Historic school to be razed

BY BARBARA MILLER

Of Our Lebanon County Bureau

LEBANON • By early August, Cornwall's 105-year-old red brick schoolhouse will be replaced by a gravel lot. The Cornwall-Lebanon School Board decided Monday night to proceed with demolition.

The board voted 5-4 against giving the Lebanon Valley Conservancy 30 days to come up with a lease agreement that could have provided two years to find money to restore the structure.

it would pay the district \$500 a month rent for two years, along with legal and insurance costs. If, after two years, the needed money wasn't raised, the Conservancy would have paid for costs.

"It's absolutely disapwhere we go from here," said Wiley Parker, a conservote. "This was sort of a to do?" he asked. Custer's last stand."

THE BOTTOM LINE

■ Property taxes in the Cornwall-Lebanon School District will increase about 5.3 percent for 2008-09, under terms of the \$57.5 million budget adopted Monday night by the school board. The owner of a home assessed at the district average of \$21,300 will pay about \$97 more than last year, for a total of \$1,940. The real estate tax rate will be 91.08 mills, an increase of 4.57 mills. Eligible taxpayers will receive \$127 in property tax cuts from slots revenue.

the school for uses such as a museum or borough offices. Over three years, the school district postponed demoli- \$1 million to \$3 million. tion three times.

this said the board needs to we can do what hasn't been The conservancy had said protect its option to use the site for educational purpos-

Parker said the conservancy didn't want to own the building but wanted a long-term lease.

The district has renovatany increase in demolition ed and saved two historic schools - Cornwall Elementary and South Lebanon pointing. I don't know Elementary schools, board member James Garrett said.

"How much of saving old vancy attorney, after the buildings are we supposed

The conservancy's pro- whether the school district posal came after the Corn- would be called upon to wall Historical Alliance and come up with money for Cornwall borough failed to renovations if the conserreach agreements on saving vancy would fall short in

Estimates to renovate the building have ranged from

on three times.

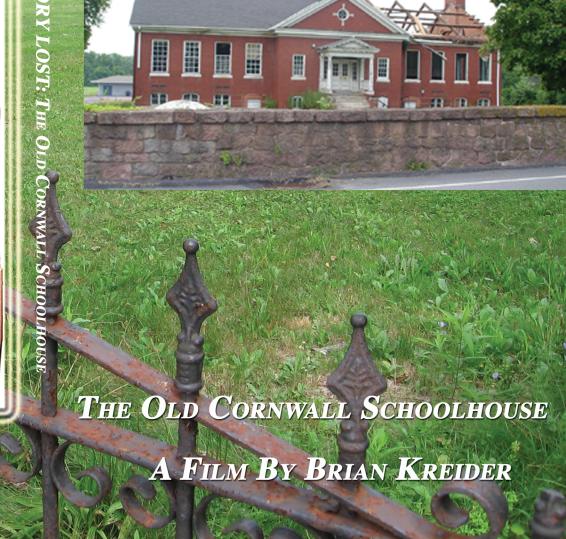
Board member Harry Masspend any money. We think done before," Parker said. referring to raising grant money.

After nearly an hour of discussion, the board voted against the conservancy's lease request, and 7-1 in favor of demolition.

A contract was awarded to Musser Excavating of Lititz, the low bidder at \$59,500. Work might begin within a week, and the demolition is to be completed in early August.

The district has no imme-He also questioned diate plans for the land, but officials said the building is becoming a safety hazard.

> BARBARA MILLER: 832-2090 or barbmiller@patriot-news.com



HISTORY LOST:





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