

June 1, 2009

The Duplin County Board of Commissioners met in Adjourned Session on Monday, June 1, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. in the auditorium at the Duplin Commons Office Complex, (165 Agriculture Drive), Kenansville, North Carolina.

Present: Chairman Cary Turner and Commissioners David Fussell, Frances Parks, Harold Raynor, Reginald Wells, and Zettie Williams

Absent: None

Also Present: Mr. Mike Aldridge, County Manager; Ms. Julia Herring, Administrative Officer; Ms. Teresa Lanier, Finance Officer; and Ms. Wendy Sivori, County Attorney

Commissioner Reginald Wells gave the invocation.

The following reports were received by the board and are on file with the clerk:

Cooperative Extension – June 2009
Services for the Aged – April 2009

Motion was made by Commissioner Wells, seconded by Commissioner Williams, carried unanimously, to approve the Consent Agenda which included the following – Budget Amendments #0222 - #0228; Solid Waste Releases #6323 - #6339; Tax Releases #6303 - #6322; and to add Budget Amendments #0229 - #0232; to add a discussion of solid waste fees; a resolution for an eagle scout recipient; a general fund budget summary handout; and a discussion on acceptance of a stimulus loan & grant and future stimulus funding for Water District D.

Mr. Mike Aldridge presented Administrative Budget Amendments #K460 - #K505 to be made part of the minutes.

Chairman Turner addressed the large number of concerned parents in the audience stating that there have been false and inflammatory statements about local funding for the Duplin County Board of Education. He stated that the board of commissioners did not intend to deviate from any past effort by the board that would result in the termination of athletics in the school system. But because of funds given to the board of education in the past have been misdirected from their intended use, the board of commissioners felt it was necessary to make corrections in the way local funds are allocated for education. (See handout in minutes.)

Motion was made by Commissioner Fussell, seconded by Commissioner Raynor, carried unanimously, to redirect \$500,000 to athletics from the \$ 7 million allotted for Current Expense – [Operational Support Services] to the Duplin County Board of Education.

Motion was made by Commissioner Wells, seconded by Commissioner Williams, carried unanimously, to redirect \$ 350,000 to the Junior ROTC program from the \$ 7 million allotted for Current Expense – [Operational Support Services] to the Duplin County Board of Education.

Public Comments:

Master Sergeant Beth Baysden, East Duplin ROTC instructor, thanked the board for redirecting funds for the Junior ROTC program. She discussed the benefits of the ROTC program and how the program helps students succeed.

Cadet Lt. Colonel Rikco Peralta from the 84th Battalion at East Duplin High School spoke in support of the Junior ROTC program and how it teaches leadership skills and a career in the military.

Ms. Marie Guy spoke in support of the ROTC program. She inquired about the North Carolina Education Lottery and asked how the money is spent because schools do not have the supplies and programs needed.

Chairman Turner replied that lottery funding was for school construction projects. He stated that the school system has to request the money jointly with the county and had recently done so to provide bleachers and air conditioning in the gymnasiums of several schools.

Mr. Jimmy Dixon stated that the Duplin County Board of Education had misled the public with false information regarding school athletics and other programs being cut. He stated that he attended all of the county commissioners' budget work sessions and it was not the intent of the board of commissioners to cut funding that would terminate any school programs. Mr. Dixon stated that recordings and minutes of the commissioners meetings, including the work sessions, are on the county's website for the public. (See handout in minutes.)

Ms. Jerri Parker, NCDOT Maintenance Engineer, appeared before the board to give an update on various roads in the county.

Roads discussed: Bowden Road at intersection of Works Farm Road –sign is missing; Tin City – sign is missing; thank you for mowing that has begun near Calypso; ditches need cleaning in the Town of Greenevers.

Ms. Sheila Lewis, Regional Ombudsman with Eastern Carolina Council, appeared before the board along with Mr. Bill Taylor, chairman of the Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee; and Ms. Rosanna Hirshkind, chairman of the Adult Care Home Community Advisory Board, to give an update on their respective committees.

Ms. Sheila Lewis stated that an appointment was needed to the Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee.

Motion was made by Commissioner Wells, seconded by Commissioner Parks, carried unanimously, to appoint Ms. Marion Kelly to the Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee.

Mr. Mike Aldridge gave a presentation of the proposed 2009 – 2010 budget. (See handout in minutes.)

Following the presentation, Chairman Turner opened the public hearing on the proposed budget at 7:10 p.m. The following public comments were received:

Mr. Reginald Kenan: Good evening and thank you for your time. I thought I was going to speak after some other board members. But very quickly what I'd like to say is that we don't need persons grand-standing. I'm very disappointed at some things said by our superintendent but I'm not going to get into that because we should be more classy and not deal with personal accusations. So I'm not going to go down to that level with you. But I am going to say that I can not believe that the resolution or the 6500 that you all so call "recommend" – that you understand it. I can not believe that you are telling us tonight that we voted on 6500 but we don't understand it. I don't agree with that. I love athletics and everyone knows that but education more than just athletics and ROTC. What I'd like to say in closing is that we can't let our personal feelings get in the way of what's best for our children. If we continue with 6500 the way you vote tonight, that means our teachers can't get supplements. Half of the supplements come from local and half come from state. So you're saying our teachers don't deserve supplements? You're wrong! They do deserve supplements. They work hard and deserve more than they get! You're saying that our schools don't need assistant principals. We'll lose seven based on the way you voted tonight. We can't teach the way we did 20 or 30 years ago. The way you voted tonight, we'll lose twelve teachers. Twelve hungry families will go without because of the way you voted tonight. Because of a personal agenda against somebody and you know who I'm talking about. If you want to preach what is right, live what is right. Take care of our 9,000 children. You may be for education, but are you for public education?

