

March 18, 2014

The Washington County Board of Commissioners met in a joint session with the Washington County Board of Education on Tuesday, March 18, 2014 at 6:00 PM in the Multi-Purpose Room of Washington County Union School, Roper, NC. Commissioners Johnson, Phelps and Sexton were present. Also present were County Manager Jerry W. Rhodes, Clerk to the Board Julie J. Bennett, County Attorney Curtis Potter and Finance Officer Frank Milazi. Commissioners Manning and McCray were unable to attend. Board of Education members Russell Wilkins, Ruffin Gill, Jr., Jerry Phelps, Fred Norman and Lynn West were present. Also present were Washington County Schools Superintendent Dr. Joe Davis and Clerk to the Board Diane White.

Chair Johnson called the Washington County Board of Commissioners to order and Chair Wilkins called the Board of Education to order for the March 18, 2014 joint meeting.

The Creswell High School JROTC provided the presentation of colors. The pledge of allegiance was led by Commissioner D. Cole Phelps. The invocation was given by Chaplain Kenneth Barber.

Board of Education Chair Wilkins gave the welcome and purpose of the meeting: "Together we stand, divided we fall." He stated he was delighted to see both Boards in the same room and that it was like a dream come true. He stated that the purpose of this meeting is for the two bodies to educate our community on our roles in this county. It is each respective Chair's desire that each board work together to support each other's goals.

Board of Education Chair Wilkins introduced the Washington County Board of Education members: Ruffin Gill, Jr., Jerry Phelps, Fred Norman, Vice-Chair Lynn West and Washington County Schools Superintendent Dr. Joe Davis.

Board of Commissioners Chair Johnson introduced the Washington County Board of Commissioners present: Commissioner D. Cole Phelps and Commissioner Bill Sexton. She stated that Commissioner Buster Manning and Commissioner Raymond McCray were under the weather this evening and could not attend. Chair Johnson also recognized County staff that were in attendance: County Manager Jerry Rhodes, Clerk to the Board Julie J. Bennett, Finance Officer Frank Milazi, County Attorney Curtis Potter and Office Assistant Jennifer Arnold.

Washington County Manager Jerry Rhodes called on staff members to speak about their departments. They spoke in the following order:

Mr. Knapp Brabble, Airport Manager (After Mr. Brabble spoke, Ms. Chesson, citizen, asked if the airport does transfers. Mr. Brabble said if you charter a plane it does.)

Ms. Dora Bell, Elections Director

Mr. Louis Boone, Facilities Director

Mr. Tim Esolen, Register of Deeds

Ms. Darlene Fikes, IT Director

Mr. John Flemming, EMS Director (After Mr. Flemming spoke, Amy O'Neal, Plymouth, asked if EMS picks up someone and they rather go somewhere other than Washington County

Hospital, can our EMS do that? Mr. Flemming said yes they can since there are no doctors staffing the Washington County Hospital Emergency Room now.)

Mr. Randy Fulford, Recreation Director (After Mr. Fulford spoke, a citizen asked about insurance for the kids playing County recreational sports—why they have to have it. Mr. Fulford stated that this is supplemental insurance. It kicks in after the citizen's regular insurance stops. Another citizen spoke up to say that the hospital isn't aware of our recreational insurance. The parents need to have an insurance number to give the hospital. Mr. Rhodes said the Commissioners recently created a Recreation Board to help with the Recreation Services across the County.)

Ms. Delisa Johnson, E911 Director

Ms. Denise Jones, Tax Office (After Ms. Jones spoke, a citizen asked about DMV and paying your property taxes there. Ms. Jones explained that you now pay it all at DMV and pay it all at one time. The citizen asked if you still get a 15 day grace period. Ms. Jones said yes it is written on the bill.)

Ms. Ann Keyes, Planning and Safety/Emergency Management Director (After Ms. Keyes spoke, a citizen asked if the County inspects the schools. Ms. Keyes replied yes--under the level 3 fire inspection.)

Ms. Rebecca Liverman, Cooperative Extension Director

Mr. Frank Milazi, Finance Officer

Mr. Lou Manring, Public Utilities Director (After Mr. Manring spoke, Mr. Fred Norman asked if there is a limit on taking items to the landfill. Mr. Manring replied that each resident is allowed 8,000 pounds free before being charged. A citizen asked Mr. Manring if he handles the Town of Plymouth's water and Mr. Manring replied no, the County does not handle the Town's water.)

Ms. Amy O'Neal, Librarian

Mr. Curtis Potter, County Attorney

Sheriff James Ross, County Sheriff

Mr. Keith Sawyer, Soil and Water Conservation

Ms. Rosalyn Smith, Detention

Mr. Burl Walker, Veterans Affairs (After Mr. Walker spoke, Mr. Fred Norman asked if the new health care center is open in Greenville. Mr. Walker replied yes it is. A citizen asked about the veteran's scholarships—are they for the veteran's children. Mr. Walker stated that the scholarships are not for veteran's children, they are for the veteran's.)

