

The Honorable Board of County Commissioners met in their said office at 7:30 p.m., Monday, February 14, 1977, according to adjournment.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD PRESENT:

C. Waldo Marlowe, Chairman

Junior W. Dew, Vice-Chairman

Edward W. Williamson

L. A. Hinson

David L. McPherson

James E. Hill, Jr., Attorney

Emogene W. Suggs, Clerk

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman. There were approximately sixty citizens present. Due to the large number of persons wishing to attend the meeting the following motion was made:

Commissioner McPherson moved that the public meeting be moved to the Superior Court Courtroom of the Columbus County Courthouse due to the large turnout of citizens who are in attendance and the inadequate facilities which will not provide seating or standing room. It was further moved that notice be placed on all doors of the regular meeting place stating the change of location to be to said Courtroom. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dew and passed and the meeting adjourned to the Courthouse.

The Board had requested that Dr. Mary Moore, Regional Mental Health Director from the Fayetteville Office, come to answer questions concerning Columbus County implementing a one-county mental health service. She was accompanied by Dr. Richard Surles, Asst. Director of Mental Health from the Raleigh Office. Dr. Moore stated that they were here to make a documented report to the Board and would address the following subjects; comparative costs, analysis of the proposed budget for Columbus County and an analysis of in-patient care.

Dr. Moore's conclusion of the possible budget was that it was inadequate because of the following: 1. County cannot receive medicaid funds unless certified by the State which was doubtful under two years period. 2. State money is based upon limited availability and would be on a less percent than now receiving at Southeastern Center. 3. Proposed budget does not reflect adequate funds for psychiatric and psychological care for inpatient care. She also pointed out that to become a mental health service area the State Commission for Mental Health must authorize the program, otherwise the state funds are much less. It was further stated ^{by Dr. Surles} that State funds could not be used for buildings or equipment but only for operational purposes and the County would not be eligible for federal funds as the minimum requirements for federal funds was a population of 75,000 except in rare cases.

She analyzed the services on the basis of race, sex, age, marital status, referral sources, et al and stated that there was a very good average as compared to the population categories in the County. According to her figures a 20-bed facility would cost approximately \$600,000 initially and about \$368,000 per year to operate for inpatient care. Last year Columbus County received 1000 days of indigent patient care at Southeastern General Hospital which was not included in the proposed budget. She concluded that Southeastern was probably the most economically healthy center in the State.

There were questions and comments from the audience which indicated they were in favor of withdrawing from Southeastern Center. One of the concerns was the turnover in personnel which has been very high. Dr. Moore's response to this was that there were at least two other areas which had a higher turnover than Columbus County. Others expressed dissatisfaction in patients being exposed to different persons on return trips to the Center.

The Board expressed appreciation to the citizens for their interest. No action was taken as this was a meeting for gathering information and some of the Board Members felt there were still unanswered questions that must be answered before a decision is made such as a reply from the Hospital Board of Trustees concerning inpatient rooms.

Dr. Moore also presented an official document showing the amount of local dollars which Duplin County puts into their mental health program and filed it with the County Clerk as a source of information.

Upon motion the meeting adjourned until February 21, 1977, at 10:00 a.m..

APPROVED:

Emogene M. Suggs
Clerk

Waldo Marlowe
Chairman