

Currituck County Schools**Joint Meeting with the County Commissioners****09/10/2020 03:00 PM****Meeting Minutes**

County Cooperative Extension Building

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Attendees

Voting Members

Karen Etheridge, Chairman
Dwan Craft, Vice Chairman
Dr. Bill Dobney, Board Member
Will Crodick, Board Member
Janet Rose, Board Member

Non-Voting Members

Dr. Matt Lutz, Interim Superintendent

I. Call to Order**II. New School Construction**

Ben Stikeleather, County Manager, stated the county would not be receiving the \$11 million for new school construction as earlier believed. This is due to the economy and the impact of the pandemic. A bond referendum could be used but it would increase the wait time for the construction of a new school.

Will Crodick asked everyone if they had read the 2011 Facility Study. Dr. Lutz said the Moyock area has seen steady growth. When schools reopen, approximately 100 students may return from home schools, private schools and other settings. Shawboro Elementary has the largest student population ever. Commissioners Paul Beaumont and Kevin McCord inquired about moving the CCMS/MMS boundary line. Dr. Lutz said he was unsure if room was available at CCMS to accommodate.

Referring to the 2011 Facility Study, Mr. Stikeleather said additions to CES, MES and MMS would provide seats for students. He said the goal for the evening was to discuss expansion of the schools and discuss building a new school. The building of a new school would require a bond.

Mr. Stikeleather presented cost comparisons for the additional seating for each expansion (\$13,000 MES, \$18,000 MMS & \$24,000 CES).

Will Crodick recommended adding on to MES and MMS and to initiate a bond referendum for a new elementary school in the northern area.

The group discussed needing a consensus and a plan B should the bond fail. Other ways to secure funding would be needed.

Mr. Stikeleather recommended a RFQ design/build process for the new school. He said mobile classrooms may help bridge the gap between start and completion of construction. If approved, the bond funds would not be available until Spring of 2023. The county can finance the expansion projects now.

Owen Etheridge stated the timeframe to repay through the bond can be 20 to 40 years versus 10 years for a loan.

Kitty Etheridge inquired about the 2011 Facility Study. Mr. Stikeleather replied that the 2011 study is sound but a new study is needed.

Dr. Lutz said different survey groups use different guidelines for capacity levels based on information supplied by NCDPI - at the time of the inquiry.

Mr. Crodick said that a 5 year study of school facilities is mandated and must be signed off by the county and BOE. He stated that for years the planning department and school board numbers have varied. The 2011 study gave growth projections and possible expansion options. The study helps to facilitate a plan and that is why he asked everyone if they had read it at the beginning of the meeting. The survey should have been used to create a 10 year plan. He found it ironic that some of the facilities were already identified as problematic concerning the capacities.

Karen Etheridge said at the time of the 2011 survey the district was facing a budget crisis of \$5 million. She would like the public to know that the survey needs could not be addressed at that time. Mr. Crodick replied that they had failed. Commissioner Bob White asked that the finger pointing stop. It was time to conduct a new study.

Janet Rose inquired about securing property for a new school in the northern area now. Mr. White stated services, expansions and the bond process needed to be addressed. Without the bond a large tax increase would be required.

Mrs. Etheridge asked about a vocational school. In the past CES was mention and how it would help reduce the population at CCHS.

The two groups discussed the cost of a new elementary school costing between \$25-\$30 million.

Following discussion and the current repairs needed at CES, there was a consensus that an expansion at that school would be too costly for the amount of seats gained.

Again the group discussed moving school boundary lines for schools to reduce the student population in the northern schools. Mr. McCord stated that possibly moving the CCMS & MMS lines would help.

Karen Etheridge and Janet Rose asked about securing land now and how the steady building of residential properties is taking available land. Mr. Beamont cautioned purchasing land or agreeing to sites that are based on the approval of subdivisions. Commissioner Mike Payment said the county could negotiate the property. The group discussed the process and the responsibility of each group on identifying land and negotiating price.

Mr. Etheridge cautioned the use of bonds and the cost of construction. The bond of 1993 did not cover the cost of CCHS construction and it was important that if a bond was used it would be done correctly.

As far as waiting for the appropriate time to start construction, Dwan Craft added that she taught in schools when expansions were underway and it can be done while school is in session.

The meeting ended with the consensus to conduct a RFP for the expansion of MES & MMS and a RFQ for an assessment/study of school facilities and capital needs.

III. Adjourn

Chairperson

Secretary