

**GATES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 21, 2015**

The Gates County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session at 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, September 21, 2015 in the Gates County Court House, 202 Court Street, Gatesville. Commissioners Hofler, Owens, Jordan, Felton and Freeman were present. Also present was County Manager, Natalie Rountree.

Commissioner Felton led in prayer and the pledge of allegiance.

Chairman Hofler called the meeting to order.

**Approval of Minutes**

Commissioner Jordan stated the June 30<sup>th</sup> minutes have been overlooked for approval and need to be approved. The Board received these minutes via email for review.

Commissioner Freeman made a motion to approve the June 30<sup>th</sup> minutes as presented. Commissioner Jordan seconded the motion; motion passed without opposition.

**Approval of Agenda**

Ms. Rountree stated a short Historic Courthouse discussion needs to be added to the agenda under old business.

Commissioner Owens made a motion to approve the agenda as adjusted. Commissioner Felton seconded the motion; motion passed without opposition.

**Delegations – Announced**

Michael Slater, VFW Representative, introduced himself and discussed the offerings of the VFW. The VFW offers scholarships and programs for school children from middle school to high school. Mr. Slater is the District Commander for Northeastern North Carolina which has five post. The local VFW also offers persons of the year awards for police, fire and rescue. The VFW would like to work with the community on any community events. This upcoming weekend 2 1/2 buses of hospital veterans will be hosted for a meal and dancing and others from the community are invited to attend to see what a service is being offered to our veterans. There will be a car show in a few weeks which will include awards and two monster trucks. Mr. Slater shared information on how he educates veterans on the programs that are offered to them including NCVets. There are also veterans and military support programs that cover a variety of areas. A lot of companies have partnered with the VFW to help with these events. Mr. Slater asked for Board and community members to contact him with suggestions for improving events and services.

Chair Hofler thanked Mr. Slater for his service and his work to host community events. Chair Hofler stated she is familiar with the school programs and they are worthwhile programs for the students. She asked how a Veteran should get in touch with Mr. Slater. Mr. Slater can be reached by phone and will leave his contact information.

Commissioner Freeman thanked the local VFW for their support with the Wounded Warrior program.

Commissioner Owens asked for a website or email address. Mr. Slater stated the organization does not have an email address but he can be reached at [mislater@yahoo.com](mailto:mislater@yahoo.com)

Commissioner Jordan asked about the scholarship requirements. Mr. Slater explained any child can apply but they encourage kids to get involved with VFW programs.

**Delegations – Unannounced**

None

**Administrative Reports**

Reports are given at the first meeting of the month

### **Public Hearings**

Commissioner Owens made a motion to enter into public hearing on consideration of a Solar Farm Moratorium. Commissioner Felton seconded the motion; motion passed without opposition.

Chair Hofler stated there is a proposed moratorium ordinance for review.

Jennifer Baptiste, County Planner, stated the moratorium is to allow the county time to redevelop and adjust the solar farm section of the ordinance particularly the items that concern the protection of adjacent property owners. Matt Lowe and Brian Saunders with Soil and Water Conservation were not able to be in attendance but prepared a letter to be shared with the Board of Commissioners.

Pam, Elizabeth City, stated although she is not a resident she has connections with Gates County and cares about the County. She feels solar farms are a good thing and they benefit the homeowner and the county but besides that there isn't much benefit to the locals. Solar farms could possibly be loud, are an eye sore, and take over farm land. The money gained doesn't always make up for the land that will be lost for farming and hunting. It is worth taking time and reviewing it in detail or else you will be taking a lot of acres a little bit at a time. The farmers that rent and lease land are going to go away because they don't have a voice.

Dawn Harrell, Hobbsville, was raised on a farm in Gates County and understands the value of farm life and she shares these values with many. She stated it is disheartening the farm land will be taken up by a company to produce a product that will never be used by residents in the County. We will never benefit from the electricity produced. A representative of the company has been heard calling residents dumb redneck hicks; this is not the type of company we need here. The company is also trying to entice landowners all over the County and is working to build farms for personal benefit. The moratorium is necessary in order to create a good ordinance. Ms. Harrell stated solar farms hold a limited life span and will be obsolete, few citizens know that we have no ordinance to dictate the dismantling of these projects. We do not know the long term effects on the farm land and if the property will be suitable for farming and or the building of houses. We currently do not stand to gain anything we only stand to lose.

