

SPRING COVE SCHOOL DISTRICT
BLAIR COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

RE: SECTION 780
PUBLIC HEARING
ROARING SPRING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

DATE: MARCH 25, 2008 7:00 P.M.
PLACE: ROARING SPRING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
239 POPLAR STREET
ROARING SPRING, PA 16673

BOARD MEMBERS: JAMES BUTLER, PRESIDENT
JOHN BIDDLE, VICE PRESIDENT
CHARLENE DODSON, TREASURER
AMY ACKER-KNISSELY
HAROLD BLATTENBERGER
GRETCHEN METZLER
JULIE MILLS
DR. JENNIFER MURNYACK-GARNER
WILLIAM REPLOGLE

SOLICITOR: CARL BEARD, ESQ.
SUPERINTENDENT: RODNEY GREEN
PRINCIPAL: BETSY BAKER
BUSINESS MANGER: JOHN CLARK
RECORDING SECRETARY: KAREN GREENWOOD

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MR. GREEN: We'll go ahead and get started. We want to thank everyone for coming out tonight. We have some information we'd like to share tonight. The purpose of tonight's meeting is what we call a Section 780 hearing to tell you more about the grade school.

I'd like to introduce myself. I'm Rodney Green, Superintendent, Spring Cove School District and I'll do part of our presentation tonight but I'd also like to introduce our board members who are here tonight.

This is Gretchen Metzler, Mr. Lloy Blattenberger, Mr. John Biddle, Mr. James Butler, board president, Mr. Carl Beard, our solicitor, Dr. Jennifer Murnyack-Garner, Mrs. Julie Mills, Mrs. Charlene Dodson, Mrs. Amy Acker-Knisely, Mr. John Clark, board secretary.

Again, we welcome you here tonight. Like I said, this is what is called a Section 780 hearing pursuant to the public code, and at this time I would ask Mr. Butler if you'd like to give some welcoming remarks.

JAMES BUTLER: I'd like to thank everybody for coming out tonight, can you hear me over there? Okay, I'd just like to thank everybody for coming out tonight and spending some time with us to talk about the elementary school here. Mr. Green and our Attorney Beard are going to walk us through most of this meeting tonight but we again, appreciate your interest in the community and school and

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coming out and helping us with this process. Thank you.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Beard, turn it over to you.

MR. BEARD: Good evening everybody. My name is Carl Beard and I'm the solicitor for the school district. As Mr. Green had indicated, the purpose of tonight is to conduct what we commonly refer to as a Section 780 hearing under the Public School Code of 1949.

This hearing which requires scheduling a public hearing not less than 3 months or 90 days before a determination is made to permanently close a school or portion of the school, itself.

As you probably are aware, a resolution was previously adopted by the board back on February 18, 2008, to schedule this hearing and notice was subsequently placed in 2 newspapers of general circulation, that would have been the Morrisons Cove Herald, that was done on February 28, and it also appeared in the Altoona Mirror on February 27th. The law requires that at least 15 days prior to the hearing those notices need to be placed in a newspaper of general circulation. In addition to those notices, information, notice was placed on the doors of the building, itself, and also a notice was placed on the school calendar of the district web page.

Accordingly, and upon review of the school code and the board's resolution I find as the solicitor that this

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1 hearing is duly constituted and properly convened, pursuant
2 to what is required by the school code.

3 As we go forward here I just wanted to outline that
4 in the school code, itself, Section 1311 of the school code
5 sets forth the reasons and the authority for the school
6 board to close a school or a portion of it, you know,
7 permanently, and that section permits it for several
8 reasons, and I believe Mr. Green later on will have that in
9 the slides, but one of the reasons is on account of small
10 numbers of pupils in attendance, that's specifically listed
11 in the school code, as is the condition of the then
12 existing school building which we're in here this evening.
13 3, for purposes of better gradation and classification and
14 simply put, that means to look at how the curriculum and
15 how the class sizes and things are actually structured or
16 how they want to turn around and look at a configuration of
17 the school based on kindergarten through 4th grade or 5th
18 grade, the school concept and the like. And the final is
19 for other reasons. A lot of times people will challenge
20 these actions, they come before the courts. Not too long
21 ago a Common Pleas Court in another part of Pennsylvania
22 actually rendered a determination that a school closing was
23 proper to balance the budget, so you have the catchall
24 phrase, for other reasons.

25 The purpose of the hearing tonight is informational.

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1 is the portion where it provides you an opportunity to,
2 through oral or written testimony, to make comments
3 regarding the school closing you feel are pertinent to the
4 board making a decision on this particular building. We
5 are going to begin with those people who have already
6 signed up or submitted their names prior to the hearing and
7 then just go through the sign-up sheet that's in the back.

