

CHESTER TIMES – February 28, 1903

LANSDOWNE COUNCIL AND THE CARNEGIE LIBRARY – Steel Magnate's Gift of Ten Thousand Dollars May be Accepted, but the School Board Will be the Responsible Agent in the Gift – The Local Legislators' Fine Diplomacy

The Lansdowne Borough Council, which held its final meeting for the year last evening, decided that it is unable to tell whether it wants ten thousand dollars or not. Andrew Carnegie, the multi-millionaire and Scottish castle builder, offered to give this amount of money for a library, with a small string attached, but the Council has shirked the responsibility and placed it on the school board, where, some of the members claim, it properly belongs.

At a previous session a committee of three Councilmen, J.W. Davis, John Jackson and G.W. Conrad, were appointed to meet a committee of three from the board of Education, to do something relative to the library project. Last night these three gentlemen made their report to the effect that the whole matter is now in the school board's hands and that they will deal with it at their next meeting on the third week in March.

THE REASON WHY – This is why it was done: It appears that the Council has no right to borrow additional money for maintaining a public library, but that the school board is empowered by law to set aside one additional mill for this purpose. Mr. Carnegie, in making his offer, stipulated that one thousand dollars must be provided annually for maintenance. The board in looking over the statutes, finds that by levying one mill the revenue therefrom on the taxable property in the town will reach \$2,000 per annum and the proposition looks safe.

At the meeting of Council last night, President Isaac Garrett of the School Board, was asked for his views on the question, but he said that as the matter has not come before the board officially, he could not see his way clear to make a public statement. This is construed by many to mean that the board is almost unanimously in favor of accepting the offer. At present Lansdowne has a public library, which costs between \$600 and \$700 to maintain.

ANOTHER PROBLEM – Council had before it another knotty problem which was given its need of consideration. At the election the people of Lansdowne voted to effect a loan of \$26,000 and \$12,000 of this was to be set aside for a town hall and fire house combined. There was one provision, and that was that the fire company, which was to be benefitted, was to donate the ground on which its present building stands. On this proposition, almost wholly, the people favored the loan.

Last night the fire company came into Council with a communication and practically went back on the proposition of giving the ground. The firemen asked the Council almost double the amount of money for the site than it cost originally, and it is considered exorbitant. Most of the Councilmen were surprised to find that the firemen should act in such a manner, and Mr. Ryan, one of the legislators, plainly said so. He intimated that as the company had agreed to give the land, and as the loan has not yet been consummated Council is not in a position to go ahead with it and the thing may fall through. The question was referred to the new Council, however.