

## CARLYNTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

### Voting Meeting February 17, 2011 Carlynton Jr.-Sr. High School Cafeteria – 7:30 p.m.

#### MINUTES

The Carlynton School District Board of Education conducted its Regular Voting Meeting on Thursday, February 17, 2011 in the cafeteria of the junior-senior high school. Those in attendance included President Thomas Brown, Vice President Patricia Schirripa and School Directors Thomas DiPietro, Sandra Hugan, Ronald McCartney, Nyra Schell, Betsy Tassaro, Raymond Walkowiak and Sharon Wilson (via phone/skype). Also present was Superintendent Michael Panza, Solicitor Janet Burkardt, Business Manager Kirby Christy and Principals Laura Burns, Jacie Maslyk, Robert Susini and Christopher Very. The audience was comprised of 122 individuals and two members of the press. WPXI news was also present for the first 25 minutes of the meeting.

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**CALL TO ORDER** - *The meeting was called to order by President Brown at 7:30 pm. Carnegie Elementary student Jessica Vogliano led the Pledge of Allegiance.*

**ROLL CALL** – *The roll was called by Recording Secretary Michale Herrmann. All members of the board were present.*

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON BUSINESS BEFORE THE BOARD:** *Kathy Green, council president of Rosslyn Farms, came forward to read a letter. She said it has been council's position to let the board do what they do, but the current situation with the elementary schools and concerns voiced by residents has caused them to draft a letter to the Board of Education. She said the letter was approved unanimously by council and endorsed by the mayor. Mrs. Green read that upon listening to the past presentation by the superintendent and the proposed plans to consolidate the schools and build, council believes the renovation costs versus building costs need to be justified. Given the considerable opposition from community members, she read, extreme caution should be taken. She urged the board to delay the decision to allow for objective consideration before voting. Mrs. Green went on to read that half the population of Rosslyn Farms sends their children to Carlynton schools, favoring the benefits of a smaller school, while others prefer to send their children to regional schools because they believe the district has too many limitations. The letter also stated that council has additional concerns; among them, abandoned buildings in one or both communities could potentially harm the boroughs; the master wish is inflated and the burden to taxpayers could be greater; and national and state budgets are already strained and could result in less funding to local neighborhoods causing them to incur additional indebtedness. Reading further, Mrs. Green read that the Rosslyn Farms Council asks the board to delay its decision until all options can be properly examined. Should the board proceed, council would take measures to submit a petition to the State Board of Education and ask for the Rosslyn Farms Borough to be merged with another school district. A copy of the letter has been entered into record.*

*Tom Pellegrino, of Crafton, urged the board to consider renovation. He stated that taking away neighborhood schools is akin to removing the heart and soul of the community. He asked the board to save the elementary schools: "do it because it's the right thing."*

*Crafton resident Susan O’Connell said she has listened attentively to both sides and has heard a tremendously strong case for neighborhood schools. She said she has not heard hard and fast facts to justify the construction of a new school, adding that the district has great schools and great communities and a decision made this evening would be premature.*

*Rosslyn Farms resident Robert McLuckie said he is a strong proponent for higher education and questioned the rush to make a decision so quickly. He cited the economic times, school voucher proposals and the state pension funding cuts as reasons to table a vote, and urged the board to consider a rational renovation of two schools.*

*Nicole MacMurdo, of Crafton, said she had understood that the cost modeling study was an opportunity for the board to pick and choose what could be done as a more affordable option. She said she is disappointed that the board intends to vote.*

*Crafton resident Alan Dorfield said he is on a fixed income with high taxes and questioned why the board has not considered a merger with the Montour School District. Mr. Dorfield said he has witnessed an upsurge of affluent families moving into the community due to the exceptional elementary school and asked the board to do what is most affordable.*