Brian Eure, Hobbsville, stated he has a lot of concerns about the amount of solar farms that are being installed in Gates County and the amount of land they are taking. Mr. Eure has asked a lot of questions to the different members of the boards, the tax office and the inspection department and has rarely been given any absolute answers but mostly the conversations bring up more questions. Mr. Eure stated he and a lot of other citizens have started to do their own research. After reading minutes from various boards and minutes from meetings in other counties he feels Gates County is very far behind on an ordinance to regulate solar farms. Mr. Eure is very much in favor of the proposed moratorium but doesn't feel that 180 days will be enough time to do the proper research to have the necessary wording that it needs to protect Gates County and the people who live here. Currently the Gates County ordinance has less than ½ a page that deals with solar farms. The NC Template for Solar Energy Development Ordinance from NC Solar Center and NC Sustainable Energy Association is a little under 30 pages on their website. This is a guideline of ordinances from an organization that is pro solar farms. It talks about level 1, 2, 3 solar systems, from the ones on a person's house to a private yard and on private businesses. Perquimans County has solar farms listed in multiple sections of their ordinances and equaling at least 2 to 3 pages. They have a whole article just dealing with buffers and screening that has landscape requirements that list how far apart trees and shrubs should be placed and what type are allowed. Pasquotank County has about a page and a half and request distance to surrounding property lines on an approved site plan, they also talk about decommissioning. Mr. Eure continued that Hertford, Currituck, and Camden Counties all have good ordinances to review, they may not be a good fit for Gates County but they are a good starting point. As our community develops and technology changes, so should our ordinance. Mr. Eure's biggest solar farm complaint is with the farm on Hwy 158 by Sugar Run Road and showed pictures of where the fence is very close to the road and very close to the house. He also pointed out that the Board of Adjustments

approved the special use permit for the solar farm in October 2014 and in the minutes it is stated by the company that the panels will be pointed away from traffic which is not the case. The pictures show that the panels, in the morning sun will point straight down Hwy 158 so traffic that is heading west towards Sunbury will be looking right at them. Speaking from experience Mr. Eure says the panels put off a glare and it's not just the panels but also the steel poles and other hardware equipment that are used to build the farms. This is another reason why we must take time to review our ordinances. On September 16, 2013 the Board of Commissioners passed the Zoning Ordinances that we have today, Mr. Eure stated he has talked with Board of Adjustment members and questioned them on how a quasi-judicial board votes and decides on either approving or denying the special use permit. All that he can determine is that everything that goes to them passes. He said he was told by two members that if they did not grant the permit they were in fear they were going to get sued. Mr. Eure asked if the door goes both ways and if the permit is granted then couldn't he sue. The Board has to go by NC General Statutes and when asking some of the members if they had read the laws that govern them he was told by one member that they knew of the laws but had not read them and another member stated he thought there was a book but has not seen it. Mr. Eure doesn't know how a board can make the right decisions for the County if they don't know how to make them. They too don't know what questions to ask or what provisions need to be added. They have been relying on other Boards to guide them. Mr. Eure reiterated that he feels the moratorium is crucial because it's not just the ordinances that need to be revised but all 3 boards need to get educated and on the same page to answer the public's questions. We, the people, rely on the boards for guidance and expect that you, who are making the rules, to know everything and have enough knowledge to protect the citizens of Gates County. Citizens should be put on a higher pedestal than some company that does not have any care in the heritage or culture of Gates County. Our interests should come first. Mr. Eure is a licensed electrician and works closely with inspectors all across Northeastern NC and asks them about solar farms when he has the chance. He has been told the small companies that are working 100 acres or less like a 5MW, tend to put a lot more heart into the project while the big companies like SunEnergy 1 do not care about us, all they care about is money. The inspectors say they are much more demanding and do a lot sloppier work. The company, O2 Energies, is very neat, well organized and have very detailed engineered plans. With no decommissioning plan for the County which site will hurt us the most, the small farm that cares about the community the larger farm that is just in it for the money. Mr. Eure feels we should consider a size limit and the number of farms that are allowed into the County. In the past 5 years the sizes of these farms have grown from 40 acres 5MW to 20MW to 80MW to possibly two in Gates County that are from 1000 to 1500 acres 112MW. If we don't strengthen our ordinances, when will enough be enough? Mr. Eure closed by reading the county vision statement in the CAMA Core Land Use Plan and stated people live in Gates County because we don't have a Wal-Mart or a big movie theater or 50 restaurants in a row. We have 1 stop light, we like farming, swamps and forest, we like Merchant's Millpond. It's about the land and hiking and camping, we don't want to look at big metal solar farms that do the opposite of what our own vision statement says. Mr. Eure challenged the Board to consider the moratorium to allow citizens to give their input and help the Board come up with a fair and balanced guideline for Gates County and our solar farm future.

