

THE RECESSED REGULAR SESSION OF APRIL 19, 2004 RECONVENED AT 3:00 P.M. ON APRIL 22, 2004 IN THE CRAVEN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' ROOM OF THE CRAVEN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 406 CRAVEN STREET, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA, IN JOINT SESSION WITH THE CRAVEN COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairman George N. Brown, Jr.
Vice Chairman Leon C. Staton
Commissioner Lee Kyle Allen
Commissioner Bill Harper
Commissioner Perry Morris
Commissioner Johnnie Sampson, Jr.
Commissioner M. Renée Sisk

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

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS:

Carrol G. Ipock, II, Chairman
Sydney R. French
Rebecca M. Kafer
Beatrice R. Smith
Kim Smith
Linda M. Thomas
Joseph Walton

BOARD OF EDUCATION STAFF:

William Rivenbark, Superintendent
David Clifton, Assistant Superintendent, Business/Finance
Janet Furman, Director, Public Relations Services
Ted Kaniuka, Associate Superintendent
Larry Moser, Assistant Superintendent, Instructional Services
Shirley Dawson, Assistant Superintendent Human Resources
Joanne Martin, Coordinator, School Nursing Program

The Board of Education stated that it had requested the joint meeting in order to raise the Commissioner's awareness of Board of Education issues, as follows:

1. Update on the school nursing program
2. Update on the status of the schools' fund balance
3. Technology status
4. School start date issues

School Nursing Program

Ms. Joanne Martin distributed a summary of the school nurses report from 1992-1993 and recounted the progress of the nursing program since that period. She stated that in 1997 there were 16 part-time nurses hired at four hours per day; one per school. However, the need was greater than four hours a day and most of the nurses were working longer because they could not leave in the middle of health emergencies. She reported that the Kate B. Reynolds Foundation awarded a \$344,555 grant, which was used to increase the hours of 16 part time nurses over three years. The grant decreased in amount over the three year period. Eight of the nurses are funded for five and a half hours, and eight who are funded for six hours are able to get health benefits. Some of the

main areas of activity for the school nursing program are: insulin injections for diabetic students, nebulizer treatments for asthmatic students, training teachers to use equipment during seizures, providing bathroom assistance, responding to cardiac disorders and allergies. In addition, they are involved in health hygiene instruction, nutrition improvement and water safety programs. Commissioner Morris inquired about notices that are sent to parents from the schools concerning obesity in their students or obese tendencies, and he wanted to know how that process works. Ms. Martin responded that a baseline assessment is made of third, fourth and six graders; however, screening is optional. Commissioner Sampson expressed his support of the wellness aspect of the school nurses' duties. County Manager, Harold Blizzard, inquired as to what happens to the funding in the fourth year. She responded that other grant opportunities are being sought in the absence of local or state funding.

Update on the Schools' Fund Balance Status

Mr. Clifton distributed an analysis of the Craven County Schools' fund balance, which indicated a balance as of the June 30, 2003 audit of \$3,111,538.00. He stated that over the previous four years, \$750,000 was budgeted as a reduction of fund balance at the beginning of the year. In each instance, the budgeted fund balance was not utilized and the schools actually added to the fund balance each year as a result of unbudgeted receipts and/or actual expenses less than budgeted. He stated that the total fund balance appropriated in the initial budgets for a four year period was \$3,000,000.00. The amount added to fund balance during this period or transferred to capital outlay was \$3,102,870.

Technology Status

Wayne Beasley provided an update on the technology status in the schools, stating that to date, the schools' technology needs have depended on federal money. Funds have not been budgeted annually for these purposes. He stated that the technology needs in the schools are now greater than the funding available. Area schools are currently networked except outlying buildings. The initial budget request for \$200,000 is for hardware and peripherals. He stated that planning is underway for distance learning in the high schools through East Carolina University.

School Start Date Issue

The Board was advised that the authority of local boards of education for setting the school calendar is under attack. A proposed legislated start date is expected to come before the general assembly again, which would take away the local communities' input. Talking points were distributed reflecting the Craven County Board of Education's position and the Board of Commissioners were requested to support that position.

The Commissioners presented their concerns for discussion with the Board of Education.

Commissioner Morris commented that the "All-A" Recognition Banquets always conflict with athletes' schedules, as Tuesdays and Thursdays are traditionally nights when sports events are held. As a result, athletes who are honored are often unable to attend the recognition banquet.

Commissioner Brown inquired what budgetary hardships to the Board of Education and the County are likely to result from the No Child Left Behind program. Mr. Rivenbark responded that it depends on the congressional funding in the next budget cycle. Commissioner Brown stated that the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners and National Association of Counties are lobbying to have the mandate funded and asked that the Board of Education support this effort.

County Finance Officer, Rick Hemphill, stated that he did not object to appropriation of schools fund balance at the beginning of the fiscal year to balance the budget. He stated that it would be preferable to have unexpected revenue appropriated to fund projects, as opposed to mid-year transfers from fund balance to capital projects. He stated that, based

on published reports, the Board of Education may be requesting a substantial increase in the FY 2004-2005 budget request, which could result in an increase tax rate of up to \$.08.

Commissioner Sampson inquired about discipline issues in the schools and asked if there have been any improvements in the suspensions and expulsions. Mr. Rivenbark responded that the overall and long-term suspensions have decreased for the current year as well as the drop out rate. He stated that more is being done in creative discipline measures.

Mr. Hemphill explained in response to an inquiry by Commissioner Sisk that an additional \$2.25 million in operating funds is proposed, including teacher assistant salary upgrades, technology assistant salaries and an increase in teacher supplement to \$700.

Commissioner Morris recommended that the schools look into establishing a commitment requirement for teaching fellows for a specified minimum period of time.

Mr. Hemphill stated that the next bond issue possibility without a tax increase would be late 2008 with a June 2009 first payment.

Chairman Ipock reminded the Board of the legislative breakfast to be held on April 26th.

At 5:10 p.m. Commissioner Sampson moved to adjourn to reconvene on April 28th at 7:00 p.m. in joint session with the New Bern Board of Alderman at the Sheraton. Commissioner Allen seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Chairman George N. Brown, Jr.
Craven County Board of Commissioners

Gwendolyn M. Bryan, Clerk to the Board