Dr. Wiley Doby: Mr. Chairman and Board of Commissioners, I'd like to make a point of clarification on something that was stated earlier tonight. Your indications to us in days prior to this meeting were that your funding to us would be limited to the 6000 Purpose Code. That's "Operational Support" which means basically "Maintenance" and "Operation of Plant". JROTC and athletics can not be paid from that. So I'm very happy that you changed your minds tonight and voted to allow for JROTC and athletics. That was a good decision. I appreciate that. I appreciate the opportunity to speak tonight. You have a very challenging job right now because economic times are very, very difficult. I respect the job you have and the challenges that you have facing you as you make these budget deliberations within the next couple of weeks. But we do want to speak and Mr. Kenan has already spoken to it to some degree but we do want to speak tonight about some of the funding challenges that we have as we go into the coming school year that you could help us with. At this time, I'd like to introduce Mr. Bo Mullins, our Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, to talk about some of the specifics in a rational way at this time.

Mr. Bo Mullins: Thank you for letting us speak tonight. I gave Mike a copy of the handout. I've been raised in Duplin County and Duplin County Schools. This is what I understand and what I keep hearing what our obligations are. And I understand what our obligations are and what your obligations are. But this is what I also understand - the people in Raleigh, they really don't care about our children. They're in Raleigh. Just to meet the basic needs of our children. . .well, I've got two. The state says I've got to feed them and I have to clothe them. But I love them enough that when it's their birthday, I buy them something. When it's Christmas, I try to get them a little something. I try to make sure they know that I care about them. And so when the folks in Raleigh don't care about our children, we need to be caring about them - the board of education and the board of commissioners. We've never said that we were going to do away with any programs. I've spent nine years at the high school and I understand how important ROTC is and athletics is. But I also understand that if we don't get instructional dollars from this board, then we're going have to cut 20 or 30 teaching positions. And that's unfair because that's 20 or 30 families from our schools and our county. We're going to have to cut 25 teacher assistant positions. We're going to have to cut nine, twelve, or fifteen social workers and nurses out of our school system. We're going to have to cut custodial and clerical positions out of our school system. And I understand that Raleigh isn't saying that it's their responsibility but it's our responsibility. We're talking about almost 100 families that live in Duplin County. Many of these folks have children in our school system. All of these families are going to be impacted. A couple of million dollars, that sounds like a lot, but when you're getting zero instructional dollars - two million dollars would save our teachers. It would save our teacher assistants. It would save our social workers. We need to figure out how to save these people. I came tonight thinking. . .and had some suspicions. . .but it's really been cleared up tonight . . .because adults don't like other adults, these little ones in the audience are going to be penalized. We may have made some poor decisions. I was out there working in the school. I don't know what all has been done at the board of education. But I know that since I've been there, we've tried to make good decisions. And when we've come to you all and said "this is how we're going to spend the money", then that how we spent the money! Tonight I say that if you give us money to save our teachers, then we're going to use that money to save our teachers. If you give us money to save our teacher assistants, then we're going to use that money to save our teacher assistants. If you give us the money to save our social workers, we'll save them. We're not going to redirect it and spend it on something else. We're going to save people. Because out here folks, are lives and they are in your hands. And just because you may not like certain people - you're penalizing our teachers, you're penalizing our teacher's assistants, and you're penalizing our children. I beg you not to let your inner feelings get in the way of what's right for our kids. I've got two and I speak tonight as a parent. Let's do right by our kids. And as a human resource person, let's do right by our staff members. I beg you to do that tonight. (See handout in minutes.)

Mr. Martin Coe: Good evening. I originally wanted to speak when the other people were speaking but it was getting hot in here but I'm going to speak now. I don't know what they're spending money at the board of education but all these people sitting in here - if you don't like the way they're spending your money - get them out! If they're not doing what they're suppose to do, then get them out! And that same thing goes for those. I have two kids, one in college and one in the 11th grade. If you keep cutting teachers, they're not going to go to college. So I ask you, I heard you say something about blackberries and trips. That was news to me. And since the board of education is sitting

here, I want to know is that true? Because if it is, we need to fix that. We can sit here and argue and talk about what he said and what you said but all I want to know is, are we going to help the kids? All this money that is being spent, I know the budget and I know the economy is hard but you still have to spend money. You have to spend it because it's needed. Find a way to get it.