Commissioner Owens asked Mr. Eure to email his material.

Chuck Brothers, Drum Hill Road, expressed his support for the Moratorium. The ordinance came in during a time when the Planning Board did not have a full time planner. There were a lot of questions asked that should have been answered before the ordinance was passed. When one of the first meetings was had on solar farms one of the biggest concerns was the screening that would be required. That particular farm has taken a lot of time to get up and going and presents various concerns. As they have been trying to get trucks in and out of the facility they are backing into the roadway and have no signage for a construction zone and have no one watching traffic helping the driver. We have to consider the 12,000 citizens in Gates County, we do not need to be known by people traveling through the County as the land of solar farms. We are not putting emphasis into regulating what is good for the County and how it will impact citizens in the years down the road. The runoff is a very big concern and should be reviewed closely. We are in the beginning stages of updating the Comprehensive Land Use Plan and the moratorium goes hand in hand with these updates. After traveling the state there has been a lot of solar

farms that have been put up and once they get their money they leave the site. These companies are in business to make money and the Board should be in the business of protecting the integrity of the County.

Erin Eure, Hobbsville, explained she is a landowner and concerned citizen in the County. Ms. Eure feels to best serve the County the six month moratorium is needed. Ms. Eure stated she is not opposed to solar energy nor does she want the County to be overly regulatory of private property rights, nor does she fault anyone for selling or leasing their land for the amounts of money solar developers are offering per acre. What she is opposed to is landowners being taken advantage of; she is opposed to poor or lack of planning that squanders the resources that are the heart and value of this County; and she is opposed to our elected, appointed, and hired officials not making a valiant and concerted effort to look beyond a boost in property tax income, a dollar figure to which no one on the county level seems to know how to calculate, and look down the road of these long-term projects under 15 and 20 year contracts. Ms. Eure stated the Question has been asked "what's the big deal?" She stated she has set through several meetings and minutes of debate over the size and number of parking spaces at Gates House and asked herself what's the big deal. It is important, it's a decision that will affect Gates County for many years to come and it's the same case for the solar farms. Her first concern is the decommissioning process. There is no plan for equipment when it reaches the end of its useable life, solar energy may be renewable but the equipment used to harness it is no different than your car, computer, or cell phone. They all breakdown, wear out, need repair or become obsolete and need replacing. If solar developers were truly investing in renewable sustainable energy, why do they abandon the contract at 15 years? Perhaps they already know it will no longer be profitable for them, yet the equipment is too expensive for most landowners to replace or remove. It may not even get to this point, what if the company goes bankrupt like Solyndra in CA. They are all LLC companies, they will walk away and we will be stuck with the cleanup. How comfortable are you with counting chickens from the government's basket of eggs? Note that on a 5 acre solar farm, equipment weighs in excess of 1 million pounds. Also note that panels are considered electronic waste and hazardous waste and cannot be landfilled. In order to sell what is acceptable as scrap metal at the salvage yard, you will be exposed to toxic substances. Ms. Eure continued by saying the County has no decommissioning plan in place, has 2 solar farms operations, 1 in progress, 1 application for permit and solar developers are searching for additional land deals in the County daily. If the moratorium is not passed the developers will come, build, leave and our new ordinance will be irrelevant. Ms. Eure stated her second concern is the escrow or bond accounts. Decommissioning will be very expensive, more than most landowners can afford. Some have touted the salvage value but labor to get to salvage will be prohibitive. Money should be set aside to ensure we can remove these from the land so that our children and grandchildren do not have to look at a once scenic county now speckled with junkyards. Ms. Eure asked from whom and how will this be required? We need a moratorium to properly figure this out. Her third concern is if the land can be returned to agricultural production. She stated zinc will be left in the soil from runoff of the panels which will prohibit future peanut production in a county that ranks in the top 10-15 in NC, a top 5 state in the US. Other trace elements and heavy metals need to be considered, not to mention the cost and difficulty of returning land to production after having been covered in structures for more than 10 years, re-ditched, etc. The herbicide use plan of solar developers also needs to be investigated, as certain products used repeatedly may build up residues in the soil and become prohibitive to future crop or forest production. Ms. Eure stated additionally how will the weed seed bank change over this period? Concern for is the creation of jobs and county income vs loss of jobs and county income, we need a moratorium to properly weigh these factors. Most of the local jobs touted by solar developers have not materialized, and when they have they are temporary. Yet loss of farm and forestland could be devastating to the County's two largest industries if limits are not set. Ms. Eure explained if a Gates County farmer lost 500 acres they would lay off 1 employee, 1000 acres 2 employees. These people live here year round, spend money here, pay taxes here, and will be here long after the solar developer and his few, if any, local jobs are gone. Ms. Eure explained that according to the Gates County FSA Office, greater than 50% of acreage farmed in the County is rented, without limits this could quickly devastate one of the county's largest industries. The average age of a farmer is 57.5, if they are put out of business who will hire them. In addition, as farmers start to decrease production, this will impact other agribusiness, namely two equipment dealers in the county, a cotton-gin co-op and many more. Harvestable forestland accounts for 67% of county acreage,

