

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF AVERY**

The Avery County Board of Commissioners met with the Avery County Board of Education in a Joint Meeting on Thursday, October 13, 2015 at 4:00 p.m. at the Avery County High School, 401 Avery High School Road, Viking Hall, Newland, NC. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss school related issues.

Members Present: Robert Griffith, Chairman; Maxine Laws, Vice-Chair; Martha Hicks (entered meeting at 4:30 p.m.) Faith Lacey

Members Absent: Blake Vance

Board of Education Members Present: John Greene, Chairman; Kathy Aldridge; Steve Smith; Keith Tutterow; Dr. Robert Clark

Call To Order

John Greene, Chairman of the Avery County Board of Education, called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m. Motion by Steve Smith and second by Kathy Aldridge to approve the agenda. Motion unanimous.

David Burleson led prayer.

Avery County Schools Presentation

David Burleson, Avery County School Superintendent, presented a power point presentation to both boards regarding Avery County Schools. Mr. Burleson explained that there were six preschool classrooms, five elementary schools, two middle schools, one high school with a freshman academy and a STEM academy. There are 2051 students enrolled in Avery County schools. He also gave some quick facts about the school system commenting that there were 350 full time employees (492 total), a \$25 million dollar total budget; \$1.4 million dollar monthly payroll. The school system operates 31 yellow buses.

David Burleson said " A quick update on the high school which you asked us to look at, we jetted all the lines of the sewer system and used the camera to video it. We made our repairs, we have done ok. We have four additional areas identified for repair next summer which is going to be a little more extensive. We do have one collection system that we need to work to replace. I have mentioned the camera system through the Governor's Crime Commission; that is an update here at the high school. The only issue that we are really dealing with that is major is some of the leaks and Darrell Pittman is on top of it. He is working on it. The two that is the most difficult to determine where it is coming from is over in the 100 pod and over in the girl's dressing room. Darrell is trying to figure out what to do there. The 400 pod ever since the school was built it was a little bit lower than everything else and the water runs in there. We did work with ag. extension and they are working trying to help us in that area back there at what we call "Lake Mitch" back behind the bus parking lot. It holds water and they are working with trying to create a wetlands out there. We will not put it down on the folks that live below us but hopefully we can contain it back there. That is a quick update on the high school. We got the state budget finalized on September 16th. We didn't get everything out until last week. Driver's Ed was funded. I want to personally thank you as county commissioners for saying you would step up if we needed you because a lot of systems suspended driver's ed this summer and they have had to try to regroup. I want to personally thank you, our board thanks you and our students thanks you for letting us teach it over the summer. We were able to do that because of your help. We did apply for and receive a Golden Leaf Grant and again our county commissioners and our former county manager and current county manager who was the finance officer really helped us with that grant and we were awarded \$750,000 and that had to go to Project Lead-The-Way. We had to write it for specifically that but it did help us with some of our Macbooks. We were able to buy about 350 new student Macbooks to help us start refreshing what we have. We will not be coming to you this year begging for Macbooks. We have been able to do that through the grant and will continue to work on grants for that. Kim Davis did a lot of work on this grant and did an excellent job of writing it. We have a lot in place with our Project Lead-The-Way with pre-engineering. Question about teacher pay; beginning teacher went from \$33,000 to \$35,000. All employees statewide including teachers got a \$750 bonus. At each five years there was a step increase so the only ones who got a raise were those going from 9-10, 14-15, 19-20, 24-25 years. Above 25 did not get but \$750. I wish they had remembered those who had been with us a long time. TA funding that was a big issue, bid hold up with the state. It did change with the formula, instead of getting # of dollars for ADM it is a ratio now. In kindergarten, every three kindergarten classes gets 2 TA's; every 3 first grade classrooms get 1 TA and every 5 second grade classrooms get a TA. There is not a lot of flexibility in that money. I will leave you with two thoughts, there is no significant learning without a significant relationship. We talked to our teachers and staff about creating positive, appropriate relationships. Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed people can change the world. I believe we have a group here that is thoughtful, committed to Avery County and you want to make positive changes. That is a little update on Avery County Schools."

