MINUTES – FEBUARY 12, 2018

The Caswell County Board of Commissioners met with The Caswell County School Board at the Central office boardroom in Yanceyville, North Carolina at 4:30 p.m. on Monday, February 12, 2018. Members present: Nathaniel Hall, Chairman, Rick McVey, Vice-Chairman, Sterling Carter, Jeremiah Jefferies, and Kenneth D. Travis. Also present: The Caswell County School Board Members: Gladys Garland, Sylvia Johnson, Ross Gwynn Jr., Tracy P. Stanley, Gordon Satterfield, Mel Battle, Donna Hudson, Dr. Sandra Carter, Caswell County Schools Superintendent, Connie Kimrey, administrative assistant, Alan Burchette, Bryan Bradner representing Dewberry and Davis, Bryan Miller, county manager, and Ashley Kirby, administrative assistant recorded the minutes. Members absent: David Owen.

CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Garland called the February 12, 2018 school board meeting to order.

Chairman Hall called the Commissioners’ meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

Dr. Carter welcomed everyone. Over this past year, has been in discussion about the needs for a new facility with the staff, maintenance, and the community. And after many trips to other high schools in different counties they have come up with a “wish list” of needs for the new facility. The school board has seen the presentation but would like to have the input of the County Commissioners, and to answer any questions they have. Then introduced the representatives from Dewberry and Davis, Bryan Bradner, and Alan Burchette.

Mr. Bradner stated that the task that was placed upon them was to look at the entire campus and to focus on the academic core. And over the years many buildings have been added on the campus like the east wing, vocational building and the gym. The main academic core the campus halls one, two and three is the original building and it was built in the fifty’s and the building is very out dated. Experts recommend every twenty to thirty years that buildings be updated and with that being said, we are almost sixty years outdated. And they are pleased with the amount of response from the building committee and involvement with everyone from the high school with this project.

Mr. Bradner introduced Mr. Burchette from Dewberry to the board.

Mr. Burchette went over the drawings and plans for the new high school facility. The new two-story building will replace halls, one, two and three the walk ways will be closed in and more fencing around the school for safety, along with many other improvements that are needed to make the campus more up to date. The building process would take place during the school year, so there will be three mobile classrooms that will be placed on campus as showed on the map during the presentation.

Mr. Bradner stated that all of the improvements and ideas are from the feedback that was received from the building committee and the staff. And along with all of the improvements one of the major improvements would be safety.

Mr. Burchette went over that with the new facility that there will be one main entrance and the rest of the campus would be fenced in. So every visitor would have to enter the main office and be checked in. Then proceeded with going over more floor plans and views.

Mr. Burchette referenced to tab five, page one the summary of probable construction cost. Stating that there will be small renovation all over campus to update the other buildings and went over the total construction final cost which would not include furniture.

Dr. Carter asked Mr. Burchette to share about entry far as getting into the facility.Mr. Burchette stated that there will be a keypad entry for staff, there will be gated parking lot entries and these locations will be opened by office staff which will be visible by camera.

Mr. Bradner stated we are thinking of this as a small campus far as setting up security.

Mr. Burchette stated that the main building the front of the building will be all glass which will help with security also because it would make the entry very visible.

Commissioner W. Carter stated that he like the improvement plans far as security.

Mr. Burchette stated that security was one of the main things that the school board stressed that was there main concern.

Dr. Carter stated that all doors on campus would be locked on campus at all times.

Mr. Bradner stated that if someone were to rent part of the facility like the dining hall other parts of the building would be locked.

Commissioner W. Carter questioned if there was going to be a new gym built? Mr. Burchette stated no there would only be improvements to the current gym and went over a list of improvements.

Mrs. Stanley questioned about the relocation of the softball field. Mr. Burchette replied only relocating home plate far as direction of the field and it would make it closer to the concession stand there would be one main entrance and there would be fencing around the whole athletic fields.

Mr. Satterfield questioned about fencing and parking plans. Mr. Burchette showed the plans to the board.

Mrs. Stanley questioned about the security for the walkway to PCC, would there be a gate? Mr. Burchette replied that has not been addressed, but they would look into it and maybe add some emergency call boxes.

