

THE ANSON CUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS convened for a joint meeting with the Anson County Board of Education on Monday, April 18, 2016 beginning at 6:00 P.M. in the Charles Riddle Staff Development Center.

Commissioners present: Anna Baucom, Chair
Dr. Jim Sims
Vancine Sturdivant
Jarvis Woodburn

Staff members present: Megan Garner, County Manager
Bonnie M. Huntley, CMC, NCCCC, Clerk to the Board
Rita James, Interim Finance Officer/IT

Others: Scott Forbes, County Attorney

Chairman Baucom called the meeting to Order. Board of Education member George Truman delivered the Invocation.

Motion by Commissioner Sims, seconded by Commissioner Woodburn, to approve the Agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Superintendent Freeman welcomed those present, noting the purpose of the meeting was to define ways to help the children in Anson County. Superintendent Freeman stated that he had met the new County Manager but wasn't sure how many of his board members had met her and in fairness to her, he called for introductions. Superintendent Freeman stated that they were excited to have a County Manager on staff. Superintendent Freeman then invited everyone to partake of the delicious meal that had been prepared by Events Catering. Superintendent Freeman shared that during the meal a power point presentation would be playing without sound to include a presentation by Anson Middle School and Anson High School to show some pictures of unique and everyday life for those particular grade spans here in Anson County. Superintendent Freeman noted that he and his staff were available for questions and conversations at the county's request.

Superintendent Freeman stated he intentionally tried to bestow some information about our schools while everyone was eating to make good use of our time. Superintendent Freeman then shared a picture of a young man, saying that on behalf of him and all the kids they saw in the slide show and video, he wanted to offer thanks to the commissioners. Superintendent Freeman said if it were not for the Board of Commissioners and the Board of Education, our children here in Anson County would go lacking in tremendous ways. Superintendent Freeman stated that here in Anson County we need quality public schools to provide for our children. Superintendent Freeman

added that those of us who follow politics in our state recognize that there are powers that be beyond the boundaries of Anson County who would like nothing more than to see our public schools close the doors. Superintendent Freeman stated that they've done that time and time again through vouchers, charter schools that are not held to the same standards as public school, private schools that are given special privileges at the expense of public schools and over the next few months you will read about more legislation where we want to consider funding unique initiatives in the state but the scary thing about unique initiatives that can bring about positives, the funding source will be public schools. Superintendent Freeman added that superintendents were being told not to worry because the local Board of Commissioners will pick up the negative balances and keep them funded. Superintendent Freeman stated that he knows the Board of Commissioners do what they can and they appreciate it. Superintendent Freeman stated that while the commissioners are not able to deliver to them buckets of unused money frequently, he believes that in their hearts as they work the magic with the pencils they have the best of intentions for their children.

Superintendent Freeman stated that academic learning was only one part of the story. Superintendent Freeman stated that when a child walks into a classroom, a teacher, a principal or a school staff member needs to know that that child is equipped with what he or she needs. Superintendent Freeman stated that these things were not unique to Anson County but he was talking about Anson County tonight. Superintendent Freeman stated that before a teacher can set the stage for learning, we need a prepared child in many aspects. Superintendent Freeman shared that most children get excited on school spirit day and they want to wear Bearcat and Panther pride apparel. Superintendent Freeman shared that when members of the Bearcat Foundation find out a child needs something they donate the item without the child's knowledge so they can attend the function with pride. Superintendent Freeman explained that they have a lot of families that are single income parents doing the best they can do. Superintendent Freeman mentioned that there were days in his career that when he saw children that were not bathed appropriately, he thought it was due to neglect or maybe not having soap in the home. Superintendent Freeman shared that they would send soap, toothbrushes and toothpaste or whatever they thought would be helpful. Superintendent Freeman added that he learned that it wasn't always the lack of soap and those kinds of things, it was trying to manage a high water bill that is calculated with sewer charges if you live in the city limits and bathe five people on one income. Superintendent Freeman shared that in the 2016/2017 school year, we would hear them reaching out in a unique kind of way. Superintendent Freeman shared that he and Mr. McLean have worked on this and shared this vision as part of their focus for the summer and next year. Superintendent Freeman stated that it was to help our community embrace ways they can help teachers have a prepared child that they may feel is unique. Superintendent Freeman shared that he and Mr. McLean want to empower their staff to reach out to families. Superintendent Freeman stated that time and time again they've had members of the Faith community, business community and people who call themselves concern citizens say they want to volunteer in the schools

