

MINUTES – February 29, 2016

The Caswell County Board of Commissioners met in a special session at the Caswell County Historic Courthouse in Yanceyville, North Carolina at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, February 29, 2016. Members present William E. Carter, Chairman, Kent Williamson, Vice-Chairman, Larry G. Hamlett, Nathaniel Hall, Jeremiah Jefferies, David Owen, and Kenneth D. Travis. School Board Members present: June Dailey, Chair, Mel Battle, Carol Boaz, Gladys Garland, Ross Gwynn, Donna Hudson, Sylvia Johnson and Betty Sartin, and Dr. Barker, Interim Superintendent. Angela Wilson recorded the minutes.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chairman Carter called the Board of Commissioner's meeting to order.
Chair Dailey called the School Board's meeting to order.

Chairman Carter stated – he would like to address the questions from the Board- beginning with Question A.

What has the School Board done over the last 2 years to improve school grades (School Report Card)?

Dr. Barker, Superintendent stated “ That had implemented several programs at the elementary level – such as added a Reading Specialist- which was an additional teacher that would assist with the teacher with kids with reading issues. At the high school level there was a math program to assist the kids with Algebra I – which it would be administered into 2 parts and this way the kids would have another chance to improve their math grades and help the kids that needed additional help. The Gold Leaf Program help with the computers and servicing of the computers- in 4 to 5 years they will need to be replace or service and would need additional funding to help keep this program in place. Mrs. Boaz, added that on the elementary level there were several programs into place such as the reading summer camp – for grades 1-3, trained teachers on Reading Foundation to help implement this program(which diagnosis children with reading & learning issues) before they reach the 3rd grade and the Success Maker Program. Commissioner Hall made several remarks in regards to the Algebra program being divided into 2 parts- Would the class be taught within a year or within a semester? How would you know if the child has completed the course? Dr. Barker briefly explains the specifics of the program and how the children would be tested and how the how the different levels work as for from High School level to Very Proficient.

How will you distribute the money that the Legislature has said each county will receive and must be used for schools, community colleges & intra-structure?

Chair Daily asked how much the County would give. Commissioner Travis stated, got to get the money first. Commissioner Hamlett stated, it was something that would have to be discussed. Chairman Carter stated that they would need to have a work session to discuss the matter. Mr. Miller explained the amount that would be \$1,090,000. Mr. Battle asked were they going to wait until they get the money before they decide. Commissioner Owen clearly stated his personal opinion to which way he would like for the money to be distributed, but Chairman Carter stated it would be discussed in the work session and it would be based on the needs and if they have needs to present to them so that it would be discussed. Dr. Barker, went on to say that no amount of money would ever satisfied all the needs, but if the Board of Education had an idea of what they would received that they could work with that amount. Commissioner Hall stated that there were a lot of issues to discuss instead of asking for X many dollars and based on enrollment, that they need to look and see if every request would be beneficial. Dr. Barker did state, they when having the work session that would consider all the variables-because whether the enrollment is up or down they still would have to meet some of the same needs. Commissioner Hall stated that amount of students for a certain amount of students. Mr. Battle went on to say that there was less schools and serving fewer amounts of students then back twenty years ago and now we down to 6 schools in the County. Commissioner Jefferies stated that they would listen to the Board –if they need it then they need it. Commissioner Owen stated, also he hoped they understand the strategies- that we all need to answer for Caswell County and we need to focus on the strategy.

What happen to the Early College program?

Dr. Barker stated that the meet with PCC President and the high school Principal and it was impossible with the existing staff to put this program into place. They asked Raleigh to hold off until the next school year- because they would need additional staff and needed to investigate and gain further knowledge. Commissioner Hall had several questions concerning the cost and why they hadn't looked into the cost. Dr. Barker stated they would need six additional teachers for a maximum of fifty students. He also stated that this was a five year program and that the classes would be smaller. Chair Dailey did express that the application came together in a hurry with the assistance of Piedmont College. So many aspects weren't though through, they did the application and submitted thinking that they could reapply. She also stated that so many logistics that needed to be answered, such as what to do when students drop out the program. Commissioner Hall did state he suspect that other schools had this program and why they didn't look to them for answers. Mrs. Garland stated that supervision would also be an issue such as a Principal – which brought up another concern. It was stated that this would be just like housing another school and the six additional teachers would be needed – costing approximately \$300,000. Chair Dailey did state that Piedmont Community College would in-kind two classrooms. Mrs. Hudson stated, that they needed to make it more aware to the community – due to the fact the child would begin this program in the 8th grade and there would have been a lot of

questions from the parents and students and making them aware of the that it would prevent them from participating in sports or extra curriculum activities, and they needed the information to make it a successful program. Commissioner Travis asked was the teachers the only expense? Chair Dailey stated, no but they would need back up funding from the state. Commissioner Travis asked, was this similar to home schooling, because he had spoke with someone home schooling and they had stated it wasn't pleasurable due to the fact that he couldn't play sports. It was also mention that transportation would be an issue being that the program would begin with the 8th graders. Chair Dailey stated, that this program was target for children that had no college graduates in the family. Commissioner Williamson asked, how would they educate the citizens and Chair Dailey stated that would be something that the Board would need to discuss. Commissioner Hall stated that it appears that the question wasn't looked at before they submitted the application. Chair Dailey stated, that the previous Superintendent had been through this program before and he thought it would work for Caswell County. So questions weren't asked.

