

COLUMBUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Informal Meeting with Columbus County Board of Education
Monday, September 13, 2004
5:00 P.M.

The Honorable Columbus County Commissioners met on the above stated date and at the above stated time at the Columbus County Board of Education located at 817 Washington Street, Whiteville, North Carolina, for the purpose of holding a meeting with the Columbus County Board of Education.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Bill Memory, **Chairman**
 David L. Dutton, Jr., **Vice Chairman**
 Kipling Godwin
 Sammie Jacobs
 Amon E. McKenzie
 Lynwood Norris
 C.E. "Gene" Wilson

APPOINTEES PRESENT:

Billy Joe Farmer, **County Administrator**
 June B. Hall, **Clerk to Board**

BOARD of EDUCATION MEMBERS PRESENT:

Raymond Shaw, Dale Ward, Ricky Bullard, Junior Dew, Bill Johnson, Bill Phipps, Thomas A. Nance, Superintendent of Columbus County Schools

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

At 5:00 P.M., Superintendent Nance called the meeting to order and stated the purpose of this meeting was to discuss and reach a resolve relative to the construction of the classrooms at Williams Town School and the design of the Williams Township Cultural Art Center.

WILLIAMS TOWNSHIP SCHOOL FIRE/CONSTRUCTION INFORMATION:

Thomas A. Nance, Superintendent of the Columbus County Schools, presented the following information.

1. Lost 33,000 square feet in January, 2004 fire;
2. Approximately another 7,000 square feet were demolished in the summer of 2004 (remainder of two-story building);
3. Total of 40,000 square feet lost; **and**
4. Loss includes 30 teaching stations, administrative office, guidance office, teachers' lounge, and various storage areas.

Planned New Construction**Classroom Building - 48,818 square feet:**

1. Includes 32 classrooms ranging in size from 850 to 1,400 square feet;
2. Administrative office, guidance center, visual arts and band classrooms, restrooms, teachers' lounge, student commons/hallways; **and**
3. Estimate cost: \$6,569,056.

Cultural Arts Center - 14,400 square feet:

1. 725 Seating capacity (will seat student body and staff); **and**
2. Estimated cost: \$3,295,000.

Total Cost for Classroom Building and Cultural Arts Center - \$9,864,056.

NOTE: Costs have increased from the original estimate on the building due to the increase in square footage and significant increase in the cost of construction.

The demolition of the two-story, eight classroom building in June necessitates adding 9,600 additional square feet of classroom space along with additional hallway space to accommodate these

classes. If this 9,600 square foot figure is multiplied by \$125 per square foot, it comes to \$1.2 million. If you add this figure to the school boards' original request of \$1.2 million, it is easy to see the need for additional local funds. These eight (8) classrooms were demolished because it was determined that bringing them up to code and adding elevators and additional stairwells necessary to tie them to a new building would essentially cost as much as replacing this old and outdated structure. The school board chose to demolish this two-story classroom building and rebuild all classrooms on one (1) level.

Construction Schedule

Schematics (Completed)	6 weeks	June 14 - July 30, 2004
Design Development	6 weeks	August 2 - September 17, 2004
Construction Documents	12 weeks	September 20 - December 10, 2004
Review and Approval	4 - 6 weeks	December 13 2004 - January 7, 2005
Out to Bid		January 13, 2005
Receive Bids		February 10, 2005
Construction	15 months	February 24, 2005 - May 26, 2006

Construction Funds Available

Columbus County Schools has settled the insurance claim for approximately \$5.3 million. Approximately \$4.3 million of this can be used for new construction. The remaining amount must be used to furnish the new building, pay to remove the remaining debris from the existing building and pay rent for modular classrooms used in the interim.

Construction Funds Needed

Columbus County Schools will need approximately \$5.5 million from the County Commissioners to build both the classroom building and the Cultural Arts Center at Williams Township School. We cannot proceed without additional funds.

RESPONSE by CHAIRMAN MEMORY:

In response to Mr. Nance's request for funds, Chairman Memory stated the following:

1. We are experiencing a problem with your request for funds;
2. We have met with the Local Government Commission and before they will give us an answer on our request to borrow money for this project, they must have certain documents in hand and these documents are: 1) a full set of plans; and, 2) Bid-ready to be let, and, at that point, we can go and ask for the sum of money we need;
3. We have been limited to \$10 Million for this calendar year;
4. You have stated that you need \$5.5 Million;
5. The State jailors have informed us we must replace the existing jail;
6. We have multiple other capital projects that must be addressed and find that we will be forced to prioritize;
7. Our number one priority will be the classrooms at Williams Township School to get the students out of the mobile units and back into classrooms;
8. Our number two priority will be the replacement of the jail based on state requirements;
9. Due to the fact of the limited funds at our disposal, we may have to fund part of these projects, and possibly parts of each project, separately;
10. We will have to work out a way to pay for all of these capital projects as the funds are made available to us;
11. You have, sitting in coffer, \$4.3 Million in which you could easily fund the cost of the plans that are needed to get the process going;
12. It has been our experience with the jail, if the plans are drawn and the project doesn't materialize, the plan can be utilized in the years that follow; **and**
13. You should not experience difficulty in getting additional plans at a later date.