John Greene said “the next updates are the sidewalks at Cranberry.” Mr. Burleson said “it has taken us four years to get this moving but it is finally happening. The purpose is to give the students at Cranberry and Freedom Trail safe access to the fields. That school does not have fields and we are very fortunate that the Cranberrian Corporation and the county commissioners allow us to use those fields. We again worked with DOT and so hopefully in the next few weeks that will be ready to go. No Avery County dollars was spent on that project. Dr. Clark can tell you what he deals with on the traffic issue at the DOT road.”

Dr. Robert Clark said “I come from Crossnore to the middle school, actually staggering the times with the high school has helped. You go down toward the DOT driveway. You can never get out to turn left. I turn right go and turn around and then go on because the risk of getting hit is rather high. I noticed a lot of people have figured that out. We need a red light.” Mr. Burleson said “we have worked with DOT to try to get them to do something there unsuccessfully. I would recommend maybe in the near future that Mr. Greene, myself and the two chairs go visit DOT again and see if there is something they can do there. I am concerned that someone is going to get killed. That is a dangerous intersection. Maybe in the near future we could sit up with our chairs to visit DOT.” Chairman Griffith stated “Mr. Burleson, I sit on the Rural Transportation Advisory Council. It might be that when Cindy notifies me of the meeting that she notifies you and Mr. Greene and maybe we all three could go to Boone to the transportation advisory council meeting and let you all address that to the DOT engineers.” Mr. Burleson said “that would be a good idea.” Steve Smith said “while you all are meeting with DOT we need a little help in the winter, there was about three days if we could have one or two roads scraped we could have had school. We are having major problems with getting certain roads scraped. It is my understanding that they won’t put but the vehicle that is designed for that road to scrape it and a lot of times they are tied up or broken down. There was three days we could have had school last year if we could have gotten one or two roads scraped.” Mr. Burleson said “If we could have gotten the roads scraped a little earlier so the sun could hit out there and start melting them it would have really helped us.” Steve Smith said “we need more DOT trucks. It is my understanding that they have four DOT trucks in the morning and four at night; that is where the problem is. It is not the contractor, they do a good job.” Chairman Griffith questioned “what roads were not open?” Mr. Burleson answered “New Beech was one and Hickory Nut Gap was another. Some of that is the fact at the state level they discourage overtime and discourage having people out using salt on certain roads and I am not a big advocate of salt but if you put it on one you might as well put it on all of them.”

John Greene said “the next thing we wanted to talk about was a Long Range Facilities Planning Committee, maybe getting a couple of members from the county commissioners, county manager and some of ours just to start. We wanted to have a committee just to get a plan not just a high school but all facilities to know what is coming up in the future. That way you don’t get blindsided by it but have a committee that comes to the rest of the board and say this is what is going on with the schools and that way you can look at the long term things. For us to be able to come to you and tell you what is coming up with the facilities and schools that you are going to have to be aware of sooner or later. We would rather you be aware of them sooner than later. We would like to talk at some point about a committee that would meet on a regular basis which would be quarterly or monthly just to keep everyone up to speed.” Chairman Griffith said “Thank you for those words. If a subcommittee or special committee is convened in the future, NC General Statute Chapter 143 will strictly be adhered to in public meeting notices, minutes and absolutely keeping both boards completely informed. As you talked about being blindsided, yes we were. I have had our clerk working on some minutes for me for some 18 meetings that we asked about in public open meetings and deaf ears were turned to our request. What is going on with these meetings? What is happening at these meetings? No information was given. Then when it came down to it we didn’t know what was being discussed. If we go by Chapter 143 of NC General Statutes, that is governing the public meeting laws, keeping everyone informed. That is a bare minimum that we adhere to.”

John Greene said “Yes that is absolutely the way it needs to work. You have to be informed and be transparent not only with the board members but the public also. Again, we think we would need to work closely together and have the citizens and students best interest at heart and make sure we are proactive instead of reactive. We want to head off things that could be big issues on down the road.”

