

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF
ROWAN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
ADJOURNED MEETING
BUDGET HEARINGS
JUNE 23, 1987

The Board of Rowan County Commissioners met in Adjourned Session in the Community Building on June 23, 1987 at 9:00 A.M. The following members were present: Chairman Richard Messinger, Vice-Chairman J. Newton Cohen, Sr., Commissioner George Knox and Commissioner Wilborn Swaim. Absent: Commissioner Jamima DeMarcus.

Chairman Messinger called the meeting to order and called on County Manager who handed out a summary sheet of budget requirements as of June 23, 1987. (attached)

Chairman Messinger commented that Commissioners would need to go into Executive Session later on in the meeting to discuss personnel and landfill.

Chairman Messinger said he had a report to make on a personnel meeting from yesterday, Monday, June 22. He had met with County Manager and Ken Deal, Personnel Director. The subject discussed was reclassification procedures. Chairman Messinger said it was the feeling of the Commissioners that the County Manager was making these reclassification recommendations as a means of getting additional money for employees. He said this was erroneous as he pointed out in a four page report of recommendations as prepared by the County Manager and given to Chairman Messinger. Chairman Messinger said the Personnel Ordinance calls for a one-step increase whenever you have a reclassification. He said they did not approve any reclassifications and if they do it will be a couple of months down the road - that Commissioner DeMarcus was absent today and she is a member of the Personnel Committee and he felt like she would approve of his decision.

Chairman Messinger had given each Commissioner a copy of a memo on Pupil Assignment Study for Merged School System. Mr. Messinger had visited the Research Triangle Institute and had talked with Dr. John Pyecha who said he could show us how to undertake a study, but would not do the study, that we would have to go to an outside agency. Mr. Messinger recommends that we proceed to retain Research Triangle Institute for our study at a cost of \$40-50,000 to Rowan County subject to agreement with Dr. Pyecha on details and procedures. He will come to Salisbury and meet with us or our committee before the deal is closed. Mr. Messinger recommends taking the \$50,000 from money budgeted for merger.

County Manager had drafted a letter to the School Boards listing conditions that were suggested at Commissioners last meeting that they had asked them to accept. Mr. Russell read from the letter that the Commission feels strongly that any effort undertaken should have every opportunity to succeed. Therefore, several important factors should be considered. First, the professional consultant selected should not be affected by any internal or external force. The results should reflect an independent opinion and a recommended plan for merger of the school districts. Secondly, the results of the study will be directly affected by the overall scope of services to be rendered by the contractor. No party to be affected by the study should have any more influence over addressing the scope than any other party. Last of all, the recommendations in the consultant's plan should be acceptable by both school boards, not qualified or subject to rejection based on a party's reluctance will change a revision, therefore, the Commission is very interested and willing to appropriate funds to undertake the study, however, the Commission wishes to be a direct party to the contract and the scope of the services to be rendered will be developed jointly by the joint school merger committee and the County Commission will be responsible for communicating with the consultant and periodic progress reports will rest with the Commission. The report will be addressed to the Commission with the Commission being solely responsible for the Consultant's performance of the contracted services.

Commissioner Cohen commented that Rowan Technical Institute has computer capabilities to put results of this study on disc; and also that he would be willing to let the people vote on merger.

Chairman Messinger said, these comments are not "written in stone", but said, "the study will be made by the end of the year and presented to both school boards". "A committee will take a vote next spring on the basis of the study; and that implementation of pupil assignment will be put off for two or three years, and that late in 1988, it will be entertained that application for a new superintendent be advertised." "Organization of the system should start July 1, 1989."

Commissioner Knox made a motion to follow the recommendation of the Chairman to retain Research Triangle Institute for the study of our two school systems for the possibility of merger, not to exceed \$50,000, to come from merger account, and Commissioner Swaim asked if Commissioner Knox would incorporate in his motion, to send the two school boards a letter of our intent, asking for their commitment to accept the recommendations of this study, which Commissioner Knox accepted and Commissioner Cohen said he would support the motion if it were added not to bypass the people's referendum. The motion was voted on unanimously.

Discussion followed concerning the school's budget and what had been appropriated. Commissioner Knox commented that he would like to see the supplement appropriated since the morale of the teachers were up because of the anticipation of it. Chairman Messinger said they could not make any decisions of this nature today since Commissioner DeMarcus was not there.

County Manager informed Commissioners that Mrs. Jean Ramsey had exhausted all her funds in her existing Register of Deeds budget and that Commissioners would need to approve an additional \$3,420 in order for her to pay for supplies already ordered. After much discussion, Commissioner Knox stated a motion that it was very imperative that all facets of local government abide by the policies as set forth whether they be department heads, political or appointed that they follow the procedures of expenditures in purchasing as described by policy. Commissioner Cohen seconded amending the motion to add to pay the bill out of next year's contingency budget. The motion was accepted and approved unanimously.