Ms. Amy Costin: I would like to say that this is not only directed to the Duplin County Board of Commissioners but also to the board of education. We do realize that part of this problem stems from the board of education redirecting money that was given to them from the board of county commissioners in the past. In regards to losing school programs including sports, vocational classes, and Junior ROTC, what kind of message does this send to businesses looking to locate in this area? If they see a county who loses its good students and their good teachers to surrounding counties because of sports and other valuable programs being cut by the actions of the county commissioners and the board of education, what are they going to think? They are going to think that our county doesn't place any value on our children, their education, or their futures. They are going to see a lot of in fighting between our leaders – the board of education and the county commissioners. They are going to realize that they are going to have a hard time getting good employees to move to this area because the schools are failing. They are going to think twice about locating in a county that has such little regard for its children and their needs. What is this going to do to those students who strive to make good grades because they want to play sports or get involved in extra curricular activities? And what is this going to do to those students hoping to get scholarships so they can go to college based on their athletic ability or get jobs using skills they have learned in their vocational classes? You all have not addressed the vocational classes part. You are, in essence, holding back the future of these young people. Is this what you want your legacy to be? We are asking you to put your animosity towards each other aside and work together for the best possible solution to keep our schools as productive as they can be. You were elected by the people to do what's best for the people, that includes our children. These same children that will eventually help lead Duplin County. These children that may not have the chance to lead Duplin County because they have become pawns in the big game between the county commissioners and the board of education. A game that unless something drastically changes – will have no winners. Thank you.

Ms. Asia Powell: I'm here to address if they are going to shut down the skilled unit at Duplin General Hospital. With me being an allied health student and getting my CNA license, I would like work at Duplin General Hospital. I want to know if this rumor is true.

Commissioner Wells: That is not a rumor. That is correct.

Ms. Asia Powell: Is there any other unit that will be shutting down at Duplin General? Where will those patients be transferred to?

Commissioner Wells: There are only five patients staying there permanently. They will be transferred to other facilities in the county. The hospital is losing money - \$600,000 or \$700,000 a year – so that is true.

Ms. Asia Powell: Okay. Thank you.

Ms. Kyrah Allen: We've heard a rumor that all CTE classes will be shut down or teachers will be cut. Is that true? CTE classes are electives like Food & Nutrition and Teen Living.

Commissioner Parks: That is not in our control. The board of education decides what classes are offered.

Ms. Kyrah Allen: Thank you.

Mr. Davis Mathis: I have a question about teachers that are retiring and coming back to teach in the county. Those teachers have worked long and hard to retire and come back to teach. Those are the teachers that know what they're talking about and help raise our test scores and I feel like should still be allowed to teach in our county. Are they being cut?

Commissioner Parks: That's a board of education decision.

Chairman Turner: The board of education meeting is tomorrow night at 7:30 at the board of education building. Dr. Doby said that he would look into it and if there's a need for a larger room, he would see about accommodating them.

Ms. Turwanda Robinson: Good evening. I have a question for a couple of you on the board. A couple of months ago I read in *The Wallace Enterprise* that David Fussell said that it would be cheaper for us as taxpayers to send our kids to Harrells Christian Academy. Why should we allow you to sit in a seat when I know that your grandchildren or either your children are going to the private school at Harrells Christian Academy when we're struggling to even send ours to public school?

Commissioner Wells: I want to comment. I think you directed that towards me. That's your right. That's Mr. Fussell's responsibility – that statement. I think I've been a supporter of public education since I've been on this board when my fellow commissioners have cut. Although my child does not attend public school, I've been an avid supporter of public education and will continue to be. That was Mr. Fussell's response to that. I just wanted to clear that up, that I have no animosity towards public school. I am a supporter of public schools. I have been and will continue to be. I believe that was something Mr. Fussell wanted to address. I think we need to make that very clear. That was David Fussell's statement, not Reginald Well's statement.

