

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF
ROWAN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
ADJOURNED MEETING
OCTOBER 17, 1983

The Board of Rowan County Commissioners met in Adjourned Session in the Community Building on October 17, 1983 at 6:30 p.m. The following members were present: Chairman Hall Steele, Jamima DeMarcus, Harry Sifford, Jim Sides and Jim Cohen.

Chairman Steele called the meeting to order and Commissioner Cohen opened with prayer.

Chairman Steele then declared the Public Hearing open to hear persons who wanted to speak for or against switching from Locke Fire District to Atwell Fire Department. Chairman Steele said Lipe Road was split between the Atwell and Locke fire departments although residents have expressed a desire to remain associated with Atwell. They had submitted a petition to Commissioners asking that they not be made a part of Locke. Chairman Steele said residents may not be aware that they might receive a reduced insurance rate by being in a tax-rated district. Whenever Chairman Steele said this a resident spoke up and said, "he already receives a reduction in the Atwell Fire Department, he has for twenty years."

Speaking for: Raymond Freeze said he was speaking for the thirteen that showed up for the hearing. He said "we have seen so many maps that we are not sure exactly where the lines are drawn!" He said firemen can get to Lipe Road better than Locke firemen because of better roads. He also said Atwell provides some ambulance service.

County Attorney Kluttz said the Lipe Road residents could apply for removal from the district after November 8. According to state statute, the removal would have to be approved by a unanimous vote of Locke's Board and the County Commission.

Chairman Steele said he thought the Locke Board would give Commissioners a letter of intent to allow the removal of the Lipe Road residents after the election; this will come to the Board's December meeting – 1st Monday – December 5, 1983.

Mr. Freeze said he was not opposed to the tax, but the residents have worked hard for Atwell – thru fund raising affairs to get where they are now.

After hearing from everyone who wanted to speak, Chairman Steele declared the Public Hearing closed.

Chairman Steele declared the next session of business to order and opened the public hearing to hear from persons who were for or against the ½ cent sales tax. He said he appreciated the large attendance of concerned people and that he would give them two minutes each to present their feelings, but no decision would be made tonight.

Chairman Steele said the legislation requires that at least 40% of a county's revenue from the ½ cent tax be used for the capital outlay needs of public schools for the first five years. For the next five years, 30% of the revenue would go to the schools. 40% will go for water/sewer improvements in the first five years.

The first to speak in favor of the tax-increase was Dan Hogue, Assistant Principle at West Rowan Senior High School who quoted an article from the October publication of Reader's Digest concerning a case where \$11,000 had been spent educating a man to a higher position and in return had made \$68 million for the company. He said, "we should do something to help our children to receive a better education!"

Next was Marcelle Williams, Chairman Rowan County Board of Education who spoke strongly in favor of the sales tax. Said, "We should move forward that 74 counties have passed it and we should do the same thing. That the County school shave about \$12 million in building needs-school libraries need to be replaced or renovated and buildings need to be constructed as high schools are being used as elementary schools.

John Robinson, member of the City Councilman spoke for Mayor Wiley Lash and the City Council in endorsing the additional tax. Said the sales tax was a fair and equitable means of taxation. Mr. Robinson said the tax would clear up the clear water bond issue and provide for better sewage facilities for the schools.

Marcus Smith, Superintendent of City Schools said the Salisbury Board of Education, its administrative staff and the professional staff of the Parent-Teach Association support the optional sales tax for Rowan County based on the reality that there are multiple needs for capital outlay funds for public schools and the fact that there does not seem to be no other alternative for capital improvement and repair and for expansion. The Salisbury Board of Education asks county commissioners to vote favorably for the public schools for future capital outlay projects.

Ann Fuller, Member of the Salisbury Board of Education and immediate past president of the city wide PTA council said there is no other resource in this county

needed as badly as better education for our children. They are entitled to a better quality of education. “I believe this is the lease you can do for education today”, she commented.