Mr. Burleson said “For example, we are going to have to do something about the roof at Crossnore Elementary School probably in the next couple of years. We need input from the county along with the Board of Education. Do we want to put a shingle roof back on, do we want to put a membrane roof, or a metal roof. It is my understanding it doesn’t have good air flow through there and shingles are wearing pretty quick. It is not old. That is examples of things together that we need to brainstorm and think about for the future.” Steve Smith said “that is a good example of cutting corners on your bid to get the school in. It was designed for a metal roof, metal roof was going to cost more. Another cut on that school was the size of the boilers were cut and we ended up coming back and putting larger boilers in. That is something that you need to look at seriously, talk with engineers and architects on some of the cuts you make to get it may come back and haunt you.”

Robert Clark said "We have a lot of inadequacy in our science lab and I certainly give it to Ms. Davis to have a top 500 school with the facilities that we provide and not even close to what the state requires. We need to know are we going to have something new? Do we need to plan otherwise how to help these kids to continue to do well in training that they do well in the future which is required of our nation? We need to make sure the science labs are adequate for training and teachers are not having to buy makeshift stuff to make up for the labs that they are supposed to be using. We need to know where we are going with that. Are we going to add something new to do that or redesigning what we have got and that is why we need a meeting to talk about what other plans, what we can expect to do sooner than later? I have a high schooler now so it is really on my plate now."

Martha Hicks said "Just this week when you all had a meeting in October 2012 that is the first time that we have seen anything that was discussed in that meeting. I have read it and got up this morning and read it again, we could be steps ahead if everybody had worked together. Somewhere it got broke. This is the first time, yesterday when I got it in the email we had seen what you discussed and we could already be steps ahead if we had known that in time. Let's both boards try to keep on board so we cannot fall behind and to move forward for the high school." Keith Tutterow said "I am like you I have not seen it either."

Maxine Laws said "The science lab has been one of my big issues. I am wondering where to go, how to go and what direction to go in. First, we need to know what some of this is going to cost. Are we cheaper to follow the DPI and go step by step or do we need a plan on where we are headed and how we are going to get there; is it going to be something new? something reworked like the science lab? if we have a new science lab where would it be? is there room for it? That is something that I do think we need to handle. We need an idea what the DPI is going to cost versus new building. You can't weigh out this unless you have a figure." Martha said "it seems like every time Phillip Barrier talks we are getting tax cuts. We are going to have to plan and get this money ahead, we can't wait."

Faye Lacey said "When I got the DPI 2010/2012, why wasn't there anything done with all of this because I found somewhere in the minutes that Mr. Wiseman advised the board at that time. I know that we don't tell you what to do but you have to let us know but this was recommended by the NC DPI. You have a lot of things to get this school up to standard and personally I am not happy with the science lab and all the other things that we need to do now that should have already been done. You have to maintain as you go and even if you were to get a new school tomorrow you can't let the children be in that science lab." John Greene said "I am not sure what you are addressing now but a lot of it comes down to our funding so what we did was we would always bring a priority list to the commissioners. We brought the things that had to absolutely be done to meet code, safety issues are always first and then work our way down to what would be nice and we never get to those things that are down on the bottom of the list. Those are things on the wish list that would be good. What we are always battling especially when we have older facilities we are battling to keep it maintained and somewhat livable so we can get through a school year. It always comes down to funding and we try to be good stewards of it and we have a lot of conversation and fortunately Steve knows our buildings and we lean heavily on him to decide what we have to address and again those things that are of utmost importance we deal with those and if we have any money left we will deal with them. Again, we are always just trying to maintain the buildings. A lot of times we don't get to all the things that we need to. You all know your funding is limited and we get our portion of that and it is limited on what we can do." Faye Lacey said "I have searched the minutes and there are minutes where the board actually came before the commissioners and specifically asked them to do this."