8 Finally, if anyone wants to testify after that you
9 can sign up with the stenographer, just raise your hands
10 due to the low numbers. The only thing that we ask is when
11 you testify for purposes of the stenographer please state
12 your name and your address and whether you are a resident.
13 If you want to tell us you are a parent or staff member,
14 that's fine too. We're going to provide each individual
15 with 5 minutes to make their statement in testimony which
16 you might imagine, we can't delegate 5 minutes to another
17 person to make up 10, 15 or 20 minutes. We will honor that
18 5 minute commitment. We do reserve the right if anybody
19 starts to engage in any personal attacks or inappropriate
20 comments to cut that time short.

21 As I said, there is a stenographer, you can see this
22 fine lady up here who is moving very rapidly with her
23 fingers to record everything that is being said here
24 tonight because we're required by law to have a
25 stenographic record.

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1 I don't know if you have ever watched public TV or
2 legislative TV, you see people come and testify at
3 congressional hearings and before the general assembly on a
4 proposed passage of legislation. That is similar to what
5 is going to be occurring tonight. Information is going to
6 be presented, as I have said before and has been outlined
7 and will be repeated, no decision is going to be made nor
8 can it be made for at least 90 days or 3 months until after
9 this hearing.

10 So when we go through this tonight we have it set up
11 in 2 parts. The first part will be the background as what
12 brings us here, what are some of the reasons why there's a
13 contemplated closing of the school, of this particular
14 school. The superintendent will provide that background
15 information. As you can see, there is a power point to go
16 through that information.

17 When the power point is completed we'll then take
18 questions from the audience if you need clarification on
19 anything that was presented by the superintendent, and
20 that's part 1.

21 I'd like to say from the beginning that there may be
22 questions that come up here that quite honestly they need
23 to be researched and you may not have an answer, but the
24 goal here is to gather information from the public as well.

25 Part 2 of the hearing is the public testimony. That

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1 The record, itself, will remain open for 30 days, so
2 if you leave here tonight, you think of something that you
3 should have said or you think that there's something else
4 that you wanted to add or delete you are permitted to
5 submit additional testimony, whatever comments to the
6 school district administration in care of John Clark, the
7 board secretary, and those likewise, will be made an
8 addendum to the stenographic record.

9 That's basically the overview of the process and at
10 this point in time we're ready to move forward to the
11 presentation by the superintendent and review of anything
12 else that we need for housekeeping details. Thank you.

13 MR. GREEN: Thank you. And as you already heard,
14 most of the information tonight will be a review of some
15 information that was already presented from the feasibility
16 study that was conducted in 2004, and again, that document
17 is available for public inspection at any time.

18 But I'd like to kind of pull out what we think are
19 the highlights that are information that is pertinent to
20 the question as to whether to close or keep the school
21 open. And in that feasibility study one of the things that
22 was noted first off is that the Roaring Spring Elementary
23 School which was built in 1937 is in poor condition and at
24 the end of it's serviceable life. Again, 1937, 2008 71
25 years is a long time. The building has had a number of

1 renovations and a number of items done to it but these
2 comments were taken out of the study by the architect at
3 that time.

4 One of the reasons we look at a feasibility study is
5 not just to look at the physical condition but to look at
6 the educational mission that is served by a school. And so
7 in this feasibility study we had the chance to not only
8 gather input on the structure of the building but also on
9 the usage and the instructional patterns of our staff and
10 particularly, how it relates to the overall instruction
11 plan.

12 And when we looked at that we really felt that there
13 was some inadequacies or some deficits that jumped out at
14 us, and one of the things was the spaces that we have. In
15 an older building, you can imagine, 1937 this was
16 constructed as a high school. High school classrooms
17 traditionally are not as large as elementary classrooms and
18 we've never done anything to substantially alter the size
19 of the classrooms in this building.

20 Also we use a number of teaching strategies that
21 involve what they call learning centers. Learning centers
22 are spaces within a classroom, particularly you want to
23 have additional space to spread out and have the learning
24 centers throughout your classroom space.

25 We also use what are called flexible grouping

1 strategies, another term that we like to look at the needs
2 of those students on an individual and small group basis.
3 If you walk into any classroom, and I invite any here
4 tonight to come visit the school during our regular
5 instruction day and you will see in almost all cases a
6 variety of groups being instructed in classrooms. You will
7 rarely see students lined up in traditional straight rows
8 of desks and large group instruction.

9 We also adapt our instruction to meet the needs of
10 individuals on an individualized basis. Another term used
11 is differentiated instruction, but that again is a reality
12 that the building does have some limitations in how to
13 serve the educational mission.

14 The other thing that obviously everyone is aware
15 today that technology is very much a part of our lives.
16 Whether you go to an ATM to get cash or to do electronic
17 banking, we use technology instruction in many ways. We
18 are using a power point presentation tonight. Our teachers
19 use a tool like that at all age levels, even kindergarten
20 and pre-school.

