitzgerald reported that the problem would occur in situations where we believed a property was undervalued so we would be limited with what we can do.

The motion passed 9-0.

- A. The Board of School Directors authorized Fox Rothschild LLP to enter into an agreement for the property located at 200 Campus Drive in Upper Providence Township and further identified as tax parcel No. 61-00-01009-60-4 by setting the assessment of the property at \$8,976,000 for tax year 2011 (school tax year 2011-12), \$9,969,000 for tax year 2012 (school tax year 2012-13), \$10,347,000 for tax year 2013 (school tax year 2013-14), \$10,479,300 for tax year 2014 (school tax year 2014-15), \$9,921,750 for tax year 2015 (school tax year 2015-16), \$9,978,900 for tax year 2016 (school tax year 2016-17) and \$9,789,450 for tax year 2017 (school tax year 2017-18) and for each subsequent tax year until a change in the assessment of the property pursuant to applicable law.
- B. The Board of School Directors authorized Fox Rothschild LLP to enter into an agreement for the property located at 400 Campus Drive in Upper Providence Township and further identified as tax parcel No. 61-00-01009-61-3 by setting the assessment of the property at \$6,647,900 for tax year 2011 (school tax year 2011-12), \$7,412,950 for tax year 2012 (school tax year 2012-13), \$7,694,950 for tax year 2013 (school tax year 2013-14), \$7,793,650 for tax year 2014 (school tax year 2014-15), \$7,377,700 for tax year 2015 (school tax year 2015-16), \$7,286,050 for tax year 2016 (school tax year 2016-17) and \$7,279,000 for tax year 2017 (school tax year 2017-18) and for each subsequent tax year until a change in the assessment of the property pursuant to applicable law.
- C. The Board approved the following independent contract:
 1. **Lakeside Educational Network – Upper Merion Vantage Academy.** Provide Educational services for a special needs student during the 2016-2017 school year as per the IEP. Services will be provided for 130 days at a rate of \$236.25 per day. Funding will be paid from the Special Education Budget and shall not exceed \$30,712.50.

III. PROPERTY

Mrs. Heine made a motion to approve Item A and Mr. Pettit seconded it.

Mr. DiBello stated that before he votes on this motion he would like to again encourage the Board to seriously consider and think about planning a town hall meeting. Mr. DiBello stated that they have heard from a lot of residents but are not sure if anyone is opposed to the expansion. Mr. DiBello added that he keeps asking and the only time he has seen any opposition other than a letter that showed up this evening is in SoundOff. Mr. DiBello again encouraged the board to plan a town hall meeting to go through the specifics of the project and give residents the opportunity to understand this project. Mr. DiBello added that they may want to consider, as they go into the elections next year, having a referendum on the ballot for approval by the residents. Mr. DiBello stated that it is tough as they hear that there is all this opposition to the project but nobody ever shows up at a board meeting to express their opposition. Mr. DiBello stated that he would highly encourage anyone opposed to come to a board meeting and express this as it is tough to discern between what is fact and what is fabricated information.

Mr. Ciresi asked Mr. Fitzgerald how a referendum would work and Mr. Fitzgerald replied that it would be up to the Board of Elections to determine the timeline for the referendum appearing on the ballot so it may be at the primary or may be at a date specific. He added that it would have to be done as a vote of the taxpayers of the voting community. Mr. Ciresi asked how the Board would move for referendum and what the process was. Mr. Fitzgerald stated that if the district were ever to move towards a referendum then a resolution would have to be passed by the Board authorizing the administration to oversee a referendum on a specific issue. He advised that a question would essentially be posed to the voters as to whether they would desire to have their taxes raised for the purposes of a specific question. Mr. DiBello cautioned Mr. Fitzgerald on what he was saying with regards to taxes being raised and Mr. Fitzgerald replied that he was explaining the generalities of how a referendum works. Mrs. Spletzer asked why else there would be consideration to take it to a referendum. Mr. DiBello commented that he was not sure that it was a true statement that the taxes would be raised and Mr. Fitzgerald replied that usually the question has to pose a specific question that may result in a higher millage for the community. He added that this is how every district generally poses the question and it would have to be consistent with how Act 1 requires the question to be asked. Mr. Ciresi asked Mr. Fitzgerald to provide some examples of referendum questions so they could see how they would look in case the Board would choose to do this.