Mr. Nance stated the Columbus County Board of Education was asking for a funding

commitment from the Columbus County Board of Commissioners in the amount of \$2.2 Million for the classrooms at Williams Township School and \$3.3 Million for the Williams Township Cultural Arts Center, which equates to a total funding commitment of \$5.5 Million.

Commissioner Godwin stated the Williams Township Committee was here tonight to see what they can actually do to help.

Comments by David Lee McPherson:

1. I really appreciate the efforts the Columbus County Board of Commissioners and the Columbus County Board of Education have put forth toward this project;
2. I do realize the priorities that are before the Board of Commissioners in their funding requests;
3. We appreciate both parties' acknowledgment of the fact the number one priority is to get the students back into classrooms;
4. We all know now that we need plans in order to proceed; **and**
5. This is a win-win situation for everyone involved.

Comments by Marjorie Gore:

1. I need to know if we need a total cost for this project before we do a grant application. Mr. Nance replied stating yes.
2. I have a letter with me that I would like placed in the minutes of this meeting. The letter is as follows:

September 13, 2004

Columbus County Board of Commissioners
111 Washington Street
Whiteville, North Carolina 28472

Columbus County Board of Education
Post Office Box 729
Whiteville, North Carolina 28472

Gentlemen:

The Williams Township Committee is a group of concerned citizens interested in seeing Williams Township School rebuilt, as it existed prior to the fire on January 6, 2004. We have consistently promoted the need for rebuilding both the classroom space as well as the auditorium, now called the Williams Township Cultural Arts Building.

After several meetings with your Boards, we realize the need to prioritize capital outlay projects for 2004 and beyond. As a result, our committee supports your efforts to move forward with construction of the classroom space in order to minimize the length of time our students will be housed in mobile units.

We do urge both Boards to continue to support our efforts to see the Cultural Arts Building rebuilt as well. To that end, we are requesting that the Columbus County Board of Education provide for, as a part of the insurance proceeds, the architectural design of the Cultural Arts Building. This will allow us to sell other public and private funding for the project over the next 12-18 months.

Thank you for your efforts on this project, as our children need this building. Please know that we stand ready to assist in any way possible. Let us know if we can ever be of assistance to you.

Sincerely,

/s/ David Lee McPherson /s/ Marjorie Gore /s/ Vernon Gurganus

After discussion was conducted relative to the amount of funding commitment the Board of Commissioners was willing to commit to, Chairman Memory stated the Columbus County Board of Commissioners would commit to the \$2.2 Million for the classrooms at Williams Township School and that Mr. Nance needed to proceed in getting the plans done so they could be let out for bids.

Mr. Nance recommended the commitment be for \$2.4 Million in lieu of \$2.2 Million to allow for any unexpected occurrence.

Commissioner Godwin stated it would be more economical to have all the drawings done at one time at the present interest rate of 5.7% which could lead to a savings of approximately fifty thousand and 00/100 (\$50,000.00) dollars.

Chairman Memory stated the Local Government Commission had informed them, during the recent meeting, that Columbus County was in good financial standing.

Commissioner Wilson stated the Local Government Commission sets rigid guidelines for counties to follow to keep counties in good financial standing and he was thankful for them.

Chairman Memory stated Columbus County has various other Capital Needs that need attention and the Columbus County Courthouse is in need of renovation.

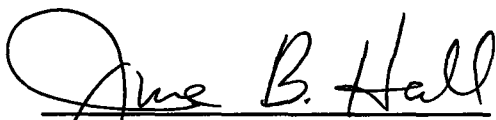
COMMITMENT APPROVAL:

After discussion was conducted regarding the amount of commitment, the Columbus County Board of County Commissioners, by general consensus, granted tentative approval for the commitment of \$2.4 Million for the balance of the construction of the Williams Township School classrooms and the design of the Williams Cultural Arts Building, subject to the approval of the Local Government Commission. This action will be formalized through a commitment letter to be approved at the September 20, 2004 Meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 5:31 P.M., Vice Chairman Dutton made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Jacobs. The motion so carried.