Bill Kenerly, member of the Salisbury Board of Education said funds to meet the requirements of our school system are not available. In recent years, school shave been forced to meet increased federal and state building requirements for the handicapped, health and safety reasons, additional facilities for girls sports, the removal of asbestos and energy conservation. He said the city schools requested \$487,000 in capital outlay funds for 1982-83 and received \$221,506. For this fiscal year, the request was \$599,000 and the schools received \$221,118. He said we needed this sales tax to satisfy the educational needs of our children.

Mrs. Bill (Toni) Kenerly said the PTA supports the sales tax for better educational facilities. The monies collected from the sales tax will the school funding.

Mayor of China Grove, Gilbert Mesimer said his town Board of Alderman sent a letter to County Commissioners to go on record supporting the ½ cent sales tax. He said his town required the sales tax revenue to help pay for sewer improvements. Mr. Mesimer said the town of China Grove was asking to receive their fair share that the State legislation has seen fit to help us with.

Barbara Doby, concerned citizen of China Grove-Rowan County School system said they needed the sales tax for education- that she thought Marcelle William’s had covered their needs and would like for each commissioner to consider the ½ cent sales tax.

Mr. Wade Mobley, Superintendent of Rowan County Schools, said County schools have buried \$3-4 million in water-sewer improvements in the past ten years. He said the schools had to have additional help from some source from the county or from the state and hopes that Rowan County will follow suit.

Jim Carter, South Rowan area, said one school cafeteria had a leak “the children almost have to swim in it on a rainy day and the South Rowan High School represents the areas second newest building. The Junior High School is in bad need of repairs. Lacks an auditorium. Would like to see the county go forward and support the schools and do away with the sales the children having to knock on doors would like to see more revenue so they don’t have to sell door to door.

Melvin Stroud, Jr. – North Rowan Advisor, strongly supports the optional sales tax and asks that county commissioners pass it in their deliberation.

Pastor C.G. Welch, Corriher Lipe PTA member said children are very important- they will be hurt not having the proper help that God had given us these children to look after and care for- the ½ cent sales tax would not hurt us- in providing for the children.

Everette Corriher, Principle of Erwin Junior High School, said he has the newer building in the crescent area. Everyday, he said, the help in the cafeteria had to unload the freezer-loading and unloading-because they have to buy in bulk to save money.

Jonathon Shores – Rowan County School System-Looking at times, he said- the sales tax would be a good investment-He said he hoped that the Commissioners would support the ½ cent optional sales tax.

Brenda Bare- Corriher-Lipe Booster Club- said the Junior High's gymnasium is to small and was built in 1939. She begs that county Commissioners pass the sales tax and do more for the children- to give it to them!

W.F. Owens spoke against the sales tax- saying “he found it ironic that those who stood to benefit from an additional sales tax sat down at the table facing commissioners!” He said “I will stand against it!”

Bill Hodge – said he was not necessarily opposed, but as a citizen of Rowan County he would like for the commissioners that are opposed to a referendum, to tell us why!

Doug McDonald – China Grove- would like for commissioners to give the citizens a change to vote on it and let them decide!

Since there were no more people who wanted to speak, Chairman Steele declared the public hearing closed. He said they would not take any action at this time, but will at the Commissioners next regular meeting in November.

Chairman Steele said he was elected to make decisions and accept the political responsibility for his actions. He said there is no way commissioners can call referendums on every single subject. Those who do not agree with commissioners had the right to campaign and vote against them.

Commissioner Cohen said he found the sales tax to be fair in equitable in principle but added he could not support an additional tax at this time. He said, “we must clean our own house first!”

Commissioner Sides said when a countywide vote on an issue is an option given to Commissioners they should exercise that option. He said “I want to do

what is right for Rowan County!” That the school advocacy groups represented at the hearing should do their own homework for a countywide vote, campaign for the tax’s passage and if it were voted in, he said, “I would be a 100 percent for it!”

There being no further business, Chairman Steele adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brenda L. Honeycutt, Clerk
Board of County Commissioners