

**GATES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
JOINT MEETING WITH BOARD OF EDUCATION
MAY 24, 2016**

The Gates County Board of Commissioners met in Special Session at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 24, 2016 at the Board of Education, 205 Main Street, Gatesville. Commissioners Hofler, Owens, Jordan and Freeman were present. Board of Education members Glendale Boone, Ray Felton, Leslie Byrum, Claire Whitehurst and Daniel Dickerson were present. Also present was County Manager, Natalie Rountree & Superintendent Dr. Barry Williams, Finance Director Sandy Pittman, Finance Director Rube Blanchard and School Facilities Director Joe Harrell.

Chairman Hofler called the meeting to order.

New Business

Chair Hofler stated the two boards are together to continue the conversation about school construction and future alternative plans.

Dr. Williams provided answers to the questions submitted by the Board of Commissioners. Information was provided on the Qualified School Construction Bond (QSCB) as well as a listing of all current capital expenditures that have been spent to date. \$180,000 of the \$200,000 allocated for capital expenditures has been spent with projects in the pipeline to spend the remaining amount by the end of the fiscal year.

Mrs. Whitehurst asked the Board where they felt the conversation of funding for new construction stood and if the Board still wanted a third party to assess the needs of Central Middle School. The Board of Commissioners felt the assessments previously presented from school maintenance, roofing companies and DPI comments are sufficient to move forward with adding a referendum to the ballot for a tax increase for school construction.

The Board of Commissioners asked the Board of Education about the possibility of future consolidation of schools to reduce overhead and maintenance costs to assist in paying for new school construction. All of the schools are older and at a point where a great deal of maintenance and costly repairs are needed. If consolidation would occur the money that is allocated for maintenance repairs could be used to build nicer additions onto current elementary schools. The Board is not proposing a consolidation take place within the next year but would like the plan to be reviewed for future years planning and budgeting purposes.

The Board of Education was not opposed to considering consolidation options but asked that any school that is closed be demolished so a cleared piece of land is left instead of an abandoned school that will be an eye sore or provide an opportunity for a charter school to enter the county. School Board members feel that consolidation and redistricting may be a very viable option for future plans.

Both Boards discussed the advantages and disadvantages of consolidation and agreed at this time they feel consolidation of elementary schools would work best instead of building a new school to manage K-8.

Discussion was had about the new schools in Bertie and Camden Counties, using DPI prepared architectural plans to reduce costs and considering the Qualified School Construction Bonds.

The Board of Commissioners expressed the need to have a solid number presented for the cost to construct a new middle school. Currently only a range of \$16-\$20 million has been presented; a range can not be used to put a referendum on the ballot in November. The Board also asked for a contingency plan if the referendum does not pass.

Both Boards discussed the need to be united in decisions and communication. If the referendum does not pass a plan will need to be in place to repair the roof immediately and to make other considerable repairs and upgrades. Funds to conduct these projects will have to be taken from other sources.

Tax calculations were discussed for construction ranging from \$16-\$20 million.

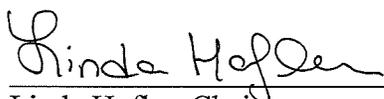
Commissioner Jordan left the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

Both Boards decided on a joint meeting with Dr. Matthews to ask detailed questions about the Qualified School Construction Bond.

Mrs. Rountree provided an update on the request for funding for caution lights in front of the school.

Adjournment

Commissioner Owens made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Freeman seconded the motion; motion passed without opposition.



Linda Hofler, Chairman



Melissa C. Lawrence, Clerk

GATES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
