MINUTES – MARCH 19, 2018

The Caswell County Board of Commissioners met in special session at the Bartlett Yancey High School Media Center in Yanceyville, North Carolina at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, March 19, 2018. Members present: Nathaniel Hall, Chairman, Rick McVey, Vice-Chairman, Sterling Carter, William E. Carter, Jeremiah Jefferies and David Owen. Absent: Kenneth D. Travis. School Board Members present: Gladys Garland, Chair, Sylvia Johnson, Vice Chair, Mel Battle, Ross Gwynn, Jr., Donna Hudson, Gordon Satterfield and Tracy Stanley. Also present: Bryan Miller, County Manager, Gwen Vaughn, County Finance Director, Dr. Sandra Carter, Superintendent, Jerry Hatchett, Scholl Maintenance Director, Jeremy Teetor, School Finance Director, JoAnna Gwynn, Emily Buchanan and Connie Kimrey. Bryan Miller, County Manager, recorded the minutes.

CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Education meeting was called to order by Chair Garland. The Board of Commissioners meeting was called to order by Chairman Hall. Introductions were made of those in attendance and introduction of Brian Bradner with Dewberry & Davis.

BYHS PROJECT/RENOVATIONS

Dr. Carter reviewed handout information that was shared with commissioners which included an aerial photo, facilities study and spreadsheet with Option # 1, #2 and #3 for review.

The Board of Education is currently in favor of Option # 1 which has been scaled back as much as possible. The Board of Education will look at tackling remaining projects one at a time. Items taken from the original list include upgrades to both gymnasiums, vocational education building expansion, areas of improvement to the east wing and civic center. Weight lifting has been removed from the athletic facilities as well as removing expansion of bus parking lot. This brings the new total to $33 million.

Dr. Carter shared information on opportunities to work with the USDA in securing a loan for 40 years. The current interest rate is at 3 ½%; however, the rate may fluctuate before a decision can be made. Option #1 also includes figures that reflect N.L. Dillard being paid off and using $3 million from lottery funds. With this option, the Board of Education has pulled back as much as possible. This would reflect a 4.94% tax rate increase.

Option # 2 includes everything and indicates a 7.50% tax rate increase.

Option # 3 reflects receipt of grant money. The application timeframe has not been shared as of yet. If the timeline from last year is the same, the grant application will be due in August and awarded in October. Option # 3 does not include scaling back of any items. The figures listed are on a best case scenario and all dependent upon receipt of grant money.

Caswell County Schools Finance Director Jeremy Teetor shared that currently the interest rates are beginning to climb and Option # 1 is the most feasible for the Board of Education. Dr. Carter shared that if the grant money is awarded the Board of Education would like to pull back in the items that were removed. Safety and educational purposes are the main focus when reviewing the needs for the high school. The upgrades that remain are needed to provide a safer environment for our students.

Brian Bradner with Dewberry & Davis shared an overview of the campus and noted that security was a huge emphasis as well as the academic environment. Currently the high school is similar to a college campus noting the multiple entrances. The new design proposes to have the entire campus fenced in. An academic building will replace Halls 1, 2, and 3. A new dining area will provide a more controlled area and will allow an outside dining area for students. Expansion of the track, new concession area and additional parking for the athletic field were also mentioned. The new design also shows addition of closed corridors (adjoined between the buildings) and keyless entry throughout the campus.

Commissioner Owen questioned the purpose of a new dining room. Mr. Bradner shared that it was a combination to provide a more cohesive area and also allow an outside area for students.

Commissioner McVey questioned if additional maintenance staffing will be needed. Dr. Carter shared that the current custodial staff at the high school should be sufficient. Maintenance Director Jerry Hatchett shared that additional equipment may be needed to clean the glass; however with the energy savings it should save enough to provide funding to purchase additional equipment if required. Mr. Bradner stated that the brick compared to glass was not a huge difference in price and the glass provides more visibility.

Dr. Carter shared that a committee was formed in the beginning to look at needs of the school. Visits were made to high schools and a list was made of student needs to provide a cohesive learning environment. These needs were included on the list and felt this was a workable budget for our county. Mr. Bradner shared that when looking at renovations of this magnitude the cost is anywhere from $50 to $75 million. His company also reached out to local contractors and partners to provide a comfortable and true estimate of the total amount. Dr. Carter also shared the difficulty in recruiting new teachers due to the current environment of the high school and asked the commissioners to consider the Board of Education’s request of Option # 1.

Commissioner Owen shared options which would be to consider including this in the election ballots in November as well as review the $16 million that may be available to the county from the State bond.

Chairman Hall asked about the life expectancy of the proposed high school. Mr. Bradner shared the average industry standard requires renovations every 20-25 years especially with energy efficient systems. Chairman Hall noted concerns with the members of both boards not being around and the need to redesign mechanical systems. Will the commissioners be asked to provide additional funding after 25 years which would incur additional tax increases to the tax payers?

Mr. Hatchett shared that we are approaching the 20 year mark for N.L. Dillard Middle School and we currently have 5 years left on the roof warranty. Other expenditures that may occur are chillers, which are expected to be replaced every 20 years.

Mr. Battle shared information regarding the movement to renovate the old Dillard School. The selling point was that at that time it was 50 years old and although there were areas that were in good condition, the needs required building a new school. Mr. Battle noted that Halls 1, 2, & 3 of the high school are 60 years old. The East Wing will soon be in need of a new roof, windows, and HVAC unit.

Chair Garland shared that the Board of Education has tried to cut the needs down to a minimum and asked the support of the Board of Commissioners to consider Option # 1.

Commissioner S. Carter also shared that this option no longer requires a bond as it can be approached from USDA perspective. Dr. Carter also shared that the public may have the perception that this will be an entirely new school and this is not the case. Areas of the school will be renovated with some areas of new construction.

Mr. Teetor shared that when reviewing the general obligation bond it was much too rigorous for a rural county. It was suggested for the Board of Education to look into the USDA and this will provide a much more economical payment. Another advantage is this only requires local government approval. Mr. Teetor expressed concern with the increase of interest rate that could occur the longer it takes to make a decision. Although he realizes the apprehension of not putting this out for voter decision, the Board of Education has tried to make this amount as small as possible for the tax-payers of the county and have looked at all resources including using lottery money. Mr. Teetor shared that a 40-year loan is typical when working with the USDA, referencing that Montgomery County recently used this to consolidate their high schools and build one new school. The regional representative with the USDA is located in Asheboro and most recently worked with Montgomery County in obtaining this loan. He is familiar with the logistics if we are to move forward.

Principal JoAnna Gwynn thanked the commissioners for attending the meeting and shared that the students at the high school are currently working on the “Seven Habits of Highly Effective Leaders” and they do not understand why the money is not available. The current high school situation is not conducive to their learning and to the future of our students. Ms. Gwynn asked for the support of the commissioners and to think about the students when making their decision.

## ADJOURNMENT

At 6:00 p.m. Mr. Gwynn moved, seconded by Ms. Johnson to adjourn the Board of Education meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

At 6:00 p.m. Commissioner B. Carter moved, seconded by Commissioner McVey to adjourn the Board of Commissioners meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Bryan Miller Nathaniel Hall

County Manager Chairman

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*