together with cropland 89%. Forestry represents 271 local sustainable jobs. Ms. Eure's explained the NC Wildlife Resources Commission, NC Dept. of Environmental and Natural Resources, and the US Army Corps of Engineers have raised significant concerns about many of the sites chosen for solar farm development thus far. We are a county rich in wildlife, state parks, and wetlands. Some solar developers have ignored these concerns by destroying wetlands and blatantly ignoring due process for proper permits, etc. They are also trying repeatedly to purchase land under US Fish & Wildlife Service easement to protect endangered wildlife. Another concern Ms. Eure shared is that landowners are being misled therefore we need a moratorium not only to give county government time to get educated but also time for landowners. Developers are waiving big and variable dollar figures in front of landowners who don't know what they don't know. They don't understand, if even made aware, what decommissioning will involve. They may not know some folks are being offered twice as much money per acre as what they have been offered. They may not be clear on who's benefitting from which incentive, who's paying property taxes, how storm water removal will change on their land, etc. Developers are not 100% honest, Bradley Fite of SunEnergy1 stated the proposed Bosley project, 1100 acres and 80 MW, will be similar in size to the solar farm off 17 bypass by Walmart in Elizabeth City, which is actually only 28MW, about ¼ of the size or less. Both the Bosley project and another 1200 acre project are touted on the SEI website as current projects at 112 MW, different from their applications, and not even yet awarded a permit by the county. In addition, solar developers are required by the NC Utilities Commission to advertise in a local paper for 4 consecutive weeks. SunEnergy1 has chosen to advertise in the Roanoke-Chowan News Herald instead of the Gates County Index for projects proposed in Sunbury. Ms. Eure have tried repeatedly to get a subscription break down number from RCNH but due to having a new employee they could not pull an exact number. However, they said circulation on that side of the county is minimal. Ms. Eure believes they are advertising in the News Herald to try to fly under the radar from local concerned citizens. Ms. Eure continued with her eighth concern which is the impact on adjacent property values. Ms. Eure is familiar with 2 Mile Desert Road in Winfall, solar farm and adjacent residential property, not even as close as the one here on Sugar Run Road is for sale with a price reduced sign posted and Ms. Eure feels this is due to the solar farm. The last concern expressed by Ms. Eure is that solar farm production is not compatible with our CAMA Core Land Use Plan. Although the plan is dated the vision remains; preserving a rural, scenic view shed, protecting agriculture and forest resources. People who live here choose to do so because of the peaceful nature, Merchant's Millpond, Dismal Swamp, etc, not because they want to see 8 foot chain linked fencing with harsh 3 strand barb wire tops and a sea of metal and glass. The plan is currently being revised and time should be given for the Board to share input on solar ordinances. A moratorium is needed to continue following the plan while making considerations for the next plan. This moratorium would send the same message that the building moratorium in Gates County did back in the 1980s, one that affected local developers, but was in the best interests of the county. A moratorium sends the message that yes, we are behind the eight ball, but we care about our county and want to do this right. It doesn't say no, it says hold on. Developers looking at new projects are not concerned about this year's tax credit ending, they have known this date for many years, from the outset. Even Bradley Fite, COO of SunEnergy1, said of the 1500 acre Bosley Road project "this is a next year project, we may start this year but the bulk of the construction will take place next year." With no additional permits applied for, realize at this time any new permits would not go before the Board of Adjustment until their next regular meeting on October 20. If you ignore the fact that there are two major holidays between then and the end of the year, that still only gives the company less than 2.5 months to possibly clear timber, prep land, get materials shipped, mobilize labor crews, and make high demands on inspectors, contractors, etc. to get everything done on that schedule is not practical. Ms. Eure stated additionally while the NC tax credits do expire December 31, 2015, as recently voted by the NC General Assembly, what is still in place is a mandate for NC utility companies to provide a certain percent of their energy from renewable sources, largely supplied by solar farms to date. Regulated utilities must reach 12.5% renewable energy by 2021, they are currently at about 1%. The NC General Assembly did not freeze this mandate, as was proposed, sending a message the market is still there for solar developers, who also still enjoy 80% property tax abatement, a 30% federal investment tax credit, and a 5 year federal accelerated depreciation tax credit. The market is still there. The message sent, "pushed down from above" as some would say, is that solar industry has been incentivized enough to this point. It's time for NC to put those precious tax dollars back into our schools. Gates County should well understand that loss. Ms. Eure closed by