Mr. Dehnert agreed that this should go to referendum and felt that they should not vote on this contract until they decide this as they would be committing themselves to essentially over a half a million dollars by doing this. Mr. Dehnert spoke about the costs of the first phase being \$109,000.00 and that it essentially did not get you any-thing except for schematics and a cost estimate which will be the basis for the fee for Crabtree which will be 7% of that project estimate that the district and Crabtree would agree to. Mr. Dehnert did not feel that the markup on travel costs was wise and felt that possibly a more local architect would not charge the travel fee. He also did not feel that spending money for this phase of the project when they were unsure if they were going to even do the project was a good use of taxpayer money.

Mr. Ciresi asked Mr. Cooper to explain what the \$109,000 would get the district. Mr. Cooper replied that this schematic design would be a process where Crabtree would meet with every group, the administration and the Board to come up with exactly the

design and the size of the area that is needed. He added that at that time they will put drawings together which will define the costs. Mr. Cooper indicated that there would then be the option to decrease the size of the addition, increase the size, lower the cost or increase the cost. Mr. Cooper stated that at the end of the \$109,000 we will have exactly what this project will look like so that if you wanted to show it to the public you would have the correct information. Mr. Cooper added that at the end of each phase the Board must vote on whether to move onto the next step.

Mrs. Spletzer asked if at the end of this first phase the district would own the schematic drawings and Mr. Cooper replied yes.

Mr. Pettit stated that this step is essential in order to keep this moving forward and Mr. Cooper agreed. Mr. Pettit commented that this project is need for the kids and he wants to get it moving as he is tired of playing around.

Mr. Dehnert stated that a rough and dirty estimate from Crabtree was already done and he questioned whether this would substantially or significantly alter the Board's decision. Mr. Dehnert raised his objections to the contract and the 7% fee Crabtree will charge and also felt the public was being deceived on thinking the costs would be \$109,000 as he thought it would be higher. He felt that the contract was a bad one to enter into and thought that they should have competitively bid it. Mr. Cooper stated that he has been a part of 13 major projects during his tenure here in the district and has never done a competitive bid for an architect. Mr. Cooper stated that they prefer to find an architect that fits the project and not the other way around. Mr. Cooper said he had never known any school district to bid an architectural fee.

Mr. Ciresi commented that he is tired of hearing that we are lying to the public or making it look different and he felt the public needed to be aware of past history. He referenced the high school project when Mr. Dehnert was on the Board and the fact that after it went out to bid the Board ended up borrowing \$9 million more than what they needed. Mr. Ciresi stated that this cost the public money. He added that they are not lying here and nothing is being done behind closed doors. Mr. Ciresi stated that they have talked about this project for numerous years, they have asked the public to give their opinion and tonight they are talking about going to referendum on this project. Mr. Ciresi felt Mr. Dehnert was just looking for stall tactics. Mr. Ciresi stated that enough is enough either they are voting on this or they are not. He also added that he did not vote on that last project and does not want his name associated with us doing something illegal or under-handed.

Mr. Dehnert responded that we are talking about doing this project the same way as the previous one where the architect over-estimated the project costs. He added that we are talking about moving forward but want to continue a practice since that is the way we have always done it. Mr. Dehnert stated that he did not recall an RFP on an architect being done before. Mr. Dehnert commented that there are other local architects who would love to do this project. He added that Crabtree did a study and said we needed this when it is something that administration never identified as an issue. Mr. Dehnert state that this is a company that recommended doing something and then they get the fee for it based on their recommendation if the Board follows through.

