

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
ROWAN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
APRIL 3, 2000 – 9:00 A.M.
COMMISSIONER’S MEETING ROOM, ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**

Present: J. Newton Cohen, Chairman
Steve Blount, Vice-Chairman
Frank Tadlock, Member
Arnold Chamberlain, Member
Dave Rowland, Member

The County Manager, Clerk to the Board, County Attorney and Finance Director were present.

Chairman Cohen called the meeting to order. Commissioner Tadlock provided the Invocation and Commissioner Blount led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA:

- Commissioner Blount stated, since there are many people present who wish to address the schools redistricting issue, he would like for the Commissioners to discuss this before the Public Comment Period so everyone will know where the Commissioners stand on this issue.
- Commissioner Blount wished to address the recent issue of the bumper stickers, which have been placed on the Rowan County Sheriff’s vehicles.

- Commissioner Blount wanted to change the date for the dinner meeting invitation, received from EDC, since there is a conflict of interest for the Commissioners.
- Commissioner Rowland wished to discuss the current road situation in Rowan County.

ADDITIONS: SCHOOL REDISTRICTING:

Commissioner Blount stated that the Board of Commissioners does not support the recent Rowan-Salisbury Schools redistricting plan, which was passed by the School Board on March 21, 2000. Commissioner Blount made reference to a recent letter he wrote, which appeared in the previous Sunday edition of the Salisbury Post. In this letter, Commissioner Blount addressed strong concerns received from citizens and also offered three suggestions, which the Board of Commissioners have endorsed.

Commissioner Chamberlain expressed to those in attendance that he did endorse Commissioner Blount's letter and stated "Bravo" to Commissioner Blount in support of the letter.

Commissioner Rowland informed those in attendance that the Board of Commissioners are not responsible for this redistricting plan. Many rumors have been surfacing blaming the Commissioners for this decision. Commissioner Rowland strongly stated that he did not approve of the process the School Board used to pass this plan. Commissioner Rowland emphasized that the citizens were blind-sided by this process and voiced his concern about the affect this will have on future school bonds. Commissioner Rowland acknowledged his support of Commissioner Blount's letter stating, with humor, that this is the first time that "all" the Commissioners have supported a letter written by Commissioner Blount.

Commissioner Tadlock expressed his concern for the status of the Southeast Middle School construction. Commissioner Tadlock has visited the site and spoke with the contractor and is concerned that the school is not close to being completed in time for school to resume this fall.

Chairman Cohen addressed the public that the Board of Commissioners are "Friends of Education". Chairman Cohen stated that he wanted the funding to go into the "classroom" and not to go into "administration". Chairman Cohen expressed that he wants what is best for Rowan County and that the Board of Commissioners have the authority to approve capital projects.

Chairman Cohen made a motion to accept Commissioner Blount's letter and to forward a copy to the School Board. Commissioner Chamberlain seconded and the vote passed unanimously.

CONSIDERATION OF THE CONSENT AGENDA:

Commissioner Tadlock moved to approve the Consent Agenda as submitted. Commissioner Blount seconded and the motion carried.

The Consent Agenda consisted of the following:

- A. To approve the March 8, 2000 and the March 20, 2000 minutes.
- B. To set a Public Hearing for Z-06-00 RR to CBI (CUD), requested by Grady Holshouser.
- C. To approve Budget Amendments.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

Chairman Cohen opened the Public Comment Period. Those in attendance who wished to address the Board and speak about the schools redistricting were as follows:

1. Lisa Graczyk is a resident of the Providence County development, which is being moved from the east district to the north district. Ms. Graczyk asked the Board "why"? Ms. Graczyk supports the letter written by Commissioner Blount. She also expressed that she wants the school board to receive a message that if this redistricting passes, there will be no windfall of money going toward the schools.
2. David Aycoth read from a prepared statement, seeking support from the Board in curtailing the School Boards redistricting plans. Mr. Aycoth cited concerns of the new Southeast Middle School not being complete for the start of the 2000-2001 school year. He cited the effect of academics and athletics in the West Rowan area, if this plan goes through. Mr. Aycoth questioned the procedural irregularities of the School Board in voting on this current proposal. He discussed projected population growth data in the proposed areas, as well as diversity and socio-economic equalization.
3. Susan Allen addressed the Board as a parent in one of the "pocket communities" from South Rowan. She stated that the maps, which showed the borders, were taken down immediately after the March 21st School Board decision and therefore, parents were not able to review these maps and many are still confused about the school boundaries.

