

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
ROWAN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SEPTEMBER 3, 2002 – 9:00 AM
J. NEWTON COHEN, SR. ROOM, ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**

Present: Steve Blount, Chairman
Gus Andrews, Vice-Chairman
Arnold Chamberlain, Member
Frank Tadlock, Member
Leda Belk, Member

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

Chairman Blount convened the meeting at 9:00 am.

Commissioner Tadlock provided the Invocation and Commissioner Andrews led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ADDITIONS:

- Tim Russell, County Manager, requested an addition to make a presentation to the Chairman.
- Mr. Russell requested a discussion on the escrow agreement concerning the school bonds.
- Mr. Russell asked to add a resolution concerning the refunding agreement for the '94-'95 school bonds.
- Mr. Russell also requested to give a report on staff's plan for the disbursement of the "teacher supply money."
- Chairman Blount requested to add an update on the recent New York trip concerning the bond rating.
- Chairman Blount also wanted to add a discussion on letters received from teachers concerning the "teacher supply money."

COMMISSIONERS LIAISON REPORTS:

Commissioner Andrews referred to a recent article in the Salisbury Post concerning Matthew Williams, a former Rowan County student who is Valedictorian at NC State University. Commissioner Andrews expressed appreciation for the recognition that Mr. Williams attributed to the Rowan County teachers for his success.

Commissioner Tadlock mentioned the funding for courthouse security, from the ABC Board and the Rowan County Sheriff's Department will be forthcoming.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Commissioner Belk made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Andrews and passed unanimously.

The Consent Agenda consisted of the following:

- A. Approval of the 08/05/2002 minutes
- B. Approval of the 08/19/2002 minutes
- C. Approval to set a public hearing for CUP-16-02, a request for a residential clustering
- D. Approval to set a public hearing for CUP-17-02, a request from West Rowan Bow Hunter's Club
- E. Approval of a resolution in support of the "Amber Alert"
- F. NC DOT request to add:
 - Westwood Lane
 - Wadsworth Road
 - Old Oak Lane
 - Coyote Trailto the State Secondary Road System for maintenance
- G. Approval of resolution for the Sheriff's Multi-agency Traffic Interdiction Unit Grant for funds previously approved by the Board.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION HONORING THE 2002 ROWAN COUNTY AMERICAN LEGION TEAM:

Chairman Blount expressed pleasure for the opportunity to recognize the 2002 Rowan County American Legion Team. Chairman Blount thanked the coaches, as well as the parents, for bringing the young men "this far." Chairman Blount mentioned the team's winning season record of 43-2, and emphasized the leadership of the team. Chairman Blount read the Proclamation honoring the team, which was followed by a round of applause and a standing ovation. Each player and the coaches were presented with a copy of the proclamation.

Chairman Blount invited those in attendance to participate in a reception to honor the team. Chairman Blount called for a short break at 9:10 am.

Chairman Blount called the meeting back to order at 9:25 am.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

1. Wanda Allen distributed a handout and addressed the Board pertaining to Rowan County retirees' health insurance, explaining that she had experienced "almost a 100% increase in premiums over the last thirteen months." Ms. Allen stated the continued increase in the medical premiums have made it difficult to maintain a comfortable budget. Ms. Allen gave an example of an individual receiving a \$2,000 per month retirement and pointed out the current insurance premium is $\frac{1}{4}$ of the income. Ms. Allen stated that the majority of retirees had dedicated 20, 25, or 30 years to serving Rowan County and that most of those jobs had been "extremely stressful." Ms. Allen reported that most counties in the state provide medical insurance coverage for their retirees, as well as most businesses in the area that are the size of Rowan County. Ms. Allen also reported that the state provides medical insurance for its retirees.

Ms. Allen felt it would be "fair" to pay the premium or offer a reduced rate to employees that have completed at least twenty (20) years of service to Rowan County. Ms. Allen suggested that the county could lower the premium if it could not find a way to pay the full amount. Ms. Allen said that there are current employees who would like to retire, but cannot afford to do so, due to the medical insurance premiums. Ms. Allen felt the county could save money by paying the insurance premium to allow those employees to retire. Ms. Allen thanked the Board for the opportunity to address the issue.

ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE ROWAN COUNTY CONVENTION AND VISITOR'S BUREAU:

Judy Newman distributed a packet of information and explained the contents of the packet. Ms. Newman and Frank Goodnight presented a power point presentation that began with the Mission Statement and a listing of attractions. Ms. Newman described the primary funding source as being the occupancy tax, which is approximately \$270,000. Ms. Newman stated that the sale of small items, such as maps, is also a "small revenue stream."