Mr. Harry White, GIS Director

Ms. Rhonda Woolard, DSS Director

Mr. Jerry Rhodes, County Manager

Washington County Schools (WCS) Superintendent Dr. Joe Davis talked about his role in the school system. He then called on his staff members to speak about their departments.

Ms. Fannie Williams—Asst. Supt. For Administrative Services  
Ms. Tracey Peele—Interim Principal for Creswell Elementary School  
Ms. Nicole Moore—Principal at Pines Elementary School  
Mr. Wesley Stokes—Transportation Director for WCS  
Ms. Gloria McCray—Student Services/EC  
Mr. Frank Stevens—Maintenance Services  
Mr. Daniel Smith—Director of Technology  
Mr. Mathew Cheeseman speaking on behalf of Ms. Amanda Holten  
Mr. Mathew Cheeseman—Chief Academic Officer  
Ms. Diane Stokes—Principal of Washington County Union School  
Ms. Sharon Cherry—Principal of Creswell High School  
Ms. Ivry Cheeks—Principal of Plymouth High School  
Mr. Mel Stanley—Director of Testing  
Mr. Lee O’Neal—Career and Technical Education  
Ms. Gwendolyn Barnes—Early College Coordinator  
Ms. Cedric Gerald—Secondary Curriculum Specialist  
Mr. David Noell—Chief Financial Officer  
Ms. Shirley Pelletier—Child Nutrition Director

Dr. Davis feels that WCS has made great strides in the 2 years he’s been here.

A public question and answer session was held for the Board of Education.

Ms. Bunny Sanders, Mayor of Roper, congratulated both sides on their presentations. She stated that she is concerned that Roper doesn’t have library services. She is asking for an allocation in the next County budget for opening a library. She would like \$25,000. Mayor Sanders feels that because the County received a grant for the Pettigrew Regional Library located in Plymouth, that there will be additional funds available to have a library in Roper. Mr. Rhodes stated that even with the grant, the County is contributing additional funds to make sure all the work will get completed at the Pettigrew Regional Library.

A citizen asked about an internet hub program that was supposed to be put in the County. The schools were supposed to have received funds to put up hubs around the County so homes would have access to the internet. Ms. Latoya Howell expanded on this saying that \$550,000 was available for our County. Someone has to contact Mediacom or CenturyLink to get this done.

Ms. Latoya Howell said she heard all presentations and that the Board of Commissioners oversees the citizens of Washington County and the Board of Education is supposed to take care of the students of the county. There was no heat at Pines Elementary school yesterday. 700 kids sat in the cold all day long. Also, citizens of Washington County want to climb the ladder of the corporate system in the school system. Ms. Howell stated that Washington County citizens are not being given job opportunities.

Chair Wilkins asked for people to ask one question at a time and give Dr. Davis time to answer. Dr. Davis will get with his IT person to check on the issue about the internet hub. The heat issue has been addressed at the Pines. Dr. Davis and staff met for 2.5 hours trying to figure

out how this occurred. The gas truck arrived at the Pines at 3:30 pm. Dr. Davis said he could not discuss personnel issues but tries to be fair.

Vice-Chair West asked for clarification of the internet hubs. Ms. Howell said that it was the Board of Education's responsibility.

Mr. Julius Webb, citizen, stated that an investigation should be done on why 'no heat at the Pines' happened yesterday.

Chair Wilkins said that the Board of Education is not perfect. It's not their job to micromanage the Superintendent. The Board's job is to implement policy and see that the policies are carried out from day to day. The Board has confidence in Superintendent Davis and the job they hired him to do.

Board of Education Vice-Chair Lynn West gave the Closing Remarks. She thanked everyone for coming out on this cold/dreary evening. 1,736 students in our school system benefit from the two Boards coming together. She sees that the Board of Commissioners is responsible for Economic Development to bring businesses to the area and the Board of Education is responsible for teaching these students so that they can work in these businesses.

Ms. West mentioned accomplishments of various students/teachers in the school system:

A student from Creswell received the Victor E. Bell scholarship (\$2,000 a year for a max of \$20,000).

Ms. Julie Simpson, 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, was chosen to attend a program at NCSU. 15 out of 55 applicants were chosen and she was one of the 15.

Ms. Charlene Evans, Plymouth High School math teacher, was chose as Washington County's Teacher of the Year and also the northeast region's Teacher of the Year and hopefully in April she will be NC's Teacher of the Year.

Ms. West stated that yes, the Board of Education does have some glitches, but so does every organization. Both boards need to continue in the spirit of working together.

Washington County Board of Commissioners Chair Johnson thanked all the citizens for coming out and all the Board members on both Boards. Chair Johnson told the County Department Heads it was greatly appreciated that they came to this meeting and spoke.

At 8:30 pm, with no further discussion needed, Chair Johnson adjourned the Board of Commissioners meeting and Chair Wilkins adjourned the Board of Education meeting.

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Tracey A. Johnson  
Chair

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Julie J. Bennett, CMC, NCCCC  
Clerk to the Board