

THE RECESSED REGULAR SESSION OF THE CRAVEN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF MAY 21, 2001 RECONVENED IN JOINT SESSION WITH THE CRAVEN COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION IN THE COMMISSIONERS' MEETING ROOM OF THE CRAVEN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 406 CRAVEN STREET, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA, AT 1:00 P.M. ON MAY 21, 2001.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairman C.W. "Pete" Bland
Vice-Chairman Johnnie Sampson, Jr.
Commissioner Lee K. Allen
Commissioner Donald Phillips
Commissioner J. Harold Talton
Commissioner Albert H. Toon
Commissioner Charles F. Tyson, Jr.

STAFF PRESENT:

Harold Blizzard, County Manager
George B. Sawyer, Assistant County Manager
Richard F. Hemphill, County Finance Officer
Ray H. Moser, Human Resources Director
Gwendolyn M. Bryan, Clerk to the Board
James R. Sugg, County Attorney

MEMBERS PRESENT FOR BOARD OF EDUCATION:

Carroll Ipock, Chairman
Linda Thomas
Rebecca Kafer
Leon Staten
Arland Bell
Sydney French
Judy Pierce (arrived at 1:20 p.m.)

STAFF PRESENT FOR BOARD OF EDUCATION:

William Rivenbark, Superintendent of Schools
David Henderson, Attorney for Schools

Mr. Ipock opened the meeting by stating that a recommendation was being presented from the Board of Education to proceed with a bond referendum for stated projects, as follows:

- Bridgeton Elementary School replacement (700 students) \$8,922,400.00
- Havelock Elementary School replacement (600 students) \$8,390,368.00
- Roofs (Arthur W. Edwards, Brinson Memorial Elementary, H.J. MacDonald Middle School, Graham A. Barden Elementary School, Oaks Road Elementary, and West Craven Middle) \$4,200,000.00
- Auditoriums
 - Havelock High School* \$2,429,000.00
 - West Craven High School* \$2,225,000.00
 - Grover C. Fields Middle* \$ 500,000.00

It was explained that the total amount needed for the projects is \$28,825,768. Craven County Finance Officer, Rick Hemphill, advised the Board that a bond in the amount of \$28,000,000 could be considered without the expectation of a tax increase. Additional funds in the amount of \$825,768 would be needed to meet total costs of the project. Commissioner Tyson inquired about the priority of the auditoriums in opposition to a need for classrooms. School Board member, Linda Thomas, responded that in some cases auditoriums would help to alleviate some of the problems of classroom shortage. Commissioner Phillips expressed lingering concerns regarding the inability to guarantee that there would be no tax increase. He also expressed misgivings about the passage of the bond this time, given the economic climate in the County, specifically a proposed ad valorem tax rate increase and revaluation.

School Board Member, Rebecca Kafer, expressed opposition to the position of the School Board, and its recommendation. Chairman Ipock stated that the Board of Education is presenting the entire Board's recommendation and suggested that if an individual member has a disagreement with the position of the Board, that member should recuse him/herself from the Board and address the issue as a private citizen. Commissioner Allen emphasized that the only issue before the Board of Commissioners should be if, when, and for how much a bond is considered. Other issues and details should be the Board of Education's responsibility to resolve. Commissioner Sampson echoed the sentiment that the County should rely upon the Board of Education's expertise and experience concerning details of the bond. He further stated that he is in favor of alternative classrooms; however, he is not in favor of alternative schools because he feels that such a scenario would further isolate students who are already vulnerable. Chairman Ipock elaborated on the Board of Education's rationale for the proposed placement of new schools. There was discussion concerning the time frame needed in order to get a bond on the ballot, and it was concluded that discussion by the Commissioners' at their reconvened work session on May 29th would leave ample time to establish a date. Commissioner Talton moved to approve a \$28,000,000 bond referendum for school projects, seconded by Commissioner Sampson. During discussion it was clarified that \$28,000,000 would be the bond amount; however, the amount available for the listed projects would be \$25,941,000, as a result of funds advanced earlier this year for roof repairs. Board Member, Kafer, expressed the sentiment that the Board of Commissioners would be making a grave error if the motion were adopted. She provided handouts to the Board of Commissioners and strongly urged that they be read before a vote on the motion. In order to read these documents provided by Ms. Kafer, the Board of Commissioners was declared in recess by the Chairman for ten minutes at 2:15 p.m. At 2:25 p.m. the Board reconvened. The Chairman asked for further discussion on the motion. There being none, the roll was called and the vote was unanimous in favor of a bond in the amount of \$28,000,000. The Board of Education agreed to return with a proposed date for the bond referendum; however, Commissioner Tyson recommended the first Tuesday in November because it would coincide with a majority of municipal elections in the County, therefore reducing the cost to the taxpayers.

Commissioner Toon moved to recess until 5:30 p.m. on May 29th, seconded by Commissioner Phillips and unanimously carried.

Chairman C.W. "Pete" Bland
Craven County Board of Commissioners

Gwendolyn M. Bryan
Clerk to the Board