Commissioner Knox made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss Personnel and Landfill. Commissioner Swaim seconded with unanimous approval.

Commissioner Swaim made a motion to come out of Executive Session and back into Regular Session. Commissioner Knox seconded with unanimous approval.

No action was taken while in Executive Session.

Commissioners discussed an additional allocation for the school system.

Commissioner Knox said he felt like our schools and our youth were our greatest assets; and that industry looks upon an area and asks, "what about the school system"?

Chairman Messinger said he had talked with the County Attorney about whether or not he as Chairman was supposed to vote and that the Attorney had advised him to. In the past the Chairman had only been voting when he had to.

Chairman Messinger commented that he would not vote for anything more than a 4% increase for the schools, but would be in favor of an additional capital allocation for the City School System.

Commissioner Swaim made a motion to increase the expenditures to the schools in the amount that would increase the tax rate to an even three cents (\$150,000) after consideration of other budget adjustments. Commissioner Knox seconded. The motion died with Commissioner Cohen and Chairman Messinger voting against.

Commissioners went through the budget again looking for more ways to decrease the tax rate:

County Manager recommended that since Commissioners did not increase their salary in essence of 1 1/2 % that they retain the \$15 per extra meeting with their travel allowance. Chairman said they had already justified their travel by increasing it from \$1200 a year to \$1500 a year. Commissioner Swaim and Cohen said they did not submit an in-county travel allowance. Mr. Cohen asked the County Manager how much in-county travel was turned in a month. Mr. Russell said from \$60-\$80. Commissioner Cohen made a motion to reduce travel allowance from \$1,500 to \$1,000 a year. Commissioner Swaim seconded. The motion dying with Commissioner Knox and Chairman Messinger voting NO. Commissioner Knox made a motion that we follow County Manager's recommendation of \$1500 a year. Commissioner Swaim seconded. The motion passing with Commissioner Cohen voting against and Chairman Messinger voting For.

Commissioner Knox made a motion that we give the National Guard \$500.00. Commissioner Swaim seconded with unanimous approval.

Commissioner Cohen moved that we cut back to \$2500 from \$4000 funding for the Army Aviation Flight Facility. His motion died for the lack of a second.

Chairman Messinger informed Commissioners that Gail Pipkin, United Arts Council had expressed an interest in buying the old Post Office. He said she might be able to receive grant money.

Commissioners agreed to leave Tourism in but; Commissioner Cohen said next year, he would not support it without municipality support.

In the Sheriff's budget, Commissioners discussed overtime pay for deputies at the Rowan County Fair, Parades and unanticipated Emergencies. Commissioner Cohen said Rowan County was leasing space at the Rowan County Fairgrounds from the Salisbury Jaycees for \$1.00 a year. He further commented that this was done many years ago when they were building and developing the fair and now, if the Sheriff is going to have to pay over-time pay to put deputies at the fair, we need to address our lease with the Fair Association or else have the Sheriff to collect the cost of this over-time pay from the Fair Association because they are financially stable now, they have large sums of money coming in, they are doing good in and for the community but they are also paying public expenses out of fair proceeds. County Manager said it was his understanding from June

Bost that the Fair Association is negotiating some type of compensation payable to the Sheriff to pay over-time for deputies.

Commissioner Knox said he felt some funds should be left in over-time salaries for the Sheriff. Commissioner Cohen made a motion to reduce the Sheriff's line item for over-time salaries by \$2,000 leaving \$6,000 in the budget. Commissioner Swaim seconded with unanimous approval.

Commissioner Swaim made a motion to fund the Trainable Class-line item #5911-634 by 8% giving them \$47,520. Commissioner Knox seconded with unanimous approval.

Commissioner Cohen informed Commissioners that Southern Bell was in the process of installing the equipment in the new building.

Commissioner Cohen reported that bids for the Library construction were 5% over the budget due to the stairwell, which is the focal point of the Library; but since that time an anonymous donor has given \$250,000 as a challenge gift. He will donate \$250,000 if they can get \$250,000 from the community which they feel like they can.

Commissioners worked through the rest of the budget and were informed by the Finance Director that they had increased the tax rate by 2.5 cents to 48 cents.

Commissioners adjourned until June 29 at 7:00 P.M. At that time, they will hold a Public Hearing on the budget to receive any comments from the public.

Chairman Messinger announced that the next regular meeting of the Commissioners will be held on July 7 at 1:00 P.M. and that the same night at 7:00 P.M. will hold a public hearing on Hazardous Waste.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda L. Honeycutt, Clerk
Board of County Commissioners