

**Columbia Borough Council/Columbia Borough School Board Special Meeting
December 06, 2016
Columbia Borough School District Administrative Building**

This joint meeting of the Columbia Borough Council and Columbia Borough School Board was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

School Board Members present: Anspach, Garrido, Hohenadel, Knighton, Schwert and Combs.

Councilpersons present: Berntheizel, Murphy, Novak, Welsh, FitzGerald and Williams. Mayor Lutz was also present.

School Board Members absent: Ford, Leader and Lutz.

Administrators present: Ramsey, Strickler (Board); Helm, Sahd (Borough)

There was the pledge to the flag.

School Board President Combs asked if any citizens present wanted to speak about any of the agenda items for tonight's meeting.

Frank Doutrich stated he asked for information regarding the Land Bank but the information was not ready at the time of his request. He asked about the agreement for the Park Rangers. Council President Murphy talked about the intent of the agreement. Frank asked if there was a resignation of a Council member. Council President Murphy stated yes.

Mary Wickenheiser spoke about the Land Bank and asked that both Council and School Board approve the ordinance and agreement.

Council President Murphy stated that Matthew Sternberg, Lancaster County Redevelopment Authority, was present and asked that a presentation be made regarding the Land Bank.

Matthew Sternberg stated the idea of the Land Bank would be to takeover a property and deal with issues such as clearing the title and the liens. He explained a commercial property would be eligible for State funding to remediate the site. Matthew talked about the Land Bank as moving the property forward instead of being blighted for years. The property, once sold, would go back onto the tax rolls with 50% of property taxes going to the Land Bank and 50% going to the Borough/School District. This would take place for 5 years and was a way for the Land Bank to be funded. He explained 2 items of the program: 1. The properties would be referred to the Land Bank by the Borough of Columbia and 2. There would be an established project review committee consisting of members from the County, Borough Council members and School Board members, which would approve the properties for the Land Bank. Mayor Lutz asked if the committee would track the progress of the developer. Matthew stated there would be an agreement between the Land Bank and the developer with the committee monitoring the performance of the developer and the progress of the work. Mayor Lutz asked about payment of taxes and if this process was quicker than the blighting process. Matthew explained there would be no deferment of taxes for the developer/property owner and the Land Bank would be a quicker process but some properties could take more time. Councilman Berntheizel asked about the conversion of single family homes to multi-units. Matthew stated, in

some instances, a multi-unit dwelling would remain. Barry Handwerger, Borough Solicitor, also stated that all Borough ordinances such as Zoning and SALDO would be required to be followed. There was discussion about assessed value of properties and how some values have decreased, along with properties sold below assessed value and how the Land Bank may very well maintain the assessed value of a property after renovation. School Board member Hohenadel asked about the time frame. Justin Eby, Lancaster County Redevelopment Authority, stated the process could take between 2 to 4 months. There was a discussion about LERTA with regards to the Land Bank program. Barry Handwerger stated he would have to research whether LERTA could be utilized. School Board member Garrido asked if the rehabilitation of the property would be done by the Land Bank. Matthew stated no, there would be a pool of local developers that would be contacted regarding the rehabilitation of the property. School Board member Anspach asked about the initial cost to the Borough and School Board. Matthew stated the initial fee was \$5,000.00 and then \$1,000.00 per year administrative fee. Councilman Novak asked if any other municipalities were on board with this program. Matthew stated there are some that are close. Frank Doutrich asked about the Land Bank. Matthew explained the Land Bank was an independent public authority established by ordinance through the Lancaster County Redevelopment Authority. Frank expressed his concerns about the property owner. Matthew assured Frank this was not an eminent domain process. Frank asked about the Land Bank rules and regulations. Matthew stated that information was available on the web site. School Board member Garrido asked if the Land Bank committee could disapprove a developer. Matthew stated yes because the developer would be selected by the Land Bank. Councilman Novak asked if the developer could be a private citizen. Matthew stated yes. School Board member Schwert asked about demolition of the property. There was discussion about demolition if the building could not be salvaged with the property either being rebuilt or the land being sold to adjacent property owners. Justin Eby talked about properties sold through judicial tax sale, foreclosure and property donations.

Motion: To advertise Ordinance 873-2016, authorizing the Borough of Columbia to enter into an intergovernmental cooperation agreement between the Lancaster County Land Bank Authority, Borough of Columbia and the Columbia Borough School District setting forth the condition of cooperation, duration of the agreement, the purposes and objectives of the agreement, the manner and extent of financing, the organizational structure necessary to implement the agreement, the manner in which properties shall be acquired, managed and disposed of; providing for the severability of the ordinance; and providing that the ordinance shall take effect in accordance with Pennsylvania law.

Motion: C. Berntheizel

Second: J. Novak

All favored this motion.

Motion: To approve the Columbia Borough School District to enter into an intergovernmental cooperation agreement between the Lancaster County Land Bank Authority and Borough of Columbia and the Columbia Borough School District.

Motion: K. Hohenadel

Second: J. Schwert

Roll call vote with the following

Board members voting yes: Anspach, Garrido, Hohenadel, Knighton, Schwert and Combs. Motion carried.

Greg Sahd, Borough Manager, handed out information and a cost estimate regarding the hiring of Park Rangers to monitor the school routes and the parks. School Board President Combs asked what authority these Park Rangers would have and if they would be working with Columbia Borough Police. Mayor Lutz expressed his concerns about contact with juveniles and a non-police individual

getting caught up in an incident and possibly putting the Borough and/or School District in legal jeopardy. There was discussion on additional camera installation and Officer Engle, School Resource Officer, working on programs with the students. Councilman Berntheizel asked how the Park Rangers would monitor 3 schools. Greg explained they would have assigned routes. School Board President Combs stated the resource officer was doing an excellent job with the students, along with programs being implemented by School officials. Councilman Berntheizel discussed alternatives to monitor the Borough parks and perhaps further discussion would need to be done regarding the hours of monitoring and training the rangers would need to mitigate any legal issues. School District member Garrido also spoke about the good job Officer Engle was doing with the students and suggested that students would respect a police presence rather than a Park Ranger. There was discussion about the programs instituted by the school to combat bullying, which starts on social media and spills over into the classroom and after school. There was also discussion about retired police officers performing these duties. Greg concluded by saying the information was distributed to generate discussion.

Councilman Berntheizel opened discussion about possible school merger in order to reduce property taxes. He asked if there was any discussion about this issue. School Board President Combs stated there was no discussion at this time but did mention the agreement with ELANCO School District for superintendent services. Councilman Berntheizel asked that the conversation at least be started to reduce property taxes that older homeowners cannot pay. He added these homeowners are leaving their homes and selling to people who then turn the properties into a rental. Mayor Lutz commented on the issue and suggested joint Council/School Board members meet with State legislatures. Mayor Lutz suggested ways to save money. He also talked about a restructuring on the County level that allows the school to maintain their identity. School Board member Garrido suggested they get together with other school districts with identical issues and address those issues with the State.

There were no additional agenda items. Council President Murphy and School Board President Combs thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

School Board President Combs adjourned this Joint Borough Council/School Board meeting at 8:55 p.m.

MOTIONED AND APPROVED this 12th day of December 2016, by the Borough Council of the Borough of Columbia, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, in lawful session duly assembled.

BOROUGH OF COLUMBIA, LANCASTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA.

By: _____
Kelly Murphy, Council President

ATTEST:

Gregory Sahd, Secretary/Treasurer