reiterating that a moratorium does not say no it says hold on. It's time for educations, understanding and balance before its too late.

Commissioner Felton made a motion to exit the public hearing on consideration of a Solar Farm Moratorium. Commissioner Jordan seconded the motion; motion passed without opposition.

Commissioner Owens asked for the statements read to be submitted to the County Manager to be given to the committees drafting the ordinance.

Natalie Rountree, County Manager, stated she spoke with Christopher Ayers, Executive Director of the NC Utilities Commission and found out that currently a 80 MW solar farm is the largest solar farm you can apply for. As far as the advertisements, the general statutes states the newspaper and general circulations must be placed in the County. Mr. Ayers said if an advertisement is placed in a newspaper and you feel it is not properly advertised it should be addressed with the NC Utilities Commission. Ms. Rountree asked should the company approach the county first the Utilities Commission first. According to Mr. Ayers this varies from company to company, some companies are much more community friendly but before anything is approved they must have certificates of construction and sales agreements from the power company as well as zoning from the County. The Utilities Commission may not override the zoning of counties.

Commissioner Felton stated the moratorium has been discussed a great deal and needs to be passed; the six month time frame was a compromise.

Commissioner Felton made a motion to approve the Solar Farm Moratorium as presented. Commissioner Jordan seconded the motion; motion passed unanimously.

Chair Hofler stated we are not the only county in the Northeast to put a moratorium into place. Camden has had to revise their ordinance three times already and they wish they would have had a moratorium to begin with.

#### **Old Business**

Ms. Rountree stated a memo from Shelly Sass has been received which outlines the proposal to go about testing to determine cause of bulging or buckling in west brick wall and beginning deflection observed on east wall. The investigation will inform decisions about the preservation of the brick masonry or replacement of historic fabric with a rebuilt wall. Methods such as brick shear, brick prism, flatjack/shear jack deformability test and/or in-situ load testing will help determine compressive and lateral loads. She will be working with companies she has worked with in the past and will be providing cost at the October 7<sup>th</sup> meeting.

#### **New Business**

Ms. Rountree stated the Personnel Board met and reviewed the request to award a 2% salary increase for the Register of Deeds effective October 1, 2015 since she has completed her certifications. The Register of Deeds has identified where the funds will come from in her current budget.

Commissioner Jordan made a motion to approve a 2% salary increase to the Register of Deeds for completion of certifications effective October 1, 2015. Commissioner Felton seconded the motion; motion passed without opposition.