Mr. Bradner stated that the most challenging would be the mobile units during the phasing. Mr. Burchette stated also that the mobile units are very costly to rent and showed the board where the construction would set up a site and storage their equipment. And there would be a set time and schedule for the construction that way they will not be all over campus working while school is going on to not cause as many disruptions as possible. Also, there would be a new temporary walkway while construction is going on from the vocational building to the cafeteria.

Dr. Carter asked Mr. Burchette to over the water shed plans. Mr. Burchette replied there would be a pond of some size built to help with the runoff and show the board where the location where the pond would be built. And that in the near future that maybe it could be used for the aquaculture class or other classroom projects.

Mr. Bradner stated that with this project they wanted to do something modern and updated and that we could benefit from it for a long time and would be a real asset.

CommissionerS Carter “I have a handful of questions if you could go back to .02 slide one side point view of the scope looking at the campus. Hmm...that not too long ago I know that the class change from the east wing the building on the left and going to the main building it’s my understanding looking at this you go through the vocational building from the east wing. Mr. Burchette replied and showed from the slide shows the walkways that would be used and that yes they would go that way. Commissioner S Carter stated “So far as security goes students there. You got this fence. Mr. Burchette replied yes there will be decorative fencing in that area. Commissioner S Carter “I’m not saying it’s a bad thing, but do we want a covered walk way in between those two buildings there and enclose that space. Looking at .12 slide show looking at the lightest blue I’m seeing a stair case going down to the library what are those two room up there?” Mr. Burchette replied its part of the library, and it is a two story library. Commissioner S Carter “replied ok that is a part we didn’t discuss and ok.” Mr. Burchette one of the main focuses on the new building is the library, it will be located on the front of the new building. Commissioner S Carter “third far as the canopy outside on the front I was just curious of the width.” Mr. Burchette replied twenty feet, but that could be expanded. Commissioner S Carter stated, “Just think about blowing rain.” “With the gate going behind the building I was just curious if you had another gate on the other side of campus going into the athletic field the one that would drop right through to the office.” Mr. Bradner replied no we do not that is a good point and they will look in to that. Commissioner S Carter “another point we touched on was the gate to PCC, and those would be the three main gates that would have access to campus. Hmm...and you mentioned the pond one last small question far as that forested area goes are we going wipe it all out or keep it all?” Mr. Burchette replied we will keep as many as possible. Commissioner S Carter “And I know that’s a nice part of campus and would like it preserved as much as possible.” Mr. Burchette stated we go over the gates and come up with a better option. Commissioner S Carter “the last thing I had was the car rider line the new configuration of the parking lot there currently sometimes you have over hanging into highway 62. I’m just wondering if there are some thoughts on that.” Mr. Burchette replied we will get a count on the number of car riders the school has on a daily basis, and these are plans we can look in to this and this can be changed. Commissioner S Carter stated, “That’s all I have thank you.”

Chairman Hall questioned what will be the student capacity on the new facility. Mr. Burchette replied same as the current building 832. Dr. Carter stated but projected to hold over a thousand. Mrs. Hudson stated that at one time there were 1,200 students at the high school.

Mr. Satterfield questioned the square footage difference. Mr. Burchette went over the difference that was listed on tab five page three.

Mr. Battle asked Dewberry to go over the current size of the science classrooms that the students have now, and go over the improvements. Mr. Burchette replied that current classrooms are small, and the new improvements the labs will be separate from the classrooms. And they will talk with the staff, and see what they would like right now with the new lay out they are larger than state standards.

Commissioner S Carter “What is he new elevation for the new classroom ceiling?” Mr. Bradner replied ten foot. Commissioner S Carter “stated that’s a lot better that what we have now.”

Dr. Carter stated the new science classrooms would have a contamination shower, and eyewash stations. In the current science classrooms, there is no contamination shower there are eyewash stations, but they are very small.

Mr. Bradner stated with the new facility everything would be updated and more modern. More technology that will allow different teaching options. This Building is a brick, block, and steal building. And looking at most campuses to renovate cost anywhere from fifty million to seventy million then to build a new school anywhere from seventy-five million to one hundred million. Mr. Burchette followed by stating that with the whole renovation for this project whole is forty million.