Ms. Newman stated that approximately one (1) year ago legislation was introduced to establish a Tourism Authority. Ms. Newman explained that the Board of Commissioners had appointed the eleven (11) -member authority. Ms. Newman reviewed the list of members.

Mr. Goodnight thanked Chairman Blount for the excellent job he has done, serving on the Tourism Authority.

Mr. Goodnight referenced the chart that depicted comparisons of the occupancy tax receipts and emphasized that the priority for the Tourism Authority is to increase tourism by strengthening marketing and advertising.

Ms. Newman pointed out several advertisements in various several magazines for the county, including the North Carolina Magazine, Our State Magazine, the Explorer, which was developed by the Salisbury Post, and advertisements in the Lowe's Motor Speedway brochure.

Ms. Newman discussed the priorities of the Tourism Authority for 2002-2203 and read the Mission Statement.

In response to a query from Commissioner Tadlock, Ms. Newman stated that Rowan County benefits tremendously from the overflow of Lowe's Motor Speedway in the months of May and October. Ms. Newman stated the County also benefits in April and October from the overflow of the furniture market in High Point.

Chairman Blount thanked Ms. Newman and Mr. Goodnight for their presentation.

Mr. Goodnight assured the Board that the current groundwork being laid would come to fruition.

PRESENTATION ON THE DISTRICT 19C's PROBATION/PAROLE ANNUAL REPORT:

Rose Cox, Judicial District Manager, presented the Board with the annual report and reported that public safety is a priority for the department. Ms. Cox highlighted the annual report, pointing out that District 19C has 47 employees, 38 of which are Probation Officers. Ms. Cox also stated that District 19C serves Rowan County only. Ms. Cox explained the types of classifications for officers and also the structured sentencing for the types of offenses. Ms. Cox reported that the 38 Probation Officers supervise 2,225 offenders within Rowan County.

Ms. Cox referred to page 6 of the annual report, which detailed the types of offenders, pointing out that 47% of offenders were misdemeanors and 23% were DWI. Ms. Cox discussed the supervision for intermediate offenders.

Ms. Cox stated that a large portion of crimes were related to substance abuse and that random drug tests were used as a tool to assist in treatment of the offenders. Ms. Cox informed the Board that only 26% of offenders do not change.

Ms. Cox discussed the Community Service Work Program, which performed 51,000 hours of work in Rowan County during the last fiscal year. Ms. Cox gave examples of volunteer work done at the Rowan County Landfill and Animal Shelter.

Ms. Cox emphasized the School Partnership Program as a beneficial program to the county, stating there are currently 51 offenders who are on adult probation, and are attending the high schools. Ms. Cox praised the two (2) officers who are dedicated to the program.

In response to a query from Commissioner Chamberlain, Ms. Cox stated that some of the students have felony charges. Commissioner Chamberlain questioned if the offenders should be in the public school system. Ms. Cox stated that the schools are notified and that the law requires the schools to be supplied with a copy of the offender's judgment.

Commissioner Chamberlain inquired about "turnover" within the department. Ms. Cox stated that she had nine employees to leave, and there are presently five vacancies. Ms. Cox stated that the State pays for salaries and the County provides the office space.

In response to a query from Commissioner Belk, Ms. Cox stated that PPO I, carry a caseload of approximately 90, PPO II have a caseload of 60, and PPO III are currently carrying 50. Ms Cox PPO III is "supposed to have a caseload of 30."

Chairman Blount thanked Ms. Cox for her presentation.

**REQUEST FOR CONSIDERATION OF A SPONSORSHIP APPLICATION
MAKING ROWAN COUNTY PART OF A RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND
DEVELOPMENT AREA:**

Bruce Rider addressed the Board concerning the Rowan Soil and Water Conservation District as well as the North Carolina Association of Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Councils annual report. Mr. Rider explained that Congress created RC&D on the assumption that local citizens, with coordinated assistance, could develop and carry out a proactive plan for social, economic, and environmental betterment of their communities. Mr. Rider stated that currently there are ten authorized areas within North Carolina, involving about two-thirds of the 100 counties.