Sandy Pittman, Finance Director presented amendments 7- 10. Amendment 7 includes the increase in funding for the senior nutrition program. Amendment 8 is for the changes discussed for the Register of Deeds. Amendment 9 affects the generator transfer switch project, we have now received the memorandum of agreement for 2015 grant funding. Amendment 10 is the increase in funding required for the sewer project, the funds will come 50% from general fund and 50% from the water fund.

Commissioner Owens made a motion to approve budget amendments 7-9. Commissioner Freeman seconded the motion; motion passed without opposition.

Commissioner Owens stated we discussed the funds for budget amendment 10 at the last meeting and provided authorization to move forward.

Commissioner Owens made a motion to approve budget amendment 10. Commissioner Jordan seconded the motion

Commissioner Felton stated the sewer project for a private developer is not a good use for the County, the money should be given to the schools.

Commissioner Jordan reminded citizens that \$1.8 million of the funds are reimbursable grant money.

Commissioners Owens, Jordan, Freeman, and Hofler voted in favor, Commissioner Felton voted against. Motion passed four to one.

Commissioner Jordan made a motion to reappoint Fannie Langston to the Jury Commission for a two year term. Commissioner Felton seconded the motion; motion passed without opposition.

Chair Hofler stated Debra Sheard, the Nursing Home Advisory Committee Director has acknowledged there are two nursing homes in the County but the County does not need to have a second committee created. It is recommended to increase the committee by two individuals.

Commissioner Jordan stated he respects Ms. Sheard's professional opinion but the general statute specifically states joint nursing home and adult care advisory committee appointments to the nursing home community advisory committee shall include appointment to the adult care advisory committee only when written approval is obtained from the Assistant Secretary of Aging from the Department of Health and Human Services. While she says adding members will be sufficient Commissioner Jordan would like a legal interpretation to make sure we do not need to get written approval to not have a second committee established.

Ms. Rountree stated on page 3 of the Long Term Care Community Advisory Committee Essential Guides: The NC General Assembly authorizes three types of Community Advisory Committees and it does reference a Joint Nursing Home and Adult Care Home Community Advisory Committee. Ms. Sheard's advice is in reference to the amount of beds not necessarily the number of facilities.

Commissioner Jordan stated based on the general statute we still need to contact DHHS for approval. Ms. Sheard states we can just do it jointly but we need to make sure we are not overstepping our boundaries.

Chair Hofler suggested tabling the motion until a clarification can be received.

Commissioner Jordan made a motion to table the increase of the size of the Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee until clarification can be received on the general statute. Commissioner Felton seconded the motion; motion passed without opposition.

Dr. Barry Williams, Superintendent, stated Central Middle School options have been discussed at previous meetings and requested information was provided in the board packet for review. Dr. Jeff Perry is a superintendent that consolidated 6 schools into 3 schools and built a new school. He is also familiar with how to secure funding.

Dr. Jeff Perry, presented a packet of information as well a presentation to the Board:

- **Introductions**

- Jeff Perry, Superintendent (Wythe County)

- Built five schools

- Academic success

- Steve Ballard, President (SBBCC)

- Built 30 schools

- Built Central/Union HS

- Chris Couch

Business development manager

Contact person

- **Purpose/Motivation**
  - Friend with Dr. Williams
  - Passion for construction
  - Want GCPS to be successful
  - Preconstruction services
  - All services are free
  - Establishing relationships
- **Benefits of Construction**
  - Increase Safety
  - Promote Recruitment
  - Promote Academic Success
  - Become Energy Efficient
  - Increase Community Investment
  - Reduce Maintenance Cost
  - Save Money in Future
  - Reduce Liability
  - Become ADA Compliant
- **Potential Safety Issues**
  - ADA Issues
  - Traffic Flow/Control
  - Panic Bars
  - Black Mold
  - Asbestos
  - Fire Retardent Material
  - Wind/Snow Loads
  - Backflow Valves
  - Electrical
  - Ventilation
- **Preconstruction Services**
  - Needs Assessments
  - Programming Assistance
  - Initial Design Concept
  - Preliminary Cost Estimates
  - Financial Analysis
  - Access to Professionals
  - Site Analysis
  - Preliminary A/E
  - No Cost to Owner
- **Consider Design/Build**
  - Construction Model
  - Integrates of Services
  - Provides Single Contact
  - Creates Efficiency
  - Creates Effectiveness
  - Allows Value Engineering
  - Finance Options
- **Design/Build Benefits?**
  - Allows greater selection flexibility
  - Shortens construction process
  - Reduces owner's risk
  - Provides GMP
  - Allows free review of designs
  - Provides A/E best ideas
  - Eliminates conflicts
  - Balances design/costs
  - Allows value-engineering
  - Requires little upfront cost
- **Financial Assistance**
  - Budget Oriented
  - Financial Analysis
  - Debt Restructuring