*David Robb, councilman of Rosslyn Farms, distributed pictures of an abandoned school that was boarded up, contained graffiti and was an eyesore to the community. He said he saw it during his work travels through Blairsville. Mr. Robb said the photos were an example of abandoned schools and the failing of adaptive reuse, noting that while the Blairsville school was sold, it was again on the market. He stated that the board has a responsibility to the communities and said neighborhood schools help to vitalize a community. In closing, he asked the board to consider a merger with another district before voting.*

*Carnegie resident and councilman Bob Veres said he believes the board has “done their homework” and he trusts their decision. As a member of Carnegie Council and a former member of the school board, he said he understands the difficulty of the decision but added that he knows and trusts the board members. Mr. Veres said Carnegie council would welcome the school in their community and will support it. In closing, he said that a “Band-aid” to fix the current needs will not be sufficient and Carnegie will support whatever the board decides.*

*Crafton resident and council member April Weitzel spoke. She said she is the mother of a first grader at Crafton Elementary and she is awestruck at the education her daughter is receiving. She said that Crafton’s honor as “best place to raise children” is due in part to the school. Mrs. Weitzel said many Crafton residents deal with fixed incomes and foreclosures and higher taxes will not help. She quoted some numbers she read in the Pittsburgh Tribune Review about the number of students within the district who receive free and reduced lunches and offered that it is indicative of the economic needs within the communities. She asked the board to take this into account and save the schools; otherwise, she added, the wrong decision will negatively impact the communities for years to come.*

*Carnegie councilman and resident Rick DeLoss questioned Rosslyn Farms’ position, given it would be closer to send students to Carnegie rather than Crafton. He suggested that losing the neighborhood schools would make little difference. He cited a situation with the Rennerdale community and the closing of its neighborhood school, adding that Chartiers Valley School District is*

successful without neighborhood schools and it has made little or no impact to Rennerdale or other Chartiers Valley communities. Mr. DeLoss noted that renovations to the Carnegie Free Library were amounting to some \$12 million and said it is “a fairytale” to believe renovations could be made at each elementary school for \$4-5 million and be sufficient. He implored the board to make the best decision for children, saying they are adaptable, and to dismiss the emotional pleas from parents.

Jim Schriver, of Crafton, offered a financial recap of the last few months of board discussions. He said the financial angle is his greatest concern with the looming state budget crisis and the recent change in the governorship, among others. He said building at this time does not make sense and he urged renovations at a lower cost. Mr. Schriver shared information from PSBA that predicted cuts across the state and reported that districts across the state are making drastic cuts to programs. In closing, he asked the board to delay their decision to see what the future holds.

Crafton resident Joe Appel said he has been bothered by the reported costs of the building project and said he does not believe the costs to build are including collateral costs. He said the board needs to disclose those numbers as well, as it gives a better picture of the overall financial costs of building.

Carnegie Borough council president Pat Catena said he can appreciate the incredibly difficult decision the board must make as this is a emotional issue, especially for parents. Stating that he is a financial analyst, Mr. Catena said he has studied the numbers. He said a “Band-aid” to update and fix a few things now will only mean that more upgrades will be needed in a few years, at a higher cost. Speaking on behalf of Carnegie Council, he agreed that consolidation makes the most sense financially.

Carnegie council member Carol Covi said she has attended the last two board meetings and has listened to all the comments. She has given this much thought and believes the bottom line is the children. Going on, Mrs. Covi said she would love to see renovations to the neighborhood schools but after looking at the numbers, she agrees that one school is the best option from a financial standpoint. She also said that parents need to help their children become excited about a new school because this is about the children.

Mark Cantley, a resident of Carnegie, said he would love to see the consolidation at Crafton Athletic Field, stating it is the best option. He said that even though the district merged the three communities years ago, he still sees a social separation between Carnegie and Crafton. Mr. Cantley said he would love Crafton kids to get to know his son. In closing, he said consolidation to one school would give children and their families an opportunity to bond.