4. Dr. Ada Fisher, Rowan-Salisbury School Board member, spoke to the Board stating that nothing has happened “per say” to change her sentiments on the way she voted on the redistricting plan. She stated that she has asked the Superintendent to present a plan, at the next school board meeting, recommending a bi-partisan committee to study redistricting now and in the future. She mentioned that, because of funding and the law, the children with special needs are not receiving all they need. Dr. Fisher mentioned that she went to the community to be sure she heard from the people. North, Salisbury, North Middle and Knox Middle have the economically disadvantaged children. She feels vision is lacking in the community. The schools that have the most problems have the largest number of black students. Dr. Fisher expressed that we need to help the “lest of our brothers as well as those more vocally and economically affluent”.

Commissioner Blount thanked Dr. Fisher for coming and speaking.

Chairman Cohen stated that it is not fair to “rob one school for another”.

Commissioner Chamberlain acknowledges his approval of a bi-partisan committee to study the redistricting, but questioned why this committee did not come “before” the vote to redistrict.

Commissioner Rowland expressed that people buy homes in the location of the schools, which they want their children to attend. He strongly expressed that this plan was “forced” and people had no chance to look at the plan. The school board still has no idea who it affects.

Chairman Cohen closed the Public Comment Period and stated that anyone who wished to speak concerning the school redistricting may return and be heard after the Commissioners have completed the items on the agenda.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR CUP-02-00 FOR THE EXPANSION OF BASS LAKE CAMPGROUND, REQUESTED BY FRED NEELY:

Marion Lytle, from the planning department, gave a review of this case to the Board, stating that a request had been received for approval of 16 additional sites within an existing development, which was established prior to zoning.

Chairman Cohen opened the public hearing. There being no one in attendance who wished to address the Board, Chairman Cohen closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Blount made a motion to approve this expansion. Commissioner Rowland seconded and the motion carried by a unanimous vote.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR A NEW ROAD TO BE NAMED RUGER STREET:

Fredda Greer, from the planning department, reviewed with the Board that a petition was received by staff to name an unnamed private road, which runs west off of the 800 block of Coley Road. County procedures and policies were followed. Staff recommends that the name Ruger Street be approved.

Chairman Cohen opened the public hearing. There being no one in attendance who wished to address the Board, Chairman Cohen closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Chamberlain made a motion to approve the name Ruger Street. Commissioner Tadlock seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH FOR MARCH AND APRIL:

Leslie Earnhardt, Finance Director, expressed to the Board that Vicki McCombs has been named Employee of the Month for April. She informed the Board that Vicki has been an invaluable employee of Rowan County for 20 years. She recently received a *Local Government Finance Officer Certificate* for completing courses, which include accounting, budgeting, financial planning, investment, and financial management.

Phil Barton, Library Director, expressed that Kevin Cherry has been selected as the Employee of the Month for March. Kevin has been an employee for five years and is an established leader in Rowan County for local history. Mr. Cherry recently received an award from NCACC, and in addition received national recognition, for a World War II Oral History Program.

Chairman Cohen congratulated Vicki and Kevin and presented them with Employee of the Month Certificates.

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE LIBRARY BOARD FOR THE PURCHASE OF THE NEW SOUTH ROWAN REGIONAL LIBRARY:

Carole Brooke, Library Board Chairman, recognized the Library Board members, which were in attendance. She reviewed with the Board the process for selecting a site for the new regional library facility in the South

Rowan area. The search effort resulted in seven (7) sites for consideration by a site selection committee, consisting of members of the library board. This committee is recommending a site adjacent to the South Rowan YMCA for the new library, to include over six (6) acres, which would hold a 20,000 square foot facility, including parking. The library board voted unanimously to recommend this site.