How do they see our current facilities especially at the high school and what improvements do they see that need to be made?

Commissioner Williamson stated, that we needed to build a new high school, with the cost of the maintenance in retaining the old school; we would be better off replacing the school. There was much discussion on this issue, it was stated by Commissioner Owen that (personal opinion) that he thought that the school should stay on site while Mr. Battle stated, that the structure of the building besides halls 1,2,& 3 should be replace. Chair Dailey also stated that she felt that the building wasn't secure and the front of the building would need to be restructuring for the safety of the school. Chair Dailey, also stated that she had spoken with an architect about remodeling the front and the media center, because she felt that it was a concern. Commissioner Travis stated, that they needed to fix up the before they replace the building. Commissioner Williamson also stated that they needed to look at the total picture, then keep spending money and make sure they have an expert to tell what is needed.

Commissioner Hamlett, then asked about Stoney Creek and Chair Dailey stated, the facility is in good shape for the money that they have spent in it. Commissioner Hamlett, then asked if the sewage problem was fixed and Chair Dailey responded with yes and added that they did have mobile units that they were also using at the Stoney Creek location.

It was also mention that several labs at the high school needed to be upgraded such as the biology lab and needed to upgrade or replace some of the technology. But as oppose to the option of purchasing a new facility and repairing the old facility should be an option. Dr. Barker stated that the school was in a perfect location with access to the community college, Caswell County had the only high school that the students had walking access to the community college and Civic Center. It was also mention that North and South which is often referred to as the

“new schools” are approximately 22 -23 years old – would be needing a new roof in about 2-3 years, so that was something else to begin thinking about. Mr. Owen stated, that if they knew that this is going to be a issue then they need to be looking for someone to advise them before it becomes an issue.

What has the School Board done to improve community relations?

Chair Dailey replied, that they have made great efforts to get the parents and community involve with the schools. The elementary/middle schools have opportunities for the parents, grandparents and guardians to be involve in many of the programs that they are offering. But parents don't take advantage of the opportunities – they have reschedule programs from the evening to morning, hoping to gain more involvement. Commissioner Hall asked, “What are the trends?”, because as he spoke with several parents that stated that didn't feel welcome or treated nicely when they enter into their child school. Mrs. Sartin responded, that when worked in the schools, that parents didn't have to sign-in or check in. But she stated times had change due to safety we have to adapt with the change, it was also a time you could have parties in the classroom but due to food regulations know that isn't possible. Mrs. Garland also stated that when parents or grandparents would come in it was a disruption of the instruction time. Chair Dailey stated, that all the Principals have said that if parents could make an appointment and they would schedule a time when it wouldn't be a distraction.

Commissioner Owen asked if they have partnered with parents, grandparents, business and the Board of Commissioners to help the schools with programs such as tutoring or coming and reading to the kids. Mrs. Garland stated, you can't get the parents there, for they had a math night and the parents didn't take advantage of that. Commissioner Owen stated, for them to look for strategies and don't accept the fact that they want attend. He would like to see the Board and County employees to have a connection with the schools by volunteering. Mrs. Boaz stated, they have many boards within the school system for parents to get involved and to help get the parents in and they use a variety of ways to contact the parents such as texting, emails and the phone tree voice calling system.

Commissioner Owen did ask the question do they do anything with the local businesses. Mrs. Boaz, stated that the CT Advisory Board at every school attempts to get donations and have career fairs. Mr. Battle also stated that every nine weeks that the local McDonalds donates 25-300 gift cards for free products and that Bo jangles does a night out for the children. Mrs. Dailey did express that we have such a small amount of business in the area, and that we continue to hit the same business all the time and Commissioner Hamlett stated that he was one of the business that donated frequently- so they do what they can.

What do they consider as their role within the school system?

Chairman Carter stated that he felt that it was the Board role to be involved and help with their needs. Mr. Hamlett stated, that they (School Board) had a lot of needs and they (Commissioners) needed to put up or shut up. Commissioner Jefferies stated, when we raise the tax 2%- then we have to explain why and the people want to know.