21 We also have special programs that require some
22 additional spaces, whether it be we have up here science,
23 art, music, physical education, the use of reading groups,
24 but again, the very nature of instruction today says that
25 we try to adapt and provide specialized spaces for our

1 students.

2 Moving on, another big item in looking at the
3 education plan, part of that feasibility study was to look
4 at our special education programs. And being that I had a
5 number of years as the special education director for the
6 district I feel not only qualified to talk about it I feel
7 from the experiences I have here we have a great program,
8 but despite resources that we have there are limitations.
9 And there are some limitation on the space that's available
10 to work with students who require, sometime they have
11 attention problems, sometime they have physical disabling
12 conditions that require some specialized spaces. In this
13 particular building we have what's considered to be a
14 resource room that's in the category of a special education
15 classroom. That's on the third floor of this building.

16 And again, some of you who go back like I do,
17 attended this school when it was in its second life as a
18 junior high school, this room here was actually part of an
19 auditorium, and the room I'm talking about was a balcony or
20 mezzanine as part of the auditorium, so if walk in that
21 room you will actually see a terraced kind of effect where
22 there are desks in a tiered format. It can be quite
23 cumbersome and at times even, I am going to use the term
24 hazardous.

25 If you walk through the school again you'll see a

1 number of services delivered in hallways, you'll see
2 students working in small groups or teachers working with
3 students sometimes. It's not because we want to be in the
4 hallway, sometimes that's the only place for a private
5 moment where it's quiet, that is required for when that
6 special educational need has to be delivered.

7 We also have in today's world of education a number
8 of agencies and other specialists who come into our
9 schools, so whether it be our own school psychologist,
10 whether it be behavior specialists who are here to observe
11 and monitor children's behaviors, so there's a number of
12 types of services that is our space is very limiting.

13 And without further stating the obvious, a building
14 like this does have limitations for students and adults
15 with physical disabilities. This is not an ADA what I call
16 a handicap accessible friendly building. It meets the law
17 but barely, is what I'll say, there are some limitations.

18 Looking again from the feasibility study, some other
19 items of note were that the site, itself, if you think
20 about the school being a campus, it's very small, it's very
21 congested, and it's a little bit disconnected from the
22 sense of the rest of the school district, so there are some
23 safety issues in regard to how our students come into this
24 campus. Students must cross the street to go to the
25 playground, whether they cross the street here or to what's

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1 called the upper playground up Cemetary Avenue across from
2 the cemetary in Roaring Spring.

3 Our heating system, if you are not aware, is a steam
4 heating system. It is actually located across the street
5 in what we now call the annex building which used to be one
6 of our older elementary schools. The heating system works,
7 I won't stand here and tell you it's not safe, but it's an
8 old system, it's outdated, it requires many repairs and
9 sometimes those repairs are complex because parts just
10 aren't readily available.

11 And the gymnasium across the street has been used but
12 it is currently out of service because of a number of
13 structural issues that allow water to infiltrate the
14 building and we had mold in that building, so we have
15 limited use for that. We use it for storage and we don't
16 use it for physical education classes, and that's a
17 definite limitation also.

18 I could go on. There are inadequate areas here for
19 parking, the walks and driveways have some, I want to say
20 areas that could be better.

21 The building, if you build a new school today or you
22 build to a lot of other schools that have been renovated
23 again, an elevator would be not a nice amendment but it
24 would be a requirement, and we are grandfathered to a
25 certain degree on some of the laws, but we can't get away

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1 from that in any major renovations.

2 The exterior brick in this building is in poor to
3 fair condition and again, referring to some of our building
4 I recall we actually had a situation at the building across
5 the street in the annex where the wall of the building
6 separated and fell on the playground. So I mean there are,
7 there have been some situations here where we have had to
8 do some patchup and repair type work.

9 The majority of the roof is in fair condition.
10 Again, I have been here long enough to know that the roof
11 has been fixed a number of times and it continues to need
12 fixed.

13 We mentioned earlier corridors are used for storage
14 for equipment. Our insurance company doesn't think that's
15 a great and idea I am sure it's not the best situation for
16 our students. Our interior finishes are in poor to fair
17 condition. With that being said we're in a room tonight
18 that I think again, our staff, our custodial staff I want
19 to thank tonight personally for getting things ready. They
20 do a wonderful job, and I think they keep things in great
21 shape. So when we say they're in fair to poor condition
22 that's not a reflection on those people, it's more a
23 reflection on the type of facility that we have to upgrade.

24 Electrical outlets, again, in today's world you can
25 think of your own home and your own life and how many items

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1 and devices you use that require electricity. Just
2 multiply that times the number of classrooms in the school.
3 The electric system we have here again, is safe, it is
4 safe, but it is outdated, it does require again constant
5 maintenance and again, if we look at some of the panels and
6 some of the breakers we have in this building they are hard
7 to replace because they're just that - outdated.