Mr. Graham Phillips: I'm not sure that I can talk with any sense tonight with what all is going on. I am sure that this business about our superintendent of the public schools being at the bottom of all these problems – we need to rise above that and this board needs to rise above that. And we need to start thinking about whether we're educating the kids of Duplin County. Last year, the county commissioners allotted \$7,600,000 together with the amount of money that the jury allotted. This year, the county commissioners are allotting the same \$7,600,000. Last year, of that amount, \$1,500,000 was paid for teacher's supplements in Duplin County. \$500,000 was paid for athletics, \$250,000 for ROTC. The county commissioner's are telling you that they are going to try something different, a different way of doing things. They have in Line Item 6500 \$6,400,000 and the board of education has got to go to them and ask for money out of their pot as the year goes on. They've already been asking for the athletic program and that's been corrected. That's been approved and we appreciate that. I'm a bulldog booster something awful. You've also been asked to fund ROTC and I appreciate that. The board of education is asking that you fund \$1,500,000 to pay the teacher supplements. Do you realize that North Carolina has 147 school districts? Do you realize that Duplin County might be the only school district in North Carolina that doesn't pay money for teacher supplements? And they're proud of it. This board of education thinks it's important that you pay teacher supplements. Why do they think it's important? Because every county that surrounds Duplin County pays teacher supplements. Every one of them. And when we don't and they want one of our good English teachers or four of our good math teachers and they go in there and offer them a supplement – there they go out of the county. Then we got to put in their place teachers that are not certified. Does that hurt your school children? Yes that hurts your school children! Why in this hard times that we've got going on, has this board of commissioners got to come forth with a new program and not give this board of education some discretion? They need some discretion as how to use that \$6,400,000 just like they had last year. They need it worse than they had last year. And they're proud of that. They're going to put that in and they're not going to pay for any teachers. We need teachers. The state has cut our teachers out and we need to replace them. It's just like these teachers that are double-dipping that this young man came up here and spoke to you about while ago. Those teachers are not going to be able to be used this year because that money has been cut. And we need this \$1,500,000 that's in this 6000 category. We've asked for it and they say that we're not going to allow it because they don't have to do it and they're proud of it. I ask you why are they proud that they're not going to pay teacher supplements? Why are they proud of that? It's already funded, it's already in the \$7.6 million. Why are they proud of that? When you lose a good English teacher or a good math teacher and put a sub-standard teacher in its place, that hurts your school system. All this other money that we spend for buildings and whatever and then you're going to go in there and take a teacher out and put one that's sub-standard, I can't see any sense in that. \$4.8 million was allocated by the jury of Duplin County. Why did they say that had to be paid to the school system? And I heard somebody say, "Well that jury does not understand education." That jury, you, doesn't understand

education. Does this board understand education? No! We've even got one member of this board that says that if you want a good education, go to a private school – don't go to the public school. How do these commissioners know so much about education? I've been on the school board twenty years and I've hardly seen a single one of them come to one of our board meetings and we meet 35 or 45 times a year! How do they know so much about education? They want to tell us how to spend it. They want to tell us where to put the public schools. Why do we even have a board of education? I would like to just say this, it's time for this board of education and this board here to quit this bickering and let's get down and work together and try not to be ashamed of our school system.

Ms. Susan Sellars: My name is Susan Sellers and tonight I speak to you from three perspectives – as a principal, as a parent, and as a coach's wife. Mr. Jimmy Dixon said we were all brought here tonight under false pretenses and scare tactics concerning athletics and ROTC. Thank you for unrestricting that and clearing that up. But there is something very real and that's why most of you still stayed here after that was decided and that is losing teacher positions. If you are here representing Wallace Elementary, please stand up. We represent 830 students that we work tirelessly everyday to educate. It is a shame that two groups of adults playing politics could possibly end up having such a negative impact on the lives of children and the adults that have dedicated their lives to serving those children. This should not be about politics, but about real people with real jobs in jeopardy and real bills to pay. This should not be about adults, but about children. We need every teacher that we have and then some. We need every assistant principal that we have and then some. We need every School Resource Officer we have and then some. We need every extracurricular program that we have and then some. This is about money and we cannot afford to go backwards in this county. Please do the right thing. Give us the money we need for our children. Seven million in current expense is not enough – a jury decided that. But if that is all we get, let us spend it where we know it's needed. Mr. Cary Turner is right. The school system does get three funding sources – federal, state, and local. Federal and state have been cut. Local is going to stay the same but if it's not enough to begin with, then that still doesn't really help. They are not cutting us, thank goodness. But it's not enough to begin with. So it still doesn't help. Mr. David Fussell was also right when he said that their only legal responsibility is to fund the building and operations. That's the legal responsibility. But ethically and morally I would hope for them to do more for our children than the bare minimum that the law requires. I agree that our buildings are in disrepair. However, nice buildings won't mean much without the proper personnel to teach our students. Many of the opening comments tonight were prefaced with "In the past...", "In the past...", ". . .In the past." Well, we are not in the past and our children should not be the ones to suffer the supposed sins of the past of both of the boards making decisions for them. Thank you.

Ms. Susan Ayers: I am here on behalf of the children. Enough is enough. The board of education and the commissioners need to call it even. The children are suffering. We need all the teachers. We need all the assistant teachers, all the principals, all the assistant principals – we need it all. Or we are going to be in the bottom of the pile. Give them the money they need. As Susan Sellars said, that's the past. Let's all grow up. Let's go towards the future. We can't afford to go down any further than we are. The children that you are hurting will be who's sitting in those seats one day, or sitting in Raleigh, or sitting in Washington. Don't they deserve the best? Don't they deserve the best teachers? One teacher can not teach 30-35 students. They can not do it! Give them the money, they have to have it. Lay down this childish play. Both sides – grow up! Be an adult, all of you. Think of the children. They are what will be your tomorrow. And without the teachers, you will be supporting them on welfare, unemployment, and taking care of them. Give them the money.

Chairman Turner: I hear what everybody is saying and just like what you said, "Give them the money". I wish it was that easy. To some it's real easy to sit out there and say what you will do but when you're sitting here . . . the situation in our county. . . how many of you know how many people in this county pay real property tax? How many? What my point is, there are 13,000 people in this county out of 53,000 that pay real property tax. And when you're saying "give them the money" we have to go to those 13,000 people. What about those other 40,000 that pay nothing? The way our budget is, we've got our fund balance down to 13 percent. If we get to 12 percent, the state sends us a nasty letter. If we go to 8 percent, they come in and take over. You have to consider these 13,000 that are being taxed to death. If you can come up with a way to get money from all the people in the county, I'll vote for it. It's not just as easy as saying, "Yes, we

can give you the money.” You have to consider those handful of people, which is 25 percent, that pay taxes.