Mr. Bureson said "We had about 18 meetings of the high school committee which was really started by the commissioners years ago. Out of one of the initial meetings came the request to the NC Department of Public Instruction to send engineers up here to give us an idea of what we needed for the building. We were meeting continually about what to do and I guess we thought that you were getting the same updates that Mr. Smith was bringing back to our board as we can tell now did not occur and Ms. Martha you are right if that had occurred we might be further down the road. I guess we go back to what Ms. Laws was talking about. We were trying to determine do we renovate, do we build new but none of you were being made aware of this. I would like to think that our board was well up with what we shared in those meetings. I think what we have to do in the long range planning committee high school, middle school whatever, we need to work on how much it will cost or do we need to build science labs, do we need to try to renovate what we got and what working together do we need to do. Our science labs are substandard, they probably were substandard when I graduated and that has been a few years ago. We owe our kids to look and see what is the best thing we can do. Martha, you are exactly right if all of this had been shared openly we would be way down the road now."

Martha Hicks said "What I miss most is Danny Clark would bring in pictures and he would even put the price what it was going to cost to get it done and we could see how bad it was but we have not been seeing that. Pictures make a believer out of you. I really miss having that to see what we need and what it is going to cost."

Chairman Griffith said "I have been sitting here listening to both sides. We had a new board of county commissioners sworn in December of this past year. The face of the county commissioner board changed tremendously. From that first December meeting I believe you will find in recorded minutes that this board in unanimous votes, straight up and down votes and by consensus votes and through emails between the county manager and the superintendent we have said on numerous occasions fix the school we have got the money; we have said this on numerous occasions. Mr. Tutterow has said that he was not aware of some minutes and some meetings and information. Ms. Martha has made reference to an October 2012 meeting. This is Mr. Robert Wiseman, former county manager, he is speaking in reference to an August 2012 DPI report. This is one of the special subcommittee meetings. 'Mr. Wiseman said when you read through this report (he is referencing the DPI) there are sections specific to discipline like plumbing, structural, HVAC and they identify long term needs and short term needs and these short term needs are things we need to address in the upcoming budget. What is the high priority is what the school board recommends to the board of commissioners?' Mr. Wiseman goes on talking about third party. Mr. Poteat, a former chairman, read from the DPI 'for its age the Avery County High School is in good physical condition, we observe that the building has the possibility of long term continued use.' Mr. Burleson is quoted in these minutes as saying the current space is more than adequate. Mr. Burleson says 'they are doing enrollment figures of 538 in 2012 but I think we are going to grow a little bit, I don't think we need to put millions of dollars in classrooms that will be underutilized.' Mr. Poteat read from page 4 again of the DPI 'we therefore recommend long term use of the existing facilities with improvements. In my opinion they are pretty confident in the overall structural soundness.' Mr. Chairman with that being said I will repeat myself, we have the money, sir, we have the money. The board has voted unanimous numerous times to specifically get on the short term needs; I have not looked at the DPI report in some months now but I know we are talking about HVAC, ventilation systems and you can rest assured that is in the children's best interest. We are not talking about, I am not an expert in it, megabucks but that stuff has not been addressed, has it or not?"

