

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING  
ROWAN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
February 11, 2004 – 10:00 AM  
J. NEWTON COHEN, SR. ROOM, ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**

Present: Gus Andrews, Chairman  
Frank Tadlock, Vice-Chairman  
Leda Belk, Member  
Chad Mitchell, Member  
Steve Blount, Member

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

Chairman Andrews convened the meeting at 10:00 am. Commissioner Tadlock provided the Invocation and Commissioner Belk led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ADDITIONS/DELETIONS**

County Manager Tim Russell requested that at the end of the meeting, he be allowed to introduce Rowan County's new EMS Director.

Chairman Andrews deleted Item #4 from the Agenda, which was Consideration of Offer to purchase County Property. Chairman Andrews said the necessary paperwork was not finalized for the discussion.

**CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL FOR STEEL BID PACKAGE FOR  
SALISBURY HIGH SCHOOL**

Dr. Wiley Doby and Jim Christy of the Rowan-Salisbury Schools discussed the Steel Bid for Salisbury High School. Dr. Doby said his Staff felt good about the price of the steel bid as well as the location of the elementary school.

Mr. Christy highlighted the low steel bid from Lyndon Steel in the amount of \$224,600. Mr. Christy referred to the handout in the agenda packet and said Lyndon Steel was the lowest of the four (4) bids received.

Chairman Andrews questioned the budgeted amount for the steel. Mr. Christy responded that the item was not budgeted but was “buried” in the building construction total of approximately \$1.9 million. Mr. Christy said the architect’s estimate for steel had been \$254,000.

Commissioner Belk asked for clarification regarding Alternate #1 in the handout. Mr. Christy said he was unclear as to how to explain Alternate #1 but it was the performance and labor material bond needed to insure the performance.

Commissioner Blount explained that Alternate #1 meant that if the company did not provide the steel for the contract, their bonding company steps in and provides the steel at no extra cost.

Commissioner Blount said he had been informed that steel prices were rising immediately at a rate of approximately ten to fifteen percent and prices were expected to continue to increase. Commissioner Blount said the opportunity to save money on steel purchases was “probably coming to a close.”

Mr. Christy said Staff hopes to have all bids by the end of April with the exception of the two elementary schools. Mr. Christy said the price of concrete was also starting to rise.

Commissioner Blount moved to approve the Lyndon Steel proposal as requested by the School Board. Commissioner Belk seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF THE PROPOSAL FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD FOR THE SCHOOL BOND PROJECT FOR THE SITE SELECTION OF PROPERTY LOCATED ON RITCHIE ROAD**

Mr. Christy said the Board of Education had endorsed the East Ritchie Road site on Monday, February 9, 2004 after receiving public comment. Mr. Christy said some citizens were for and some citizens were against the proposed site. Mr. Christy said the Site Selection Committee had reviewed six possible sites and recommended the East Ritchie site.

Mr. Christy discussed the factors considered in site selection, which were the cost of the property, cost to obtain municipal water and sewer, location in relation to other schools and relationship to the approved attendance area.

Mr. Christy said the Board felt that the East Ritchie site was the best selection and said the Board of Education currently has \$316,000 budgeted for water/sewer. Mr. Christy said there was also \$300,000 budgeted for purchase of property and \$85,000 of the

amount was expended on the Southeast Middle School site. Mr. Christy said the Board of Education felt it could make a good faith offer \$12,500 per acre for approximately 27 acres and remain within the budget.

Mr. Christy requested that the Board approve the site.

Chairman Andrews said that Commissioners Belk and Mitchell served on a committee to work with the Board of Education regarding the site selection.

Commissioner Belk said that the Board of Education had performed a diligent search to find the most suitable site and the East Ritchie Road “was by far the number one site.” Commissioner Belk said the site would also provide a buffer for the residents that “back up” to Summit Corporate Center. Commissioner Belk discussed traffic and said architects would be asked to design a school that would be safe. Commissioner Belk said she was in favor of the \$12,500 offer.

Mr. Christy said the site was an excellent site in regards to the student relocation plan.

Commissioner Mitchell stressed that the Board of Education had gone through due diligence in searching for the South Elementary Site. Commissioner Mitchell said he felt the benefits of the site selection would far outweigh any negatives. Commissioner Mitchell said the Committee moved to accept the Board of Education’s offer of \$12,500 per acre.

Dr. Doby echoed that the school system had diligently looked for another site and the site by far the best for the school. Dr. Doby said the Board of Education would appreciate the Commissioners consideration on the issue.

Commissioner Tadlock questioned the potential of future use for the previous site purchased for the school. Mr. Christy responded that the Board of Education would re-evaluate the options for the site.

