

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
ROWAN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
CALLED – APRIL 16, 1999 – 2:30 P.M.
COMMISSIONER’S MEETING ROOM, ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

PRESENT: Frank Tadlock, Vice-Chairman
Steve Blount, Member
Arnold S. Chamberlain, Member

ABSENT: J. Newton Cohen, Chairman
Dave Rowland, Member

The County Manager, Clerk to the Board, County Attorney, Finance Director, Director of Administration were also present.

Vice-Chairman Tadlock called the meeting to order for the purpose of meeting with judicial officials and Architect Bill Burgin to discuss Courthouse space needs. The judicial officials present were: District Attorney Bill Kenerly, District Court Judge Charlie Brown, District Court Judge Anna Mills Wagoner, Clerk of Court Jeff Barger, Superior Court Judge Larry Ford, Probation Supervisor Wayne Kinney, Sheriff George Wilhelm, Dean Combs, and Tim Bost.

Mr. Russell reviewed the process staff had been working through to deal with the additional needs of court space and parking. He then turned the meeting over to Bill Burgin, Architect.

Mr. Burgin stated that he had met with all of the judges in order to get an idea of their needs in the expansion and construction of additional court space. He reviewed the several phases they had developed trying to incorporate the various requests from the judicial officials.

Mr. Russell discussed establishing a priority list for the needs in the courthouse in order to develop a timeline for those things that needed to be funded first.

Judge Ford stated that if the probation unit was moved from the Courthouse it would solve two immediate problems. First the round courtroom could be used and secondly, the employ courtroom on the first floor could be used for office space for the Clerk of Court.

The group discussed the assignment of a new district court judge to Rowan County and the need for a new courtroom for district court.

The use of the old law library space was discussed and the possibility of using it for a courtroom. After lengthy discussion it was decided that perhaps it would be best to move probation into the old law library space and refurbish the round courtroom for court use.

Judge Wagoner and Judge Brown stated that the round courtroom would fine for an immediate solution but they would not want to use it on a long term basis. Judge Brown noted that it may not be necessary for all of the proposed courtrooms to have jury boxes, since most civil courts were held without them.

Commissioner Blount suggested the following time frame for projects at the courthouse: Provide temporary renovations to the law library for probation, Upfit the round courtroom for use, renovate the Home Town building, Upfit the second floor courtspace, move probation to the renovated Home Town building, and renovate the law library to a jury pool room.

Bill Kenerly added that the Clerk of Court was in desperate need of space and he felt that should be handled before the jury pool room.

Several members again noted that if the round courtroom and the proposed two new courtrooms were completed, the first floor courtroom could be turned over for expansion of the Clerk's office.

Commissioner Tadlock discussed the use of the basement for possible office location. Commissioner Chamberlain agreed that he would like the basement to remain in consideration for office space and he felt the small courtroom on the first floor was a natural fit for expansion of the Clerk's office.

Sheriff George Wilhelm told the Board that he needed new jail pods because some of the pods now had broken beds and other had structural damage caused by inmates and could not be used.

After lengthy discussion with the Commissioners and staff, Commissioner Chamberlain asked Ken Deal to do whatever necessary to have the holes in the jail cells fixed and to determine if maintenance requests had been submitted for the repair.

Judge Ford thanked the Board for meeting with judicial officials and trying to solve the immediate and long term needs of the courthouse.

Vice-Chairman Tadlock thanked everyone in attendance and adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelly Dickinson, CMC
Clerk to the Board