Mr. Scott Ballard: Most of you that know me know that I don’t know how to speak. I’d have a hard time following up to those that have already been up here. I do appreciate your time tonight in rethinking the ROTC programs and athletic programs. We do need; however, more teachers. We just can’t do the job without them. I understand where you’re coming from with wanting to do things differently because of the past but this is not the year to do things differently. We’re hurting right now. The state has cut us. The federal government has cut us. This is not the year to be thinking about doing things differently. I’m a little disappointed that this is what has happened because we don’t know if you’re making the right decisions or not and we have to come out here and make sure things are doing right. We shouldn’t have to do that. We elected you to make good decisions. With this many people here tonight, that’s telling me that something is not right. Like I said, I do appreciate you changing your minds with ROTC and with athletics but we really need the teachers. The state is not going to pay for them this year. It’s like Mr. Mullins said, we do what we have to do because we love these kids. There are things we have to do by law with our own children but we go beyond that because we love our own children. Besides clothing them and all that, we show them love. We need to do that here as a county as well and not just what the law says we have to do. It disturbs me when I read in the newspaper that legally all we have to do is maintenance and upkeep of these buildings. That tells me that something is wrong. But I thank you for your time.

Mr. Hank Frey: First of all, let me complement the commissioners on coming in with a tight budget but it’s called for by tight times. I’d really like to direct my comments, for the most part, to the board of education situation. And I’m going to run counter to the tide. Let me read into the record part of an editorial from *The Duplin Times* dated June 6, 2006: “Our problems here are also due to a school board that often seems detached from the operation of the school, the arrogance and poor decision of the administration in the way it deals with nearly every situation that it faces, and turf protection of districted schools”. The real tragedy in this county is that could have been written yesterday. The 2010 board of education budget includes a continuation of the \$4.8 million under litigation. That is both ill advised and it was certainly adversarial, especially since the appeals court has not ruled on that. The board of education spent \$800,000 on that court case. At \$45,000 a position, that would fund 22 teachers. Ask yourself what you’d rather have - that or the 22 teachers everyone is up here asking for? Also, in November of 2008 it took Jimmy Dixon to indicate that the board of education was paying the legal fees without itemized invoices. That is not the way that you run a tight financial ship irrespective of who you are. From 2003 to 2007 the student body has increased 2 percent while the cost per pupil has increased 30 percent. How many of you know that if you combine the non-teaching and administrative positions in the school system that number is more than number of teachers. You want more teachers? Change that balance. You need less administrators and more teachers. I think that we all want the same thing for our children. We want a quality education for our children. But at the same time, we all have the right to expect the funds that are appropriated for certain things are spent the way they were intended to be. And also, there is prudent management of the money. The primary purpose is the children. Get more teachers in, change the balance, cut the administrative costs. I think that until the board of education shows that they can manage resources more wisely than they have before and set the right priorities that you basically keep the situation the way it is. I would urge the commissioners to keep the board of education funding at the present budgeted level.

Ms. Susan Carone: I really didn’t think that there would be anything else to say. I’m a bit confused. Immediately as soon as athletics came up, boom. . .more money. As soon as ROTC came up, . . . more money. So I just assumed with the teachers . . . what’s the difference? Why can you move money so quickly for that but yet we’re having all of this discussion about teachers – the backbone of our schools?

Chairman Turner: Because the money is already there. It’s just that when we got together with Ms. Hartley . . .the new way that we’re phasing into is going to a code system. And in putting into the codes, the way I understand it, is restricting where the money went.

Ms. Susan Carone: But you undid it quickly tonight. So why can’t you do that for teachers?

Chairman Turner: Because the money is not in there. Are you talking about the money for the 26 positions?

Ms. Susan Carone: I'm talking about the \$6 million. It seemed very quick that you could move \$500,000 into athletics and move \$250,000 to another line item for ROTC. And I may be misunderstanding it but I'm sure I'm not the only one. So why can we not move the money from the 6500 line item to another line item to fund the teachers?

Chairman Turner: This is 26 teaching positions that my understanding is that the board of commissioners funded. And this past year, we just found out that money was not being used for those positions.

Ms. Susan Carone: Do you really think that is going to happen again with all these people here? Do you really think that is going to happen?

Chairman Turner: We took it as they didn't need those positions now all of a sudden they do. We didn't make that decision to take the money and allocate for other things. We were paying for the teaching positions.

Ms. Susan Carone: Well, I'm speaking as a parent right now. And I would almost be willing to walk away from it if I thought my child had what she needed. But she doesn't. And I'm very ashamed of every one of you sitting up there right now.