Dr. Barker stated, that the Aug, 30rd the school lost \$300,000in funding- so they had to make cuts and cut back on personnel. Mr. Hamlet asked, that being that gas is cheaper did allow for the difference. Dr. Barker stated that the State uses a formula for the price of gas to determine the allowance, so if gas is cheaper than the allowance is lesser. Commissioner Hall, then asked did the transportation study solve the issue of so many buses passing his house, and they need an expert to check the routes based on students in that area. Dr. Barker stated, that a computerize program calculated and managed the routes. He also stated that approximately sixty-four to sixty-five buses was running in Caswell County that include the elementary, middle/high school and special needs buses. Chair Dailey stated that the buses had special equipment to monitor the buses. Dr. Barker stated, the equipment had the ability to monitor when the bus stopped, how long they was at a stop, certain amount of minutes to clean the bus and tract issues within the bus. Commissioner Travis, asked was it cheaper to drive the buses home or back to school. Dr. Barker answered that some drivers did carry buses home.

Specific details on actions the School Board will take or has taken to improve student performance, reduce teacher turnover and how the Board of Commissioners can help in the method instead of just throwing money at the issue?

Chair Dailey had a question as far as the statement as “just throwing money at the issue”. Commissioner Owen did explain that he didn’t mean it as throwing money away, and he was sorry that it sounded that way. But he just wanted to make sure that funds weren’t just added to the supplement and was it beneficial to the purpose.

Mr. Battle stated, that Hertford County had did a study in which it provided information on if supplements where made to teachers within the County that most likely teachers in that County would accept positions within their own County. The reasons would be that they would remain at home and still be among their families. Dr. Barker then asked if we still have the Teacher Cadet Program within the school system and Chair Dailey stated, yes we do. Dr. Barker also stated that Mrs. Hudson & Mrs. Boaz have been recruited to retain information as far as the supplements and retaining teachers. Chair Dailey stated, that ten percent of the first year teachers would benefit more if that stay longer in the County.

**Specific strategies to improve reading?
Number of certified reading specialists in each School?**

These questions were covered within other questions.

How many in school and out of school suspensions have there been by race and by gender for the last 3 years?

Chair Dailey, handed out a hand out that showed the numbers and Mr. Barker went into quoting numbers from the report. Commissioner Hall, asked what the strategies to prevent suspensions was. Dr. Barker stated that they had tried different strategies but when it comes to having a safe environment and dealing with children drugs and weapons, they have to take them out of the environment. Commissioner Hall, then asked if it was permanent? Dr. Barker stated, First - Safety & Secondly – environment that kids can learn. Commissioner Hamlett, agreed. Dr. Barker also stated, that overall all the schools he had worked, Fort Bragg and Cumberland County the children are not like Caswell County parents – where they are afraid to send their children to school. He stated that most kids are being raised in bad communities and or raising themselves. Mrs. Hudson stated that the elementary schools are to make school implement plans on School of Conduct consistent throughout the County and the middle and a high school is doing the same thing. So if they have the similar consequences for the behaviors. Commissioner Owen then quoted, “Above all else have discipline” and asked if parents could request work for these students? Dr. Barkers stated, yes, make up work would be provided.

What has the County Commissioners done to improve community relations?

Commissioner Travis stated that the community didn't really care, until it's something that involves them. Dr. Barker did express that when it affects them personal as a general rule they want to do more and if you mess up you will hear from them.

Has the Certificate of Attendance been done away with? Does everyone get a diploma now? justification?

Dr. Barker stated, that the only children that receive certificates are children with special needs and those who didn't pass the state requirements to graduate with a diploma. Commissioner Hall asked, so I assume those that don't pass the requirements probably drop out? Dr. Barker stated, they can go to Piedmont Community College to GED because Caswell County doesn't have a High School Equivalence Diploma program as Alamance County does or they can return back for the fifth year. They have a lot of students that have returned back and received their diploma. Into where they have students that at the age of twenty-two years of age have stayed and received certificates, because as they go across the stage no one know s whether it's a certificate or diploma they are receiving. Commissioner Hall wanted average of the children that drop out

and Mr. Barker stated he would get that information to him, but Mr. Battle stated a five to six percent average. Dr. Barker stated that an average of seventy-five percent of the eight grades will stay on track and graduate on time.

Overall Discussion

Commissioner Hamlett stated that he thought this was the best joint meeting with school board in the last 12 years.

Chairman Carter stated he appreciated the School Board coming out, and the next schedule meeting would be after the work session in May. He would like for the School Board to submit a list of needs.

Adjournment

At 8:20 p.m. the Commissioner Hamlett moved, seconded by Commissioner Owen to adjourn the Caswell County Board of Commissioners meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

At 8:20 p.m. Mrs. Garland moved, seconded by Mr. Gwynn to adjourn the Caswell County School Board meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Angela S. Wilson

William E. Carter
Chairman