- Value Engineer
- Lease Program
- Best Time to Build
- **WCPS Experience with SBBC**
  - Allowed us to move quickly
  - Allowed us to select the best
  - Allowed us to change elements
  - Retained the original cost (GMP)
  - Provided unmatched expertise
  - Unified A/E with contractors
  - Required little upfront cost
  - Reduced our risk factors
  - Allowed value engineering
  - Finished on time/under budget
- **Closing Thoughts**
  - Experience with Construction
  - Educational view
  - Construction view
  - Passion for Construction
  - Provide Assistance
  - Finish on Schedule
  - Finish within Budget
  - Establishing Relationships
  - Create Legacy

In closing Dr. Perry stated the Board has a tremendous responsibility and are the stewards of the County's money and in the 1950s a lot of people set in similar seats making similar decisions. What would we be without those individuals making decisions and providing schools that have benefited us for decades?

Chair Hofler thanked Dr. Perry for his presentation and for taking time to speak with the Board.

Commissioner Jordan said as we talk about the design/build concept there is a general statute that states we are not allowed to use the design/build concept due to safety reasons. When we built the library we were required to use separate firms. Dr. Perry doesn't think this is still the case in NC but will look into it further. Over the last couple of years a lot of the statutory regulations have changed. Whether we can use the design build concept or not there are other options that are available.

Commissioner Owens asked about the school that was pictured. Dr. Perry said the school was finished two years ago and was a prototype for the second school. Commissioner Owens asked about school consolidation. Dr. Perry said there were 2,000 kids at the high school level and 6 schools that were consolidated down to three. They had some schools that were 6 miles apart that varied from 150 students to 600 students.

Commissioner Jordan asked about the estimated timeframe to build a school. Dr. Perry said the typically say it's about 18 months from the moment that you say go to turn key entry. A totally operational school with supplies, desk, cameras etc can be provided. The school was built for 750 students and currently has around 650 students.

Commissioner Owens asked if you can build a school without locking doors and cameras. Dr. Perry said there are typically no state or federal security requirements.

Commissioner Owens asked for a success story by SB Ballard similar to a school of our size in our area. Mr. Ballard said they are building five in Norfolk that are under contract and two have been started on. SB Ballard is located in the Tidewater area and has offices in three different areas. Dr. Williams would like to look at a design for 500 students. Mr. Ballard stated he would ball park an 80,000 square foot building. In a middle school they would recommend masonry type construction to be resistant to middle school students rather than dry wall and such. Commissioner Owens asked if schools are going one or two stories. Mr. Ballard stated two story buildings are more efficient and are trending due to

heating, cooling and safety. SB Ballard will show you how to best spend your money and they will relate granite stone to the number of computers that could be purchased.

Commissioner Freeman stated he is impressed to hear so much about security and safety and asked if the Commonwealth has provided guidelines on how to set up a school to be safe. Dr. Perry stated they bring in local law enforcement, state police and federal police to look at the design and trouble shoot the design. A bigger safety concern is health. New construction is pumping in fresh air more so now than ever. Most schools are tiled floors to eliminate carpet health issues. They make sure they look at the everyday health and safety concerns as well.

Dr. Williams added that the Board of Education is requesting a motion to approve the Board of Education to initiate the process and proceed with the feasibility and planning of a new middle school

Chair Hofler said the initiation involves looking for designs, costs estimates and additional information.

