

Joint Meeting:
YADKIN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
YADKIN COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
February 2, 2009

The Yadkin County Board of Commissioners met in Joint Session with the Yadkin County Board of Education on Monday, February 2, 2009 at 12:00pm, in the Conference Room of the County Planning and Permits Building, Yadkinville, North Carolina. The Yadkin County Board of Commissioners was the host for today's meeting. A meal was shared prior to the call to order.

Present for the meeting:

Representing the Board of Commissioners

Chairman Chad Wagoner
Vice Chairman Kevin Austin
Commissioner Tommy Garner
Commissioner David Moxley
Commissioner Brady Wooten

Representing the Board of Education

Chairman Frank Brown
Vice Chairman Howard McKnight
Joe Dezern
Rex Baity
Larry Vestal
(Dr. Hazel Brown and Diane Hampton were absent)

Yadkin County Personnel

Stan Kiser, County Manager
Gina Brown, Clerk to the Board

Yadkin County School Personnel

Dr. Jim Benfield, Superintendent
Gary McDonald, Assistant Superintendent
Mark Rumley, Assistant Superintendent
Donald Hawks, Director of Maintenance
Kim Rose, Secretary to Superintendent
Rick Swaim, Principal of Starmount Middle School
Kelly Mabe, Principal of Forbush Middle School
Gale Hill, Finance Director
Leon Rives, Auditor

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Wagoner called the Yadkin County Board of Commissioners back in session from recess at 12:30pm. Frank Brown called the Yadkin County Board of Education to order at 12:30pm.

INVOCATION

Gary McDonald, Assistant Superintendent of Yadkin County Schools, gave the invocation.

WELCOME

Commissioner Wagoner welcomed the Board of Education and school personnel.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

■ PRELIMINARY YADKIN COUNTY SCHOOLS BUDGET

The preliminary budget was completed by staff and presented today without Board of Education review. Priorities include stabilizing the budget, reducing the use of fund balance, adjusting for inflation, and the addition of an operating budget for the middle schools.

Timing is critical regarding the middle school budget. Dr. Benfield stated that some decisions, including the hiring of staff, could not be made without a preliminary acknowledgement of funding. There have been no announcements from the state regarding possible cuts. Yadkin County Schools will be able to maintain a very limited fund balance.

The preliminary budget presented today for the middle schools does not pad expenses to adjust for shortfalls in other areas. Utility costs should decrease with the removal of the portable units. Yadkin Early College has expressed an interest in those units. The middle schools will begin with a 10 book per student allotment in the media library collection. Yadkin County Schools would like to increase that allotment over time.

There was some discussion of transportation and school hours. School staff is currently considering separate busses for the middle schools. School staff has analyzed transportation alternatives and believes this to be the most cost effective and appropriate for the students. The high school hours are 7:55am to 2:55pm. Middle school hours may be 7:55am to 3:15pm. Commissioner Wooten commented that the State provides the major portion of the transportation costs. Gale Hill confirmed that \$280,000 is local with \$1.2 million in State dollars.

■ AUDITOR'S REPORT

Mr. Leon Rives, auditor for Yadkin County Schools, addressed the Board regarding fund balance. Yadkin County Schools has an eroding fund balance and this causes concern with overall financial management. If the fund balance continues to decline, the school system will be forced to make tough decisions on which positions and programs to cut. Fund balance allows operations to run smoothly. Mr. Rives did not intend to sensationalize the issue or make it appear as an emergency, but felt the issue was worthy of address. It was noted that the LGC provides guidelines for maintaining a fund balance for public schools. Though there is no general statute requiring public schools to maintain a fund balance, Mr. Rives commented that it is just good business policy.

Discussion continued. Vice Chairman Austin asked for a budget total and the amount of local funds in the budget. The total projected operating budget for Yadkin County Schools is \$78 million with \$6 million in local funds. However, Yadkin County Schools estimates that \$6.5 million would be required to operate, manage fund balance, and open the new middle schools.

