

Cherokee County Board of Commissioners
Joint Worksession with Board of Education
January 21, 2021
6:30 p.m.
Cherokee County Courthouse

County Commission members present: Dr. Dan Eichenbaum, Chairman; Jan Griggs, Vice-Chairman; Cal Stiles, member; Randy Phillips, member; and Gary Westmoreland, member.

Staff present: Randy Wiggins, County Manager; Maria Hass, Assistant County Manager/Clerk to the Board; Candy Anderson, Finance Director; and, Darryl Brown, County Attorney.

Board of Education members present: Arnold Matthews, Joey Shore, James Ellis, Joe Wood, Jeff Tatham, and Jeff Martin. Board member Keesha Curtis was absent, due to family illness.

Staff present: Superintendent, Dr. Jeana Conley. Several CCS administrative staff members were in the audience.

Also present: WKRK Radio, Local TV4 and Cherokee Scout.

Call to order and ethics statement by Chairman.

Invocation and Pledge

Cherokee County Schools (CCS) Facilities Study Discussion

Dr. Conley began the discussion by giving an overview of the CCS facilities study, which is required every five years by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). She then discussed the plan for one consolidated high school, to be located next to Tri-County Community College.

Comments in brief:

- Board of Education member, Joey Shore, shared his support of the one consolidated high school plan.
- Commissioner Randy Phillips also shared his support of the one consolidated high school plan.
- Board of Education member, Joe Wood, said that he supported small community schools.
- Commissioner Jan Griggs said she did not believe that Cherokee County residents had been heard on the matter. She questioned the legality of a public hearing held during the pandemic, when attendance was limited. She asked if the cost of the consolidated high school project included a new stadium. She also asked what the cost of renovating the remaining schools was, and which of those schools would close. Concerning the legality of the public hearing, Dr. Conley said that the Board's attorney said that it was legal. Concerning K-8 renovations, she said they would need to hire a consultant to go through the K-8 schools and develop a cost estimate for renovations.
- Board of Education member, Jeff Tatham, shared his support of the one consolidated high school plan.

- Commissioner Stiles agreed with Commissioner Griggs that the residents deserved an opportunity to be heard. He also shared concern of the county taking on the debt service. He said he is opposed to the Design-Build construction method and thinks that projects of this magnitude should have blue prints and be bid out. He said bidding the project out is fairest to the taxpayers. He asked how CCS would dispose of the old high schools.
- Board of Education member, Jeff Martin, shared his support of the one consolidated high school plan and said that he supported a tax increase to help fund the project.
- Commissioner Gary Westmoreland, shared his support of the one consolidated high school plan and also said that he would support a tax increase. He said that children need good schools.
- Board of Education member, Arnold Matthews, shared his support of the one consolidated high school plan. He said there would be a savings from not having to maintain old facilities.
- Commissioner Dan Eichenbaum, shared his support of the one consolidated high school plan and said he supports multiple opportunities for students, which will allow them to succeed. He said there are inefficiencies in current schools and a new school is more efficient.
- Dr. Conley said without the one consolidated high school, that Cherokee County Schools would continue to have inequity in programming.

At the conclusion of the worksession, the Board of Commissioners thanked the Board of Education and Superintendent for coming, and acknowledged receipt of the DPI study. There was no action to be taken.

County Business Item

A Motion was made by Commissioner Phillips to hold a worksession during the commissioner's regular meeting on February 15th for armory discussion. Motion seconded by Commissioner Westmoreland. Motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

There being no further business, a Motion was made by Commissioner Stiles to adjourn. Motion seconded by Commissioner Westmoreland. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

THESE MINUTES WERE APPROVED AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE CHEROKEE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS ON MARCH 15, 2021.