

LAKE-LEHMAN SCHOOL BOARD Budget dominates school board races

By KALEN CHURCHER
For The Post

With eight candidates and three incumbents battling for five open Lake-Lehman School Board seats, the only certainty for the School District is change.

Newcomer Mark Kornoski, 52, said those changes should occur in teachers contracts and health-care costs, including requiring a co-pay.

"You have to at least look into it," said Kornoski, of Harveys Lake.

Kornoski, a Democrat, faces cross-filed incumbent Lois Kopcha of Noxen and Republican taxpayer advocate Jeff Pauley for one of two seats available in Region 1.

Unfinished science and industrial arts labs, a faulty roof and other smaller construction projects have all but forced the School Board to take out a loan, Kornoski said. However, once those projects are complete, spending must be curbed, he said.

Pauley, 46, agrees a loan appears to be an unfortunate necessity to put students back in classrooms. He criticized the School District's business manager for not making budget reports easily accessible to the School Board.

"They're not getting the information they need," the Noxen resident said. "I was personally shocked that they kept (business manager Kathleen) Williams on when her contract came up."

In Region 2, Democrat incumbent Chuck Boytin faces Republican James Welby and Harold Cornell Jr., with Cornell securing Democratic and Republican bids by cross-filing in the primary. Two seats are open.

Welby, 55, said he questions budget reports given by Williams.

"Two and two is four no matter which way you add it up," Welby said. "I'm not question-

ing the business manager per se ... but something has run amok."

The Lehman Township resident said the School District must not lose sight of its first purpose — educating students. To do that, teachers must be given proper materials and facilities. Welby suggests opening communication between teachers, principals and the School Board.

Boytin, 49, said it is nearly impossible to accurately discuss the budget because the state has not announced its contributions. However, Lake-Lehman is in better shape than some other districts, he said.

"We are still paying our bills. We may not have all the answers to where we are at, but we are still fortunate enough to be able to pay our bills on time," said Boytin, of Sweet Valley.

One of the biggest challenges Boytin anticipates for the next few years is maintaining quality education without laying the total burden on the taxpayers.

Democrat Robert Peron battles Republican incumbent Joseph Kapitula for the sole available seat in Region 3. Both men are from Jackson Township.

Peron admits he is unsure how dire the School District's financial status is. Whatever the situation, junior-senior high school construction projects must be complete.

"You've got to look at what needs to be done, and there may be some things that need to be put on hold," said Peron, of Jackson Township. "Unfortunately, you may end up having to raise taxes."

Peron, 42, said it is easy to place blame on past administrations for financial problems and incomplete projects, but the board must focus on the future.

Kopcha, Cornell, and Kapitula could not be reached for comment.



POST PHOTO/RON BARTIZEK

Small trees remain on the hillside off Sago Street in Dallas Township that was clearcut this summer. The property owner has taken remediation steps to stop runoff, but has not filed an Erosion and Sediment Plan with the Luzerne County Conservation District.

Erosion plan still not filed

By ERIN YOUNGMAN
Post Staff

DALLAS TWP. — The developer who was found in violation of the Pennsylvania Clean Streams Law for improper clear cutting on Sago Street has not yet submitted a plan that was first requested in August.

Dave Moss of the Luzerne County Conservation District said October 21 that the Erosion and Sediment Control Plan requested by his office to

be received by September 1, has not been filed.

The September 1 date was an extension given by the county office after the plan was not received by an August 21 due date. The August date was assigned after Dombroski had been found in violation of the PA Clean Streams Law for failing to protect a nearby Toby's Creek tributary when trees were removed from his property.

The Erosion and Sediment

Control Plan should have been submitted prior to cutting.

Dombroski had the area clear cut in August to prepare it for home building.

Moss said other required repairs to the property to prevent erosion and runoff problems have been made.

Further work at the site is not permitted until a Sediment Control and Erosion Plan has been submitted and approved by the Luzerne County Conservation District.

Supervisors quiz developer on roads

By RONALD BARTIZEK
Post Staff

DALLAS TWP. — At the October 21 meeting, Township Supervisors asked the developer of the proposed Goodleigh Manor subdivision off Lake Catalpa Road to make changes to streets so that plowed snow doesn't block driveways.