Mr. Ciresi asked Dr. Goodin if this expansion project was needed and Dr. Goodin replied that we absolutely needed it. Dr. Goodin said he wanted to address the issue of going

out to bid to select an architect and stated that we are not just talking about a process that has never been done here but it is not done anywhere. Mr. Dehnert asked if that was a fact. Dr. Goodin questioned what exactly you would go out to bid on as the percentage of the architect fees are something that is negotiated between the owner and the architect. Dr. Goodin advised that what goes out to bid is the schematic design along with your bid documents. Contractors then bid on the project and that is where the competition comes in concerning the overall cost of the project. Dr. Goodin stated that with regards to the overall percentage that the architect gets, there is an industry standard for architect fees and we are certainly within that range with a reputable architect firm. Mr. Dehnert again asked if that was a fact that no Pennsylvania school district had ever gone out to bid for architect fees and Dr. Goodin stated none that he knew of. Mr. Dehnert commented that it was not a fact. Mr. Fitzgerald advised that having seen a number of school districts, although he cannot speak for all of them, he would say that 99 out of 100 would not bid a service like this. Mr. Dehnert said he wants to be the one who pays less.

Dr. Dressler asked Mr. Cooper if in all of his experience he thought that the charge of \$109,000 was inappropriate or overpriced and Mr. Cooper replied no. Mr. Cooper stated that you will see some lower fees when you are dealing with a building out on an open sight but here you are dealing with a school in operation and students in the building. He commented that they will have to work around major utilities which take extra design work which you would not have if it were new construction. Mr. Cooper spoke of the careful monitoring of the project and the material used that he and Mr. Ziegler provide during the project to ensure that the district has strong buildings with efficient walls and roofing.

Mr. DiBello stated that from his perspective they have talked about the project for several years and all he has ever seen are what-if scenarios. He stated that he is not sure how a Board can make an informed decision. Mr. DiBello stated that the proposal this evening is to get the true absolute schematic designs and have a pretty true idea of what the project is going to cost. Mr. DiBello added that he wants to make sure that all information gathered is real so that they can go to the community with real information. Mr. DiBello asked Mr. Fitzgerald if it was true they were giving approval to give Crabtree over ½ million dollars and Mr. Fitzgerald replied that the commitment is only for \$109,000 and nothing further without a Board vote. Mr. DiBello asked if the \$109,000 could change other than some incidentals and Mr. Fitzgerald replied that yes it could but this is a reasonable industry estimate but matter could change which could make the amount go up or down. Mr. DiBello asked if the district would own the schematic design and Mr. Fitzgerald said yes but there are limitations under a contract when they develop a schematic on how they can be used in a subsequent time period. Mr. DiBello confirmed that the only thing being approved tonight is to get the schematic design and not approving building the expansion. Mr. Fitzgerald confirmed this. Mr. DiBello advised that the Board could abort the project at any time.

Dr. Goodin stated that the motion was set up so that the Board must approve every step along the way and they at any time may halt the process. He also stated that the actual cost of the project will be based on the competitive bids that come back from those contractors that bid the project. Dr. Goodin stated that the Board at that time can decide if they want to accept the bids or not but the architect has still done the schematic design work. Mr. Fitzgerald pointed out the language in the agreement that indicated that approval for the each phase of the project must go before the Board for a vote.

Mrs. Zasowski asked if once the plans were finalized whether the Board, if they were to decide to move in this direction, could opt to go with a different architect and Mr. Fitzgerald replied that he would have reservations about how we could use those designs and go with another architect as there are limitations. Mr. Fitzgerald indicated that this question would be better served by asking Ellen Enters from his office as she negotiated this contract. Mr. Fitzgerald cautioned that he would not enter into this contract tonight with the anticipation that you would be using the designs developed by this architect to go with another architect. Mrs. Zasowski asked Mr. Cooper about his statement that the costs could go up slightly due different fees and the contractor working around the student population and she asked if it wasn't also possible that it could be slightly less if we stayed with this architect who just did this very detailed feasibility study and has already gotten to know our people and facilities. Mr. Cooper replied yes and many times we see architecture rates at 8, 9 and 10%. He stated that he believes that this is why our architect fees are lower and at 7%.