8 The fire alarm system again works but it is a
9 combination of some older and newer technologies. We do
10 not have smoke alarms in this building and some of the
11 other amenities that again, are not required, that are
12 required in the code but if we do a renovation we would
13 have to add those items to this building.

14 And our heating and ventilation and air conditioning
15 system is also outdated with the piping, the unit
16 ventilators in the classroom, I probably would recognize
17 some of those from my high school days and the pneumatic
18 controls again, these type control systems.

19 This building does have, like a number of our older
20 buildings, it does have asbestos. We do have an asbestos
21 maintenance plan, we do have a company that comes in and
22 inspects and makes sure that our asbestos abatement plan is
23 always up-to-date, but again, that being said, we have to
24 be careful. There are certain areas of the school we
25 cannot do renovations to because we would be disturbing

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1 materials that have asbestos in them.

2 Again, the panels are old, replacement parts, we have
3 emergency power, if we keep our fingers crossed the power
4 won't go out tonight but if we did our emergency power
5 plant would give us some basic lighting but not a whole lot
6 more than that.

7 And our building entrances lack security. Again, any
8 newer facility school security today as you know,
9 unfortunately, is in the budget, and we want to make sure
10 that our schools are safe and have updated security
11 systems.

12 The kitchen facilities over my shoulder are outdated
13 and they do not meet Department of Agriculture standards.
14 That doesn't mean you can't operate them but they don't
15 meet those standards. We are grandfathered in some areas
16 with the standards.

17 And our offices are small, and additional office
18 space needed for again, the number of staff we do have a
19 number of what are called para or teacher assistant, other
20 type assistance in the school, we have other adults and
21 specialists, and it just seems like you can never have
22 enough office space for the people.

23 Just in summary the feasibility plan said that
24 Roaring Spring Elementary will require costly
25 non-reimbursable repairs in the near future if steps are

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1 not taken. This was in 2004. And what that simply means
 2 is for us to get reimbursement from the Pennsylvania
 3 Department of Education instead of asking you, the local
 4 taxpayers for funding for the school, they're not going to
 5 continue to give money to fix and repair an old school.
 6 There are limitations and there are rules that you have to
 7 abide by. There are things like a 20% replacement rule.
 8 If you go to the Department of Education website they have
 9 additional information about some of those types of
 10 regulations. But it really does place severe restrictions
 11 on districts as they look at renovating older school
 12 facilities, the state just will not cough up additional
 13 support unless you have a really good plan for where you
 14 are going in the future and that includes newer facilities.

15 So in essence, we would be spending money on a
 16 school, and we would be spending a significant amount on
 17 the school for repairs and we still would not have the
 18 things I just talked about, the adequate space with the
 19 classroom, a number of the other items as far as the
 20 outlets and those types of things, we would have
 21 limitations, and it's again, would be some fixing up but
 22 just wouldn't be those what would be considered the
 23 standards today for education.

24 Now I want to kind of add while you are here tonight,
 25 obviously, I'm not going to stand up here and pretend like

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1 we're not also in the middle of a building project, as you
 2 are well aware, we have started a building project at the
 3 site near the administration offices and the middle school.
 4 In fact, there are pictures to my right against the wall
 5 that show you that project.

6 But one of the benefits that we are looking at when
 7 the board was going through the Act 34 hearings to consider
 8 the project is they had considered not just whether they
 9 needed to close the school or not but what might be the
 10 benefits of combining smaller schools into a larger school
 11 facility for efficiency which is one of the areas in 780
 12 that you need to look at.

13 And obviously, some of the things they were looking
 14 at items such as better insulation and again, you can all
 15 appreciate in today's world with \$4 plus a gallon heating
 16 oil, diesel fuel and natural gas we are going to look real
 17 hard at everything we can to save energy if our electric
 18 bills are going to go up we know that for the same reason.
 19 So having better controls, better insulation, better window
 20 systems, all these things are going to have some
 21 significant paybacks in the cost of the building.

22 We also know that if we do some of those things,
 23 creation of spaces, our children are going to have enhanced
 24 opportunities, and that's really what this is about.

25 And also that our staff can be better utilized, and

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1 we can be more efficient in how we staff. I'd like to show
 2 you a little example here of what I am talking about. One
 3 of the things that we do to calculate cost, we have a
 4 breakdown for all the schools and it takes a little bit of
 5 a pointing out of our budget. We can estimate what our
 6 total budget is for elementary education. We can also
 7 estimate what our budget is for each building. So in
 8 essence, we can take a look at what it would cost to
 9 operate those buildings, break out heating costs, the
 10 staffing costs. Now just say this to you, we know without
 11 getting into a detailed analysis that our number 1 cost
 12 item in this school district is human resources. We hire
 13 and recruit we think very fine staff, we try to maintain
 14 that staff and that's our biggest expense, it really is.
 15 And so, you know, to take that example, if I took the total
 16 expenses for a building, and that's our denominator in this
 17 math equation and put it over the numerator, what the
 18 salaries and benefits are, you are going to see a
 19 percentage that pretty much plays out, not just in Spring
 20 Cove School District but just about any school district you
 21 would want to visit in our area.

