

Camden County Board of Education
and
Camden County Commissioners
Open Session Minutes
Camden Public Library Community Room
March 27, 2018

The Camden County Board of Education and Camden County Commissioners met in a joint open session meeting on March 27th, 2018, in the Community Room at Camden County Public Library beginning at 6:30 p.m. Board Members in attendance were: Christian Overton, Chair, Jason Banks, Vice-Chair, Board Members Chris Wilson, Kevin Heath and Sissy Aydlett, and Superintendent Joe Ferrell. Camden County Commissioners in attendance were: Tom White, Vice-Chair, Commissioners Garry Meiggs, Ross B. Munro, and County Manager Ken Bowman. Clayton Riggs, Chairman and Commissioner Randy Krainiak were not in attendance. Others attending the meeting were: Faye Perry, Stephanie Humphries, Larry Lawrence, Reggie Ponder, Karen Davis and Anita Cuthrell.

Invocation was given by Chris Wilson at 6:00 p.m., followed by dinner.

The meeting began at 6:30 p.m. Calls to Order were made by Chairman Overton and Vice-Chairman White, followed by the pledge of allegiance. Mr. Overton asked Board Members if there were any additions, deletions or changes to be made to the Open Session agenda. Each member was polled. Mr. White asked Commissioners if there were any additions, deletions or changes to be made to the Open Session agenda. There were no additions, deletions or changes to be made by either board. Motion was made by Mr. Meiggs to accept and approve the agenda as presented. There was no further discussion. All voted ayes, none opposed and the motion so carried.

County Manager, Ken Bowman, welcomed those in attendance. He said he and Dr. Ferrell had been working to put the agenda together. He said he was glad the boards were working together to meet a common goal. He said some brief presentations would follow; that the meeting was information.

Superintendent Ferrell thanked the County Manager and Commissioners for the opportunity of working together on the budget by sharing thoughts and priorities. He said the state allotments were proposed based on 1,853 students and if that number was not reached there could be reductions in specific allotments. He said his first 90-100 days were spent on a listening and learning tour. He shared this information with the Board of Education at a recent retreat on February 16. He had shared some information at each school. He felt it was important for the staff to hear from him as far as what he has learned.

He said he planned to do some reorganizing to better serve schools. He said staff would know who to go to. Superintendent Ferrell said he would develop a strategic plan beginning with the Profile of a Graduate. He said all led to budget priorities. He said he wanted to discuss school safety and the fund balance to determine what was reasonable. He said Mr. Lawrence had a list of Capital Outlay needs. Superintendent Ferrell said he wanted to give both boards the opportunity to ask questions so in May there would be no questions. He said he would tell the Commissioners upfront that he was conservative where money was concerned. He said he planned to ask that Camden County Schools be funded the same as last year.

Presentations began with Stephanie Humphries, Camden County Finance Officer. Ms. Humphries distributed a handout entitled *School Board of Education (BOE) Funding Requested/Approved*. She discussed the handout in detail. She said the handout was historical financial information that followed a spreadsheet type layout. There were six charts and each was discussed in detail. She said some of the information was taken from NCDPI's website and other information was what was requested by the Board of Education and approved by the Board of Commissioners. There was discussion regarding some financial data and clarification was given. Ms. Humphries concluded her update.

Faye Perry, Camden County Schools Director of Finance, began by saying in the State Public School Fund we would cover as much personnel as possible in the individual allotments provided by NCDPI. She said at the current time, we planned to cover the salaries and benefits for the majority of our employees who worked both part and full time positions. She said those allotments would also cover instructional supplies, workshops, computer and non-computer equipment, and software. She said in the At-Risk Program, we would be able to provide funds to help cover the cost of SRO officers that patrol our schools. She said our Local Current Expense budget would cover approximately 26 part and full-time employees plus benefits. It also covered workshops, supplies, field trips, reproduction costs, supplements, custodial and maintenance needs of the buildings, band program expenses, athletics, school health needs, At-Risk Program and EC Program needs not met in other budgets as well as other related needs. Ms. Perry said the Federal budget covered five positions plus benefits within our schools as well as covering instructional supplies, workshops and technology needs. She said we were expecting to have smaller carryover allotments due to rising costs and shrinking allotments. Ms. Perry said in previous years at some points we had to transfer expenses to stay below the maximum carryover but in the most recent years, this had not been the case and we did not expect this type of situation in the future. She said while our exceptional children population was not decreasing, the costs of the program were rising and some of the needed personnel for those programs were being covered in the local and state budgets.