Commissioner Jordan stated he appreciates the information and research but at this time we know what we need to do to construct a new school. The Commissioners were not given an opportunity to analyze the full situation. Commissioner Jordan reached out to a metal roof consulting firm about our situation and sent them information. Commissioner Jordan received the following letter in return:

It was good talking with you last Friday and again this afternoon about the roof/building envelope problems your school board is experiencing at Central Middle School. I have attached a copy of a Google Earth shot of that school for your use. I have also attached a "starting" and "ending" picture for a middle school we just finished in Brunswick County, NC. This school is approximately 2 times larger than Central Middle, but the pictures show how it was framed and what the finished product looked like. This is the third such middle school that we have designed and administered for this county over the last 3 years. From the small amount of information that we have received for this site, it appears that a retrofit metal roof system, like the Brunswick County projects, is very probable. Without any other remediation (HVAC, windows, walls, etc.) this type of roof should be able to be constructed for approximately the same cost as would removing and replacing the existing roof. When finished, the building would then have a metal roof that would protect the building's interior for over 100 years. We would be glad to come to visit this school and have a follow-up meeting with you and other board and/or commissioner members the same day to verbally explain what we found and how a retrofit metal roof system could very well be a good first step in saving this building. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you about this situation.

Commissioner Jordan asked the Board of Education to allow Mr. Howard to visit Gates County and provide an assessment to be reviewed with building a new school so that an informed decision can be made. Commissioner Jordan would like all coordination to be kept on the Commissioners side as The Board of Education has already presented their side. Chair Hofler stated we aren't working on sides we are working on the same side to make the best decisions. Commissioner Jordan stated he will share the information with both Boards but the point of contact should be on the County side.

Dr. Williams is fine with inviting the roofing firm for a visit and having Dr. Perry in attendance. Commissioner Owens stated we can't ignore possible solutions, the more information we can receive the better. Dr. Perry said the request is legitimate and everyone has to be educated and know about all options. While the roof is one issue, the pump station is another issue as well as water problems and electrical supply and climate control issues. These are systems that will need to be replaced in the next few years. If we put four new tires on the car will the engine and other parts hold up as long as the tires. You don't want to put tires on a car that has 10 miles to go.

Commissioner Jordan stated the company can provide some insight on the internal issues as well. Commissioner Freeman said we have to make sure both Boards discuss and are on the same page for all stages.

Commissioner Jordan made a motion to table the request to initiate the process and proceed with the feasibility and planning of a new middle school until Metal Roof Consultants provide an assessment to the Board of Commissioners and the Board of Education. Commissioner Freeman seconded the motion; motion passed without opposition.

Commissioner Felton asked about Mr. Howards costs. Commissioner Jordan said there will not be an initial cost for a basic analysis but a more detailed analysis would require a cost.

**Citizen Comments**

None

**Commissioner Comments**

Commissioner Freeman thanked citizens for providing their support for county government and thanked those that provided facts and information which promotes multiple opinions to be evaluated.

Commissioner Felton thanked the residents from Eure for their attendance. Commissioner Felton thanked Erin and Brian Eure for the information provided and encouraged them to keep up their efforts and to be at all planning meetings.

Commissioner Jordan thanked citizens for attending and expressing their opinions because they are important. Each individual that gets involved can to make a difference and an impact.

Commissioner Owens thanked individuals for participating and sharing their materials. When the public participates it causes actions to be taken and can force the Board to act. Open dialogue is good and the more informed we are the better decisions can be made.

Chairman Hofler thanked citizens for attending and stated it was gratifying to see so many speak about the topics on tonight's agenda. When you listen to people bring up issues that you may not have thought of before it is a good thing. We have to make the best decisions we can make for citizens even if they are not the most popular ones. Thursday night there will be a speaker at the Dismal Swamp to talk about its value and the historical side of things.

**Closed Session**

Commissioner Jordan made a motion to enter into closed session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 a (4) Economic Development (5) Real Estate, (6) Personnel. Commissioner Owens seconded the motion; motion passed without opposition.

Commissioner Owens made a motion to exit closed session. Commissioner Jordan seconded the motion; motion carried without opposition.

Commissioner Jordan made a motion to authorize the county manager to modify the letter discussed in closed session to be signed by the Chair. Commissioner Owens seconded the motion; motion passed without opposition.

**Adjournment**

Commissioner Felton made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Freeman seconded the motion; motion passed unanimously.



Linda Hofler, Chairman



Melissa C. Lawrence, Clerk