With no further comments from those who signed up to speak, President Brown said the board would begin the business portion of the meeting and open the floor to comments at the end of business meeting.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Director Hugan moved, seconded by Director DiPietro, to approve the minutes of the February 3, 2011 Regular Voting Meeting as presented. **By a voice vote, the motion carried 9-0.**

#### **REPORTS:**

- Executive Session – President Brown stated that employment, legal and

Minutes – February 3, 2011

labor issues were discussed in executive session, all within the guidelines of Section 11 of Board Policy .006.

- Principals' Reports – The principals made a few announcements: Mrs. Maslyk called attention to an upcoming fundraiser and said the school will have a small assembly to recognize the acceptance of grant money for a health/wellness program. She also extended an invitation for parents to speak at career days; Mrs. Burns announced the date of the boys' basketball playoff game; Dr. Susini said two students, Brittany Kroh and Kelsey Ponick, will compete at the WPIAL gymnastics competition and a group of five will compete at the state level in a LifeSmarts competition.
- Director of Pupil Services' Report – Mrs. Myford said a parent night will be held in March dealing with Asbergers and Autism.
- Business Manager Report – Mr. Christy noted that while the board may see an increase in the Parkway budget, the district's share of that budget will be less since the district is sending less students to Parkway.
- Superintendent's Report – Dr. Panza gave an overview of the calendar of upcoming events.
  - ✓ The minutes of the January 4, 2011 Parkway West Career and Technology Center Joint Committee Meeting were entered into record. (SC Item #0211-01)
- PSBA-Legislative – Director Walkowiak reported on the latest news from the Senate Education Committee: Bill 157 – creates a Homeless Children Task Force; Bill 200 – involves the management of athlete concussions and head injuries and school requirements; Bill 224 – Expands the list of offenses for employment in schools of those with convicted offenses; and Bill 244 – training of school personnel in cardio pulmonary resuscitation. He also mentioned a legislation alert is being discussed regarding a change to school code to allow for economic furloughs to control costs due to fiscal constraints. Another topic was the prevailing wage. Mr. Walkowiak said legislators are looking into exempting school districts from prevailing wage by allowing them to save costs with public contracts.

President Brown asked Dr. Panza if the district had trained individuals in CPR. Dr. Panza said classes for certification have been made available to all staff and aides.

Director Tassaro asked Director Walkowiak to read a report. The report indicated that school districts could lose up to \$1 billion in cuts by Governor Corbett. This, he read, will create a huge whole in basic education funding. The report said that available funding this year will disappear next year. This action will set funding back to where it was five years ago.

## **I. Miscellaneous**

Director DiPietro moved, seconded by Director Hughan, to approve the list of conference and field trip requests as presented and approved by administration:

Conference and Field Trip Requests

- C...H.Mangis...PATTAN...LRE Training...2/23-24, 4/27
  - C...M.Smoller/MBVeri...Upper St. Clair HS...Gifted Consort...3/18
  - C...M.Smoller/MBVeri...AIU...Gifted Resource Day...3/29
  - C...T.Patsko...Coraopolis...Motivation Techniques for Students...4/5
  - FT...L.Begg/M.Stagl...Clayton House...Social Studies...2/22
  - FT...N.Milson/R.Gevaudan...Harrisburg...LifeSmarts Tourn...2/23-24
  - FT...MBVeri...Crafton Elementary...Computer Challenge...2/24
  - FT...M.Mishkin...AIU... Transition Student Career Day...3.8
  - FT... W.Steiner...Stephen Foster Theater...Shakespeare Troupe...3/22
  - FT...J.Bhuta/D.Mitchell...Challenge by Choice...Prob.Solving...4/15
  - FT...J.Lewis...Carnegie Science Center...STEM Learning...5/9
- (Miscellaneous Item #0211-01 REVISED)

And name Director Schirripa as the district representative/candidate for the ballot to the Allegheny Intermediate Unit 3 board for a three year term. **By a voice vote, the motion carried 9-0.**