Commissioner Tadlock asked if there was a potential for playing fields on the property. Mr. Christy said since a school will not be located on the property, the Board of Education could begin considering the options.

Chairman Andrews said he had reservations regarding the site and the concerns had been relayed to Board members and also relayed to the Chairman of the Board of Education. Chairman Andrews said Ritchie Road was a narrow road with its 9’ lane and the amount of traffic “was not a popular situation” for a school location. Chairman Andrews said an industry had also recently looked at the property but due to topography, the site was found unsuitable by the industry. Chairman Andrews said if the school’s location covered approximately 30 acres, the remainder of the site would be eliminated from industrial development. Chairman Andrews discussed the “impurity air trough” along I-85 and said the school’s location next to the interstate presented a concern regarding the air problems. Chairman Andrews mentioned the industrial tie that would eliminate the

adjoining properties for future expansion. Chairman Andrews said the also had concerns with “private enterprise” and the fact that water/sewer already existed on the East Ritchie Road site. Chairman Andrews asked if the Board used taxpayer’s money to put water/sewer on another site, would other property owners also have a favorable site for the school. Chairman Andrews said once a school was located on the property, it would become a non-taxable property. Chairman Andrews said he had explained his stance to the Chairman of the Board of Education and why he would vote against the proposed site.

Commissioner Blount responded to Chairman Andrews’ concerns. Commissioner Blount said he would like to discuss the “other side of some of those issues.” Commissioner Blount said he didn’t feel the County would have a difficult time marketing the remainder of the property left by the school’s location. Commissioner Blount said the use on the south side of Ritchie Road was more valuable with its interstate frontage and there was no indication the site couldn’t be used. Commissioner Blount said the site had been considered for industry or office use as well as a distribution center. Commissioner Blount referred to the air quality problem and said because the school would be located “next to the creator of air pollution does not mean they’re going to have higher air pollution problems than a site somewhere else in the county.” Commissioner Blount said water/sewer had been extended to various locations throughout Rowan County and in doing so, the land is made more valuable. Commissioner Blount said the only option is “to not be in the water/sewer extension business at all.” Commissioner Blount felt the Board could not afford to take that stance regarding water/sewer.

Chairman Andrews called for a second to Commissioner Mitchell’s motion prior to the Board’s discussion.

Commissioner Mitchell asked which account the funds would be appropriated to from the sale of the property?

Mr. Russell responded that he understood the Board of Education was prepared to enter into an option on the property for a 6-month period. Mr. Russell said the 6-month “window” would provide the Board of Education the opportunity to go through due diligence regarding the site selection. Mr. Russell said at the end of the six months, the Board of Commissioners could make a decision concerning the appropriation.

Commissioner Tadlock said his position would be for the funds from the sale of the property to go into the General Fund.

Commissioner Mitchell said the Committee’s motion would “stand as it was just to enter into an option to purchase for \$12,500” per acre.

The motion carried on a 4-1 vote, with Chairman Andrews voting against the motion.

## **ADDITIONS**

### **Introduction of New Emergency Services Director**

Mr. Russell distributed a memo concerning the selection of the Emergency Services Director. Mr. Russell said Wayne Ashworth had retired from as Emergency Services Director on December 31, 2003 but had continued to work with the County part-time, until the position could be filled.

Mr. Russell said the county had received approximately sixty applications, with approximately forty-five of those being qualified, according to Human Resources. Mr. Russell said he had interviewed seven applicants, with part of the process including a written response as to how the applicant would handle certain situations.

Mr. Russell expressed his thanks to the applicants.

Mr. Russell announced that Telecommunications Director Frank Thomason had accepted the offer of the Emergency Services Director position and the appointment would be effective February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2004.

Mr. Russell said Mr. Thomason was in attendance and mentioned that Mr. Thomason had worked for the county for approximately sixteen years, ten of which he served as Director of Telecommunications. Mr. Russell praised the leadership of Mr. Thomason and said Mr. Thomason's knowledge had gained the county national exposure and recognition for its "state of the art" 911 system.

Mr. Russell said the county was faced with many challenges as it continues to improve emergency services and said he personally felt Mr. Thomason was the "best person for the job."

A round of applause followed the announcement.

Commissioner Belk, as liaison to Emergency Services, welcomed Mr. Thomason as Emergency Services Director. Commissioner Belk said Mr. Thomason brings "a wealth of knowledge" to the position.

Commissioner Tadlock also welcomed Mr. Thomason to the new position and called Mr. Thomason forward to shake hands and be congratulated by each Board member. A second round of applause followed the greetings.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

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

**ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to come before the meeting body, Chairman Andrews adjourned the meeting at 10:40 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rita K. Foil, CMC  
Clerk to the Board