No rush to decision on Edgewood

Earlier this month, the Pottstown School Board received a brief report from Reynolds Energy Solutions regarding the condition of the Administration Building and the former Edgewood Elementary School, which is still owned by the district and leased to the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit and a private school.

Reynolds Energy previously consulted with the district to help reduce energy consumption at the middle and high schools, and it was involved in the renovation of our four elementary schools.

The good news from Reynolds is that neither building is in need of immediate repairs.

Last year, the board was told the HVAC system at the Administration Building was in imminent danger of failure.

Turns out that’s not the case, Reynolds reported. At some point the boiler will need to be replaced. The piping system, windows, and roof should also be replaced eventually, but Reynolds called these low priority items, and the building can keep functioning as repairs are made.

If the district decides to reopen Edgewood as a school, however, the decision could be extremely pricey. Assuming the board wants to make all the upgrades it did at the other four elementary schools, taxpayers could be spending up to $6.6 million.

With a steeply declining tax base and the sixth highest taxes of Pennsylvania’s 500 school districts, the school board should look long and hard before spending that kind of money.

It’s already agreed that nothing will be done prior to the 2020-2021 school year. There’s time to gather information and consider options.

Tom Hylton is a member of the Pottstown School Board. However, the views expressed are his alone and not the board’s.