22 And in this district, if you do that math about 70%
 23 of our costs at all our elementary schools is related to
 24 salaries and benefits for staff, for Martinsburg Elementary
 25 70%, East Freedom about 72, and Roaring Spring about 69%.

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1 Now these are estimates, but they give you a ballpark and
 2 also give you again, a better idea of what we're dealing
 3 with when we talk about using our staff more effectively
 4 and perhaps evening out class sizes at the same time.

5 Again, just as an example a step further and this is
 6 again, just for illustration only, so please, there aren't
 7 any decisions being made on class sizes or anything
 8 tonight, I wanted to show you very simply, I took Roaring
 9 Spring Elementary's classes right now, these are our
 10 current enrollments at Roaring Spring Elementary,
 11 kindergarten classrooms, grades 1 to 5, and those are the
 12 numbers in the classrooms, that's how many students we
 13 have. If you take it and do a comparison with East
 14 Freedom, and I am just doing that tonight because we're
 15 doing 2 hearings, 1 here and 1 at East Freedom, this shows
 16 you what their class sizes look like. If you toggle back
 17 and forth you can get an idea of how they vary. If I had
 18 Martinsburg Elementary School up here I would see a similar
 19 pattern.

20 And I guess what I am getting at is that when you
 21 have smaller schools it's historically true in the school
 22 district, you have inequities at different times and
 23 different grade levels. And as a parent, a principal in
 24 this district for almost 15 years and now I'm the
 25 superintendent, I can tell you we often hear about class

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1 sizes being different in one building versus another. So
 2 one of the impacts that you can start to affect when you
 3 look at putting both those, if we would open a new school
 4 today, right now, this is what it would look like. This
 5 would be based on those 2 current enrollments and taking
 6 nothing but just moving those classes into a new building
 7 and new classrooms, that's what it would look like.
 8 Now you can start to see the impact, I will go back
 9 again, of how the class sizes start to even out, become
 10 more equitable, a little more standard from 1 level to
 11 another. I am going to take the example 1 step further and
 12 I told Mrs. Baker I didn't want to give her a heart attack
 13 here tonight but I just wanted to show her, if you take it
 14 1 step further and say hey look at that, grade 4 and grade
 15 5, that's pretty interesting, those class sizes are pretty
 16 small being compared to some of the 22 and 21s for grade 1
 17 and 2 so we kind of like to keep our classes at a smaller
 18 size for younger children. If you take it 1 step further
 19 and by combining those 4 and 5 you can take it down to the
 20 class size that is still relatively manageable, relatively
 21 I'm going to say effective and particularly in a new
 22 setting with the new school we're talking about and you
 23 could have a net reduction of 2 staff members.
 24 Now this varies from year to year, I am using this as
 25 just an example. I'm using it as an example to kind of

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1 layout of the school that you see again illustrated here in
 2 the room and this is a basic layout and number of rooms and
 3 kind of spaces that are being proposed for that building
 4 that are actually part of now the plan.
 5 I also want to kind of touch on another issue tonight
 6 segueing into transportation, that's one of the things
 7 people always ask us about and again, the hearing tonight
 8 is to gather information, it's not to make any decisions,
 9 but I know the question will come up in the future about
 10 transportation. We have already been talking to our
 11 transportation contractors. We know that the current
 12 routes we have right now might need a little bit of
 13 modification but in all likelihood they would be small
 14 hardly significant changes to the routes. Route times may
 15 have to be adjusted a little bit, probably not a lot. And
 16 I am using 5 minutes as a rule of thumb here. 5 minutes
 17 probably is about the most time that would be added to the
 18 time for children to get from this site instead up to the
 19 new site near the middle school, depending on traffic
 20 conditions on any given day. Jim and Mary are sitting
 21 here, I am sure there are days when it's a little more
 22 congested but in general, we know that it's really not that
 23 big, it's not that much of a mileage change.
 24 In fact, it's such a small mileage change that we
 25 know it's only going to be little or no additional cost.