Steve Smith said "Ventilation, that is what the entire renovation was about it was not heating and cooling it was put in for indoor air quality, the architect was out of Durham, NC. Chairman Griffith questioned "has this been addressed since August 2012." Steve said "No, I am talking about the ventilation that was designed for this building specifically. Has there been any air quality monitoring? Is that what we are addressing now?" Chairman Griffith said "I know one place in the DPI it is talking about ventilation in the carpentry shop or in the woodworking shop." Steve Smith said "the major renovation was done for ventilation. It was not done for heating and air. Air was a positive part of it. The prints are somewhere at the shop. All the air quality was tested after that, amount of flow was done, it was a company out of Columbia, South Carolina. Ok, this is another one of those where we cut corners. We do not have individual control of any rooms in the classrooms in the 100 or 200. Most of them are put on 3 rooms controlled off of one duct. You have got dampers. I will take up for Mr. Darrell Pitman until the end of time. He has worked on those and set the flows to get the ducts and get the amount of flow of ventilation, amount of flow of cooling and the amount of flow of heat. You are never going to have control when you have three rooms feeding off of one duct." Chairman Griffith asked "Mr. Smith, have you read the DPI report in its entirety, sir." Steve Smith said "I have glanced at the DPI report. If we are going to go DPI reports we need to do them for every school in the county. We need to pull the middle school in. The first thing they are going to do is recommend an air conditioning system. If we are going to use DPI reports, we need to pull every school we have got. Let's do them all, don't pick on just one." Chairman Griffith said "That is the one that was picked." Steve said "I understand that but if you want us to come to you with the needs of Avery County; I am not for just one school I am for all the schools in Avery County. We will get the DPI on all the schools except Banner Elk and possibility Crossnore but the rest of the schools we need to go ahead and do that. If we are going to be fair for one, let's be fair for them all." Chairman Griffith said "I don't think the board would have a problem with that but we are specifically here for the past few minutes, we are getting off the subject matter, the subject matter is what we are going to do with the high school. We have the money, Steve, this board has voted in unison and short term needs such as ventilation and such as that needs to be addressed and fixed. Now when a special committee comes together apparently sometime in the near future, Mr. Chairman, we will go to talking about long term what is needed. We have the money. I can't repeat myself enough. We have the money. We want to absolutely fix these short term needs. There are emails from the county manager's desk for us to fix it." Kathy Aldridge asked "How much money do you have available for all these repairs?" Chairman Griffith said "I think there is enough to fix the short term needs." Kathy said "Which would be approximately what in your determination?" Chairman Griffith asked "What do we have in the fund balance?" Tim Greene said "We try to maintain a 20% fund balance." Kathy questioned "What do we have in lottery funds coming in? What do we have as far as some of the other funds that came back where we are ending other building programs and the money that was left with the building project at Banner Elk?" Robert Clark said "A little over a million dollars, was that lottery funds or not?" Tim Greene said "that sounds right." Kathy said "Ok, 5 million dollars." Maxine Laws questioned "How do we know what this stuff is going to cost?" Kathy said "We want to sit down with you all and see?" Robert Clark said "Speaking of blindsided, we were blindsided as well. We thought there is a new school, I am speaking personally not as a board, I thought oh there is going to be a phase in schools. I have not thought about the process what are we going to do now if we are not going to do that and that is where the subcommittee we talked about would come in. I think we can come back and say this is the high priority things that we need to have since there might be an additional new additions to it. This is what we have to have, this is the

