

MINUTES
Scotland County Board of Commissioners
Special Meeting, September 30, 2009
507 West Covington Street, Laurinburg NC

At 5:30 p.m. Chairman J. D. Willis called the meeting to order. Commissioners in attendance: Chairman Willis, Vice Chair Betty Blue Gholston and Commissioners Bob Davis, Guy McCook, Joyce McDow and Clarence McPhatter. Commissioners not in attendance: Commissioner John Alford. Staff in attendance: County Manager Kevin Patterson, County Attorney Ed Johnston and Clerk to the Board Ann W. Kurtzman.

Chairman Willis said the Board of Education funding request would be discussed. Chairman Willis said the funding request originally was discussed in an informal meeting he attended along with County Manager Patterson, County Attorney Johnston, Board of Education Chairman Jimmy Bennett, Superintendent Rick Stout and School Attorney Nick Sojka.

Chairman Willis said the special meeting allows Commissioners to discuss the request and ask questions, which would be forwarded to the Board of Education and Superintendent.

He added that both boards should meet at a future time to discuss the low wealth formula and the possibility of amending the formula to better reflect the local dollars the County pays for students currently enrolled rather than on student enrollment numbers projected by the State.

Before the funding request discussion continued, County Manager Patterson asked the Commissioners to consider sending Economic Developer Greg Icard to China with an American Chamber of Commerce Executives group. Mr. Patterson said Chamber President Theresa Lamson will be going to China and suggested the County send a delegate. Mr. Patterson said the trip would cost about \$2,000. Mr. Patterson said it would be a plus for the County to learn about the culture of China and potential growth opportunities.

Chairman Willis returned to the funding request discussion. He said the consensus by the Board of Commissioners is to approve the funding request. He explained that it is important to do what is right for the County and in the best interest of the education system.

He added that some Commissioners indicated they would like greater accountability from the schools on how the money is spent.

Chairman Willis again commented on the need for an amended funding formula to more accurately account for actual attendance rather than a projected student count. He said the County pays more locally because its funding is based on projections while the State funds the school system on actuals.

Chairman Willis added that in order for State legislators to consider an amendment, both the Board of Commissioners and the Board of Education must agree to a proposed amendment to the current funding formula.

Commissioner McDow asked how the Board of Education would move forward on the Wagram expansion project if it needs funding now. Chairman Willis said the Wagram expansion is a capital project that would not be funded from current expense unless Lottery funds for capital fell short. The

Board of Education approved an agreement that it would use its current expense at \$250,000 a year if a shortfall did occur.

Vice Chair Gholston said she is concerned about future Boards of Education and whether they would be bound to the agreement.

Commissioner Davis asked about the School's fluctuating Fund Balance that went from a high of about \$800,000 to low of about \$200,000 in a matter of weeks.

Chairman Willis said perhaps receivables at the end of FY 2008-2009 brought the Fund Balance down. Chairman Willis suggested the Commissioners might want to look at last year's audit and ask the Board of Education about the Fund Balance, where the dollars went and what is the financial breakdown.

Commissioner McCook said he would like to meet with the Board of Education to improve a working relationship between the two boards. Commissioner McCook explained that the public expects greater accountability because of the County's unique school funding situation.

County Manager Patterson said the Board of Education this year experienced unanticipated State funding cuts that put them in a scramble.

Commissioner Davis said he was asked what the Board of Education is doing to cut costs and perhaps save money in the long-term.

Commissioner McCook said he would like an overview of the capital dollars and a break down on how capital dollars were spent over the past five years.

County Manager Patterson said the request by the Board of Education for \$344,000 is to pay for six secretarial and custodial positions that would otherwise be terminated.

Vice Chair Gholston said she would like to know how much of the local funding above the State formula goes to the associate superintendent position.

Motion was made by Chairman Willis and duly seconded by Commissioner McDow to approve \$344,000 in funding for the schools to be distributed in monthly installments retroactive to September 2009 and continuing through June 2009 with said funding to be used for the previously specified secretarial and custodial positions and that the funding is a one-time appropriation and not to be used as part of the base funding formula. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Motion was made by Commissioner Davis and duly seconded by Commissioner McDow to adjourn. Vote: Motion unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Ann W. Kurtzman
Clerk to the Board

J.D. Willis
Chairman