Mr. DiBello stated that he would assume that the schematic designs and the numbers would come back separately for the arts expansion and the athletic expansion. Mr. Cooper confirmed this was correct. Mr. Cooper added that there would also likely be other alternates included that the Board and the public could view, pick from and decide on.

Dr. Dressler asked if this were to go to referendum how much additional time would this add to the project and Mr. Fitzgerald replied that this was a very unknown question as there are many factors but the project could be slowed down by a minimum of 6 months probably more. Mr. Fitzgerald added that going to referendum is not an overnight decision as many districts take months if not years to decide if this is a process they want to enter into.

Mr. Dehnert commented that the 7% of the cost of the project will be based on the first phase and he questioned what would happen if the district and Crabtree could not agree on a cost. He also asked what Crabtree's fee would be if that were to be the case as he could not figure that out from the contract.

Mr. DiBello questioned if the district were to decide to not move forward if there were additional fees that we would be committed to and Mr. Fitzgerald stated that there would be fees associated with the phase. Mr. DiBello asked if the district were to do Phase I and then stop then what would the cost be and Mr. Fitzgerald replied that the cost would be those costs associated with that Phase but there are no commitments beyond the phase.

Mr. Dehnert asked about section 11.1 in the contract where it talks about the 7% fee and stated that the base fee for Crabtree is based on the cost of the project that comes as a result of the first phase. Mr. Dehnert asked what the cost would be if the district were not able to agree on a cost of the project with Crabtree as there is nothing to base the 7% on. Mr. Fitzgerald replied that he would have to look into this as the 7% is based off of that initial number. Mr. Dehnert also stated that the district is paying high rates for additional services and the contract indicates that we would pay for any consultants at the same rates regardless of what the consultants charged so if the consultants charged less then Crabtree could potentially get a profit based on the consultants used. Mr. Ciresi replied that Crabtree cannot bring a consultant in without our approval and Mr. Fitzgerald added that the district will be overseeing the engagement of consultants. Mr. Dehnert stated that there is language in the contract regarding consultants. Mr. Ciresi questioned

whether this contract was any different than any other contract the Board has ever agreed to for construction with regards to this being standard language. Mr. Fitzgerald reported that the language is standard AIA contract language and although there are deviations from it there is nothing that major. Mr. Cooper reported that this agreement is actually stricter than ones we have done in the past. Mr. Ciresi questioned if we had done beyond due diligence with this contract and Mr. Cooper confirmed this was correct.

The motion passed 8-1 with Mr. Dehnert voting no.

- A. The Board approved entering into an Agreement between Owner and Architect with Crabtree Rohrbaugh & Associates, Architects for the Spring-Ford Area High School Additions, Performing Arts and Fitness Centers as presented at the September Board meeting subject to approval of final wording of the agreement by the District Administration. Furthermore, approval is sought for the Architect to perform the Schematic Design Phase of the project for a fee of \$109,032.00 for basic services, plus reimbursable expenses and fees for additional services, if applicable. Per the terms of the Agreement, future Board approval is required prior to moving on to each subsequent design phase.

IV. PROGRAMMING AND CURRICULUM

Mrs. Heine made a motion to approve Item A and Mrs. Spletzer seconded it. The motion passed 9-0.

- A. The Board approved entering into a 5 year agreement with Final Site for use of the Learning Management System (LMS) service. Payment of this service will not begin until the 2017-2018 School Year. Funding will come out of the Technology Budget and shall not exceed \$20,000.00 a year.

V. CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

Mr. Pettit made a motion to approve Items A-B and Mrs. Spletzer seconded it. The motion passed 9-0.