mobile units we need to have to put these kids in until we can get these things fixed. That may be a possibility or may not be.” Mr. Burleson said “We took care of the most serious safety issues being raw sewage in the building. That was taken care of this summer. The plumbers looked at four other areas and that can be next summer. Steve had the idea of jetting the lines which worked out very well. There are two issues I can bring to Tim tomorrow and that is the leak in the basement of the 100 pod and in the girl’s dressing room. We feel like what we are going to have to do there is to dig the two stairwells out . The water is going out behind the two stairwells. There was probably 3-4 inches of water in Coleman Bailey’s room and about that much in the girl’s dressing room. Thankfully it had a drain in it. We did address one of the air quality issues and that was in the carpentry shop. Darrell was able to fix that one. There is a second one that will be used next semester and we will have to do that too. I think the long range on the science lab we need to do exactly what Ms. Laws said we need to determine what it will cost to fix those compared to building a small five pod classroom; it might be the same and put out there in front of the 100 pod. That is the kind of things we need to look at short term but long range also.” Kathy Aldridge said “We really do try to take care of what we have. We have systems. We try to maintain everything we can as if it were our own homes. We never try to leave anything that would not be a good environment for the kids. We really try with what we got to do the best that we can do. I am proud of the fact that the kids come first. I don’t want you to ever think that we take lightly our responsibility of taking care of those situations as we can with the money we are provided. It is kindly like you can’t put a new roof on the house if you don’t have the money to pay for it and that is where we are at?” John Greene said “Faye this kindly goes back to your original question of it was never addressed but we were having these meetings all along. We didn’t want to put millions of dollars in a building that we were going to start replacing and that is where we were going with that, well not replacing but heavily renovating. As far as fixing all the things in that if we had put a band aid to it and spent 5 or 10 million dollars and then turned right around and made a new one that would have been the biggest waste of taxpayer’s money. None of us would have been in office if we had done that. So as far as addressing those that was how we were addressing a lot. By doing the long range plan and going into a phasing in of a building and paying for it as we go we were addressing all of that. We would have had very few issues because we would have been taking those out and replacing that. Again, that is where we had gone for months and months and months and planning to go that route. Instead of asking for money and giving us 2 million dollars that we were going to fix a pod we were going to tear down in a year and a half, we didn’t want to do that. Of course, you all would not want to do that and the previous board would not as well. Again with addressing those it is not like we put them under the rug and acted like they were not there because we knew they were there and that is what we were trying to do with the long range plan was to get rid of them.” Maxine Laws questioned “how much of the DPI report has been done since 2012, any of it? How many of those items have been addressed or taken care of because there was a lot in the DPI report, am I right or am I wrong?” Mr. Burleson said “Some were long term, some were short term. The issues that have been taken care of are any safety issues.” Martha Hicks questioned “Has the handicapped for the softball field, tennis court been taken care of?” Mr. Burleson said “The way we have worked that now you don’t have to have that because we have ground level access available. If you look at the softball field you will notice that we have created handicapped parking up top and designated tennis courts you can go up the backside and drive straight in there. “ Faye Lacey said “I noticed there was something about a sprinkler system was necessary. Have you addressed that?” Robert Clark said “We have not built a new building or added any structure to the high school so no ma’am. I remember reading this the other day.” Mr. Burleson said “If we add a structure then we have to update the new building codes.” Chairman Griffith said “You are saying update the building code for the old structure.” Maxine Laws said “I think one thing she is referring to is you have to have two exits for each room and you can do away with the two exits if you have a sprinkler system.” Robert Clark said “Again, there was a subcommittee that was meeting for a long term plan for that. If you decide quickly that is not what we are doing, that is what they had thought previously we might be doing then we need to change that, get on the stick, get a plan, here is what it needs to be.” John Greene said “Again, that would have been addressed in the long term plan. You wouldn’t want to put a sprinkler system in and tear it right back out.” Faye said “I realize that but we have got the school building and got the children in it and that is what we need to work on.” John Greene said “that is a good lead in to our last item which is our quarterly meeting. We have not done those in a while. We were talking about the subcommittee to keep everybody up to speed on that. I am speaking for our board for us to meet just as we are right now, for us to meet together and talk about these issues because now here we are I don’t know the last quarterly meeting we have had, maybe last winter other than budget but just to talk about these things. A lot of these things are not open to interpretation when I got back and tell the rest of the board then it is filtered through my thoughts; we are all hearing the same thing at the same time. If we do that, then we can address these things as we go. Even some of the questions you are asking now back in 2012, we are trying to remember right off the top of our heads what took place. If we could have these quarterly meetings and doing them regularly and religiously and I think it would help all of us.” Chairman Griffith said “I will go a step further than that. I think rather than a subcommittee that really has no governing power, a school board elected officials, our county board elected officials if we all met together what I would suggest we have talked a lot about the DPI in the last few minutes. I am going to repeat myself again this board is fully unanimous of absolutely going with the short term needs right now. I would ask because we have been at this since December. I don’t know if you haven’t been getting that information or what but you are getting the information now. I would suggest that a short term need; I am going to make an example of new light switches. The DPI report says we need new light switches. I would suggest that the school maintenance supervisor get up with an