Larry Lawrence, Director of Auxiliary Services, told the boards we were planning our Capital Outlay projects for the upcoming year with earnest preparation. He said we were not asking for extra ordinary items to be done. He said we were asking for the funds to cover the routine building repair items that we requested each year such as painting, gym floor refinishing, gravel/paving, roof repairs, furniture and carpeting as those items got wear and tear on a regular basis. Mr. Lawrence said we were also requesting funds to continue the lock upgrades and cameras in the schools with the ever growing concern for safety for students and staff. He said we were seeking funds to replace a heating and AC units at Camden Early College High School as well as general heating/cooling units throughout the schools as part of capital plan and replace heating and AC units as needed in the schools and placing our schools and central office on an energy management plan. Mr. Lawrence said we were requesting funds to replace floor tiles in four classrooms at Grandy Primary, replace carpet in the Camden County High School office area as well as in the Finance mobile unit, install Rhino flooring on the ramps at Camden Middle, repaint the canopies at Camden Intermediate, rebuild floor and replace tiles in the CECHS mobile units. He said we were requesting funds to build a storage unit for the transportation department at the central office to be able to store large equipment when not being used on a regular basis. He said we were seeking funds to reseal windows in some of the hallways at the schools, replace gutters and install concrete in the interior courtyard of Grandy Primary. Mr. Lawrence said we were transferring funds from previous budgets to purchase a county vehicle since our van was aging and had over 200,000 miles. He said we were requesting the same amount of funds we received last year to replace aging technology as part of our technology plan. He said we would pay installment #4 of 4 and #2 of 4 for yellow school buses we received in a previous year. He said the State of North Carolina would send us funds to cover our lease payments in our budget.

Mr. Lawrence said the Child Nutrition budget was designed to be covered by the revenue generated by the sale of food in our cafeterias. He said if they fall short from meeting the budget from expected revenues then we must cover those expenses in the State and Local Current Expense budget. He said during the 2018-2019 fiscal year we were expecting to have to cover \$30,000 in Local funds and \$45,569 in State required matching funds. He said the State funds contribution was a mandated amount that we must pay according to NCDPI as our match in order to continue to receive USDA reimbursement funds. He said we were not planning to increase lunch prices during the 2018-2019 school year at this time.

Mr. Lawrence asked if there were any questions. There were no questions and Mr. Lawrence concluded his update.

Mr. Overton led the discussion on SRO needs, 800 mg radios and other school safety needs. He noted that we were waiting to hear from a SRO grant that was submitted in February. Superintendent Ferrell advised the boards it would be for the amount of \$28,000, if awarded. There was lengthy discussion regarding the funding for a second SRO. The discussion turned to 800 mg radios which was another safety concern. There was lengthy discussion regarding radios and the recent active shooter drill which had been conducted at Camden Middle School. The installation of reactors was discussed at length. Mr. Munro discussed the D.O.G.S. Program which was a program of dads who were veterans and who volunteered in schools. He noted Hickory High School had implemented the program and could possibly provide additional information if there was an interest. Ms. Aydlett commended Mike Lawrence on his job performance. There was discussion of sending a Resolution to the State of North Carolina regarding the county's authority to deputize civilians. Superintendent Ferrell said he would reach out to Sheriff Meads for additional information. Discussion concluded.

Mr. Overton then led the discussion on the next steps needed to become shovel ready for construction of a new high school and the need to improve Camden County Schools' eligibility for additional grant awards. He reminded the boards that Camden County Schools had applied for and been granted funds from the Needs Based Grant. However, no money has been received. The need to become shovel ready was important for the next phase of grant awards. He opened the floor for discussion. There was lengthy discussion. Superintendent Ferrell advised the last information update he had received was that guidelines were being written; that the money was available but would not be sent until the guidelines were completed. He said he had talked with other school systems that had also received awards and none of those schools had received funds. Superintendent Ferrell said he would contact NCDPI for additional information. Mr. Overton said they would wait for additional information from Superintendent Ferrell.