*Director Walkowiak wished Mrs. Schirripa much luck in the election, adding that she has done a great service to school districts and the IU as a board member in the past. President Brown echoed the sentiments.*

## II. Finance

Director Brown moved, seconded by Director Walkowiak, to approve the Treasurer's Report for the month of January 2011 as submitted;

The January 2011 bills in the amount of \$1,626,565.57 as submitted;

The February 2011 Real Estate Tax Refunds for the Borough of Carnegie as presented; (Finance Item #0211-01)

The February 2011 Real Estate Tax Refund for the Borough of Crafton as presented; (Finance Item #0211-02)

The January 2011 Athletic Fund Report as reviewed by administration and presented; (Finance Item #0211-03 REVISED)

And the January 2011 Activities Fund Report as reviewed by administration and presented; (Finance Item #0211-04) **By a ROLL CALL VOTE, the motion carried 9-0.**

Director McCartney moved, seconded by Director DiPietro, to approve the consolidation of the elementary schools and to build one new school on the Carnegie Elementary School site. **By a ROLL CALL VOTE, the motion carried 5-4, with Directors Schell, Tassaro, Walkowiak and Wilson voting NO.**

*Prior to voiting, the skype connection with Director Wilson was lost and Director Tassaro made several attempts to reach her. Director DiPietro took the opportunity to make a comment. He said he appreciated the comments from community members and said he did listen to what was said. He said that during the feasibility study and all subsequent community meetings, he truly believed community members offered suggestions of what they wanted in a school. Then the feasibility came out with 10 options. He had hoped*

Candidate to AIU Board –  
Patricia Schirripa

January 2011 Treasurer's  
Report

January 2011 Bills

Carnegie RE Tax Refunds

Crafton RE Tax Refund

January 2011 Athletic Fund  
Report

January 2011 Activities Fund  
Report

Consolidate Elementary  
Schools and Build on Carnegie  
Elementary School Property

renovation would be the least expensive option but it did not happen that way. Mr. DiPietro said that code requirements and the ages of the buildings raised the cost of renovation. Going on, Mr. DiPietro said that when costs were higher than expected, the board went out and sought another study through Thomas & Williamson. He went on to say that he preferred the Crafton athletic field site as the best option, with plans to convert the gymnasium-end of Carnegie Elementary into a community center and later moving the track to that site and returfing the field, in addition to offering increased parking. But when Crafton council president Dan Cindric said council would do all in their power to prevent that, the board's hands were tied. He added that he hoped Mr. Cindrics' comments truly represented the community-at-large. He said he heard negative comments about PSSA scores going down, taxes going up and other reasons for not consolidating, without hard facts. Mr. DiPietro said he hopes the community understands that Mr. Cindric forced the board's hand. He said he is dismayed by council members who threaten to get their own way.

President Brown stated that some of the drawings to build a school at Carnegie indicate the loss of Honus Wagner Field but other renderings illustrate the district can build and maintain fields at that location. He said the accusation to change facts, regarding the cost factor to relocate the Crafton field, were mistaken. The board never had any intentions of replacing the field, he continued, and even discussed the possibility of approaching CIT for the use of one of their fields. Director DiPietro said he was not in favor of the option to relocate the field. President Brown told the audience the board has received four additional options from Kimball and Thomas and Williamson for building on the Carnegie site, with a range of \$26 to \$31 million.

Director Schell said she reviewed the revised numbers from Kimball using the higher end range, believing it is safer to go with the higher range in the event of an issue. She named the various options and the total costs, noting that the numbers change when the state reimbursements are subtracted. She then gave the projected end costs with the reimbursements. Mrs. Schell said the four major options, including the collateral costs, were in the range of \$31.1 to \$33.9 million. Mrs. Schell said when you consider the renovation costs, versus new building costs, the bottom line indicates there is not much difference.