Mr. Rider informed the Board that the proposal before the Board would be presented to Congress for approval at the end of September. Mr. Rider explained the proposal for a seven county RC&D Council, consisting of the following counties: Rowan, Stanley, Cabarrus, Mecklenburg, Lincoln, Gaston, and Union.

Mr. Rider reported the RC&D Council would have 501(c) 3 status, making the Council eligible to apply for grant money to fund projects in rural areas. Mr. Rider highlighted some of the projects that had been funded such as:

- location of water sources for fire hydrants for local fire departments to assist in achieving better insurance ratings
- installing nature trails for school groups
- fishing access for the handicapped on streams and waterways

Mr. Rider stated the decision was left to the counties as to which projects would be pursued for their areas. Mr. Rider said the funds come from grants and from the private sector and explained that the only financial commitment from each county is dues. Mr. Rider said the dues not currently set, but normally range from \$500, \$1000 to \$3000 per county, per year, and the money is used for administrative costs. Mr. Rider continued by saying the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) provides financial assist for a fulltime RC&D Coordinator, part-time salary for an administrative assistant and provides funding for the office space.

Mr. Rider explained that usually five (5) officials from each county are appointed to serve on the Council.

Mr. Rider said there is no guarantee the proposal would be approved in Washington at the end of September and encouraged the County to gain support by contacting its Legislators. Mr. Rider asked the county to join the other counties by sponsoring the RC&D Council.

Marion Lytle, County Planner, felt the Council has “a lot of potential” and cited examples of questions staff had received. Mr. Lytle stated those questions “were outside of what Planning does.”

Chairman Blount stated he would not be asking for a vote during the meeting, but the presentation was for informational purposes. Chairman Blount encouraged the Board to feel free to ask any questions.

In response to a query from Commissioner Andrews concerning the ultimate goal of the Council, Mr. Rider referenced the following goal to be four-fold:

- to protect natural resources
- to improve the standard of living
- to improve watersheds t
- to provide for needs in the county that cannot be met in any other way

Mr. Rider stated that the Soil & Water Conservation provides technical and free engineering assistance. Mr. Rider continued saying the purpose of being of 501(c) 3 entity allows the opportunity for the Council to pursue grants for the project and cited several projects that were developed.

In response to a query from Commissioner Andrews, Mr. Rider stated that proposal was generated through the Soil & Water Conservation, USDA, as well as the counties represented.

Commissioner Andrews commented that the Board had listened to 3 or 4 presentations from different groups with the same goals. Commissioner Andrews felt the groups were possibly duplicating services.

Mr. Rider stated that RC&D was organized through an act of Congress and passed down to North Carolina from state conservationists. Areas were studied that were not already covered thru RC&D, but with similar needs to be addressed. Mr. Rider continued to explain that Mr. Lytle was asked to represent Rowan County at the first council organizational meeting last month. Mr. Rider emphasized that RC&D geared to serve the citizens within the counties and that the other groups that had been mentioned were geared mainly to land preservation.

Mr. Lytle added that RC&D has his total support due to the community projects that RC&D handles, whereas the larger regional groups are not designed for this purpose.

Commissioner Andrews stated that the county has participated in several multi-county operations and pointed out that the funding continues to increase.

Mr. Rider stated that the average contribution is \$500-\$800 per year and that the contribution amount has remained the same “for years.” The legislative maximum contribution is \$3,000 per year.

Commissioner Chamberlain observed that the literature distributed by Mr. Rider does state that RC&D also focuses on “farm preservation, better land use planning and open space.”

In response to queries from Commissioner Chamberlain, Mr. Rider stated that he was from Rowan County. Mr. Rider stated that so far, out of the seven proposed counties for the agreement, Cabarrus County has “signed on.” Mr. Rider also responded that his group is not a “lobbying group.”

Commissioner Belk viewed Mr. Rider’s presentation as trying to “fill a niche” for the citizens.

Mr. Rider stated that RC&D is asking the county to agree to sponsor the district. If approved in Washington, the Board would need to appoint members to the council and give support through dues.

Chairman Blount asked the Board to give the issue consideration and put RC&D on the agenda at a later date.

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE ANNIVERSARY OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001:

Commissioner Tadlock made a motion to adopt the Resolution as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Belk and passed unanimously.

PROCLAMATION IN SUPPORT OF THE FIREFIGHTER’S MEMORIAL:

Chairman Blount reminded the Board of the ceremony scheduled on September 11th at 10:00 am, at the Firefighters’ Memorial.