Commissioner Rowland ask if this recommended area was in a flood plain and he also asked about the cost. Ms. Brooke responded that about 1 acre was in a flood plain and is not sure of an amount at this time. Commissioner Rowland stated that he would like to know a price and he would also like to see other sites before making an approval.

Commissioners agreed to accept this presentation as information and to have a work session to discuss the proposal further.

Phil Barton acknowledged that the library board had worked very hard and taken this task very serious in presenting their recommendation.

ACCEPTANCE OF A BID FOR A NEW IMAGING SYSTEM FOR THE REGISTER OF DEEDS OFFICE:

Leslie Earnhardt gave an overview of the bid process for the Register of Deeds Automated Register of Deeds System. Nine bids were mailed out and three bids were received. Staff is recommending to approve the bid from Lason for \$129,000.00. The bids received were as follows:

\$129,000.00	Lason Systems
\$195,433.00	Hart Info Services
\$ 59,400.00	DDSI

David Boling, Information Systems Director, and Bobbie Earnhardt, Register of Deeds, and a representative from Lason Systems, were present to answer any questions that the Commissioners would have.

Commissioners expressed approval that this new system will give continuity and bring Rowan County into the 21st Century with the capabilities of worldwide access.

Commissioner Rowland made a motion to approve the new system. Commissioner Blount seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH:

Commissioner Chamberlain began this presentation by reading from a plaque, which hangs on the wall in the Commissioner's meeting room. The plaque reads, that in 1997, community leaders selected the first of April to *forever* remember the children of Rowan County and to review the child abuse prevention network.

Sandra Wilkes, Social Services Director, stated that since 1983, the month of April has been observed as Child Abuse Prevention Month. She cited statistics from last year, that 114,000 children, from across the state, were victims of child abuse or neglect, and that 23 children, under the age of three, died. The Rowan County DSS receives approximately 175 reports of child abuse/neglect per month. There has been a seven percent increase in child abuse/neglect cases across the state since 1975. The increase is due to drug abuse, domestic violence, and the general devaluing of human life. Ms. Wilkes stated that reporting child abuse/neglect, as well as child abuse prevention, is everyone's responsibility. Ms. Wilkes informed the board of numerous events, during April, that will take place for Child Abuse Prevention.

Ms. Wilkes presented the Commissioners with Child Abuse Prevention T-Shirts and explained that the XX-size shirts did not relate to their physical size, but rather their size in authority and power.

Chairman Cohen called for a break at 10:45 a.m.

Chairman Cohen reconvened the meeting at 11:00 a.m.

UPDATE ON THE I-85 STUDY:

Marion Lytle presented an overview of the *northern portion* of the I-85 corridor study. Mr. Lytle reminded the Commissioners of a moratorium on subdivisions, approved on February 21, 2000 for duration of 90 days, until May 20, 2000. Staff was directed to determine a specific area to protect for economic development.

Mr. Lytle presented an analysis of this area by showing a series of maps illustrating land use, geography, transportation, public facilities, soils and study sub areas.

Mr. Lytle stated that workshops would be conducted, with mailings going out to all those residents affected by a rezoning to industrial.

Commissioner Blount made a motion to have staff proceed with scheduling a public workshop and contacting area landowners. Commissioner Chamberlain seconded the motion. Commissioner Rowland verified that

public hearings would still be conducted. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS:

The Board approved the following:

Industrial Facilities & Pollution Control Financing Authority:

The following were reappointed:

- Mr. Dwight Fraley
- Mr. John Fisher

Criminal Justice Partnership Board:

- Toni L. Shope's appointment was deferred until someone from Rowan County could be selected to replace Amy Anderson whose term will expire on June 30, 2000.

City of Salisbury ETJ Planning Board Member:

The following was approved for reappointment to serve on this board:

- Elaine Stiller

City of Salisbury ETJ Alternate for ZBA:

The following were approved to serve on the ZBA:

- Allen Brown
- Yvonne Tracey

Rowan County Nursing Home Advisory Committee:

The following was reappointed to serve on this committee:

- Ms. Betty Sunding

Rowan County Special Populations Board:

The following appointments were made:

- Mrs. Scott Rhodes was reappointed to serve another term.
- Dr. Patricia Whitley was appointed to serve a first term.