President Brown asked Director Schell if she attended the meeting of Friday, February 11, when new documents with projected costs were provided. These documents were generated on February 16 and 17 when requests were made by board member for a more realistic cost. President Brown said the board was not voting on a specific option, but to consolidate the elementary schools and to build on Carnegie Elementary property. Director Schell said she thought they were voting on Feasibility Study Option ES 6. Director McCartney said no; the option to move the field was not being considered. Director Walkowiak asked for clarification of what was being voted on. He asked if the board was voting on the options provided in the last few days; Director McCartney said they were voting on a variation of the options the board received a few days ago. Director Walkowiak expressed some confusion. Director McCartney said the favorable option is a variation of the initial Kimball drawings. Director Walkowiak said the confusion was caused because the board just recently received the designs. Audience members

*asked where on the Carnegie site would a new building be erected, if not on athletic field.*

*Director Walkowiak said he provided a very simple chart with numbers at the last meeting. The numbers were looking forward, into the next five years, and the data was supplied by administration and President Brown. Mr. Walkowiak said the numbers do not fit into the picture without some sort of tax increase down the road because of the obligations and expected increases, i.e., health insurance and pension costs. He asked the board to sit down and set a budget and be responsible to the tax payers by holding the line on taxes as long as possible. Mr. Walkowiak said the board needs to find someone to give them some financial options the district can afford.*

*Director Schell said if the board goes with the Thomas & Williamson numbers, the costs are still slightly lower than Kimball's number, though still in the same ball park.*

*While the attempts continued to reach Director Wilson, Director Tassaro said she agrees with Director Walkowiak's comments. She said she is not comfortable with the options that have been made available.*

*Director Wilson was then reached on Dr. Panza's cell phone and placed on speaker phone. She stated she had three areas of concern; the first was the genuine needs the district has in regards to space and improved infrastructure. Another was the cost. She said district taxes are already high and she believes they will need to be raised or staff and programs could be cut to fund the proposed building project. She said the district needs to balance the costs with educational value. Dr. Wilson's third concern was the effect that closing a school will have on the community, adding that the residents have asked us to retain neighborhood schools. She asked the board to listen to the community. In closing, she reminded the board that she has asked for a lower cost option but have yet to receive one.*

*Director Tassaro said she concurs with Director Wilson's comments. She said the threats of funding cuts could threaten some of the extra programs that require rooms or more space, and asked how they could continue to be operated if funding is cut. Director Tassaro stated that all members of the board did not agree with some of the room requirements, such as the extra computer room and a time-out room, which she believed inflated costs. She suggested the board could request an option from Landmark Design Associates (LDA) to provide an additional plan at a lower cost and then select a project somewhere in between. Director Tassaro said the board has worked to get taxes lowered and she has an issue with costs. She said she believes the board needs to keep schools in the neighborhoods. Calling attention to a letter the board received from a Carnegie resident, she said the letter expressed the importance for a school to remain in Carnegie because it is an asset and offers vitality to community. Director Tassaro said this is equally so for Crafton. "The reason the vote is going down tonight," Mrs. Tassaro said, "is because the board can get the votes for Carnegie, and that's a shame."*

*Director Walkowiak again asked for clarification on which option the board was voting. Director McCartney said the second option is one option with students staying in the current school while building on the Carnegie property, and the last option is to relocate students and build a new school on the current site of Carnegie Elementary. The audience questioned what*

*was taking place, asking if it was legal without providing them with more information. After the roll call vote, many residents shouted their disappointment and left the meeting.*

\_\_\_\_\_ as construction manager for the preferred elementary school project. **REMOVED FROM THE AGENDA**

\_\_\_\_\_ -  
Construction Manager

### III. Personnel

Director McCartney moved, seconded by Director Walkowiak, to approve the addition to the 2010-2011 Supplemental Athletic List as presented and reviewed by administration:

Addition to the 2010-2011  
Supplemental Athletic List

- Michael Donovan – Girls’ Varsity Head Softball Coach
- Michelle Smoller – Girls’ Varsity Assistant Softball Coach  
(Personnel Item #0211-01)