Commissioner Andrews made motion to approve the Proclamation as submitted, followed by a second from Commissioner Tadlock. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE \$76.9 MILLION SCHOOL BOND AND APPROVAL OF THE RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SPECIAL BOND ELECTION:

Chairman Blount explained the public hearing as a requirement for placing the \$76.9 million school bond on the ballot for the election.

Chairman Blount opened the public hearing to entertain citizen input for the proposed bond. Chairman Blount stated that each citizen would be given three (3) minutes for any comments.

1. Penny Bowman, of 2315 Berkshire Drive, Salisbury, stated she was in complete support of the bond referendum as one package for \$76.9 million. Ms. Bowman said she has spent the past several months “doing homework” on the issue and felt the capital needs are not “frivolous.” Ms. Bowman emphasized that the county needs elementary schools, as well as high schools, and renovations to existing schools. Ms. Bowman stated that she had children attending Knox Middle and Salisbury High School. Ms. Bowman continued by saying Salisbury High School is under capacity, East Rowan was over capacity and cited statistics concerning future capacities. Ms. Bowman felt there are too many mobile units and “we need schools now” and that the county must spend money now to get ready for future.
2. Paul Dziezyc, of 260 Quail Drive, addressed the Board in opposition to the bond, stating that with layoffs and bankruptcies it is not a good time to propose the bond. Mr. Dziezyc suggested waiting until the economy improves before putting the bond on the ballot. Mr. Dziezyc felt more students could be added to each classroom and also continue to use the existing mobile units. Mr. Dziezyc stated the School Board was going to spend \$9 million on property that was valued at ¼ of that amount. Mr. Dziezyc accused the school board of “spending money just like drunken sailors” emphasizing that the amount (\$9 million) was 12% of the total bond and the funds would not go into schools or classrooms. Mr. Dziezyc expressed that it was difficult for the average person to address the Board. Mr. Dziezyc reported the county is putting more money into the schools, the scores are going down and asked that citizens vote against the bond.
3. Donald Schumacher, of 106 Pinewood Drive, stated that he is a senior citizen on social security. Mr. Schumacher said he was addressing the Board on behalf of the elderly and low-income people in Rowan County. Mr. Schumacher gave an

example of a widow who had contacted him with her concerns on the bond. Mr. Schumacher said he was not totally opposed to the school bonds for growth and explained that he did not like the “way I see money being spent.” Mr. Schumacher questioned why plans could not be purchased from other schools for design purposes in order to save the excessive architectural fees. Mr. Schumacher suggested looking at other alternatives and look at the long-term goals of the schools. Mr. Schumacher also said “put the burden on the parents who are sending the kids to school and give a break to the elderly.”

4. Howard Carter, 401 11th Street, Spencer, addressed the Board in opposition to the bond. Mr. Carter felt the timing is not good to ask the citizens to support a bond. Mr. Carters reported that with the bond and with revaluation, taxpayers could be paying \$.80 to \$.90 cents per hundred for taxes. Mr. Carter also stated that by still paying on the 1994, 1995 & 1996 bonds of \$30 million, it would be “too much of a burden on the people.” Mr. Carter recommended year round schools which would eliminate the trailers at the schools and pointed out that new schools would require more teachers, therefore more money. Mr. Carter felt the school board should consider the interest of the voters and should let the voters know other options exist. Mr. Carter discussed an example of a school superintendent who put year round schools in place for the sole purpose of improving test schools. Mr. Carter commented that Rowan County ranks around 43rd in per student spending and “they are always asking for more money.” “Something is wrong with this system here in Rowan County.” Mr. Rider asked that the School Board be made more accountable for the money it spends.
5. Bruce Rider, of 10633 Hwy 52 East, Rockwell, spoke in favor of the bond issue and stated he had four (4) children in the school system. Mr. Rider said that the schools in his area are at capacity. Mr. Rider referred to the American Legion team and said that a lot of good kids come from the Rowan County schools. Mr. Rider also cited several names of other students as examples. Mr. Rider said students should be given “every opportunity to better their education.” Mr. Rider asked that the voters be allowed to decide if they want the bond.
6. Dennis Isaacson, of Patterson Road, Landis, asked the Board to not put the bond on the ballot. Mr. Isaacson felt the voters would not support the package. Mr. Isaacson said the school board displayed “little, if any, financial responsibility.” Mr. Isaacson reported that recently “the school board has paid for emergency services at various locations provided as a public service for our municipalities.” Mr. Isaacson expressed concern that the school board had “overpaid for an option for land for a new school with money not even approved by the taxpayers.” Mr. Isaacson continued by expressing displeasure with the school board over other situations. Mr. Isaacson reported that “our” SAT scores are down, while the state SAT scores are higher. Mr. Isaacson concluded by emphasizing that he did not support the bond.

