

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
ROWAN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
MAY 25, 1998- 7:00 P.M.
EAST ROWAN HIGH SCHOOL, SALISBURY, NORTH CAROLINA

PRESENT: Jim Neely, Chairman
J. Newton Cohen, Vice-Chairman
Steve Blount, Member
Dave Rowland, Member
Frank Tadlock, Member

Members of the Board of Education in attendance were Rev. Stan Welch, Betty Starr, Karen Carpenter, Vick Bost, Eldridge Williams (7:45) as well as school staff.

Chairman Neely called the meeting to order and introduced Larry Parks to serve as moderator of the meeting.

Mr. Parks discussed the ground rules for the meeting and told the audience that Boards were present to hear input from the public and not to debate the issue or get into a question and answer session. He urged the audience to contact the proper office if they should have a question about the proposed funding plan.

Mr. Russell was then given ten minutes to present the County Proposal to determine the level of funding for the schools. He reviewed the current expense and capital plan. Mr. Russell also discussed the sources of revenue that might be used to meet the funding demands.

Howard Hurt with the Salisbury/Rowan Schools, then made his ten minute presentation on the needs of the schools and how they proposed to use the \$3.2 million increase they were requesting.

Mr. Parks then opened the floor for public comment and the following citizens addressed the Boards:

1. Rev. Darrell Norris – asked the Board of Commissioners to make K-12 education the top priority adding that they should feel compelled to fund the schools at the state average immediately.
2. Tim Ludwig- stated that Erwin had nine teachers with no classrooms and stated that the Board’s emphasis needed to be placed on education rather than business.
3. Frank Merrill- stated that the two bond issues that were passed were too little too late and the schools and county needed better planning for facility needs.
4. Marsha Tucker – stated that there were many students with learning disabilities in the school system and they needed intensive tutoring rather than retention to help these students.
5. Phyllis Fisher – read a poem about a child with learning disabilities and stated the increased funding for the schools was needed.
6. Regina Rogers – supported per pupil appropriations and stated she would do whatever it would take to provide the increase. She also read statistics comparing U.S. students to those of foreign nations.
7. Gary Manso- stated that the quality of the schools would be a continual concern for business looking to locate to this region and added that he supported the funding plan even if it meant an increase in taxes.
8. Ralph Walton – stated he hoped the funding decision had not already been made by the Board of Commissioners and that they will listen to the public input.
9. Kathy Farris- stated she supported increased funding for the schools and discussed the various types of students in the system today and the difficulties the variations present.
10. J. M. Stablo- stated the Board should not be talking about average, but above average funding adding that students with average grades would not make it in college.
11. Derwood Puckett- referenced the use of the school voucher system and stated that the Board needed to look at the whole picture and should not discriminate against private and homeschools.
12. Mike Lippard – stated he has seen some weaknesses in the schools but was concerned the facilities needed improvements and would be willing to support the increase funding effort.
13. Ann Heard – stated she supported additional funding and stated that Erwin needed a resource officer and drug counselor.
14. Cindy Gordon – stated that in order to achieve academic improvements the real problems with children must be addressed and parents must be responsible for their children’s behavior.
15. Dennis Ingold – asked the Board to aim for higher than average.
16. Steve Stayton- said that the schools needed quality people and they must have competitive salaries to attract and maintain good teachers. Supported increased funding.

17. Barbara Ipson – asked the Board to address the substance abuse problem in the schools and asked for a resource officer and counselor at Erwin as well as a DARE follow through program.
18. Doug Shelton – said he was not thrilled about paying more taxes but was willing to do so to make improvements. Added that the County needed accountability for the money spent.
19. Rebecca Corriher Daugherty – referenced the 2.0 requirement for class of 1999 graduates to receive a diploma instead of a certificate.

There being no further business, Mr. Parks thanked everyone for their input and their attendance and adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelly Dickinson, CMC
Clerk to the Board