Commissioner S Carter “I discussed with Dr. Carter more as a luxury idea that the court yard that is there be utilized that as an outdoor classroom space. It’s always been vacant nothing but a few benches just used to transfer to class to class it’s not used much.”

Chairman Hall question if class sizes reduce over the next few years will there still be enough space in the new facility. Mr. Burchette replied yes if reduced substantially you would need to add some space. Dr. Carter stated that is not a limit with the high school more with K-3. Mr. Bradner stated that with the new facility the classrooms are bigger. Dr. Carter stated that with the planning of the new building she had meet with teachers, and media specialist with the classrooms being bigger that would allow the children to break off into small groups.

Mr. Bradner asked if there were any further questions, and there was none.

Mrs. Garland thanked Dewberry for coming.

Chairman Hall questioned when the anticipated start date is. Mr. Bradner replied that it would take 8 months for planning... Dr. Carter questioned that the mobile units are very costly, with that being said could we have the luxury of when to start construction and that the mobile units would not be brought in until August. With that time frame when would construction be complete? Mr. Burchette replied it takes eight to nine months of planning and to pick a contractor. And hopefully construction would be complete by fall 2020.

Recess

Board took a brief recess for dinner.

Discussion on School Bond Referendum and Quarter Cent Sales Tax

Commissioner Travis opened the room by stating that the only way it could be done is by putting the bond as a school bond referendum. Dr. Carter stated that it had been done in the past before, which was the Dillard Middle bond, and it will be paid off in 2021. Commissioner Travis replied if we could not get people to vote for it, it will not pass. Mr. Battle stated we need to give the people an opportunity to vote because this is a onetime deal.

 Commissioner S Carter stated “my only suggestion is that doing research that Dillard bond was a very low vote turn out at that point and time it did pass with a 60% if I am remembering correctly, and my suggestion would be to put it into November general vote you’ll have a higher turn out a better chance in that situation.” Commissioner Travis stated not in this election you will not. Commissioner S Carter “we will have time to do it.” Commissioner Travis stated that you would have a better turn out in the May election because if the sheriff election. Commissioner S Carter “I think voter turnout will be aggressively different in November, the primary has never seen about 40% in this county. November we can hope for 75-80%, and this would give us more time to plan. Dr. Carter agreed.

Commissioner W Carter question about will we be receiving any grants? Dr. Carter replied the deeds to this grant will be according to the state department and right now, we are going to have it available in August and will be applying. Commissioner Travis questioned about the first grant approval. Dr. Carter replied no only one county received the fifty million, that was Jones County, and not all other counties that received partial grants have received their money yet.

Commissioner Travis suggested that he did not think that the sales tax and the school bond should not be put on at one time that it would be too much for the taxpayers, and questioned the board if they thought it would be too much. Commissioner S Carter replied “I understand that, and I agree the twenty five cent is only gonna generate but so much this would allow more people which is more important in my opinion.”

Mrs. Hudson suggested having open house at the High School to allow the public to come in and see the issues, and to publicize this with this public and make them aware. Dr. Carter also suggested giving presentations at PTO meetings to make parents aware.

Chairman Hall stated that this year he is serving on the legislative goals committee, and that on February 7th the committee put together five goals that they will present to the NCACC Board of Directors the week related to the schools. The following are the goals: 1) To seek Legislation to establish a state/county partnership to address statewide public school capital challenges. 2) To seek authority to repeal statutory authority that allows school boards to sue boards of commissioners. 3) To support legislation to provide an overall increase in the funding of schools based on ADM. 4) To support legislation proving flexibility to align K-12 classes with the community college calendar. 5) To seek legislation to repeal K-3 class size mandate. The main things that we want to put emphasis on getting capital schools, aligning school calendars, and digital infrastructure. One thing that was added that was not a goal is to expand Pre-K.

Commissioner W Carter suggested to the school board to educate people and make them aware before putting it on the ballot.

Chairman Hall stated that the school board will not be the one to put it on the county commissioners will. That it is very important that the commissioners, and the school board work closely together. First make a decision make it as timely as possible, and we need to be practical to support our position. If we need a new school, and the sales tax increase we need to support it. It is very important that we work together and make the decisions needed.