and they welcome them, but some get offended because in 2016 they feel it is appropriate to do a background check. Superintendent Freeman added that they find when they get in the schools and they give them an academic task they feel intimidated and they don't want that. Superintendent Freeman shared that they want people to volunteer at their level of comfort so it can be a value to the child and the volunteer so therefore they plan to emphasize Soft Skills next year. Superintendent Freeman stated that they will process and accept volunteers who can come in and be a strong math, communications or science tutor and anyone that has a prepared background that can demonstrate a willingness and a level of competency to do that will be welcomed and received as a volunteer. Superintendent Freeman noted there were things we could all do. Superintendent Freeman stated that in Soft Skills the volunteers can help them instill in a child how to be a good citizen by working with them daily and reflecting on their day and giving them tips on how to do well in school. Superintendent Freeman added that they can also teach children words that govern respect. Superintendent Freeman feels we have to get back to gentlemen holding doors for ladies and children talking to adults with respect. Superintendent Freeman feels if we as adults don't take this on it will not change. Superintendent Freeman noted this was not just in Anson County but across the nation. Superintendent Freeman mentioned listening to the way some adults talk to children and how it rips at his heart to see a three or four year old child being humiliated, degraded, curse at or slapped on and they want to empower the community through any agency they can find to help parents learn how to deal appropriately with children. Superintendent Freeman feels our county can offer recreational opportunities, sports or swimming along with the Faith Community and Civic Support. Superintendent Freeman asked those present to go out and help him embrace the community and get them to see that there are challenges ahead but if we stay the course with our children we can take care of them. Superintendent Freeman believes we have more cases of struggling that we recognize at times.

Superintendent Freeman asked those present when they heard things about the school system conducting community meetings, to realize that a great emphasis of those meetings is going to be on the Soft Skills followed by the academic support, if appropriate, and imagine how that ties into Economic Development. Superintendent Freeman stated that the school system wants to help validate companies to want to come to Anson County. Superintendent Freeman noted that the next thing on this journey will be when our young are instilled with the pride of learning go off to college, community college, licensure programs, will they come back and give to our community.

Superintendent Freeman stated that they will be presenting to the Board of Commissioners budget request and going through the formalities. Superintendent Freeman added that in talking with other superintendents about the joint meeting with the Board of Education and County Commissioners he hears horror stories and he is so proud to sit in those meetings and say that is not the way it is in Anson. Superintendent Freeman stated that the one thing we agree on is that we are poor and

we will do our best to stretch a dollar and he appreciates that. Superintendent Freeman offered thanks to both boards for the good relationship between them. Superintendent Freeman thanked the Board of Commissioners once again for being there to support the school system and if they have questions to please let him know. Superintendent Freeman stated that it was an honor and a privilege to serve them and this community.

Commissioner Sims commented that his presentation could not have been better and it was an honor to have him as our Superintendent. Chairman Baucom thanked members of both boards for all they do and to the teachers and administration of our public school system. Chairman Baucom stated that education was critical for this county. Chairman Baucom added that we need a workforce that can fill out an application and spell their names right and people with a work ethic that are willing to work and learn new ways to do jobs. Chairman Baucom stated that one of the things she learned from one of the Association conferences is part of Economic Development is livability issues and if we look around we have beautiful land, open spaces, the river and good roads but we need to fill in some gaps with places to spend your money. Chairman Baucom stated she has held for a long time that a community is known by the way their fast food is delivered and feels everything should be perfectly made and the restrooms need to be immaculate. Chairman Baucom feels we have to put our best foot forward, not just when it's a show and tell time but in the everyday way we treat each other and serve customers. Chairman Baucom added that the Board of Commissioners can't do this by themselves. Chairman Baucom voiced appreciation for the relationship between the two boards and this meeting. Chairman Baucom appreciates the acknowledgment that we are going to do the very best we can. Chairman Baucom mentioned that she found a statistic that North Carolina is 40th in teacher pay in the nation and feels it is an insult and a deliberate attempt to dummy down America. Chairman Baucom thanked them again for what they do and for the evening. County Attorney Forbes noted that this was the first year everyone got a free meal and offered congratulations for this. County Attorney Forbes stated that this way the children are all treated equally and there is no more stigma. County Attorney Forbes asked if there were ways to measure how this has positively impacted Anson County so it can be expanded. Superintendent Freeman answered that they had an ongoing evaluation throughout the year and they were phasing in an annual evaluation. Superintendent Freeman stated that they hope to continue with the community eligibility program and it is their desire, if not this summer then by the summer of 2017, to look at summer feeding options for children they serve and potentially those they do not serve. Superintendent Freeman shared that they anticipate expanding, through some federal dollars, to do year round feeding in some capacity as time and resources permit. Commissioner Sturdivant shared that she and her motorcycle group plan to volunteer. Commissioner Sturdivant voiced that she did not like the social promotion program and asked if there was another way of doing this. Commissioner Sturdivant also voiced that we need more parental involvement. Commissioner Sturdivant was of

the opinion we had retired teachers that could go back in the school and give at least an hour or two a day to help the teachers.

Motion by Commissioner Woodburn, seconded by Commissioner Sturdivant, to recess until Saturday, April 23rd at 8:30 A.M. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted:

Bonnie M. Huntley, NCCCC
Clerk to the Board

Meeting time: 1 hr. 30 min.