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1 show you, this is the kind of things we would look at when
 2 I say using our staff more effectively and more
 3 efficiently. Why would you look at that when 70% or more
 4 of our cost comes from salaries and benefits? It's
 5 something all districts do, it's something I know this
 6 board when we go through our budgeting process will be
 7 looking at very carefully before we add staff and when we
 8 consider a reduction of staff. This is why we look at the
 9 type of choices. They are choices that we have to make
 10 sometimes. So I am just using that for an example so
 11 please don't say tomorrow morning, we're not cutting 2
 12 positions, okay, we got that straight.
 13 While we're here I just wanted to again, a quick
 14 review of the new school project is up and running and that
 15 project we feel accomplishes many objectives but in
 16 particular, going back to 780 purposes and the feasibility
 17 study we truly believe we can show, demonstrate hard
 18 numbers that we would achieve yearly operational savings,
 19 not just in the cost of say lets say gas bills, electric
 20 bills but you can see we might achieve some savings in a
 21 better use of our staff, also. And also we definitely know
 22 that we would be providing enhanced and more equitable
 23 learning opportunities for our students.
 24 If you didn't have the opportunity to attend the Act
 25 34 hearings that were held December of 2005 this is a

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1 We've estimated a few thousand dollars at most is probably
 2 going to be the total bottom line on our transportation,
 3 and that would include also East Freedom. When we have the
 4 hearing there we'll be reviewing the same information.
 5 So in essence, the construction project that was
 6 approved already when they did the Act 34 hearing the cost
 7 of that project on that evening was stated to be
 8 approximately \$14,510,387 and that was actually in
 9 documents that we had to submit to the Pennsylvania
 10 Department of Education on what's called Plan Con process.
 11 When we did our bids earlier this school year November of
 12 '07 the bids that were awarded for construction are
 13 actually \$14,811,856.
 14 There were some other costs that are calculated in
 15 addition to that but the bottom line is we didn't have to
 16 do a new Act 34 hearing, and that rumor I know has been
 17 going around that we might have a new Act 34 hearing but it
 18 isn't true, and the main reason it isn't true is because of
 19 this, because the only criteria the Department of Education
 20 uses is did your cost that you estimated when you submitted
 21 Plan Con, did those costs stay within an 8% range. That is
 22 did you have, you are allowed to go at least up to 8% over
 23 that additional cost figure. We did not. In fact, I feel
 24 we were very fortunate to have a school project that was
 25 really put on hold for almost 2 and a half years to go to

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1 bid and bring it in at the cost that we did, so we were
2 really fortunate. We had some very good bidders, we had
3 some good time as far as construction market and also
4 materials.

5 That is the document that I am referring to that was
6 actually submitted to the Department of Education.

7 I don't want you leaving tonight saying well, he told
8 me the school was only going to cost 15 million dollars.
9 That's not 100% true. What really there are additional
10 costs involved in the project. The 15 million or roughly
11 14.8 million, those were just for the plumbing, the general
12 construction, some of the site plan, the technology pieces
13 to the wiring, the electrical, a few of those items, but
14 there are many other costs that are associated with the
15 school, water tap-in, sewer tap-in permit fees, design
16 fees, you have to build in contingency costs, so there are
17 a number of other costs that had to be incorporated in the
18 overall project, and that's why the district financed or
19 borrowed the amount of money that it did which I'll show
20 you in just a second.

21 But right now our total project costs we're
22 estimating we're up to about 18.2 million, \$18,268,859.
23 And again, that is part of what we estimated in overall
24 finance costs of up to 21 million dollars and let the board
25 approve when they did their financing approval back in '05.

26

1 I want to show very quickly since you are here
2 tonight interested in this project and in the school
3 district, these are the kind of numbers that have already
4 been put in place for financing in the school district.
5 For example, in 2006 and 7 during that school year in that
6 budget year there were 10 million that were actually issued
7 of bonds as part of the project. Our millage for the
8 entire school district that year did go up 12 mills, but 8
9 mills of that 12 was dedicated specifically for the
10 financing of this project. So as we go forward that 8
11 mills is going to be paid towards the bonds for this
12 building, the new school. Likewise, in '07 and '08 we had
13 an additional issuance of 7 and a half million dollars for
14 bonds. Our millage that year because of other budgetary
15 items was 14.53 mills. 6 and a half of that 14.53 was
16 specifically for the bond issue.

17 Now if you drop down to the bottom of that chart,
18 you'll see first off it says this year, we're working on a
19 budget right now. We know already that we will not be
20 issuing bonds or borrowing additional money this year as
21 part of the project even though we are authorized to do 21
22 million. So in this year's budget we will not have any
23 bonds issued, therefore, there will be no millage increase
24 this year for the project. I have a question mark there
25 because I don't know if the millage will be increased or

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1 not, because of other budgetary needs or forces, but I know
2 for a fact we won't be doing millage this year for the
3 project. That leaves 3 about and a half million dollars to
4 complete this, that 21 million dollar project cycle, and we
5 project to do that on the advice of our bond counsel in the
6 '09 '10 school year and again, I can't tell you yet what
7 that budget is going to be, that's 2 years out, but we do
8 know that whatever our school budget is that year
9 approximately 2.3 mills is all that will be required for
10 the bond issue. So it gives you again, that idea that this
11 project, 21 million dollars in financing and the total
12 millage for the school would borrow 21 million dollars is
13 16.8 mills. And that's the way it is and that's the way
14 that the whole project has been financed.