Ms. Edie Barfield: I'm a school nurse with Duplin County Schools. As a parent, I come before you tonight with a true sense of worry about the future of the children in our school system. I realize that times are hard and that tough decisions have to be made. Many of your constituents elected you to this board because they felt you had what it takes to make those decisions. During your own election campaigns, many of you promised to make education a priority. Now, I am asking you to make good on your promises. You cannot go wrong when you do the right thing – invest in our children and their education. Because we live in a globally competitive society we certainly need to make every effort to produce well-educated children who will be able to compete in the world of today and lead our county into the challenges that they are going to face tomorrow. Every day I go to work as a school nurse in this county. Being part of the educational team is very rewarding and I am often amazed and inspired by others in our schools who sacrifice so much to do what is right for children no matter what. I am surrounded by teachers, translators, administrators, guidance counselors, media coordinators, teacher assistants, social workers, other school nurses, and coaches, all going above and beyond what is written in their job descriptions to provide quality educational experiences against all odds for our children. The best educators not only teach from the book they teach from the heart. And our educators have the biggest hearts. What person sitting on the board of commissioners or even in this audience tonight has not been the beneficiary of the support, encouragement, challenges and gentle pushes in the right direction from a teacher? US Presidents, congressman, every astronaut, every country farmer, doctors, all of us, have been inspired to greatness however big or small in part due to the contributions of those who have taught us so much along the way - our teachers. That is why I think your proposed budget for education in our county disturbs me so much. Your budget greatly changes the vision of "No Child Left Behind" to "Duplin County children are going to be left behind" especially if you continue on the same course that you have charted for us in this budget. Cutting teaching positions, decreasing funding, earmarking money, increasing class size, eliminating support services and clerical staff, not funding athletics, which has been remedied tonight, and reducing programs is not the answer. It is crazy to believe that our schools can attain these goals that have been put before them with inadequate funding and inadequate tools. The miracle of it all is that over recent years our school system has been doing just that. Could it be because our teachers, our social workers, our coaches, our teacher assistants, and those who work in the educational setting are a lot like a candle - they consume themselves only to light the way for others and never to make themselves look good. I would challenge this board to do this as well. Consume yourselves with the current budget demands being placed before you and make sure that you light the way for our children of Duplin County when you make your final budget proposals for they are our leaders and tax base of tomorrow. Sometimes I cringe when I find myself outside of Duplin County. This usually occurs when I meet someone not from around here. You know they always ask, "So where are you from?" Of course I say, "Duplin County or Duplin County Schools." They used to say, "Oh, where is

that?" But now when I say that I'm from Duplin County they develop a knowing look on their faces and there is usually some discussion about how wonderfully our county commissioners and board of education members get along so well together. I find myself completely embarrassed about the standoff situation that seems to be existing between our two boards. To both boards - you have squandered the taxpayer's money on petty bickering and unwillingness to see beyond your own agendas long enough. To this end, our children have suffered. Get rid of the bad blood that is leading us down a definite path of destruction. Making cuts or refusing to provide educational funding is not the answer to the Duplin County's budget woes. Please look elsewhere. In closing, I respectfully request that both the board of commissioners and board of education put away your differences and separate political agendas and work together for the good of our greatest natural resource - our children. Channel all of this negativity towards each other into making a workable plan that will help our children have a promising future. We all want our children to become something that we can be proud of. I will make it a matter of prayer that the Lord will grant each of you the wisdom needed to make good choices especially when it comes to decisions impacting our children. Thank you.

Ms. Terrie Taylor: First, I'd like to thank you all for allowing us to speak tonight. I have been working at North Duplin Elementary School for about 11 years now. I have been going to school to become a teacher up until about a year ago. I don't know if it's between the commissioners or the board of education, but I see no reason why I would want to become a teacher. Not after the way the teachers are treated and how the assistants are treated. I have a son that also wants to go to school to teach and become a coach. I can't give him a good reason now why he should go into education. Some of the greatest teachers I've met started out as teacher assistants. We have teacher assistants now that are going back to school to get their teaching degree. But guess what, they probably won't be teaching in Duplin County. Several of them have talked about going to different counties because of the supplements being cut, jobs being cut. I know there has been talk tonight about the past . . . Ms. Frances, I remember that I had you when I was in elementary school. I don't think we can go back to the way things were when you were teaching me in elementary school. I believe that you counted on your assistant a lot when you were a teacher. The only ones hurting from this is our children. If you don't think that we need all the staff and faculty that we have at our school . . . I know earlier they were asking for people to volunteer at the nursing homes. . . I invite anybody here to come volunteer at the schools. You don't know what these children live with. You don't know from day-to-day when they come in what they had to put up with at home. The loving support of the staff might be the only love they get. I do not agree with cutting teaching positions or teacher assistant positions just simply because it is going to hurt the county and the children will ultimately pay the price for it. Thank you.

