

**Cherokee County Board of Commissioners
Joint Meeting with Cherokee County Board of Education
Tri-County Community College Enloe Building Auditorium
September 16, 2024
6:00 P.M.**

Cherokee County Board of Commissioners present: Randy Phillips, Chairman; Dr. Dan Eichenbaum, Vice-Chairman; Cal Stiles, member; Jan Griggs, member; Ben Adams, member.

County Admin present: Randy Wiggins, County Manager; Candy Anderson, Chief Financial Officer; Maria Hass, Assistant County Manager/Clerk to Board; and, Darryl Brown, County Attorney.

Cherokee County Board of Education member present: Shannon Raper, Chair; Steve Coleman, Vice-Chair; Jeff Tatham, member; James Ellis, member; Jeannie Gaddis, member; Arnold Matthews, member; and Jason Murphy, member.

Cherokee County School Admin present: Dr. Keevin Woody, Superintendent; Kim Gibson, Assistant Superintendent; Stephanie Hass, Finance Officer; John Higdon, Director of Facilities; and Greg Chapman, Administrative Assistant and Board Liaison.

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Location: Tri-County Community College (TCCC), Enloe Auditorium.

Commissioner meetings are recorded by Local TV 4 and livestreamed by the Cherokee Scout Newspaper. Both media outlets post the meetings on their Facebook pages for public viewing.

Call to Order by Chairman Phillips

Invocation

Pledge

Ethics Statement

The Chairman reminded the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners of its adopted Code of Ethics.

Recognition

The Chairman recognized and shared appreciation of Dr. Donna Tipton-Rogers, Crystal Rumfelt and staff at TCCC for the use of the facilities and for handling the logistics and room set-up.

Passing of Gavel

After recognition of TCCC officials and staff, Chairman Phillips announced that he would be passing the gavel to the Vice-Chair, Dr. Dan Eichenbaum, who would be moderating the remainder of the meeting.

Opening Comments by Moderator

Dr. Dan Eichenbaum, CCBoc Vice Chair made an opening statement and shared expectations for meeting decorum and the public comment period.

Dr. Eichenbaum, prior to opening the public comment period, called upon Dr. Brian Mitchell to speak and share his views on the educational needs of Cherokee County.

Public Comment Period

The following persons spoke during the public comments period: Aurelia Stone, Joe Hogg, Paul Wilson, Levi Killian, Ronda Phillips, Michelle Peters, Leslie Ledford, John Midkiff, James Williams, Mark Kephart, Victoria Ivie, and Alan Bryant.

The public comment period closed at 6:46 p.m.

Cherokee County Board of Education Comments

The following Cherokee County Board of Education members shared their individual ideas/thoughts for future school reorganization and/or consolidation plans, and acknowledged that all students deserve the same opportunities, and agree that some form of consolidation is necessary:

Steve Coleman, Vice-Chairman; Jeff Tatham; James Ellis; Jason Murphy; Arnold Matthews; and Shannon Raper, Board of Education Chair. Board of Education member Jeannie gaddis did not speak.

Cherokee County Board of Commissioners Comments

All commissioners spoke and expressed the importance of the school board coming up with a unified plan to address the current needs, since currently there are several different ideas about what is the best plan for Cherokee County Schools going forward. Also discussed was the importance of soliciting community input before implementing any new plans.

Commissioner Stiles said there are issues in schools that need to be fixed and reminded the school board it has \$5.5 million in Article 40/42 sales tax to take care of some of those things. He suggested looking at CCS needs assessment and for members of both boards to get together and go look at the different school sites.

Commissioner Griggs expressed the importance of Cherokee County School developing a long-range plan with estimated costs, so the county can plan for funding accordingly.

Commissioner Adams shared that while the county did un-designate Article 46 sales tax that Cherokee County Schools still has ability to request Article 46 funds, and added that there is still \$2 million dollars in Article 46 sales tax funds set aside specifically for education. He also said the county has approved everything the Board of Education has asked for.

Commissioner Phillips told an audience member that there is an SRO in every school. He said that Cherokee County Schools are having a difficult time finding qualified applicants for the SRO position. He also said, contrary to what some may think, there are safety plans in place and those plans are updated plans.

Vice-Chairman Eichenbaum said that all students should have equal access and opportunities. He said it would be nice to have a school on every corner, but it isn't financially feasible. He talked about the importance of dual-enrollment courses during high school and how fortunate we are to be able to partner with Tri-County Community College for technical and vocational careers, and for high school students to have access to the Schools of Innovation and Technology. He said the Board of Education needs to come up with a plan and the Board of Commissioners come up with a way to pay for it. He suggested forming a committee to include two commissioners and the county's finance officer and two Board of Education members and its finance officer to meet and discuss ideas and then report back to the two boards.

Commissioner Eichenbaum asked Board of Education Chair, Shannon Raper to contact him and let him know who the two Board of Education members are and he will set a committee meeting date.

Adjourn

Motion made by Commissioner Stiles and seconded by Commissioner Phillips to adjourn.
Motion passed unanimously.