

Poll: Three Democratic challengers would easily beat Republican Gov. Tom Corbett in 2014 contest

LEHIGH VALLEY MORNING CALL: Republican Gov. Tom Corbett would get trounced by any one of three Democrats if the gubernatorial election were held today, in part because he would lose the independent and female vote by large margins, according to the latest Quinnipiac University poll...

The poll shows [Joe] Sestak, who is undeclared, would top Corbett 48 percent to 34 percent. Sestak's tally includes 45 percent of independent voters versus Corbett's 29 percent of the same demographic... (more)

LCSWMA board minutes shed light on long road to buying the Harrisburg incinerator

In the case of this article, we learn many revelations:

- LCSWMA really got into the Harrisburg incinerator deal accidentally, and had first hoped to increase the Lancaster authority's own capacity.
- **The original purchase price of the Harrisburg incinerator was only \$45 million which has now swollen to as much as \$150 million.**
- LCSWMA proposes to pay off Covanta's \$25 million loan.

LANCASTER SUNDAY NEWS

Lead article "**Do hospitals pay fair share?**" reports:

" 'A question is sometimes raised as to why not-for-profit institutions such as Lancaster General Health ... are exempt from paying property taxes,' wrote LGH President and

- **The higher purchase price was set by Dauphin County commissioners, not the city of Harrisburg or the Harrisburg Authority. Dauphin County strangely is also a creditor: how did the county come to set the price?**

- There were four engineering studies, three of which LCSWMA says it won't release because of a non-disclosure agreement with the Harrisburg Authority.

- LCSWMA's CEO thought he could convince Moody's not to rate this bond transaction. He was wrong... (more)

CEO Thomas E. Beeman. But LGH does pay property taxes, he wrote; by the end of fiscal year 2013, on June 30, LGH will have paid more than \$6 million in taxes and payments in lieu of taxes to local municipalities and school districts.' " ...

“In 2012 the Pennsylvania Supreme Court issued a landmark decision asserting that to prove it is a tax-exempt charity, an organization had to meet five specific criteria — it must ‘operate entirely free from profit motive’ and donate ‘a substantial portion of its services,’ among other requirements.”

WATCHDOG: *Six comments:*

Thank you *Sunday News* for at least discussing the matters of importance, albeit always in a way that minimizes offense to the establishment. For this a wag of the tail.

Readers should always continue to the end of such articles and also ‘read between the lines.’

The assessment bureau likely does not pay much heed to updating assessments on tax exempt properties, so it well may be that the tax Lancaster General Health would have to pay without an exemption would be much greater than their current contributions.

Lancaster General Health clearly has not donated “a substantial portion of its services” nor does it provide adequate support to other charities that share its mission, as also required. Concerning services, the trick they play is to set artificially high ‘retail rates’ on its services and then treat discounts to insurance plans and the Amish as contributions.

That’s like the car dealer taking a charitable deduction from between the ‘sticker price’ and what the customer actually pays.

The Lancaster General Health governance lacks transparency, is self-perpetuating, and the all establishment Caucasian board does not reflect community diversity. It is also gradually creating a monopolistic strangle hold on all medical services in the county.

The public ends up paying for Lancaster General Health’s self-serving actions through higher medical bills and health insurance rates.

LETTER: Let’s lease capacity, not purchase, Harrisburg incinerator

“Kudo’s to Newslanc for digging into this.

“What? Confidentiality and non-disclosure agreements between public (taxpayer funded) institutions? Prices set by Dolphin County Commissioners? Dolphin County sets the price and LCSWMA pays it? Borrowing 150 Million dollars to buy a troubled incinerator makes no sense. “If more capacity is needed let’s lease capacity from the Harrisburg incinerator. No need to buy it.”

EDITOR: You forgot to mention the \$25 million the LCSWMA is borrowing to giveaway to Covanta.

The above items have been excerpted from www.NewsLanc.com. Visit the website daily for news, commentary, letters, and other features. Suggestions and letters can be sent anonymously through the home page.