Mr. James Brinson: My name is James Brinson but a lot of people call me J.B. I just recently started teaching, or substituting at James Kenan's ROTC program. But aside from that, I am a soldier. I've been to war and back and traveled across the world and done a lot of things. I'm still in service now. But I'm looking at it now as how you're treating the teachers, the teacher's assistants, the nurses, and the counselors. They need it. I've been knowing these kids for the last three or four months and I see that they need the teachers. It's not about me. I have an eleven year old daughter. I don't want her going back to the one-room schoolhouse that they used to have on the block. I understand where you all came from. You all know where I came from. A lot of you all started off in the school system. You got to do what you've got to do to help these kids out. It ain't about you. Stop being so thin-skinned, so petty, so tit-for-tat crap and do what you've got to do to give them this money for it. Now we sit here paying money for lights over here, lights over here, parking for this place. . . you talk about not having any money. . . who is paying for this? Ain't we paying for it? We're paying for this! It's our money that we work to give back to you all. And what do you all do with it? Build this thing over here. . . I ain't even been inside of it. I don't even know how long its been there. Then you're talking about the school system saying, "Give me this and give me that". And oh. . . this is a bigger way of doing things, like ya'll haven't ever bent any rules before. You have done it. Do it for these people. Don't do it about yourself. Put yourself in a careless situation. We have to go by seven army values. There's seven of them. I try to live by them every day. I don't do everything correctly, but I try to. I have young people looking up to me. They are a reflection of you. A lot of you all helped me to grow up. Now when I say (inaudible) mention your name, you want them to say something positive like I want them to say something positive about me. Nothing negative. There's enough of negative crap in this world right now. Do something positive. Do something where people will be proud of

you, that will want to shake your hand or give you a hug. Do something for the kids. If you don't teach them correctly, what do you think this (inaudible) Duplin County will be? Think about it. Thank you.

Ms. Elizabeth Straughn: Mr. Aldridge, Mr. Turner, commissioners, and Dr. Doby, good evening and thank you very much for this opportunity to speak. At the end of the last school year, I completed 21 years as a classroom teacher. I taught in Florida before moving to North Carolina and have taught in two counties in North Carolina. When I transferred to Duplin County, I knew it was God blessing my life. To what extent, I can't say because I have been and am continually blessed as I further my career in Duplin County. I worked at James Kenan High School for two years and then I helped open the James Kenan School of Engineering its first year. As a result of working for three outstanding Duplin County principals and again with God working in my life, I just finished my first year at ECU as a North Carolina Principals Fellow. So, why am I telling you this? Because in three short years in Duplin County, I was given an opportunity for growth that I was not given in another county. You see, I live in that other county so I can't say that I voted for any of you. I live in that other county less than four miles from four schools. Yet I chose for three years to drive almost 30 miles one way to come to teach the children at James Kenan and James Kenan Engineering School. Now as I embark upon my internship and my career as an administrator, I again choose Duplin County. It is my turn to do for others as was done for me. With this in mind, it is my sincerest hope that you will remember the classroom teachers across the county and the supplements for them to keep them in Duplin County. The children of this county deserve quality education. North Carolina's Department of Public Instruction has charged the public schools across the state to get our children ready for the 21st century because we're in the 21st century. We need to be able to prepare our students for today with teachers who are trained for today's technology and today's strategies, not yesterday's. Without the proper funding, we will lose dynamic teachers and our children will lose in the end. Thank you.

Ms. Kendall Wolz: Excuse me. Would you all mind if I say something? I did not sign up though. But I'm a concerned student. Would you all mind? I am a senior at James Kenan High School. I will be going to UNC Chapel Hill this Fall but I'm not proud to say that I came from Duplin County because you all can't get along. I'm not proud to say that I came from schools that are poor and don't have money to provide teachers. Last year I had to resort to an online pre-calculus class because I did not have a pre-calculus teacher. I don't think that's fair to me or the other students that had to do that also. As far as the nursing situation goes, I challenge each one of you to go stand at my nurse's door for even an hour and count how many students need her. See how many students walk in her door and get treated. It's unbelievable. There have been days that our nurse has missed and when she comes back, she's swarmed with students who need her. You can not take away our nurses. The same goes for our social workers. I have worked in the guidance counselor's office and I've seen how many students walk in and out of her office. You can't cut them. I just wanted to let you all know that you need to rethink this whole teacher's situation. Whenever I was in sixth grade, I remember my teacher asking me and all the other students, "What do you want to be?" He first asked, "How many of you want to be teachers?" Probably about five students raised their hands. He had them to stand up and have the rest of us give them applause. I didn't understand that. I was mad. I was like . . . how come I want to be a doctor but I don't get a standing ovation? But think about it, would we have doctors without teachers? Would we have any teachers without teachers? Would you be where you are without teachers?