7. Troy Elliott of 505 West Ketchie Street, China Grove, began by saying that he was not against building new schools, but felt that there could be more prudence in spending taxes to build schools and stated, “we are being taxed to the limit.” Mr. Elliott felt there needed to be a better management of money.
8. Bob Kemp expressed support for schools, but “we’re asking for too much at one particular time.” Mr. Kemp also felt there had not been enough publicity as to how the funds were going to be spent and expressed concern that “we might bite off more than the taxpayers can chew.” Mr. Kemp emphasized that education is needed and important, but the bond needs to be cut back “some.” Mr. Kemp stressed that the children should be kept first.

With no further comments from citizens, Chairman Blount closed the public hearing.

Chairman Blount addressed the Board stating a decision must be made as to whether the bond issue should be placed on the November ballot.

Chairman Blount commented pertaining to the public input the Board had just received and explained that the Board was required by law to build schools. Chairman Blount continued by saying five (5) public hearings had been held by the school system. At the public hearings the school system explained the needs in great detail and had shown plans for schools concerning growth. Chairman Blount stated the community and the Board had been told how the money would be spent.

Chairman Blount agreed with Mr. Carter, that the school calendar should be examined and possibly changed.

Chairman Blount stated that an effort was being made to assist those on fixed incomes to “mitigate to some degree, the impacts of a tax increase.”

Chairman Blount referred to comments made concerning a tax increase to approximately \$.80 to \$.90. Chairman Blount said the comment was “completely incorrect,” and that “the revaluation, if anything, will actually bring the tax rate down, it won’t take it back up.”

Chairman Blount confirmed the price of the total bond package to be \$76.9 million and not \$109 million as had been stated.

Commissioner Belk mentioned that the Board is often criticized for “micro-managing” the Board of Education. Commissioner Belk stated the Board is authorized and mandated by the State to build schools and explained the decision before the Board is strictly to vote to build schools.

Chairman Blount stated the bond referendum is an opportunity for the citizens to “say yes or no” as to whether to build schools. Chairman Blount stated that if the bond were to fail, the Board would have to look at other options in order to build the schools.

Commissioner Tadlock verified that the \$76.9 million included the Board's commitment to the Kannapolis school system. Commissioner Tadlock congratulated the school system for conducting five (5) public forums and presenting the bond information.

Commissioner Andrews pointed out that citizens have expressed concern as to how the school board spends funds, yet, when the Board of Commissioners question "some of that spending," the Board is accused of "micro-managing." Commissioner Andrews continued by saying the word "micro-managing" should be replaced with "accountability," and questions should be asked.

Commissioner Chamberlain explained that he had spent the past several months studying the bond issue. Commissioner Chamberlain read the following quote from a letter he had written concerning the bond issue. The quote stated, "I as one Commissioner fully expect a redistricting plan to be in place before placing a bond on the ballot. I do not plan just to settle for enough information. I do realize that redistricting can be changed by the School Board at any time. But I do expect a well, thought out, school board voted on and approved plan, before a bond package goes to the voters of the county. I am a voter also."

Commissioner Chamberlain said the Board must decide whether to place the bond on the ballot and referred to the upcoming election and the possibility of four (4) new commissioners and four (4) new school board members. Commissioner Chamberlain expressed concern at the prospect of new school board members who could "remake some of these decisions." Commissioner Chamberlain agreed with Chairman Blount that new schools would have to be built, even if the bond fails.

Commissioner Chamberlain continued by mentioning the Chamber of Commerce and its support of a \$100 million plus bond package. Commissioner Chamberlain asked, "Where are they? They're not here." Commissioner Chamberlain recalled that the Board had encouraged the Chamber to go forward with a plan that would make economic sense, but "they haven't done it."

Commissioner Chamberlain again referred to the issue of the redistricting plan and said he was in favor of the schools but he could not support putting the bond on the ballot. Commissioner Chamberlain said he would not work "against" the bond package and that he would work for the bond if it passed. Commissioner Chamberlain quoted Mr. Isaacson by saying, "it's too much at the wrong time" and that there is no redistricting plan.