"Where do you put the snow on a cul-de-sac?" asked Supervisor Frank Wagner, who spent many years as roadmaster. He and Supervisor Phil Walter said driveways that enter cul-de-sacs tend to get blocked by snow, resulting in complaints to the township. There are four such streets in the development, each with four to six driveways off them.

Developer Jim Comes of Landview Properties asked if a "hammerhead" layout, in which a square or rectangular area replaces a circle at the end of a

street, would be preferable. The Supervisors said it would be, as long as there was adequate space to turn around a plow truck. Comes said he would consult with the township engineer and "work something out."

Comes has yet to make a formal application to develop the land, but has asked the Supervisors and Planning Commission for direction before submitting a plan.

If built, Goodleigh Manor will contain 74 lots on 250 acres, with access on both ends off Lake Catalpa Road. Comes said homes would have a minimum of 2,400 square feet of living space, with individual wells and septic systems.

The Supervisors also discussed raising the fine for illegal parking from its present \$5. Police Chief Robert Jolley said one offender had told him it was cheaper to pay a few days'

finer than to hire a tow truck to pull his car out of a snow bank.

Wagner suggested a fine of \$15 for the first offense and \$25 thereafter. The township solicitor will be asked to draft a resolution to that effect.

Parking is banned on all township streets between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. until the end of April.

In other business, the supervisors:

- Approved a motion to reduce the letter of credit required from the developer of the Overbrook Farms subdivision off Overbrook Road from \$512,205 to \$305,426. Howell said the township engineer had inspected the project and found that enough work had been properly completed to justify the reduction.
- Changed the date of the next meeting to Monday, Nov. 3, due to the election Nov. 4.

Deadlock preserves business manager's contract

Staff report

LEHMAN TWP. — The School Board deadlocked October 21 on a motion to not renew the employment contract for Lake-Lehman School District Business Manager Kathleen Williams.

Board member Angelo DeCesaris made a motion not to renew Williams' contract when it expires next year. Joseph Kapitula's absence from the meeting created the tie, though the motion could appear on a future agenda.

"How in your right mind can you vote not to terminate this?" asked DeCesaris, one of several School Board members who have questioned Williams' work. "We have to look out for the best interest of the School District."

According to the contract, the agreement is "automatically renewed" unless, at least 150 days prior to its expiration, the board informs Williams otherwise.

Solicitor Charles Coslett stressed the motion was not a "termination resolution" for Williams. Instead, it required her contract be renegotiated before it expires next year.

Besides a salary of more than \$72,000, contract perks include: complete reimbursement for tuition costs, up to 12 credits per year; 20 vacation days per year; and an early retirement incentive.

Represented by attorney David Tomaszewski, Williams said little at the meeting. Tomaszewski, however, questioned why the School Board could not wait until new members come aboard to vote. Five School Board seats are open in the Nov. 4 election. He also argued Williams' contract does not expire until 2006, rather than 2004.

DeCesaris, James Mahon, Sheila Gionfriddo and Lois Kopcha voted not to extend the contract. Moderno Rossi, Charles Balavage, Michelle Coombs and Charles Boytin voted to keep the status quo.

In other business:

- Board members will continue Tuesday's meeting at 6 p.m. Oct. 30 in the music room of the Lehman-Jackson Elementary School. Refurbishment of science and industrial arts rooms will be discussed.

Haunted Forest is extended

Due to the popularity of the Penn State Wilkes-Barre Student Government Association's Haunted Forest, two extra dates have been added to the original schedule. The forest will be open from 7-10:45 p.m. on Wednesday and Thursday, Oct. 29 and 30. A \$5 per person entrance fee includes approximately 40 minutes of scary fun in the haunted forest, the haunted mansion, and on a haunted hayride. All proceeds benefit the Four Diamonds Fund for children with cancer at the Hershey Medical Center.

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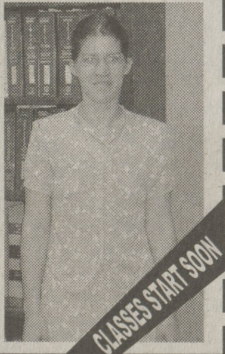
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