

Windsor, North Carolina
September 25, 2016
Joint Meeting

The Board of Commissioners recessed its work session on Wednesday, September 14th in order to meeting jointly today with the Bertie County Board of Education. The following members were present or absent:

Present: Ronald “Ron” Wesson, District I
 Stewart White, District II
 Tammy A. Lee, District III
 John Trent, District IV
 Ernestine (Byrd) Bazemore, District V

Absent: None

County Staff Present: County Manager Scott Sauer
 Finance Officer William Roberson

Board of Education Members present: Tarsha Dudley, Chair
 Bobby Oceana, Vice Chair
 Emma Johnson
 Jo Davis Johnson

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Trent called the Bertie County Board of Commissioners to order. Chair Dudley of the Board of Education did the same.

DISCUSSION

Chairman Trent reviewed the following timeline of recent correspondences and joint meetings with the Board of Education regarding school funding:

April 26th -- Meeting in Raleigh with NC Department of Public Instruction staff: Ms. Alexis Schauss, Director of DPI Financial and Business Services, and Mr. Philip Price, Chief Financial Officer for NCDPI to address Low Wealth Supplemental funding deficiency.

April 26th -- Follow-up email from Ms. Schauss providing spreadsheet of the option discussed with County and School officials from Bertie County, noting “noting it will take adjustments to the appropriations through 2016-17.”

April 27th -- Bertie County correspondence to NCDPI and Ms. Schauss committing to restore and replace the noted funding deficiency with an appropriation of \$328,188 above the minimum required for FY 2016-2017 current expense funding.

May 5th -- NCDPI email to Bertie County Finance Officer confirming “the Department has accepted the remedy from County and the actions, as proposed, correct the supplanting violation. No further action is required at this time.”

June 9th -- Letter to Superintendent White confirming budget for FY 2016-2017 for school current expense of \$3,003,000 and \$375,000 for capital outlay—an increase of \$110,000 over the current year appropriation.

Also, the correspondence noted the Board of Commissioners interest in discussing “consolidation of campuses and reducing the financial burden of maintaining physical plant facilities for school buildings that are underutilized.”

In addition, the correspondence encouraged “the opportunity for shared use cooperative facility arrangements for the County and the School System in the areas of joint fueling for vehicles and vehicle maintenance and repairs.

August 24th -- Meeting with interim Superintendent Walker and the Board of Education Chairman and Vice Chairman to discuss a budget shortfall of approximately \$500,000 and options to address this issue—see Minutes of this meeting attached.

September 14th -- Board of Commissioners meet to discuss school funding challenge and seek joint meeting, approve \$42,000 in additional funds from contingency, and develop proposed equity partnership plan and conditions for monthly funds to continue.

The Commissioners also expressed concern for the current budget situation and reviewed its discussions on September 14th and the motion approved as follows:

Commissioner Lee made a **MOTION** for the County to provide the first payment of \$42,000 with some contingencies in order for the school system to receive the next payment. Additionally, the motion also addressed a proposed meeting date of Monday, September 26th at 9:00AM for both Boards to meet and discuss appropriate strategies to address the shortfall including a potential “equity proposal and partnership.” Commissioner Wesson **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION PASSED** unanimously.

The Commissioners then reviewed the proposed partnership plan and conditions, in addition to the attached correspondence and reports from the NC Department of Public Instruction:

- 1) Auditor’s preliminary report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2016 to include initial findings or concerns regarding the school system’s current cash position.
- 2) Transfer of the Early College Program to the new high school or the 900 building on the former high school campus.
- 3) Transfer of fifty percent (50%) equity and ownership of the fuel tanks, the new bus garage and related equipment to the County and establish joint vehicle maintenance and fuel purchase initiative. Oversight for bulk fuel purchases for gasoline and diesel fuel will be supervised by the County.
- 4) Transfer of title and ownership of the former South West Middle School campus (Early College High School) to the Bertie County Board of Commissioners for the consideration of \$1.00.
- 5) Change in legal counsel for the Board of Education to use a local attorney.
- 6) Report to the Board of Commissioners regarding academic performance and end of grade (EOG) testing for all grade levels.
- 7) Report to the Board of Commissioners regarding average daily membership as of the 10th day September for the number of students enrolled as compared to the same figure from one year ago.

- 8) Report to the Board of Commissioners regarding Central Office staffing and recent rotation of program directors and principals.

At the suggestion of School Board Chairman Tarsha Dudley, it was decided that the Board of Education will need additional time to review these items and discuss as a Board, prior to responding to the Commissioners.

ADJOURN

Chairman Trent adjourned the Bertie County Board of Commissioners at 10:30AM.

John Trent, Chairman

Sarah S. Tinkham, Clerk to the Board