In response to a query from Commissioner Chamberlain concerning the Resolution, Mr. Russell clarified the middle school was for Kannapolis.

Chairman Blount stated the approval of the Resolution would put the question before the voters in November. Chairman Blount clarified that the Board was not approving the spending or borrowing of funds.

Commissioner Belk made a motion to support the Resolution as presented, followed by a second from Commissioner Andrews. The motion carried with Commissioner Chamberlain opposed.

Commissioner Chamberlain stated that the Board is elected to make tough decisions and that all issues do not have to be “put out there.”

Chairman Blount called for a short break at 11:20 am and reconvened the meeting at 11:30 am.

Commissioner Andrews acknowledged the hard decisions that had been made and expressed appreciation for the work put forth.

Commissioner Andrews stated that as an elected official, he tries to represent the people, which is what he feels he was elected to do. Commissioner Andrews pointed out that not many things could be brought back for the citizens themselves to vote upon.

Commissioner Tadlock thanked those who had worked on the bond package, as well as the previous bonds.

Please refer to the following documentation as part of the minutes concerning the public hearing for the \$76.9 million school bond:

BRIEF DISCUSSION ON GROUP HOMES IN ROWAN COUNTY:

Commissioner Chamberlain stated that he does not personally know Reverend Buddy Hoffner (City of Refuge) and said that he applauds the good things he has heard Reverend Hoffner tries to do. Commissioner Chamberlain said those who deal with the children would be held responsible and accountable to a set of guidelines. Commissioner Chamberlain continued by saying Rowan County had group homes it was not aware of and that there was a need to determine “who is licensed for what.” Commissioner Chamberlain discussed the types of licenses (boarding school, group home, etc.) and stated that an effort is being made to have a representative from the state work with the Department of Social Services to “find out what is going on.” Commissioner Chamberlain applauded those who are working for the children and are “doing it right.”

Commissioner Belk felt that Rowan County is representative of other counties in the state, with gaps concerning group homes. Commissioner Belk discussed concerns for the permitting of boarding schools, group homes and other facilities concerning the care of children. Commissioner Belk stated that boarding schools are currently classified as secondary schools and are permitted in all districts. Commissioner Belk stated that her personal inquiries had not been resolved concerning “who has oversight of boarding schools.” Commissioner Belk continued by saying there is ambiguity between the classification of group homes and boarding schools. Commissioner Belk requested the Board to impose a 60-day moratorium to allow staff to clarify the issue and to also allow the State time to come in and work with staff.

In response to a query from Commissioner Tadlock, Marion Lytle stated that 60 days is a “good start” and if additional time is needed for the study, staff will come back to the Board with a request for an extension.

Commissioner Andrews asked if a moratorium would create problems for others to which Mr. Lytle stated that there had been one inquiry concerning a boarding school in the last couple of weeks.

Chairman Blount stated that Rowan County controls the zoning where the facilities are located, the building is inspected as it is being constructed and the health department inspects for sanitation requirements. Chairman Blount asked if the County had any control as to the operation of the facility. Commissioner Belk said, “there is no oversight,” and there are concerned individuals as to who is looking out for the welfare of the children placed within the facilities.

Chairman Blount questioned the purpose of the moratorium. Commissioner Belk responded the moratorium is to buy time to allow Raleigh to respond to unanswered questions.

Chairman Blount asked if the County had the legal rights to permit the operations. Attorney Holshouser responded the County would only have the right if the State gives the authority.

Commissioner Belk responded to a query from Commissioner Tadlock that it is unclear if any other county in NC had guidelines from the State as to who has oversight of group homes or boarding schools.

Mr. Holshouser stated that in the past moratoriums had been issued to place a “cap” on the permitting process. Mr. Holshouser said the permitting process for the issue before the Board is unclear.

After considerable discussion, Chairman Blount clarified Commissioner Belk’s motion to imposing a 60-day moratorium on boarding schools, group homes, and any facilities for the care of children, asking Staff to return to the Board with any zoning modifications to create a better process.

Mr. Lytle asked if daycares were included. Commissioner Belk clarified the motion would exempt daycares.

Commissioner Tadlock asked to impose the moratorium for 90 days.

Commissioner Belk agreed to modify the motion to impose the moratorium for 90 days.

Commissioner Chamberlain seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS:

Rowan County Housing Authority

Commissioner Tadlock made a motion to approve Floyd Echerd. The motion carried.