The following additions to the 2010-2011 Day to Day Substitute List as presented:

Additions to the Day to Day  
Sub List

- Gina Halbedl – Elementary
- Cailin O’Toole – Elementary and Library Science K-12
- Kristal Pattinato – Elementary
- Kathryn Rizzo – Elementary/English 7-9  
(Personnel Item #0211-02)

*And the following additions to the before school tutoring program at Crafton Elementary school:*

Additions to the Before School  
Tutoring Program at Crafton

- Nina Kovanis
- Clare Rex (Personnel Item #0211-03)

**By a voice vote, the motion carried 9-0.**

### IV. Student Services

Director McCartney moved, seconded by Director DiPietro, to approve the discipline action for Student #B02/2-2011 as recommended by the administration. (Student Services Item #0211-01) **By a voice vote, the motion carried 8-0-1 with Director Wilson abstaining.**

Discipline Action for Student

### V. Policies:

Director DiPietro moved, seconded by Director Schirripa, to approve the first reading of Policy No. 431, Job Related Expenses, with updates per recommended of the administrative staff; (Policy Item #0211-01) **By a voice vote, the motion carried 9-0.**

Updates to Policy No. 431 –  
First Reading

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** *Director Walkowiak read from PlanCon Part A that offered direction for the board to contact the borough for historic preservation of the school building and the Pennsylvania Historical Museum Commission to determine historical significance. He said the district must take all measures to protect the historic value of the school and to develop an adaptive reuse plan to avoid demolition or abandonment. Mr. Walkowiak stated that this is a major concern and the board should adhere.*

*John Hummel from Kimball explained that his office will work cooperatively to begin the necessary dialogue and to ensure the historic review process is*



*followed. He expounded upon the full process and reiterated that Kimball will stay on top of the process and keep the board and the public enlightened.*

*Director Schell said that in lieu of the vote, she wanted to explain why she voted no. She recalled the numbers she spoke of earlier, saying she did this to find out what the district could afford in the context of all children at all grade levels and all programs. Given funding uncertainties, she continued, she was not comfortable with spending so much at one end-the grade school-when the junior senior high school has some needs, especially when looking long term. Mrs. Schell said the thing that made the most sense to her was to not risk putting so much money into one project while having a strong sense that the district is comprised of three communities. She added that a large part of the identity of the district is for Carnegie and Crafton to figure out how to best blend. "This, and finances is why I voted no," she said, "and as much as the elementary schools have needs, other needs will be necessary at the high school." She said she also wants to maintain a balance within each neighborhood while preserving the economic viability of each community. Since the vote has been made, she stated, the board must unite to make the best decisions for the future. Director Schell said she chose to vote on the conservation side and if anyone takes issue, they can feel free to speak with her.*

**NEW BUSINESS:** *None*

**OPEN FORUM:** *Crafton resident Bob Gentile came forward and said the public was sand-bagged. He said the open meetings have been a charade and the board knew what they planned to do all along.*

*Susan O'Connell stepped forward to say she was a little confused about exactly what was voted on, asking when the new plan was provided and discussed. President Brown explained that it was provided earlier and the vote was to build a new consolidated school on the Carnegie Elementary property.*

*George Honchar, Jr., of Carnegie, said he was studying finance at Duquesne University and questioned if a sensitivity analysis had been conducted before the board made a decision. He said the cost of steel will go up and argued that the board is only looking at direct costs. He then questioned the costs for transportation, since more would be needed to bus students to one school. Dr. Panza explained that the district is in a fuel consortium and saves money through that, as well as the fact that the district has just entered into a five-year contract with a new bus company. It was Mr. Honchar's opinion that the board did not forecast into the future before making a decision.*

*Carnegie resident Nadine Popovich, said that when talking with her neighbors and friends, she found that they trusted the board to make the best decision, both fiscally and educationally. She said she was dismayed by the disrespect she witnessed at the meeting that evening when the vote did not go the way some had hoped. Mrs. Popovich said she overheard someone say they would now have to send their children to school with students from Section 8 housing and she found it to be offensive. Going on, she said she has two daughters who successfully went through Carnegie Elementary and the high school; they are both now at private colleges and doing very well.*

