

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA)
)
COUNTY OF STOKES)
)

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONERS
STOKES COUNTY GOVERNMENT
DANBURY, NORTH CAROLINA
NOVEMBER 1, 2016

The Board of Commissioners of the County of Stokes, State of North Carolina, met for an Emergency Session in the Third Floor Conference Room of the Ronald Wilson Reagan Memorial Building (Administration Building) located in Danbury, North Carolina on Tuesday, November 1, 2016 at 9:45 am with the following members present:

Chairman J. Leon Inman - entered the meeting at 9:50 am
Vice Chairman James D. Booth
Commissioner Jimmy Walker
Commissioner Ernest Lankford

Commissioner Ronda Jones - absent

County Personnel in Attendance:
County Manager Richard D. Morris
Clerk to the Board Darlene Bullins
County Attorney Tyrone Browder

Vice Chairman James D. Booth called the Emergency Meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance today.

INVOCATION

Vice Chairman Booth invited those who wished to join in the invocation to please do so.

Vice Chairman Booth delivered the invocation.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT-GOVERNING BODY-PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice Chairman Booth invited the citizens in attendance to join the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Lawsonville Pole/Light Project

Vice Chairman Booth opened the floor for further discussion regarding the
November 1, 2016 - Emergency Meeting

Lawsonville Light Project.

Commissioner Walker requested to hear information from the school first.

Vice Chairman Booth called on Principal Greg Ottaway, Lawsonville Elementary School.

Principal Greg Ottaway commented:

- On October 9, 2016, the lights on the school's ballfield were inspected
- There is a total of 6 poles/lights
- The inspection was done because of the issues at North and South Stokes High Schools
- The poles and lights were installed in 1992; one pole has a date stamp of 1982 on it
- The poles were used when placed on school property
- There are issues with the cross arms which are leaning away from the actual pole
- Understand also there are issues with bolts and wiring
- Have not been up in a bucket to see
- Some of the lights needs to be replaced

Chairman Inman entered the meeting at 9:50 am.

Commissioner Walker questioned if the school system had gotten any quotes?

Dr. Brad Rice, Superintendent – Stokes County Schools, responded:

- Have an estimate of around \$20,000 for metal cross arms, fixing wiring, and making sure bolts are secure
- May use some of the lights/poles being taken down at North Stokes
- If you go with completely new metal poles and lights, it would be around \$60,000

Commissioner Walker questioned how long would you expect to be able to use the wooden poles versus new metal poles?

Dr. Rice responded:

- Life expectancy on wooden poles is around 20 years
- New metal poles – there has been no case study of metal poles wearing out

Commissioner Lankford commented:

- The reason for the urgency of this meeting today is to get the school children back on the playground
- If funding was approved for the cross arms to be fixed, when could we expect for the children to be back on the playground?

Dr. Rice responded:

- To replace everything, it would be a couple of months
- The fixtures and the cross arms can be taken off the poles next week
- Could have kids back on the playground by the end of next week

- The project to replace or repair the lights could be done before the Spring

Commissioner Lankford commented:

- That is my preference – get the cross arms and the lights off the poles and get the kids back on the playground

Vice Chairman Booth commented:

- Must be done for the safety of the children
- Hear the children are playing in front of the school near the parking lot - unsafe
- Great to hear that repairs can be done to the cross arms
- Confirmed with Dr. Rice that all 6 would be repaired

Principal Ottaway commented:

- Need to get the lights down in order to get the new playground equipment installed
- Have a community member who is willing to donate \$10,000 for matching grant for playground equipment – deadline is November 13th
- Approximately \$30,000 has been raised and will be matched by the playground company - total of \$60,000 worth of playground equipment

Commissioner Walker commented:

- Questioned if there was any school funding available for this project?

Dr. Rice responded:

- Everyone knows the Board of Education's Fund Balance
- We could take the lights down
- As far as putting them back up for limited school use, I don't see that
- If the Board of Commissioners stated there was no funds available, we could take the lights down
- It is not in the five-year facility plan to replace poles
- We have other projects more pressing
- If it were left up to us, we would simply take the poles and lights down
- Know that the students at Lawsonville Elementary that play parks and recreation Little League baseball use the lights, but we don't have a school program that requires lights

Commissioner Walker continued:

- The County's Fund Balance is rapidly decreasing
- Trying to find a way to stabilize our Fund Balance
- Confirmed with Dr. Rice that the school system could possibly take them down, if the County put them back up

Dr. Rice responded:

- Don't have the exact current Fund Balance, but believe it is only a little over \$100,000

Commissioner Walker continued:

- Want to work with you
- Want to see a good outlook
- Look at school participation whenever possible
- Confirmed with Dr. Rice, the cost for taking down the poles/lights is around \$8,000

Vice Chairman Booth commented:

- Believe funding could be taken from the savings of the Chestnut Grove Middle School Roofing Project
- Confirmed with Dr. Rice that the estimated \$20,000 would include taking the lights down

Commissioner Lankford commented:

- My understanding is:
 - That if the cross arms and lights are removed, the poles can stay there until the project is done
 - Then the project can be bid when the other two lighting projects (North and South) are bid
 - We can use the playground and ballfield now
 - Lights will be up by the spring

Vice Chairman Booth commented:

- Questioned who would be taking the lights down?

Dr. Rice responded:

- Tommy Lawrence Electric can take the lights down next week
- Reynolda could not take the lights down next week
- Would hope to get the contractor who got the bids for both North and South Stokes with a possible savings doing all three projects
- We have estimates, not funding
- Have to have funding to do bids

Commissioner Lankford commented:

- Want to make sure everyone understands the plan
- First lights and cross arms will be taken down
- Poles can stay because there is no danger in the poles remaining
- Children will be allowed to go back on the playground once the lights and cross arms are down

Dr. Rice responded:

- The poles are old and need to come down, but the immediate threat is the cross arms and lights
- If funding is approved, will make the call when I leave this meeting to have the cross arms and lights down next week

Chairman Inman commented:

- Have spoken to Commissioner Jones who is in favor of providing funding for the Lawsonville Project

The Board discussed funding the project.

Chairman Inman apologized for his lateness due to traffic on Highway #8 this morning.

Chairman Inman entertained a motion.

Commissioner Lankford moved to go forward with the repairs to the Lawsonville

Elementary School ballfield lights by removing the cross arms and lights as soon as possible and then concentrate on the project being put back with wooden poles, wiring and steel cross arms during the time that the North and South Stokes High Schools projects are being done and that funding be allocated from the savings of the Chestnut Grove Middle School Roofing Project.

Vice Chairman Booth seconded the motion.

Chairman Inman opened the floor for further discussion.

Commissioner Walker commented:

- Always look for fairness and consistency
- Would like to ask if there is any other elementary school that has a similar need for field lighting like what is at Lawsonville that may be coming down the pike?

Dr. Rice responded:

- The only other one would be Sandy Ridge which has been checked with no needed repairs at this time

Commissioner Walker continued:

- The reasoning for my question about any other school is because I strongly support recreation and positive family activities in our county
- Any chance we have to improve those options, I certainly would like to know about them
- Certain areas of the County have a lot of lighted ballfields, but there may be other areas of the County that could benefit from having a lighted ballfield

Commissioner Lankford responded:

- Must remember that the community paid for these lights
- Feel strongly that the school system needs to keep them repaired after they are put up
- If any other community wants to put up lights, that is fine with me

Commissioner Walker responded:

- Would listen with interest any legitimate request for similar funds
- This is a good investment for our children and the future
- Helps to keep children occupied, hopefully keeping them away from drugs

Vice Chairman Booth commented:

- Reiterated the lights were paid for by the community
- School system does not put lights on ballfields at elementary schools
- Lawsonville and Sandy Ridge Elementary Schools both received lights thru community involvement – the community raising funding for the lights
- The Nancy Reynolds lights were put up by the Endowment Fund
- Agree, we need to repair those lights that have been put up by the community

Commissioner Walker confirmed with Chairman Inman that the motion included taking down the lights and repairing the lights at Lawsonville Elementary School.

The motion carried (4-0) with Commissioner Jones absent.

Chairman Inman expressed appreciation to Principal Ottaway and Dr. Rice for their attendance at today's meeting.

CLOSED SESSION

Chairman Inman entertained a motion to enter Closed Session for the following:

- To consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body, which privilege is hereby acknowledged pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3)

Commissioner Lankford moved to enter Closed Session for the following:

- To consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body, which privilege is hereby acknowledged pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3)

Vice Chairman Booth seconded and the motion carried (4-0) with Commissioner Jones absent.

The Board re-entered the open session of the November 1st Emergency Meeting.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Inman recessed the Emergency Meeting until Thursday, November 3, 2016 at 2:00 pm.

Darlene M. Bullins
Clerk to the Board

J. Leon Inman
Chairman