APPROVED:


JUNE B. HALL, Clerk to Board


BILL MEMORY, Chairman

COLUMBUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

**Special Called Meeting
Monday, September 13, 2004
5:35 P.M.**

The Honorable Columbus County Commissioners met on the above stated date and at the above stated time at the Columbus County Board of Education located at 817 Washington Street, Whiteville, North Carolina, for the purpose of holding a Special Called Meeting which was called by Chairman Memory and the press was duly notified.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Bill Memory, **Chairman**
David L. Dutton, Jr., **Vice Chairman**
Kipling Godwin
Sammie Jacobs
Amon E. McKenzie
Lynwood Norris
C.E. "Gene" Wilson

APPOINTEES PRESENT:

Billy Joe Farmer, **County Administrator**
June B. Hall, **Clerk to Board**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

At 5:35 P.M., Chairman Memory called the meeting to order and stated the purpose of this Special Called Meeting was to discuss a problem that had occurred in the last forty-eight (48) hours relative to three (3) horses within Columbus County in which we have recently been notified.

SITUATION RELATIVE to THREE (3) HORSES:

Billy Joe Farmer, County Administrator, stated the following:

- A. I have just been made aware of this situation;
- B. It is definitely peril to the animals involved;
- C. We have been advised the animals would not be alive long enough to wait for a court date to be established through the court system;
- D. We hope to rescue the animals by a method in which does not require the owner's signature;
and
- E. In accordance with N.C.G.S. § 19A-45, the Board of County Commissioners is authorized to appoint one (1) or more animal cruelty investigators to serve without any compensation, at no cost to the County.

Rossie Hayes, Columbus County Animal Control Officer, stated these three (3) horses were indeed the same three (3) horses in which Columbus County had dealt with before, and due to a technicality in the process that occurred before, we had to release these horses back into the same situation they were taken out of. I desperately need the help of someone to help monitor situations of this type.

Chairman Memory stated Columbus County had discovered a feasible solution to this problem and other problems of this nature, when they arise, and the solution would be to appoint an Animal Cruelty Control Investigating Officer. We have with us here today two (2) people who have experience in this field. I would like for these two (2) people to introduce themselves and present a background of their experience.

LORI DADDONA PRESENTATION:

My name is Lori Daddona and I am a certified Animal Cruelty Investigating Officer. I work with horses, donkeys, mules and ponies. I am associated with the United States Rescue League and the North Carolina Rescue League which covers nine (9) other counties. I have with me a Certificate of Completion for the Horse Cruelty Investigator's Workshop and a Certificate of Completion for the Animal Protection Society of Orange County and The Humane Society of The United States, Horse Protection Officer's Short Course. I am from Brunswick County and with me tonight is Lisa Hartman who is from Pender County, and I will ask her to give a brief presentation for your information.

LISA HARTMAN PRESENTATION:

My name is Lisa Hartman from Pender County. We have a facility which entails seventy-five (75) volunteer workers and one (1) paid barn keeper. It is very important that animals in this type of condition be placed in the hands of someone who knows the proper method of getting them back to a good nutritional state through proper diet and medication. After they have reached a good health status, it is even more important to place these animals in the hand of someone who will maintain that state, and not everyone is educated in this process. I have been working in this field for many years and I have a Certificate of Completion from the Animal Protection Society of Orange County and The Humande Society of The United States, Horse Protection Officer's Short Course bearing the date of May 4-6, 2004.

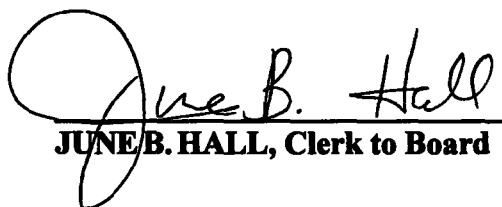
Ms. Daddona and myself can be a tremendous help to Rossie Hayes in monitoring the conditions of animal in Columbus County and rescuing those in need of such services.

APPROVAL of APPOINTMENT of TWO (2) ANIMAL CRUELTY INVESTIGATORS in ACCORDANCE with N.C.G.S. § 19A-45:

After further discussion was conducted by the Board, Vice Chairman Dutton made a motion to appoint Lori Daddona and Lisa Hartman as Animal Cruelty Investigators for Columbus County, in accordance with N.C.G.S. § 19S-45, and under no circumstances shall Columbus County bear the cost of any expenses, unless prior approval has been duly given. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Wilson. The motion so carried.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 5:49 P.M., Vice Chairman Dutton made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Jacobs. The motion so carried.


JUNE B. HALL, Clerk to Board

APPROVED:

BILL MEMORY, Chairman