Mr. Overton led the discussion on the fund balance. He told the boards that when the auditors came, they suggested that the fund balance be kept between \$400,000 and \$500,000. He said the auditors recommended two months of operating expenses in the fund balance. He opened the floor for discussion. There was lengthy discussion. Superintendent Ferrell said he wanted to find out what was preferred by the Commissioners. He said the fund balance was at \$430,000 now but he had spoken with one commissioner and had been told his comfort level was around \$250,000.

There was discussion about the fact that during the year the fund balance may increase for many reasons but adjustments could be made at the end of the year. Mr. Overton thanked the boards for the discussion. He said the fund balance was a number that moved. Mr. Overton recognized Ms. Humphries. Ms. Humphries said twelve payments was an option if the Board of Education wanted to put that on the floor. She said that option would be of no concern on the County's part. Superintendent Ferrell said that would be great for the school system. Mr. Meiggs said he had no problem with that because it was the same amount of money just divided differently. Ms. Humphries said current statutes allowed the boards to agree on that; the boards were allowed to make that decision. Both boards agreed to 12 payments instead of 10 payments. The discussion concluded.

Mr. Overton asked if there were any other priorities for the boards to discuss. Mr. White brought back the topic of school safety and spoke specifically about an additional SRO, radios and reactors. Superintendent Ferrell said he had cost information. There was lengthy discussion. Superintendent Ferrell said there would be another active shooter drill on April 27 which was a teacher workday and he planned to announce the drill and invite all staff to see. The teacher workday was an excellent time to conduct the drill because students would not be in school.

Mr. Overton turned the meeting back over to County Manager, Ken Bowman.

Regarding school safety, Mr. Bowman said he would like to ask the boards to give him and Dr. Ferrell the opportunity to get together before the end of the budget cycle to see if they could work out some of the safety concerns before the end of the year. He said he was at the most recent active shooter drill and discussed the fact that the team there had never practiced together before. As previous military, he understood the importance of practicing with the same team members. He said teams had to be reactive and he felt that was an issue for the Sheriff to address. He then discussed Camden County's purchase of NCDC property. He said the county worked with Rodney Bunch before he retired. He said Dr. Robinson at Pre-K loved the facility and the plan was for the facility to be up and running by August. He told Superintendent Ferrell that should free up some space at school. He said the facility was about 7,000 sq. ft. and could easily accommodate the 60 students. He said he and Dr. Ferrell would work out the transportation issue; that the details would be put in writing and would be something that both boards and Dr. Robinson would have to agree to. The MOU would stipulate that transportation would be provided by the school. Superintendent Ferrell said Camden County Schools had provided transportation before the move and after the move but transportation services had continued at no charge which impacted the school's efficiency rating. He said the MOU for transportation would need to be separate from the County's MOU.

He said he and Mr. Bowman would work on that detail; that drafts of both MOUs would be provided for both boards to review. Mr. Overton remarked that if the Board of Education was in charge of transportation, he would like to see a separate MOU for transportation.

Mr. Bowman said the matter of broadband was put on the agenda because the county had been approached a few months ago to participate in a feasibility study of a specific area in the county. He asked that the study be done for all the county and the study was almost finished. He said he expected a draft report on April 10th. He said the study would include permit requirements and costs to get up and running. He said once he received the report, he would know what questions to ask about coverage, cost and next steps. He said he was anxious to see what was coming in the report. He said good things were happening here. There was brief discussion regarding broadband services.


Mr. Overton thanked the boards for their comments. He asked if there were any other questions or comments. Mr. White said he appreciated the information given during tonight's meeting and felt the joint meeting had been beneficial for both boards. He thanked those who were responsible for the arrangements. Mr. Overton said he wanted to echo Mr. White's remarks. He too felt good information had been shared.

At 8:10 p.m., Mr. Overton asked on behalf of Camden County Board of Education, if there was a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion was made by Mr. Wilson and seconded by Dr. Banks. All voted ayes and motion so carried. Mr. Meiggs said the meeting was adjourned; that no motion was needed for commissioners to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted this 12th day of April, 2018.



Christian A. Overton, Chairman



Dr. Joe Ferrell, Secretary