*Crafton resident A.J. Pescuric thanked the board for their work, but said she was disappointed with the decision, hoping the board would further explore renovation. She apologized for the person who made the comment about Section 8 housing and went on to say she is afraid the decision has creative a sense of*

*divisiveness within the communities, though she did not feel there was a division between the communities beforehand, as someone had commented earlier. She said she shops and enjoys eating in Carnegie and pointed out that Crafton resident Betsy Martin, who collaborates with the renovations to the Carnegie Free Library, is an example of how Crafton people have reached into the Carnegie community. She closed by saying that since the decision has been made, a healing process needs to take place, and she urged everyone to move forward with the decision.*

*Crafton council president Dan Cindric came forward, saying he missed the earlier part of the meeting due to a commitment, but was told that statements made by him at an earlier meeting “to block all proceedings for a new school” were a lie. Mr. Cindric said he did not make the comments but only stated that council would do everything possible to keep Crafton Elementary. He said that he and the eight other members of Crafton Council believe this is one of the most important issue they have faced. He went on to say that he never heard anyone but Director Wilson comment about the booklet from PSBA, and asked if anyone else had taken the time to read it. President Brown said he read it and took issue with Mr. Cindric’s comment. Mr. Cindric said he believes statements from the board were misleading all along to make the public believe the board is doing the right thing. Director DiPietro told Mr. Cindric that he did make the earlier statements, and read them from the minutes: “Mr. Cindric said Crafton Borough will not support a new construction. He said council will take all and any necessary measures to prevent consolidation and to see that Crafton Elementary remains in the community.”*

*Crafton resident Judy Kushner said she grew up in Carnegie and has many fond memories. She said she loves the Espy Post, the library, and the old homes, and believes the comment that Crafton residents do not like Carnegie is untrue.*

*April Weitzel came forward again, saying she was confused about what the board planned to do. Director DiPietro said a new school would be built at the Carnegie Elementary site. President Brown said the board has yet to decide where, but the goal is to build without collateral costs or having to move the field or field house. April Weitzel then asked if the goal was to knock down the current school, and if so, would children be put in trailers. She said she felt this was a vindictive move. Director DiPietro said again that the school could have been in Crafton but the board did not want to fight against council. Mrs. Weitzel said that council’s resolution was non-binding; now the public is uncertain of what the plan is and they have a right to know. President Brown said some configuring was being done to build on the Carnegie school site and the board would continue to look for way to save money. Going on, he said the plans will be made available to the public.*

*Director Tassaro asked if the Crafton site could be reconsidered if it was understood that Crafton Council would not block it.*

*A resident from the audience asked why the board would consider building near active railroad tracks, which were situation on the hill above the proposed site.*

*John Hummel explained that the presented drawings were only preliminary concepts or just a preview of the options. He said his firm is aware of the railroad tracks and they would never build an elementary school too close to the tracks. Mr. Hummel went on to say that the executive summaries of the feasibility study did provide renovation options, but the options did not address ADA codes or security issues. He said these summaries illustrated renovation costs at*

Crafton between \$11 and \$13.4 million; at Carnegie, the range was \$10.5 to \$12.7. Mr. Hummel said costs are also increased when renovating two separate buildings because contractors are dealing with two completely different design schematics and phases. Going on, he said it would not be fair to one or the other elementary school if the fund balance was used to renovate only one school.

A.J. Pescuric asked if the new proposal for the school was to be built on property the district owns. Mr. Hummel said yes.

Crafton resident Mary Luxbacher said she believed Mr. Hummel had some doubt about the Carnegie building site. John Hummel said she was mistaken; he had no doubt. She went on to say she sensed some vindictiveness among the board and wondered if the board had a master plan for Carnegie all along. She asked what will be done now to Crafton Elementary. Director DiPietro said the district will attempt to sell it.