Rowan County Landmark Commission

Commissioner Tadlock made a motion to approve the following ten (10) applicants:

- Margaret Banks Basinger
- Michael J. Black
- Dallas Campbell
- Judy K. Haire
- Darius Hedrick
- Rose Lacasse
- Duard C. Linn
- Jeanie Misenheimer
- Jacqueline B. Taylor
- Ann Teague

The motion carried.

Commissioner Andrews made a motion to approve the bylaws for the Landmark Commission as amended and submitted. Commissioner Tadlock seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Salisbury Rowan Human Relations Council

Commissioner Belk made a motion to reappoint Freida Nikolai and Kenneth Miller, as well as approve the suggested terms. The motion carried.

ADDITIONS:

Presentation to Chairman Blount:

Mr. Russell presented Chairman Blount with a plaque from the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners in honor of his dedication to the Association's Board of Directors during the past two (2) years. A round of applause followed the presentation.

Chairman Blount stated that he had enjoyed serving "more as a way of learning what is going on in other counties." Chairman Blount encouraged other Board members who may be interested in serving, to pursue the at-large positions as a means of learning issues throughout the state.

Bond Refunding:

Finance Director Leslie Heidrick referred to a handout distributed prior to the meeting, stating the handout included a Resolution, which described the details for the sale of the County's refunding bonds. Ms. Heidrick stated the amount to be refunded is \$20,070,000 and that the County would have approximately \$888,000 in accumulative savings, translating into \$750,000 present value savings.

Ms. Heidrick discussed the escrow deposit agreement between Rowan County and First Citizens Bank.

Ms. Heidrick asked the Board to adopt the Resolution and approve the escrow agreement in order to proceed with the refunding process.

Commissioner Andrews made a motion to adopt the Resolution and approve the escrow agreement as submitted. Commissioner Tadlock seconded the motion and also commended Staff for their accomplishments concerning the issue.

The motion passed unanimously.

Please refer to the following documentation as part of the minutes concerning the Board approval and adoption of the Resolution and escrow agreement for the refunding of school bonds.

Update on Trip to New York:

Chairman Blount expressed appreciation to Mr. Russell, Ms. Heidrick and the Finance Department for their work in preparing the information concerning the bond issue.

Chairman Blount discussed the meetings that took place in New York concerning the stability of Rowan County and the county's finances, in order to hopefully improve the county's bond rating.

Chairman Blount highlighted that even through two (2) years of the State withholding reimbursements from the counties, Rowan County's fund balance improved through the fiscal management of the Manager and of the Board.

Chairman Blount suggested it would be beneficial for the Board or future Boards to consider going to New York "every couple of years."

Teachers Supply Money:

Chairman Blount stated that he had talked with Chairman Clyde Miller prior to the meeting and that Chairman Miller felt there was very little chance the Board of Education would pass a Resolution to accept and give the funds to the teachers.

Commissioner Chamberlain said he would not have voted for the school board to handle the money for the teachers.

Commissioner Andrews stressed the teachers supply money was not a budgeted item and the funds were strictly for the teachers' supplies. Commissioner Andrews said the funds should have no bearing on a teacher's position for employment.

Commissioner Belk said she could not understand why the supply money was ever considered as part of teacher's salaries.

Mr. Russell highlighted the plans for providing the funds for the teachers. Mr. Russell stated the plan would be considered as a reimbursement plan for every certified teacher with a classroom. Mr. Russell stated the teachers would be reimbursed for approximately \$250.00 during the time frame of July 1, 2002 through January 31, 2003.

Commissioner Andrews questioned purchases made by teachers for which they may not have their receipts.

Mr. Russell stated the Board could ask for affidavits from the teachers without receipts

Chairman Blount requested running the notice in the newspaper close to the January 31, 2003 cutoff date as a reminder.

Commissioner Chamberlain verified with Mr. Russell that the process would be on a reimbursement basis.

Commissioner Tadlock commented the reimbursement process was due to the reluctance of the school board to submit a Resolution to the Commissioners.

Letter from Teachers:

Chairman Blount referred to letters the Board had received from teachers indicating that many individuals were under the impression that the teachers supply money was forcing the termination of teaching positions. Chairman Blount emphasized the teachers supply money had “nothing to do with the hiring or firing of teachers.”

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There were no citizens present who wished to address the Board.

ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Blount adjourned the meeting at 12:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rita K. Foil
Clerk to the Board