

PERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MEMBERS PRESENT

November 6, 2007
OTHERS PRESENT

Johnny Myrl Lunsford, Chairman
Jimmy B. Clayton, Vice-Chairman
Kyle W. Puryear
Larry H. Bowes
Larry E. Yarborough, Jr.

Steve Carpenter, County Manager
Ronald Aycock, County Attorney
Faye T. Fuller, Clerk to the Board
Andy Davenport, Finance Director

The Board of Commissioners for the County of Person, North Carolina, met in special session on Tuesday, November 6, 2007 at 6:15 p.m.

The joint meeting with the Person County Board of Commissioners was held at Southern Middle School. Members of the Board of Education present included Pecolia Beatty, Ronnie King, Vickie Nelson, Jimmy Wilkins, Vice Chairman and Gordon Powell, Chairman. Dr. Larry Cartner, Superintendent, Dave Bennett, Associate Superintendent, and Julie Masten, Finance Officer, and Teresa Shotwell, Secretary to the Board were also were present.

Chairman Lunsford led in prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

The meeting was held due to the fact the Board of Education does not feel the Board of Commissioners adequately funded the school system for FY 2007-08. The Board of Education requested \$10,201,436 for current operating expenses for 2007-08 and was appropriated \$8,479,850 by the Board of Commissioners. The difference between the amount requested by the Board of Education and the amount appropriated by the Board of Commissioners is \$1,721,586. The Board of Education felt the appropriation was insufficient to support the school system’s needs. The 2007-08 allocation represented an increase of \$604,850 over the 2006-07 allocation; however, that increase was not enough to cover rising salary and benefit costs mandated by the state and increases in utilities, maintenance, or fixed costs, which totaled \$693,002.

Dr. Larry Cartner presented a PowerPoint presentation on the challenges and relationships of school funding. The information in the presentation had been shared with parents. Sources of information provided were from Statistical Profile, an annual publication of NC Department of Public Instruction, Governor’s Report Card, NC Public School Forum Finance Report, Person County Finance Office and Person County Budget Ordinance.

Following the PowerPoint presentation, Board of Education Chairman Powell opened the discussion period of the meeting by saying that the purpose of bringing both Boards together was for dialog and communication.

Board of Education Vice-Chairman Wilkins asked if the Board of Commissioners had a funding formula, and if so, what it was. He said he would like to see both Chair’s, the Superintendent and the Piedmont Community College President have monthly

meetings to discuss the financial progress of the educational entities. He said a two to three year financial commitment would simplify financial predictions.

Board of Education member Vickie Nelson emphasized that everything in the PowerPoint presentation was true. Schools need to keep pace to prepare students for the global world. Children have to be prepared for the future. The solution would lie in a long term plan.

Commissioner Larry Yarborough disagreed with the Power Point presentation because he felt it presented numbers out of context. As a small rural county, employees are paid same as larger counties. He suggested the Board of Education manage its money more wisely, particularly state funding. He asked how North Carolina Education Lottery funds were being used.

Board of Education Vice Chairman Wilkins responded that lottery proceeds are earmarked for certain capital projects only and are not used for the classrooms.

Chairman Powell told Commissioners that the Board of Education used \$750,000 of its fund balance with the understanding that the Commissioners would refund that amount in the local budget. He said the funds were used because it had to be done to educate students. Next year's budget will be more crucial than this year as there is no fund balance to use.

Chairman Lunsford said he was glad the boards had an opportunity to discuss issues relating to the school funding. He said it was important to share information because everyone is concerned about the children in Person County. He said he would like to take the information provided, review it and see if there was anything the Board of Commissioners can do. He said it was important to establish a dialog.

Commissioner Clayton agreed but commented that the county has a \$52M budget, but actual tax receipts in 2007 were \$23,881,198. The percentage of that actual tax rate that went to education was 32.98% for current expense. With capital outlay expense added to that would be another 2.1%. Therefore of the actual property tax paid in Person County, 35.8% went to schools. He stated he was well aware of the shortage of school funds. He pointed out that over the last several years, there has been some percentage of increase. He said both boards need to continue to work together.

Commissioner Yarborough said he would favor appropriating \$750,000 to the schools to help them through the end of the year.

Commissioner Puryear said the Boards need to meet more often to enable the Board of Commissioners to be better prepared for next years proposed school budget. He said the \$750,000 would be just a band-aid on the problem.

Chairman Powell said both boards need to move forward to work on budget ideas and needs. He said he felt some productive dialog had taken place and he looked forward to working with the Commissioners for a resolution to the school funding needs.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 7:52 p.m., the meeting was adjourned by **motion** of Commissioner Clayton, **seconded** by Commissioner Bowes and carried.

Faye T. Fuller, CMC
Clerk to the Board

Johnny Myrl Lunsford
Chairman