Commissioner Wells: As a board member, I want to personally thank all of you for your applause tonight. As the late Paul Harvey said, "the rest of the story is. . . that I think that our board of commissioners as well as our board of education has a part to play in this. We're all clapping. The board is clapping, we're clapping, but I challenge the board. . .and I just want to say again. . .I thought we were beyond the pettiness. . . I went personally before the board of education and extended the olive branch. And we've been working, what ever happened to that? We've got to move forward. We're not going to accomplish anything by saying that we're being challenged or they're being challenged. The bottom line is that we're going to have to figure out how to move this county forward. Nothing is going to happen by fussing and arguing and slinging mud. We all know that. So I think what we've got to do as adults, is for this board and their board to forget about how we feel about Dr. Doby or whatever. Because regardless if Wiley Doby leaves tomorrow or today, the Duplin County School System and the citizens of Duplin County

will have to run. So what we've got to do is not focus on personalities. We've got to focus on keeping the main things the main things. And the main thing is the education of our children. So I challenge my board and this board to convene a meeting and let's try to resolve this issue before next year. Can we do that? I think that when there's no talking, things like this happen. I think we can avoid this whole thing by not going behind closed doors, but by calling a meeting as saying, "Let's resolve this instead of getting all these persons involved and emotions involved. Let's solve this and move on." Let's move on and the best way to do that is for the board of commissioners and the board of education to sit down. Let's resolve this. We're responsible adults elected by the people to do what's right. Let's forget about being petty and let's do right for the children of Duplin County. Thank you.

Motion was made by Commissioner Wells, seconded by Commissioner Williams, carried unanimously, to schedule a joint meeting between the Duplin County Board of Commissioners and the Duplin County Board of Education to be held as soon as possible before the next board meeting.

With no further public comments, Chairman Turner called the public hearing to a close at 8:17 p.m.

Mr. Rudolph Becton appeared before the board to request \$1500 in order to attend the senior citizen national games in San Francisco, CA in August 2009. He stated that he won in several categories in the local and state senior games and is now eligible to attend the national games to represent Duplin County. Ms. Melisa Brown, Assistant Aging Director; and Ms. Frankie Hobbs, In-Home Aide Supervisor, were present and stated that extra funds are not available in the Services to the Aged budget. (See handout in minutes.)

Motion was made by Commissioner Williams, seconded by Commissioner Parks, for each commissioner to make a \$100 personal donation to Mr. Rudolph Becton in order for him to attend the national senior games.

Commissioner Wells offered an amendment to the main motion to allocate \$600 from the Services for the Aged Trust Account to Mr. Rudolph Becton.

Motion died due to lack of a second.

Since the amended motion died, the vote on the original motion was: Commissioners Parks, Raynor, Wells, and Williams voted for; Commissioners Fussell and Turner voted against.

Mr. Lee McClure with Construction Control Corporation, along with Mr. Brent Jeffcoat and Mr. Joe Niggel of McGuire Woods Investment Advisors made a presentation to the board regarding funding options for school construction. (See handout in minutes.)

Mr. Mark Tutor of Innovative Development Solutions, Inc. gave a presentation on the service his company provides in assisting counties with removing abandoned mobile homes. (See handout in minutes.)

Motion was made by Commissioner Wells, seconded by Commissioner Williams, carried unanimously, to recess Regular Session and go into session as Water District D.

The board returned to Regular Session.

Motion was made by Commissioner Wells, seconded by Commissioner Williams, carried unanimously, to adopt the resolution to loan up to \$100,000 at 4 percent interest from the County Water District to Water District D.

Mr. Brian Pearce, EMS Director, appeared before the board to discuss location options for EMS sites as requested by the board at the May 21, 2009 budget work session meeting.

Motion was made by Commissioner Parks, seconded by Commissioner Fussell, carried unanimously, to hold a work session on Thursday, June 4, 2009 in order to discuss the EMS location options, solid waste fees, and fire tax districts.

Mr. Mike Aldridge stated that Sheriff Blake Wallace is requesting that the weapons used by retired Sheriff's Department employees, Mr. John Tyson and Ms. Judy Wiley be declared as surplus and be awarded to them for retirement.

Motion was made by Commissioner Wells, seconded by Commissioner Williams, carried unanimously, to surplus the handguns used by Mr. John Tyson [Beretta 92F 9MM Handgun – Serial #BER231346] and Ms. Judy Wiley [Beretta 92F 9MM Handgun – Serial #BER125873] and award them to them for retirement.

Mr. Aldridge stated that North Carolina's Eastern Region Board of Directors is requesting the reappointment of Mr. Earl Brinkley.

Motion was made by Commissioner Wells, seconded by Commissioner Raynor, carried unanimously, to reappoint Mr. Earl Brinkley to the North Carolina Eastern Region Board of Directors for a four-year term to begin July 1, 2009.

Mr. Aldridge presented a resolution proclaiming June 1, 2009 as "Stand for the Children Day" in Duplin County. (See handout in minutes.)

Motion was made by Commissioner Wells, seconded by Commissioner Parks, carried unanimously, to adopt the resolution proclaiming June 1, 2009 as "Stand for the Children Day" in Duplin County and authorize the chairman to sign same.

Motion was made by Commissioner Wells, seconded by Commissioner Raynor, carried unanimously, to go into Closed Session pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(4).

The board returned to Regular Session.

Motion was made by Commissioner Wells, seconded by Commissioner Raynor, carried unanimously, that the county may be interested in offering an incentive package for "Project Chest" to include tax incentives for three years at 80 percent contingent upon a public hearing and a performance agreement.

The board recessed to meet again on Thursday, June 4, 2009 at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioners' Meeting Room, County Administration Building (224 Seminary Street), Kenansville, North Carolina.

Clerk