

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF  
ROWAN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
ADJOURNED MEETING  
MARCH 18, 1985

The Board of Rowan County Commissioners met in Adjourned Session in the Community Building on March 18, 1985 at 2:00 p.m. The following members were present: Commissioner Jamima DeMarcus, Commissioner Harry Sifford, Chairman Hall Steele, Commissioner Richard Messinger and Commissioner Newton Cohen.

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

Chairman Steele told the members and concerned persons of the two school systems present that he was not clear why the meeting was called, but it would give both boards and Commissioners a chance to indentify the problems.

Marcelle Williams and Carl Eagle with the county system and Reid Leonard and Glen Ketner representing the city school system addressed the Commissioners concerning the proposed school merger.

Mr. Leonard commented that the two school systems did not have a chance to meet to discuss the merger before coming to Commissioners. Chairman Steele told the school board members that the well-being of the children and the county would be the 1st. item of business.

Mr. Leonard said the importance of the merger is how we proceed- he said the county teachers would receive a supplement like the city teachers receive; further commenting that we must achieve State level for the county- expressing the fact that it would take \$366,000.00 to bring County teachers up to City teacher's supplement; also saying County programs and curriculum is the bottom line and that cost.

Commissioner Cohen questioned the funding difference between the two systems and the 56 additional positions that the merger would create.

Commissioner Messinger said this the "meat of the coconut"- he would like to see where the 56 positions would be used, a plan to coordinate the two systems - he asked, "what is the plan"- whether or not to hold a public hearing - he said he did not want to see it just for supplement, he said he wanted details on curriculum and supplement all this should be studied as part of the plan. He further commented that it would be feasible to put \$250,000 in the budget in July for the merger. Chairman Steele said he could not consider an .18 increase in county taxes resulting in a 4.6 million proportion- he said we needed a reasonable program- that we needed curriculum

understood- also that busing was scaring everyone. He raised the question, "do we want the merger"- that has to be addressed- "we could spend a year looking into this".

Mr. Glen Ketner said there has been a misunderstanding on the part of the Commissioners that he knew rumors were "flying" around; but that all that has been discussed between the two committees and boards had all been in good faith; and that #1 it was not their intention to come before the board today asking for money, but to exchange ideas, that he felt like today's meeting was a bit premature, but hoped that it would eliminate rumors. He said they wanted to strive to have the best school system in the State.

Commissioner Sifford mentioned that the planning for the merger should be spread over a period of time; that it could not be accomplished in a year.

Mr. Ketner said the Committees had discussed a long range of planning that this would have to be done in order to achieve goals- that it was clearly understood this needed to be done.

Mr. Eagle, County School System, asked the Commissioners if they were dead serious about the merger. He said, "we are". He said when budget time comes, "we will have something to present to you". Commissioner DeMarcus said, "the merger decision should be made between the two school boards, she said, "you know the school system". "Are we merging or not", is the primary question. "Whether we do this or that" is another.

Commissioner Cohen, concerned about the 56 positions that it would take to bring the County to City curriculum and the federal funding which he said the County would come up short, said, "he could not vote on something we don't have".

Mr. Eagle said supplement was a selling point. He would like to see County teachers on a line as compared to others.

Commissioner DeMarcus said she would like to go on record favoring- "Considering a Supplement".

Mr. Ketner said the initial question, "to merge or not" would not be decided in a vacuum- the issue would be addressed- also programs, supplements, etc.

Chairman Steele said, this Board will take a positive position with a good program and good will and it take a process to get into.

Commissioner Cohen said we might have to put this to the people (referendum) and let them vote.

Mr. Mobley, County School Superintendent, said the feeling that he has derived from the people is they would be opposed to the merger unless the quality of education was improved- he said we need funds to develop programs- "funds are needed".

Commissioner Cohen said there were not enough students to support five high schools, that it would take a lot of study.

Clyde Miller, North Rowan, said his was the smallest high school- that he would be in favor of redistricting in order to have equal amount of students, but he would be opposed unless , he said, "we can keep our high school".

Chairman Steele in closing said, "We have five high schools, with the best of facilities, the question is,"are we going to do without our high schools". He said that "the students education is the main thing".

There being no further business, Chairman Steele adjourned the meeting until Tuesday, March 19 at 1:00 p.m. at that time Commissioners will meet with the three Architects that they had chosen at a previous meeting; in order to award the contract for designing the new Agricultural Building.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda L. Honeycutt, Clerk  
Board of County Commissioners