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# THE CARLISLE MERCURY

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## Board discusses federal bill as funding source

for a cut of this fund have a detailed plan ready to start construction within 90 days. However, as Hall and other board members pointed out, the article was vague in what the federal lawmakers meant by did discuss possible options 90 days, whether it was 90 days from the point at which they apply or when they have been approved for funding, and what other specific criteria would be necessary in order to be seriously considered for funding out of this bill.

Also, of course, the bill had not been passed by the federal government.

Board members felt they should be cautious about the federal approach, considering the number of unanswered questions left by the article. Hall's point, however, was that the board should be prepared in case this or another funding opportunity does present itself. She suggested the board continue to work from the planning stage by bringing on an architect to at least draw up specific plans for a new high school.

"We are actively seeking board, the emergency aid bill introduced by a New Jersey representative, would ask for \$10 billion worth of financial resources to assist local governments in the construction of major facilities. Local school boards were included among the governing bodies. The bill would require all local governments applying



The Carlisle Mercury's Josh Shepherd photo.

## We support Dr. Egan

Above: This is just a few of the patients and friends of Dr. Peter Egan who appeared at a support meeting for the doctor's practice at Monday night's Johnson-Mathers Board meeting. Left: Dr. Egan enters the Nursing Home cafeteria to the applause of the support group at the Monday meeting. Egan immediately dispelled rumors about his leaving the county and expressed his appreciation for the support.

## Nearly 100 arrive to support Egan at Hospital meeting; Dr. vows to stay

ball games and several were posted in local businesses to generate signatures. However, many of Dr. Egan's patients and friends apparently wanted to voice their support directly to the Johnson-Mathers Board. There was concern that the regular closed meetings of the Johnson-Mathers Board would bar them from giving their vocal support.

Nevertheless, on Monday night, a large crowd arrived and gathered in the hospital parking lot. It was also announced the Board would open the meeting in the hospital cafeteria. As members of the Board convened at a table in front of the crowd, applause erupted as Dr. Egan arrived, shook hands with board members, and took a seat with them. Cartmel Lester presented Dr. Egan and the board a thick collection of petitions bearing the signatures of what Lester estimated to be approximately 1,000 Nicholas County people.

Board chairman Cliff Vice welcomed the crowd to the meeting and asked, for convenience sake, that the people select a few to address the board directly. "Dr. Egan is, obviously, a valued member of this community. If there is a problem, we want to identify what it is and get to the bottom of it. Nobody on this board wants Dr. Egan to leave either," Vice said.

Richard Gardner, a member of the support group, opened the meeting with a prayer, expressing hope that the board and the support group come to a calm and satisfactory resolution to the dispute. Vice then turned the floor over to Egan. Dr. Egan said he had no plan to leave this county and expressed his appreciation to the people for their support. However, Egan said, the situation between himself and the board would be better resolved with a more limited crowd. He said the feelings of those gathered to support him may result in a very biased decision by the board and nothing would be accomplished. Based on Egan's request, the Board agreed to call itself into closed session. However, before the board completely adjourned, Ronnie Clark addressed them. "We have a very serious need for doctors in this county and it's just not acceptable that we lose doctors in this county over petty differences," Clark said.

Many others voiced their concern over the quality of nursing care at Johnson-Mathers, citing incidents when nurses were unable to provide for patients because they were tied up with other duties. Others protested the closed meeting, feeling they were being shut out and hospital business conducted in secret. However, as a private, non-profit organization, the Johnson-Mathers Health Care Board is not bound by state laws regarding open meet-

ings. But board member Margaret Hunter said anyone who wishes to, could contact a board member and request to meet with them and lodge a complaint. Board members spent nearly an hour and a half in closed session discussing the situation before them. They adjourned a few minutes before 9 p.m. There are two main problems we discussed in closed session. One is a matter of miscommunication, and it is probably the biggest reason why everything was blown so out of proportion that people thought Dr. Egan was being pushed out or thinking about leaving," Board Chairperson Cliff Vice said after the meeting. "No one on the board wants Dr. Egan to leave here, and he has made it very clear that he has no intention of leaving either," Vice said. But miscommunication is a problem Vice felt should be easily remedied. A far more serious problem, he said, is the nursing shortage at the hospital. Vice said that people's complaints about the nursing staff's inability to meet the needs of every Johnson-Mathers patient is well grounded. Their nurses, he said, are stretched too thin. "We must solve this problem, but it's not all that easy. We can afford more nurses, but we can't pay what a Lexington hospital can offer. We have hired three new nurses this week and that should help alleviate the problem, but it doesn't solve it yet," Vice said. There is no problem at Johnson-Mathers that can't be resolved, Vice said. It just takes time.

## Council approves district jackets

and not use the athletic fund for the council. Denny Tackett has requested the council purchase another VCR for his class if the cheerleaders wear the district would wear jackets for everyone involved with basketball team. Ron Baker, assistant principal said what about buying patches for everyone. Martha Taylor, member of the site based council made the suggestion to buy the jackets for the varsity team members and buy everyone else a patch. The council decided Taylor's idea would give every one something special to represent the teams winning both tournaments. The council agreed to present the Nicholas County School Board with another letter to see if the board can help financially to purchase a computer for the council.

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