■ UPDATE ON MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Dr. Benfield provided an update on middle schools. Starmount Middle School is on time and budget with opening planned for the 2009-2010 school year. Forbush Middle School lost 2 to 3 months in construction time due to an environmental issue. Yadkin County Schools have been pushing the contractor and every effort will be made to open as scheduled. A mid-October completion is the worst-case-scenario with Forbush Middle School opening to students in the second grading period. The moving of power poles at the Starmount site was estimated at \$122,000. Actual cost was \$75,000. Forbush Middle School is slightly over

budget. Yadkin County Schools have frozen their capital budget with the understanding that Yadkin County will not provide any additional funding assistance for these projects.

The middle school curriculum will include:

Algebra I	Science
Geometry, 8 th grade only	Health and PE
Chorus	Art
Band	Dance
Drama	Spanish I
Study Skills	SAT Preparation
Vocational Classes	

Middle school students will have the benefit of a team of teachers that will work collaboratively and state of the art science and computer labs.

Athletics will include:

soccer	volleyball
baseball	softball
cross-country	track
golf	wrestling
basketball	

The Sertoma Club will continue to manage the football program. A conference that will accommodate the middle school activities is being pursued. Tennis and swimming have been considered but there is currently no local conference offering those activities.

Athletic fields will be rough graded for erosion control but will not be completed for use. Additional funding will be needed by parents, booster clubs, grants, and other means. Students participating in athletics will be transported by bus to one of the elementary schools for practice. It was noted that booster club meetings are already underway.

Selections have been made for staffing of the middle schools. Parent meetings will begin in mid-March. Yadkin County School officials feel the elementary schools will be much more effective. The 20% high school drop-out rate can be addressed more intensely.

In addition, Dr. Benfield reported the schools will have vinyl tile flooring. There have been no change orders or deviations from the plans. There will be Hunter Safety Teams.

Commissioner Garner invited members of the attending audience to comment or ask questions. Mr. Barry Hennings addressed the potential for negative impact on Forbush students transitioning during the school year. Mr. Hennings surmised that 8th graders, in particular, would experience a setback without any of the advantages offered by a middle school. Mr. Hennings had attended an initial booster club meeting. The Booster Club alone cannot raise the necessary funds considering the current economic environment and the magnitude of expenditures. There is no current history in which to compare as there has been no school construction in Yadkin County since the late '60s. Discussion continued. Dr. Benfield and other school officials answered additional questions from audience members.

■ SCHOOL BUDGET COMMITTEE

Chairman Wagoner suggested this committee consist of 2 members of the Board of Commissioners and 2 members of the Board of Education. Yadkin County Schools Finance Director, Gale Hill, should make the 5th member. Superintendent Benfield and County Manager Kiser would attend the meeting with no voting rights. The committee would be responsible for making budget recommendations to the Board of Commissioners. The Yadkin County Board of Commissioners previously approved Commissioner Moxley and Commissioner Wooten for this committee. The Board of Education will determine their members and report their decision.

Commissioner Wooten was excused from the meeting at 2:00pm.

■ QUESTIONS FROM LAST MEETING

- (1) There does not appear to be a correlation between class size and graduation rates based on a random sampling of 40 North Carolina counties.
- (2) Grants for Automatic External Defibrillators (AED) have not been identified. School personnel continue to seek possible funding.
- (3) Financial analysis was provided for:

maintenance personnel	janitorial positions
maintenance trucks	floor care equipment
grounds and fields upkeep	
- (4) Energy cost-savings from the reduction of mobile units is estimated at \$36,783.46.
- (5) Yadkin County Schools have not pursued a standard mode of dress. Additional discussion is necessary if this is a priority of this Board.
- (6) Tennis courts and gymnasium floors need to be replaced. These and other capital needs are critically tied to the \$1.4 million capital improvement allocation in the funding model.
- (7) Dr. Benfield provided data on each elementary school regarding the potential for reduction in class size.

2009 JOINT MEETING SCHEDULE

Monday, March 30, 2009 – Board of Education to host
Monday, June 29, 2009 – Board of Commissioners to host
Monday, September 28, 2009 – Board of Education to host

ADJOURN

Vice Chairman Austin made a motion to adjourn the Yadkin County Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Moxley second.

Vote: 4/0

Meeting adjourned at 2:35pm.

Prepared by Clerk to the Board

Date Approved by the Yadkin County Board of Commissioners