

Board Meeting Highlights
Special Called Joint Session with County Commissioners
December 4, 2017

The Gates County Board of Education and the County Commissioners met in a special called meeting on Monday, December 4, 2017 at the Gates County Board of Education Central Office. The following board of education members were present: Glendale Boone, Ray Felton and Claire Whitehurst.

County Commissioners Linda Hofler, Jack Owens, Henry Jordan, Ray Freeman and Billy Felton were present at the meeting. Also present were County Manager, Natalie Rountree, County Finance Director Jodie Hawks, Finance Director Rube Blanchard, Superintendent Dr. Barry Williams, Assistant Superintendent Tammy Boone, Maintenance Director, John Greene, and Daniel Plyler from Chesson Construction.

Madam Chair Linda Hofler, of the county commissioners, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Mr. Henry Jordan led the invocation.

Chairman Hofler began with information regarding the loss of the \$2 million QZAB Bond, because paperwork had not been completed in time for the December 31, 2017 deadline. She added that we had been awarded a \$2.5 million Needs Based Grant, which will help to offset this. However, due to the receipt of the grant, the county will lose the lottery funds revenue of \$100,000 per year, which had been intended for use to pay back loan for construction.

Mr. Ray Felton, Chairman of the Board of Education, explained that the \$2 million QZAB Bond had not been lost, but we had lost the ability to possibly get the Bond at zero percent interest rate, because we had not met the December 31, 2017 deadline. He explained that the Board had been working with Pinnacle Architecture and A.R. Chesson to get a Guaranteed Maximum Price that can be given to the Local Government Commission. It has been determined that the price is \$9.8 million. This of course is not a firm price, since bids have not gone out. He also gave credit to Dr. Williams for working diligently to secure the Needs Based Grant.

Mr. Henry Jordan was concerned about the \$1.9 million over the original cost of \$8 million.

Mr. Felton and Mr. Plyler explained that once bids are put out and received, we will have options that we can work with, to bring costs down. They also explained that the cost is more than likely on the high side since the economy has been good, and there has been a boom in construction. This price is simply something that we can use for the LGC and is

not a final price. Mr. Felton said that one option that he would like to have is a handicap accessible bathroom in the 7th grade wing, even though it is not mandated, due to the fact there will be ones in the 6th and 8th grade wings, but felt this was something that was needed. Mr. Felton handed out copies of a proposed amended drawing (provided by Pinnacle Architecture) of a handicap bathroom in the 7th grade wing at Central Middle School. Everyone agreed the bathroom needs to be added to the drawings.

Mr. Jordan expressed his concerns over the fact that this project had originally been voted down by the taxpayers, but the commissioners had felt there was a need for it. They had promised taxpayers that it would not result in substantial increases in taxes. Ms. Hofler talked about recent developments with the property reevaluation, tax increase from 68 cents to 76 cents, rising county costs for insurance, retirement, ect., Rescue Squad liability, and the repayment of existing loans for schools, library and social services.

Mr. Felton expressed his concerns with the contingency amount of \$200,000.00. This amount is very minimal and felt this should be looked at. He also talked about the fact that he would like to see the Needs Based Grant be used for an Alternative School. There is a great need to have these students housed away from the high school to produce a better learning environment for all students. However, if the need arises, we can certainly look at using that money for the Central Middle School Project.

The commissioners and the board of education members all agreed that we have a common goal of providing the best we can for our students, while at the same time looking out for the citizens of Gates County, and will work together to make that happen. It was also suggested that the two boards meet often to keep each other informed.

Ms. Hofler informed that the earliest time they could present to the Local Government Commission, would be February, 2018.

Ms. Hofler thanked everyone for their attendance, and adjourned the meeting at 2:38 p.m.