electrical contractor and he says yes we can replace every switch where the DPI said we needed switches. We can replace every switch for x amount of dollars and we will start work on it tomorrow or whenever the school system or children or work on Saturdays or we can fix every problem there by this certified licensed contractor for x number of dollars. I would suggest you do that and bring us a bill, bring us a bill and say ok here is the DPI report, here are the short term needs and get up with the county manager and go with the short terms, it is listed out; not just an estimate that you and I would do. Get a licensed contractor and say right here is his estimate and he will fix it for this. Does that sound sensible? And give us a bill and then meet back and I say meet back soon.” Kathy Aldridge said “I have a problem with that because what we may see as more important she may not see as important and we need to collaborate between the two boards so that both needs are getting met and the things that we have listed rather than us making a decision and least you have input.” Chairman Griffith said “you do not want to go by the DPI report?” Maxine Laws said “Oh, I do but I would like to know, one of my big hang ups is the science lab and is that in the DPI short term or long term, where does that fall?” Chairman Griffith said “Let’s let management get up with each other and this can be worked out.” Martha Hicks said “Mr. Wiseman plainly stated in that report that you need to go ahead and get an architect and whatever needs to be done to the schools to bring it back to us.” Faye Lacey said “I think take your DPI list. We need to do everything on the list to bring everything up to standard. When you get something done, mark it off, go to the next thing; it is really simple, it doesn’t have to be complicated.” Kathy Aldridge said “We brought you a list every year what we were doing and as far as the DPI that is 4 years old and we may have other things that are pressing. There may be something else with safety that we may miss if we went down the DPI.” John Greene said “a subcommittee would be good, but we have to communicate and articulate what happens in those meetings to everybody but I think it would be insufficient if we all met and you are in a public meeting all the time, arranging schedules with everybody all the time is going to be difficult. When you get a couple from each one where we don’t have a quorum and it is not a voting board at all, it is just a recommendation board to take to our full boards and also Faye again going down the DPI that is why we need to have the quarterly meetings because we need to decide are we going to sink money into something and try to maintain it or go down the DPI list and do everything on it and then decide we are going to have to tear it out. We need to decide as a board what is priority.” Faye Lacey said “Use common sense is what I am saying, you don’t have to complicate it.” John Greene said “that is why we need to have our meetings and a subcommittee meeting so we can say what is our long term range, these things are not included in that but we need to fix these things because they are not included in the long term and we may have to fix things that are in the long term if it is a big safety issue. Again we want to be good stewards of the taxpayer’s money. I know that you all are dedicated to that. We need to decide and get those things that are important to maintain the school and then the other things that are not quite as high priority that may be on the DPI list do we need to tackle in the long range.” Chairman Griffith said “tackle in the long range and you took the words right out of my mouth. Get in the DPI report, get in those short term needs that are listed out and the other commissioners have echoed the same thing and let’s get to rocking and rolling, let’s fix the problems. We are minus one commissioner but he voted in a unanimous vote with us. I am going to read one thing from an August 26, 2012 meeting of the special subcommittee. I am referring to our now county manager that was then the finance director. This is something we have got to think about for both boards and of course it is the board of commissioners who are taxed with the duties. ‘Tim said, if we want to start next July the last thing I heard was an 8 plan cycle. Just throwing this out we would need to plan on a 5-10 cent tax increase next year to be able to do this. Let us say the whole project is 30 million dollars over 15 years that is 2 million dollars a year. That is 5 cents on the tax rate. We don’t have 2 million in our annual budget. As we are bringing in the groups everyone needs to know what we are looking at. ‘ Let us keep that in mind. Mr. Chairman, I beg you to look at this report and Mr. Burleson and Mr. Greene to get up with each other and I would ask respectfully that the two boards, we are getting into the holiday season, but the short term needs not just pull something out of the air but go with this report, go with the state DPI report where they sent engineers in here to examine the school and get us a dollar figure and then when you get the dollar figure and present to the other county commissioners then we might say time out maybe we do need to study it and go another route or absolutely we want to stay on track and are ready to write a check. We don’t know anything until you give us a bill.” John Greene said “I know you need to see dollars.” Steve Smith said “I have no problem going with DPI reports, none at all but if we are going to come to you with DPI report we are going to come to you with DPI reports for every school. I am not going to just hit on the high school. It is our responsibility to take care of every school not just the high school and it is not fair to any other school to short change them to do something on the high school so if you want to stay with the DPI and I don’t think we need to look at that date. I think we need them to come back in and look at all the schools and us sit down and then we will get in some serious discussion on what we need first. You are talking about ventilation, go in August or June to the middle school on the third floor, go on any of them. We just don’t have needs at the high school we have needs at all schools. If we are going to go that route let’s look at them all, get our priorities and I think both boards needs a say so in all of this. I am not just going to let us pick the high school and pass on all the other schools. I am just as concerned with the other schools. We need to look at all of them. It is not fair. I believe in being fair to everybody and I am not going to short change one school for another.” Chairman Griffith said “we are not asking you to, you are putting words in our mouth. We are committed to fixing the high school. If you want to get a DPI report for the other schools that may be pretty intelligent.” Kathy Aldridge said “If we have current issues that have come up we can look at a new DPI and see and then we can go down that list if we need to and see this is a current need and this is not a current need.” Steve said “we can look at the middle school, we can

look at the other schools.” Chairman Griffith said “Right now we have a report in place and I would love for you all to give us a bill and us to be able to say here it is, do we want to fund this project or do we need to look at something new, can we do this and be in accordance with state regulations. That is all I have to say about it.”

