Ironically, Give us the facts!

Why does the Pottstown YMCA need to close? Conflicting information has been offered by Shaun Elliott, CEO of the Philadelphia-Freedom Valley YMCA.

In the last five years, the parent organization has been providing $5 million annually to subsidize the Pottstown operation, Elliott told Mercury reporter Evan Brandt last week.

Then Elliott said the Pottstown Y’s annual operating deficit is as high as $700,000.

Then he said the Pottstown Y would need $2 million a year for the next five years to remain viable.

If the Pottstown Y is losing $700,000 a year, why would it need a $5 million annual subsidy? If it’s needed a $5 million annual subsidy in the past, why would it need just $2 million a year to remain viable in the future?

Where is the financial analysis?

Where’s the architectural and engineering study to justify Elliott’s claim that the Pottstown building needs $11.5 million in repairs and upgrades?

As a school board member for eight years, I reviewed numerous detailed architectural and engineering studies of Pottstown schools.

In 1997, one study said the HVAC system at the Edgewood School (now leased by Head Start and a private school) was “well beyond its service life.” Maybe so, but 20 years later, it’s still operating, with minimal repairs.

We shouldn’t accept at face value claims that Pottstown’s situation is hopeless. Give us the facts!

Commentary by Thomas Hylton

FORMER EDGEWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL was built in 1969, the same year as the Pottstown YMCA. Edgewood still has its original HVAC system. Needed repairs to the Edgewood boilers were made in 2015 at a cost of $15,805. YMCA administrators have not made public any studies to justify their claim that the Pottstown Y needs $11.5 million in repairs.