Mrs. Hudson stated “they would gladly leave if you all would like to vote.” Commissioner Travis stated they would not be voting today. Commissioner S Carter asked “we don’t have the ability to do that?” Chairman Hall stated no there needed to be further discussions on it before they would vote on this matter, the pros and cons needed to be heard on both matters the school bond and the sales tax. And everyone needed to work together and come to an agreement.

Mr. Battle stated that in 1992 Caswell County closed six schools to build North and South Elementary. The cost was nine million to build both facilities, but the education process was done before the vote. And with the public seeing what was happening with the enrollment with small schools and the issues that is why North Elementary and South Elementary was built. The same process happened with Dillard Middle School, the board hopes that the Commissioners will let the people speak and let them vote. And according to Commissioner S. Carter the sales tax is less than two hundred thousand dollars. Commissioner S Carter replied “I may be wrong…. I was thinking we saw one hundred eighty-four thousand is that right Bryan?” Mr. Miller replied yes. Mr. Battle stated the board could not act without the county commissioners.

 Mrs. Garland thanked Dewberry for coming, for investing time and doing the research they did a great job, and we need everyone to help support the new facility.

Chairman Hall stated that his main discussion is about the sales tax, the only revenue that the county has is property tax. Property owners pay for most of everything that happens in this county, without the sales tax only property owners are the only one bringing in revenue. If the sales tax is approved non-property owners and visitors will support the county. Far as the school bond no matter how much it is it all comes back to the property owners. Mrs. Stanley stated that everyone in this room is property owners.

Chairman Hall stated that school systems around the state high schools are going for sixty to eighty million, if we can get our high school built for forty million we need to take advantage of it and do it for the children. Looking at the report cards if classroom are not big enough or have the equipment needed.

Mrs. Hudson stated that she has interviewed several teachers who would be very excited about working at the high school, but once they see the building, they lose their morale.

Dr. Carter question is it possible to discuss a time frame? Commissioner S Carter questioned, “Could it be added to the next agenda?” Chairman Hall stated it could be added on the next agenda. Commissioner S Carter questioned, “With the quarter cent sales tax I’m being sensitive to how people perused two items like that on the bond referendum associated with…we have yet to determine the use of the quarter cents could be geared toward this project.” Chairman Hall stated I would not vote for a specified sales tax for the schools, that we already have money for the schools the state funding etc. Sounds good to citizens out there but when we look at our other needs we are going to get a fire out of the community if we dedicate everything to the schools even though they need it our hands would be tied. Commissioner W. Carter questioned what about the lottery funding? Dr. Carter replied that is something that we need to check on and the schools do not receive as much lotto fund as the public thinks. Commissioner Travis stated the way they advertise the educational lotto they make the public believe that the schools receive a lot of funding from it, but in all reality, they only receive a small amount. Chairman Hall stated that in the legislative goals in the past three years we have been pushing to receive that funding, if not the full amount at least some percentage.

Dr Carter questioned when the next commissioner is meeting. Commissioner S Carter replied “next Monday.”

Mr. Satterfield stated that one of his main reasons he considered being on the board of education was report cards and test scores. The board runs on limited funds and they have made a significant amount of progress. Caswell County is battling against other counties who give a higher sign on bonuses, we are trying to fill our vacancies by giving sign on bonuses that way our students have teachers. He suggested that everyone go visit the high school and do a walk through. This needs to be pushed to get on the ballot in November, let the people of Caswell County decide what is good for our students, we do not have the funding that other counties do and this needs to be a joint project.

Mrs. Garland thanked everyone for coming and the board would be in contact.

Commissioner S Carter stated, “There is a very kind young lady who has been sitting in the back of the room who has been watching the proceedings the whole time. This again is an issue for the architects, I’m sorry to pull things up but she mentioned a very valid point that haven’t even crossed my mind the students that park in the large parking lot on the left are they going to have to go into the front main building to get into campus when they park their cars.” Mr. Bradner stated no they would use the new closed in corridor between the east wing building and the vocational building.

Adjournment

At 6:16 p.m. Mr. Satterfield moved, seconded by Mrs. Stanley to adjourn.

At 6:16 p.m. Commissioner Travis moved, seconded by Commissioner McVey to adjourn.

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Ashley D. Kirby Nathaniel Hall

Administrative Assistant Chairman