15 Mr. Clark wouldn't be a good business manager if he
16 didn't ask me to remind everybody that we have other bonds
17 that we are already paying for on other projects and again,
18 the way we were able to do what's called a wrap around or
19 reconstruct our financing we know that the 1999 bond will
20 have to be paid off in the year 2009, we also know that the
21 2003 that we have will be paid off in 2011. That money is
22 already in our budget and so that money has already been
23 calculated to rolled into or wrapped into the bond payments
24 for the 21 million dollar project. That's how we do the 21
25 million dollars for 16.8 mills. And our annual debt

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1 service is approximately \$1,409,717. Those are bonds that
2 I'm talking about that will be rolled into this other
3 project.

4 Moving along here very quickly, but I just want to
5 say again, that's the basic information we wanted to share
6 tonight and again, to give you some feedback and some
7 information on the needs for this school as far as why the
8 feasibility study was done, what their findings were, and
9 that is just a part of the information or part of the
10 picture that the school board will have to consider as they
11 look at the question of whether or not to close the school.
12 As Solicitor Beard mentioned to you, we not only have a
13 time period tonight to provide testimony but I want to
14 remind you again we'd be happy to take written testimony
15 from you for the next 30 days to be included with the
16 official record and we certainly want information and
17 testimony from people throughout the time period. The
18 earliest by the school code that the school board is able
19 to consider the question of the closing of the school, they
20 have to wait at least 90 days, 30 days for the other
21 submission and then 60 more. But I can tell you that
22 probably the question will not be considered until July of
23 2008 is the earliest that the school board will probably
24 consider that question. If you do submit information to
25 our offices please again, include your name, your residence

1 area of the district and also label it as testimony for the
 2 780 hearing for the Roaring Spring Elementary School.
 3 So again thank you for your attention and information
 4 and we'll go back to the portion of the program tonight now
 5 for public testimony.
 6 MR. BEARD: If they have questions.
 7 MR. GREEN: Yes, questions also.
 8 MR. BEARD: Anyone have any questions for Mr. Green
 9 or the board with regard to the information that was
 10 presented? Anybody at all? Because we have a record,
 11 going once, twice, all right, sold.
 12 At this point in time we're into part 2, anybody that
 13 would like to address the board, provide testimony of any
 14 kind this is like when we have a school board meeting we
 15 have the public comment period, you can get up and address
 16 anything you'd like in regard to Roaring Spring Elementary.
 17 Anybody want to provide any testimony at all? Is anybody
 18 signed up back there? We'll let Mrs. Baker, the
 19 principal, check.
 20 (Off the record.)
 21 MR. BEARD: Sure, go ahead, just state your name.
 22 MS. MOCK: My name is Lou Ann Mock, M-o-c-k, and I
 23 live at 224 Poplar Street across the road. I wondered if
 24 you had any idea if the school does close how this building
 25 or this space would be zoned, would it be residential,

1 commercial?
 2 MR. BEARD: Either one of us can take a stab at it.
 3 MR. GREEN: Go ahead.
 4 MR. BEARD: It's like right now, you know, buildings,
 5 school buildings sometimes fit in, you know, even though
 6 the zoning may not be necessarily made for schools, when
 7 schools, and I'll give you an example, when schools want to
 8 go somewhere maybe like through eminent domain proceedings
 9 they will turn around and they will want to put that
 10 building, people want to challenge them stating not in my
 11 back yard, this isn't going to happen.
 12 To answer your question right now, I don't know how
 13 this area, you know, is zoned and what actually would
 14 happen with the building. Where we go from here is food
 15 for thought, you know, from the board. And one of the
 16 things that Mr. Green had indicated was if anybody had any
 17 suggestions, you know, recommendations oftentimes when
 18 information gets out if there's a contemplated closing of a
 19 school or a substantial portion thereof it invokes interest
 20 on the part of people to come forward and say we might have
 21 an interest in this, we might want to buy this building.
 22 Municipalities, nonprofit organizations will come forward
 23 and say, we might want to consider use of the building.
 24 Those are all the options.
 25 You know, it's a little premature but eventually if

1 somebody comes forward those are considerations for the
 2 board and naturally, if there would ever be that the
 3 building would be donated or part would be torn down, those
 4 would all be things that they would have to look at. If
 5 the building were ever to be sold or portions thereof, you
 6 can't dispose of school district property without 2
 7 appraisals to insure that we receive fair market value.
 8 And that is very complex, and as this unfolds at some point
 9 down the line we would, if we felt or at least I had
 10 indicated to the board as well that there is an agreement
 11 at some point the questions that are raised and other
 12 information that could come from other people through the
 13 30 days of testimony that comes after this hearing it may
 14 raise questions that the board would ask the administration
 15 to take a look at and naturally address those comments or
 16 questions through another power point at some point or get
 17 information to the board. And that's a very good question.
 18 I would say for the most part I'm not going to
 19 venture to go do that route, papers, but right down the
 20 road this could possibly be and I don't speculate because
 21 just when I think something is residential you'll find it's
 22 a cookie cutter, so without actually looking to the zoning
 23 requirements I can't answer that, but that's certainly
 24 something we'll look into for you.
 25 MS. MOCK: Thank you.