- Edwin Martin was reappointed to serve another term.
- Darryel Scism was reappointed to serve another term.

West Rowan Fire District Commissioners:

The following were appointed to serve on the West Rowan Fire District Commission to be effective July 1, 2000.

- Eddie Poteat
- Kenneth Williams
- Bill Scoggins

BUMPER STICKERS:

Commissioner Blount voiced concern regarding the recent publicity of bumper stickers appearing on county owned vehicles. Commissioner Blount asked to have staff devise a policy that does not allow the use of county vehicles or county materials for advertising, without the Board's approval.

ROWAN COUNTY ROADS:

Commissioner Rowland strongly expressed that, for two years, he has been addressing the fact that the roads in Rowan County are the worst roads in the state. Commissioner Rowland expressed his confusion over "why" this has happened and with a DOT board member living here in Rowan County. He stated that citizens think that the Commissioners are responsible for road construction and repair. Commissioner Tadlock questioned "why" this is the second unfavorable rating Rowan County has had concerning the conditions of county roads.

Chairman Cohen explained that there is a formula used which favors the eastern part of the state more than the western part of the state. The number of miles of roads will determine the amount of funds which will be received.

Commissioner Rowland made a motion to send a letter of displeasure, over the conditions of our roads, to our Legislators, Public Officials, DOT, Governor, Lt. Governor and State Auditors. Commissioner Chamberlain seconded the motion. Chairman Cohen expressed that he wished to add to this list, our future Commissioner of Agriculture, Frank Tadlock. Commissioner Chamberlain expressed his astonishment in naming Highway 70 after Jim Graham, referring to the conditions of this road as being "atrocious". The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Chairman Cohen stated that this completes the agenda for this meeting and would now entertain comments from the public on school redistricting.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON SCHOOL REDISTRICTING:

The Clerk called the following citizens forward to speak:

1. Debby McCoy, a resident of Neel Estates, expressed her concern that, although her children were not involved in being redistricted, they would be greatly affected by this proposal. Her concern is for her child who is a rising “honors” freshman at West Rowan High School (WRHS). Since a large number of the students being redistricted to Salisbury High are “honors” students, this would have an impact on the number of “honors” and “AP” classes, which could be offered at WRHS.
2. Jackie Meseroll, a resident of Homestead Hills, expressed her appreciation to the Commissioners for “listening” to the concerns from parents. She voiced her concern that one-third of the parental participation, athletics, and academic achievers will leave the West area and go to Salisbury. She stated her concern of having two children attending two different High Schools and the stress of being involved in different schools. Ms. Meseroll asked why “grandfathering” of “families” is not being addressed.
3. Chris O-Guin, resident of Mt. Hope Church Road, expressed that the school board is not listening and not returning calls to parents and students, who would be losing a sense of community with the redistricting. He stated that children would be passing each other going to different schools, if this plan goes through. Children, parents and education will suffer. “Do we want our educational system in the same condition as our roads”? He stated that the school board’s response to children losing friends is “they can make new ones”. The school board’s response to families relocating is “let them, there is nothing we can do about it”. Mr. O-Guin asked for the Board’s help.
4. Duane Richardson, who resides in the Southeast Middle School district, considers this plan “ludicrous”. Mr. Richardson expressed his concern that, when the new middle school opens, there will be no cafeteria, no library, no equipment and no facility for athletics, and no band program. He expressed his concern over the quality of teachers at the new middle school. Mr. Richardson questioned, if the new Southeast Middle School, meets the “safety occupation and

awareness” standards, from the NC Department of Education Safety Program. He voiced his concern of the county’s liability if accidents should occur because this facility is not ready. Mr. Richardson stated, “be prepared” and make a move that will last.

Commissioner Chamberlain asked everyone to stand that agreed with what Mr. Richardson just said. Mostly everyone in attendance stood. Chairman Cohen asked everyone to stand that was present earlier in the morning during the Public Comment Period. A large number of those present stood.

Chairman Cohen asked that everyone who wished to speak, to please hold his or her comments to three minutes and asked the Clerk to hold her hand up at the three minute mark.