The following individuals were approved for attendance at the following:

CODE: 580 Account: Conference/Training, registration, food, and accommodations

- A. **Catherine Gardy**, Literacy Supervisor, and **Wendy Taylor**, K-6 Literacy Coach, to attend "Fountas and Pinnell's – The Continuum of Literacy Learning K-8" at the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit in Norristown, PA on January 24, 2017. The total cost for this conference is \$500.00 (registration). No substitutes are needed.
- B. **Gregory Detwiler**, Grounds Maintenance, and **Edward Koneski**, Lead Grounds Maintenance, to attend "2017 Eastern PA Turf Conference" in Valley Forge, PA on January 4, 2017 and January 5, 2017. The total cost for this conference is \$320.00 (registration). No substitutes are needed.

VI. BOARD COMMENT

Mr. DiBello asked Mrs. Erwin about her invitation to Mr. Quigley and what his response was and Mrs. Erwin replied that he did not want to be here. Mrs. Spletzer asked why not and Mrs. Erwin indicated that Mr. Quigley said he was not invited. Mrs. Erwin reported that she advised him that he did not need an invitation. Mr. DiBello stated that The

Mercury is here tonight and he would like to put it out that if they run any articles in the future that they please put that on behalf of the Spring-Ford School Board Representative Tom Quigley is invited to any meeting he wants to come to any time in the future and he doesn't need a special phone call for him to show up at this meeting. Mr. Ciresi added that the invite goes to all of our representatives. Mr. DiBello stated that he has sat on the Board for 7 years and he has yet to see a representative show up at this meeting other than Senator Andy Dinniman who does not even represent us anymore. Mr. DiBello said it is appalling when he hears that they don't want to show up at this meeting as they represent this community and they should be here. Mr. DiBello stated that they do not need a special invite but he would guarantee that if it was a photo-op that they would be the first ones in the parking lot. Dr. Dressler asked that his representative Warren Kampf also be extended the invite.

VII. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

Clinton Fetterman, Limerick Township, asked when we would see the delivery on the schematics and Mr. Cooper advised that now that this is approved he will contact Crabtree who will set up meetings with the organizations both in athletics and performing arts to determine the needs. Mr. Cooper stated that he will start on this right away but with the holiday coming up it could be delayed a little. Mr. Fetterman asked what Mr. Cooper's gut feeling was on the timeline and Mr. Cooper indicated April or May.

John Carre, Upper Providence Township, stated that he wished to raise opposition to the fitness center and performing arts project. Mr. Carre expressed concern as a retired senior on a fixed income. Mr. Carre advised that last week he went to the Montgomery County Public Comment Session because they are raising real estate taxes by over 11% which is the second year in a row they are raising real estate taxes. He added that Upper Providence Township is going to incorporate a real estate millage tax for the first time probably next year and school taxes are generally going up every year. He asked what the advice was of the various taxing authorities for those people on fixed incomes. Mr. Carre stated that everyone wants the best and the brightest but he is afraid of what will happen to those on fixed incomes. Mr. Carre stated that he will probably have to move at some point because he cannot afford the taxes. Mr. Carre added that he felt that always going to the well for taxes especially for a fitness center that he believed would support the sports activities is something that should be funded and supported by real estate taxes. Mr. DiBello advised that taxpayers should go to their state legislators to address property tax reform and the millions of millions of dollars in unfunded mandates that are pushed down to the school districts. Mr. DiBello stated that we are not talking about providing the best but rather providing the essentials. Mr. Carre questioned whether Mr. DiBello was saying that a fitness center was essential to the school and Mr. DiBello replied that there are 2200 students between the 9th Grade Center and the 10-12 Grade Center that the current facilities cannot accommodate properly. Mr. Carre asked for clarification if they were talking about more gymnasium space and so forth and Mr. Ciresi replied that it is a gymnasium that is being built. Mr. Carre asked if it was not a fitness center and Mr. Ciresi stated that it was not a fitness center as it was another gym for PE and not just a workout room. Mr. Carre said his understanding was that it was a fitness center as that is how it is being promoted and talked about. Mr. Ciresi commented that it is a fitness center but it is for the 2200 kids that are in the schools and it is not just for the sports teams. Mr. Carre said that when you say fitness center you think of places like LA Fitness and so forth. Mr. Ciresi stated that it is not that. Mr. Dehnert stated that it is weight lifting equipment and aerobic equipment not a gymnasium. Mr. Carre said that there needs to be clarification as to exactly what these facilities are going to be as they don't sound like they are necessary.