At 10:05 pm, the administrators were dismissed.

Darren Gayly, of Crafton, asked the board how they plan to pay for the building project. He said he just had a tax increase on his home and he was not happy. President Brown explained to Mr. Gayly that his home was under assessed and this was a part of the district's effort to be certain all homes are taxed at the current appraisal level.

Crafton resident Tara Fox said the board's decision will have a big impact on the community and the people have a right to speak out. She said there has never been a feeling of "us versus them (Carnegie)" because Crafton residents wanted to see renovation at both schools. She went on to say the Crafton athletic field was not an appropriate site due to traffic and the locality of the shopping center. She said that tonight's decision shot down Crafton and might kill property values, as well as raising taxes.

Jim Schriver said he was disappointed. He said the referenced projects were not as glorious as they were made out to be and said the board blatantly ignored the wishes of the community. President Brown said that wasn't so; he and others took the time to listen; he personally returned many emails. Mr. Schriver said he viewed the vote to build as a direct admission for a tax increase. Director Schell said that cannot be determined because there are still so many unknown factors and variables. Director McCartney commented that one can not say there will or will not be a tax increase because this could happen at any school at any given time. Director Walkowiak noted that his numbers, presented earlier, do illustrate a tax increase at some point down the road, adding that "he will go on record saying that."

Jim Schriver questioned the cause for the meeting last Friday. President Brown named those in attendance-Director Hughan, Director Schell, Director Tassaro, Director Walkowiak, and himself-and said it was a working session. Director Walkowiak said he asked for the meeting at the February 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting, because he had numerous questions for the architects and Mr. Thomas from Thomas & Williamson. Questions arose from the audience, asking if a quorum was at the meeting. President Brown said the meeting was solely for the purpose of addressing Director Walkowiak's questions and all board members were invited.

Robert McLuckie took the floor again, saying he came as a concerned citizen but felt there was not a great representation of residents at the meeting. He said he would guess the project would have been voted down had it been brought to a

referendum. Mr. McLuckie said that with all the possible financial scenarios on the horizon, it was irresponsible of the board to move forward with building. Calling attention to some of the aforementioned cost factors that Dr. Panza provided at an earlier meeting, i.e., savings by not needing a courier, he added that these costs do not realistically compare to the cost of a major project. Dr. Panza asked that individuals not make personal attacks, adding that everyone should be a model for children by showing respect. Mr. McLuckie questioned rising health care costs, to which President Brown said the immediate forecast is only two percent for premium increases. Dr. Panza added that Mr. Brown serves on a county-wide health consortium, volunteering his own time to better serve the district and other surrounding districts. Mr. McLucky questioned the forthcoming teacher contracts and asked if the district budgeted for these costs. Director Walkowiak said that yes, these factors were considered.

Dave Robb asked for the estimated costs to build on the Carnegie site. President Brown said \$26.7 million, but added that the board can ultimately decide the final cost by adding or eliminating things. Director Tassaro asked if this number included the soft costs and John Hummel said yes. Mr. Robb said he felt relief for Carnegie but was sad for Crafton. He added that it is unfortunate that one community gets the advantage while the other could be harmed.

Members of the audience asked for a timeline of the process of building. John Hummel said the phases for the PlanCon process can take up to 11-12 months and the construction times depend on the design phase. A realistic timeline for building would be 12-18 months, he added.

Director Schell said, to be clear, the board has yet to approve PlanCon A.

A.J. Pescuric asked why the vote was not a two part decision; one to build and another for the site. President Brown said he did not believe it would have made a difference.

**ADJOURNMENT:** With no further comments or business to discuss, Director Hughs moved, seconded by Director DiPietro, to adjourn the meeting at 10:37 pm. **By a voice vote, the motion carried 9-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

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Kirby Christy, Board Secretary

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Michale Herrmann, Recording Secretary