5. Harold Stover is a resident of the Waters Edge development, which was in the east district and is now proposed to be in the north district. He voiced his opinion concerning the poor planning by the school board in the redistricting proposal. His concern was for his son, which is a rising sixth grader, who will now go to North Middle. The north district has the lowest test scores in the county. Mr. Stover expressed no confidence in the school board and he questioned what happened with the bond referendum, which was to expand Morgan Elementary School.
6. David Boling is a resident of Providence Country development, which will be moved from the east to the north district. He does not see how moving 10 or 20 children will help with the overcrowded situations in the schools. He expressed his concern about moving his children from a community and friends, which they have already developed. Mr. Boling stated that, Dr. Fisher said that we would have to follow through with this plan and then come up with a good one. He does not feel that children should be moved and then come up with a good plan.

Commissioner Rowland asked those in attendance, to please stand, if the school district was a factor in the purchase of their home. A large number of people in the audience stood, one of which expressed that it was the number one priority.

7. Larry Crowell, a resident on Neel Road, spoke on his concerns about academics. The number of AP courses offered at WRHS are dependent upon the number of qualified students. Mr. Crowell informed the Board that 40 percent of the Academically Gifted (AG) students at WRHS live on Highway 150, which is being redistricted to Salisbury High. He expressed that this would be disastrous for WRHS

and made a reference to a letter, written by the staff at WRHS, which reiterated this fact.

8. Julie Gainer, currently in the WRHS area, expressed that she has lost faith in the school board because of the lack of planning and the lack of *long range* planning in approving the redistricting plan. This plan would be taking resources from one school and sending them to another.
9. Marla Trosper resides in the Glen Heather Community, off Highway 150. She has three children who will be attending three different schools because of the redistricting. Ms. Trosper stated that her family chose a church because of the “Youth” program and wanted her children to attend a school with the same friends from church. Her family moved into the Rowan County area specifically to be in the West Rowan school district and with this redistricting plan, there would be no pull to keep her family in Rowan County.
10. Bruce Kolkebeck, a resident in the West Rowan school district area, comically addressed the board that he was late because he was registering his children at Salisbury High School. He focused back to the fact that this was not a laughing matter. He has two sons, which will be attending two different High Schools. Mr. Kolkebeck expressed that there is still time to work this out and that parents need to be consulted in the redistricting.

Commissioner Chamberlain made a reference to a letter, which the Commissioners received previously from Mr. Kolkebeck, where he asked the Commissioners to please say “it ain’t so”. Commissioner Chamberlain expressed “it ain’t so”.

11. Terry Hill explained to the Board that, although the school redistricting does not affect him, he is very concerned about the children being moved from the east district to the north district. He stressed that there is an area on Bringle Ferry Road where one side of the road will attend the east schools and the other side will attend the north schools. He expressed the importance of keeping communities together. Mr. Hill stated that, if this plan goes through, there would be no prayer of passing future school bond referendums. He explained that the Morgan school area is a community that does not believe in the government feeding them.
12. Ed Connelly addressed the Board out of concern for his grandchildren, which will be affected by the school redistricting. He asked the Board

to check about reverting back to a separate City and County school system.

13. Darlene Boling, a resident of Providence Country development and spouse of David Boling, who previously addressed the Board, expressed that she did not understand this redistricting plan. Her children have developed a community that provides support. Ms. Boling stated that her family's church is also in the east school district. Out of the eleven students at Granite Quarry School, which will be redistricted, three of these children are hers and she does not see how these numbers will solve anything.
14. Lisa Graczyk readdressed the Board to add that she has visited the schools and by April 27th, her child has to pick electives and she is concerned about the possibility of her child losing a spot if the school redistricting is changed.

Commissioner Rowland informed those in attendance that the Board of Commissioners supports them and all their concerns. Although the Board of Commissioners cannot make decisions, any pressure they can present, they will. Commissioner Rowland explained that the Commissioners would do all they can.

There being no further business, Chairman Cohen adjourned the meeting at 12:25 p.m.

Respectively Submitted,

Rita K. Foil
Clerk to the Board