Mr. Ciresi stated that this is why they want to move to the schematics so that they can show what this is rather than have hearsay that has gone back and forth over the years. Mrs. Spletzer reported that they have had public meetings where they went through the first phase of what Crabtree did and they showed an idea of what it would look like. Mr. DiBello added that this was the purpose for him suggesting a town hall meeting as there is a lot of fabricated information out there. He added that the whole purpose of what they are talking about this evening is to get actual drawings that could be projected onto a screen so they can properly communicate to the public what they are talking about doing and the reasons why. Mr. Carre stated that what they are saying comes across as a fitness center but if they are talking about a gymnasium then put it across that way and show it as something basic to what is needed. Mr. DiBello commented that it was to expand the current facilities that are used for part of physical education as well as what the sports teams use as extracurricular so it is a combination of everything. Mrs. Spletzer clarified that it is what is needed as there have been studies and evaluations done and we have gym classes which are mandatory for graduation that have to be on top of each other or all in the same room since we do not have enough space. Mrs. Spletzer stated that it is not just a weight lifting center or a fitness center as it will be a comprehensive space like a gymnasium. Mrs. Spletzer advised that they did show the whole schematics which are probably out on the district's webpage so that he can get an idea of what they were looking at. Mr. Carre stated that he understood but felt that it needed to be clarified as to what this project is to which Mrs. Spletzer replied that his point was well taken. She added that she wanted to clarify the Board Members are all district residents and although she is not retired she is raising 4 children in the district and it can be tough getting 2 nickels to rub together and she for one is not about going to the well and raising taxes. Mrs. Spletzer stated that she serves on the Finance Committee and it is very important that they are fiscally responsible. Mrs. Spletzer commented that this project is something that has been pushed off over the years and now there is a real need to go forward with this. Mr. Carre stated that he will need to look at more details regarding this because he is not too sure that we are clear as a society what is truly needed versus what is wanted versus what is desired nowadays. Mr. DiBello replied that this is exactly why they are doing what they are doing so they can go to the community and tell them specifics rather than them talk about it at a high level because that is where all this fabrication comes from. Mr. Carre referenced the suggestion of meeting with or talking to their state representatives and said you are probably better off just banging your head against the wall because if you look over the years on what they have done to handle the pension issue and property taxes which is nothing. Mr. Carre expressed doubt that anything would be done by Harrisburg. Mr. Ciresi reminded Mr. Carre that every two years voters have a right to change things. Mr. Dehnert stated that it is not a gymnasium as it is a fitness center that will have weight lifting equipment and aerobic equipment.

Armond Newton, Limerick Township, stated that he is like the gentleman before him in that he is retired. Mr. Newton commented that he came here one time just to find out what we are going to spend money on. Mr. Newton said he still does not know as he heard \$100,000 to \$9 million. Mr. Newton stated that he needs more facts and he is not against it as he thinks the young people in the community do a great job and he is very proud of them but on the other hand it is real money. Mr. Newton added that Teleflex is moving, Altria is moving and our tax base could go down so we have to look at it all. He commented that we can't do everything.

Becky Landry, Spring City, commented that she is a single mom and is not exactly rolling in the money. She stated that she understands there may be a price increase

and it may be hurtful to some people and she is one of those people. Ms. Landry said that these programs are important and she wants room for her kids. She stated that she has a child who is going to be in the Athletic Department and she has a child in the Music Department and she would like them to have the space and the room that they need. Ms. Landry added that these are important programs and there is a reason why colleges ask the kids what extra activities they do. Ms. Landry commented that it is important as these activities make good people.