John Greene said “we do have five other schools. We always have issues at the other schools. All of those have priorities that have gone above some of those. We are trying to take all of the issues. We would bring a list before. There were several things why those have not been addressed one is the long term planning would have taken care of that and the amount of funding we had to put toward all the schools. We could not just concentrate on the high school we had to take care of all of them with the resources that we were allotted.” Kathy said “It is like the family you don’t just take care of one kid you take care of all of them because you love them.” Mr. Burleson said “Let me throw out an idea. First of all I want to complement our maintenance staff, our group does a very good job and they are the key in determining what the needs are. They are the ones that we talk to. What has to be done across the board and Steve knows that. I think everybody wants the same thing the best for all the kids in Avery County. We do have the report DPI, it is a little bit dated. I would suggest Tim, myself, Steve, maybe Tommy or someone from the planning area and maybe Darrell Pittman because he has been here for a while and maybe someone else, let’s sit down and go over that report and see if there are areas that we need to do tomorrow that are critical. Let’s do that. There are some areas that are fuzzy on that report as far as what is long term, short term and I think Steve knows the building and Darrell understands the building. If you have a couple of engineers that you employ would be helpful. Let’s in the next couple of weeks try to get together, go over the report, see what needs to be done as soon as possible. Maybe get DPI in to look at the other schools and maybe this one again but what is critical for this school let’s get it done. Get some figures on it and then decide over the course of a few months and if it is a lot of money let’s say to replace the science lab, do we want to renovate, do we want something new. We need to make sure that we get the critical areas done. Does that sound like a plan?” Chairman Griffith said “that sounds like a good plan, give us a dollar figure we can present to the public that we can renovate and have a nice building for x amount of dollars or new building. For example, we can renovate for 100 dollars or we can build a new one for 110 dollars. We can fix everything on the DPI report for 10 dollars or we can build a new one for 110 dollars; what makes the most sense that we can present to the people of Avery County.” Steve Smith said to Tim Greene “How much debt service is coming off of the schools in the next 18 months.” Tim Greene said “The Crossnore and Newland Schools just got paid off in October and it was roughly \$600,000 for both schools.” Martha Hicks said “I made a suggestion that since we sold the Banner Elk School that that money be put in a fund to help with schools.” John Greene said “ we appreciate you all in having a very spirited but respectful meeting and again like David said we all have the same goal in mind we just need to agree on how to get there. We are pleased that you are willing to continue to meet on a regular basis so we can get all of this squared away. We do appreciate your service to Avery County.” Steve Smith thanked each board member for coming. We appreciate it. We will get nowhere unless we sit down and talk.

Chairman Griffith thanked the school board for the meal and the fellow county commissioners for being at the meeting. Mr. Burleson your suggestion is very well taken. I ask Mr. Greene if he would expedite with getting up with Mr. Burleson and try to get something to report back to our board and it is hard to get 10 people together but I would suggest we meet back as soon as possible. You all get together and get the particulars and get us an actual dollar amount from a contractor and this is what you need and Mr. Smith your suggestion of going through each school. Let us go with what we know right now.

Mr. Tutterow said “Reo, are you going to handle all of the employment and contracts on this thing according to the law.” Chairman Griffith said “Yes I am.”

Maxine Laws said “So the way we stand now is we are waiting for them to get together and in those dollar figures it will tell us what it is going to cost or replace.” Mr. Burleson said “the best we can.”

Motion by Robert Clark and second by Kathy Aldridge to adjourn this meeting at 5:46 p.m. Motion unanimous.

Chairman Griffith declared that the meeting was adjourned at 5:46 p.m.

Robert Griffith, Chairman
Avery County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST: _____
Cindy Turbyfill, Clerk