1 MR. BEARD: Anything else?
 2 MR. GREEN: Additional comment just is added, we have
 3 talked to the Borough of Roaring Spring tentatively to let
 4 them know that as we move forward with our process we will
 5 keep them informed and that they can anticipate that they
 6 might get inquiries from citizens of Roaring Spring
 7 Borough, especially, along the lines of what you just
 8 asked.
 9 And again, I am not going to state, and I know Mr.
 10 Biddle is a former council member, Roaring Spring has very,
 11 very, few areas that are designated specifically just for
 12 residential. That's something I think you'd have to talk
 13 more to the borough and the zoning people about. That
 14 being said, the district does have some latitude and as
 15 Attorney Beard said, for us to do some things with the
 16 borough and we have told them that, we want to stay in
 17 dialog with them, work with them. So it's in everyone's
 18 best interest.
 19 They may have someone come forward once the decision
 20 is made and often people don't come forward until the
 21 district takes the next legal step of whether to close the
 22 school or not, then all of a sudden people go, well now I
 23 know for sure what your plans are, I might have an idea.
 24 And so once that process starts we've said to the borough,
 25 we get very much, we'll be in touch with them and also you

1 know, that we would hope they would cooperate with the
2 district also if someone does come forward with plans that
3 we can work together on that.

4 But I think the citizens who live in the borough,
5 it's never too soon to talk to the borough about it and
6 what are the what ifs, what could happen.

7 MR. BEARD: Please keep in mind the contemplated use
8 of the building is considered by an outside party and
9 ultimately they have to go back to the local municipality,
10 which would be Roaring Spring. Because quite honestly,
11 that's why they have zoning boards and people can request
12 variances and before anybody can do anything they have to
13 post notice that they want to change and they have to
14 petition, and there's a lot of hoops. People just can't
15 like say I am going to come in here and like put another
16 paper mill right here in this building, I mean, there are
17 processes that they would have to go through with the
18 borough. So there are those municipal protections that are
19 in place.

20 Anybody else? Going once. Nobody? Okay, going
21 twice, 3 times? Okay, well at this juncture if there's no
22 other takers this basically concludes this section 780
23 hearing. I'm not going to belabor this, but if any board
24 members have any comments that they want to make they're
25 not obligated to, I just turn it over, but we're rapidly

1 approaching the conclusion of this hearing at this point in
2 time. Statements or comments from the board members?
3 Okay. Mrs. Baker, anything?

4 MRS. BAKER: I am good.

5 MR. BEARD: All right, well at this point in time I'm
6 not the board president, we'll let him call the hearing
7 closed, and on behalf of the board, the administration we
8 would like to thank all of you for attending. It was no
9 real obligation to sign up but we have approximately, just
10 let me verify, excluding the principal we have 1, 2, 3, 4,
11 is there anybody behind you ma'am, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10,
12 individuals. Any of you school employees in the back? All
13 3, all right. So basically we have approximately 14 people
14 and 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, are school district employees. So at
15 that point in time thank you for coming, we'll turn it back
16 over to Mr. Butler.

17 MR. BUTLER: So we'll adjourn this meeting, the act
18 780 hearing for the closing of the Roaring Spring
19 Elementary School.

20 MR. BEARD: And it's approximately 7:52.
21 (Hearing concludes at 7:52 p.m.)
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1 COUNTY OF BLAIR :

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2 COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA :

3 I, Jo Nell Snider, Reporter-Notary Public, authorized to
4 administer oaths within and for the Commonwealth of
5 Pennsylvania and take depositions in the trial of causes,
6 do hereby certify that the foregoing is the

7 Section 780 Hearing re: Roaring Spring Elementary

8 I further certify that the questions and answers were
9 taken down stenographically by the said Jo Nell Snider, a
10 Reporter-Notary Public, approved and agreed to, and
11 afterwards reduced to typewriting under the direction of
12 the said Reporter.

13 I further certify that the proceedings and evidence are
14 contained fully and accurately in the notes taken by me on
15 the within matter, and that this is a correct transcript of
16 the same.

17 WITNESS my hand and seal in the Township of Freedom,
18 County of Blair, State of Pennsylvania, this 2nd day of
19 May, 2008.

20
21

Jo Nell Snider, RPR
Notary Public

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24
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