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Why LGH? Ephrata already has plans to handle population growth.

According to Ephrata Community Hospital (ECH) spokeswoman Joanne Eshelman, *“We regularly evaluate our facility needs and have a plan in place to further develop our main hospital campus to meet the needs of this community.”*

This fact may come as surprise to the public, considering Lancaster General Hospital’s intention to develop an inpatient hospital and medical center within three miles of ECH’s central facility.

A primary justification for LGH’s proposal is an anticipated five-year population increase of 10,000 in

northeast Lancaster County. Yet Eshelman says that Ephrata’s strategic plan accounts for the needs that will come with anticipated population growth.

According to Eshelman, the hospital’s occupancy rate averages 64%, nearly 4% lower than the national average for non-profit hospitals as of 2003.

Eshelman declined to comment directly upon Lancaster General’s plans to expand into nearby West Earl Township.

Task Force may consider library tax, system improvements

At the September 16 County Commissioners Meeting, a “Lancaster County Public Libraries Task Force” was appointed to assess the funding and administrative oversight in place for the county’s fourteen public libraries. Commissioner Craig Lehman described the group as an opportunity *“to see if we can do things better.”*

Commissioner Scott Martin added that, since library funding is a line item in the County budget, the Commissioners want to ensure that the libraries of Lancaster County are operating efficiently and effectively.

As officially stated, the Task Force will work *“with the overall goal to continue and improve library service in Lancaster County, will focus on library funding and administrative oversight and will make short-term recommendations that may impact the 2010 County budget as well as long-term*

recommendations that may impact future County budgets.”

Lehman told NewsLanc at the September 16 meeting that the appointment of this Task Force was largely initiated by former County Commissioner Terry Kauffman, who will serve as the Chairman of the group.

In a recent newsletter, Lehman hinted toward one issue that could well be discussed in the context of this Task Force:

“I believe that a scaled-down version of the library tax could garner the necessary public support here in Lancaster County if placed on the ballot by libraries for libraries and considered when a positive outcome is most likely. But before that can happen, local libraries must form an iron-clad coalition that harnesses their strengths and answers the ‘who gets what’ question.”

EDITORIAL: What do officials have against profits?

At a recent Lancaster Township Supervisor's meeting, Lancaster Mayor Rick Gray bristled when an audience member mentioned that the City had built into its police service bid a 10% profit margin. He insisted it wasn't so.

The person wanted to make the point to the supervisors and audience that, in contrast, Manheim Township had no margin for profit and thus MT's very low bid for police services was all the more in jeopardy of losing money.

NewsLanc is advised by a source believed to be reliable there was a 10% margin in the City's bid, whether it was called "profit" or something else.

But more importantly, what do Gray and the officials at Manheim Township have against profits? Why would they be offering services to other municipalities unless the arrangements also benefit their own taxpayers?

Brunswick may re-open within a month

In a conference call with the owners of the Brunswick Hotel, *NewsLanc* was advised that all required life safety upgrades are underway and expectations are that the hotel will receive an occupancy permit by the

end of the month and re-open early in October. In addition, the partners are considering renovations to the common areas. Approximately 120 rooms have been refurbished over the past two years.

LETTER: New appointees add expertise to CC board

"Lancaster mayor Rick Gray's appointment of two financial experts [Patrick Snyder and Larry Hinnenkamp] to the board of the Lancaster County Convention Center Authority is great news for all taxpayers..."

"Both the convention center and the private hotel are jointly managed by Interstate Hotels and Resorts. The Lancaster County Convention Center Authority has no direct control over its own facilities, being

limited to oversight of its operation. This leaves open the possibility of blurring the lines between taxpayer dollars and private revenue.

"The issues facing the LCCCA at this time require expertise in dealing with numbers and financial management. An LCCCA board with three (or more) members that are well-equipped to deal with financial issues will serve well to make the project much more accountable to taxpayers, now and into the future."

INTELLIGENCER NEW ERA: The newspaper carries a full back page ad stating: *"Wanted 25 people who have difficulty hearing and understanding in background noise."*

"These 25 people are needed to evaluate [-----]'s latest and most advanced digital hearing instrument and the effectiveness of the directional microphone system in background noise." It claims "tremendous savings" and says "Candidates will be selected by September 18th, 2009."

WATCHDOG: *"Candidates...selected"?* *"Tremendous savings"?* **The ad has the characteristic of a 'come on'. It implies research when, in fact, it is seeking to sell its product.** Most of us will see through it. But not everyone...or else they wouldn't pay to run it. This is another example of why *Lancaster Newspapers, Inc.* needs an Ombudsman.

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