Andreina Erwin, commented that about 3 weeks ago she spoke to the Board about the 11% county property tax and this is why she told Mr. Quigley that he had to be here to talk to everyone and explain. Mrs. Erwin referenced a Mercury article that she indicated went back and forth between Mr. Quigley, Governor Wolf and Mr. Ciresi saying that Mr. Ciresi wanted Mr. Quigley to come out to a meeting because he was running for office. Mrs. Erwin stated that this is exactly what we have to avoid as we are here going in circles. Mrs. Erwin commented that she totally understands those residents who are retired and are on a fixed income. She added that in the long term if you look at the Labor Statistics the most new jobs here in the United States are personal care aides and their median salary pay is \$20,980. She asked that they look at the long term and when our kids are retiring no one will be able to live anywhere. Mrs. Erwin stated that we have registered nurses at \$67,000 which is great but then we have home health aides with a median pay per year at \$21,920. Mrs. Erwin stated that this is on the Labor webpage and Mr. Dehnert can go and see it and see what the progress is for the long term. Mrs. Erwin added that this is what happens when we do not have the correct education to teach our kids and we can't put the tools together and when we have people who are just not up for progress.

Mr. Ciresi asked the administration that as we move forward that we make sure we get the right message out there. Mr. Ciresi mentioned the wording in the Board agenda motion which referred to the project as a fitness center and stated that it should not be called a fitness center as it is an expansion of the physical education offerings in the building. He encouraged that the district put out all of the facts for the public so that when people put out false facts it is negated and we understand this. Mr. Ciresi stated that none of the nine of them are here to spend other's people money or their own if they don't have to. He added that while they may not agree on everything they do agree on that. Mr. Ciresi commented that they are the Board of Education and it is an obligation of theirs to make sure the children have an education. Mr. Ciresi asked that they do not forget that Spring-Ford is one of the top school districts in the area and he understands those that spoke about being retired and understands what they are saying about taxes as he agrees with them on this. Mr. Ciresi added that Spring-Ford does miss the boat in with our state funding as we are one of the lowest in the state for funding and we need to fight our state to get more funding. Mr. Ciresi stated that for what we are looking to do this is the first step towards the process in order to be able to come back to the public with what the project looks like and what it costs. He added that this will be a long process and it is nothing that has not been done in the past. He asked that Dr. Goodin and Ms. Crew as they make an effort to get the information out to the public that they make sure they have all of their i's dotted and t's crossed and that there are no questions. Mr. Ciresi urged the public who may have questions to please ask the administration as this is all on the up and up, nothing is being hidden and all of the meetings will be public.

Mr. DiBello commented that they must cognizant of the fact that the county is raising taxes 11% and Upper Providence Township is proposing a tax which we have no control over. Mr. DiBello advised that last year the district raised taxed by 7/10 of 1% and 95%

of that was to cover the mandates put forth by the state for pension reform. Mr. DiBello reminded everyone that the district did get rid of the per capita tax and while Upper Providence maintains a per capita tax that is beyond our control but our portion is gone. Mr. DiBello added that the district has done very well with our spending and within the next 5-6 years we have a huge drop off that is coming with our annual debt service. Mr. DiBello reported that the district use to be about \$285 million in debt and we have paid that down by over \$170 million so we have become extremely efficient in running this district. Mr. DiBello added that we are the third largest district in Montgomery County and we are the sixth lowest millage in the county. Mr. DiBello stated that we must be cognizant of the fact that the district is growing and the student population has needs, not wants but needs. Mr. DiBello indicated that he would not approve a want. He expressed that he was disappointed that they have seen a lot of people here from the performing arts in support of this expansion but he has seen nothing from the athletic side tonight. Mr. DiBello stated that he would hope that they would see in the future that if someone is not in favor of this project that they come to a board meeting and speak as writing anonymously into SoundOff means nothing as it could be and he believes most of it is the same person. Mr. DiBello again stated that if you are truly opposed to the project then you need to come to a board meeting and speak their position.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Spletzer made a motion to adjourn and Mrs. Heine seconded it. The motion passed 9-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Fern
School Board Secretary