

Oversight Committee
Thursday, September 26, 2019
9 AM

Present: County Commissioner Chair Amy Scott Galey, County Commissioner Tim Sutton, Board of Education Chair Allison Gant, Board Trustee General Blake Williams, Board of Education Steve Van Pelt, Bryan Hagood, Dr. Bruce Benson, Dr. Algie Gatewood, Jeremy Teetor, Tom Hartman, Matthew Banko, Dr. Todd Thorpe, Misty Brown, Susan Evans, Andrea Rollins, Josh Fernandez, and Michelle Mills.

Introduction and Welcome

Alamance County Manager Bryan Hagood explained that the purpose of the Oversight Committee was to allow an opportunity for the Technical Review Committee to bring project and status updates to Board Members of all three institutions – Alamance County, Alamance-Burlington School System, and Alamance Community College. Additionally, the Oversight Committee provides a chance to review and update the Capital Plan, which affects all three. Dr. Benson and Dr. Gatewood agreed that it was a good model to implement and that it would help ensure accountability.

ABSS Project Updates – Todd Thorpe

At Cummings High School, Eastern High School, and Graham High School, architects have been hired and provided with blueprints, but no further action has been taken. Pinnacle Design has been hired for the Eastern High School project. Morrisburg Design has been hired for the Graham High School project.

To complete design services for the new high school project, the Moseley Architect Firm has been hired. Curriculum plans are underway, preliminary conceptual designs will be prepared for review at public stakeholder meetings that will soon be scheduled before the finalization of conceptual drawings. The ABSS board has approved Samet Corporation as the construction firm using the Construction Manager at Risk model, and contract negotiations are underway. The ABSS Board has approved negotiations for evaluation of land purchase at site #7. One attendee asked which middle schools will feed into the new high school. Todd Thorpe answered that the majority of the students will come from Hawfields Middle School and Graham Middle School. Commissioner Sutton asked if there would be room for additional buildings or facilities in the future at the new high school site. Todd Thorpe answered that the site is 100 acres, 96% of which is suitable for development. With the current plan, the buildings and athletic facilities will likely take up most of that space. There are concerns about crowding if another building is added later.

Todd Thorpe walked through the blueprint plans for Southern High School, which includes new classrooms, science labs, administrative suite, parking additions, outdoor cafeteria patio, and new covered walkways between buildings. The main addition will be one-story tall rather than

two-stories saving the costs of stairways and elevators and simplifies ADA compliance. The plan intends to add definition to the perimeter of the school and to steer visitors into a clear entrance, since there is currently no clear “front” to the school. From the road, the building will look like a new school. The project is currently on budget. Commissioner Sutton asked about the potential difference in roofing costs for a one-story addition vs. a two-story addition. Todd Thorpe answered that there would be a small, yet insignificant difference in roofing costs with a two-story building being slightly cheaper. Steve Van Pelt asked about the access road to the west of the campus concerning the elevation variance. Todd Thorpe answered that he expected the need to bring in fill-dirt to deal with that issue and to ensure the access road is wide enough. Dr. Benson added that the updates will not affect the operations at Southern High School, which will save money by avoiding the need to lease space to move students.

At Williams High School, the Sud Engineering Firm has been hired to begin research on building engineering and electrical capacity.

At South Mebane Elementary School, the Morrisburg Firm has been hired and is reviewing the blueprints. This will be the next project to be started after the new high school and Southern Alamance High School projects.

At Pleasant Grove Elementary School, the Morrisburg Firm is reviewing the electrical schematics and is conducting an analysis of needs to bring the building up to current code.

At Western High School, an architect has been hired and provided with blueprints, but no further action has been taken.

ACC Project Updates – Algie Gatewood

The planning process for the Biotechnology Center of Excellence project has involved several different groups with internal stakeholders meeting with the design firm and construction manager (CMR model). The Board of Trustees Building & Grounds Committee has immediate oversight of the projects. The design firm has communicated that more time should be spent on the Advanced Planning stage of the project and indicated that the original completion date of August 2021 is no longer realistic. More time invested on the front-end in advanced planning is expected to increase efficiency and quality in the construction process, but will result in a 3-6 month pushback in project completion date. Per the usual process, three candidates for the CMR role have been passed along to the State Board of Community Colleges for review. Dr. Gatewood mentioned that the highest ranked choice, Christman Company, is a large company with a national reputation and experience in various projects, including cancer centers, educational buildings, science labs, and hospitals. He also stated that Clark Nexsen, the hired architect firm, had worked on projects such as the Hunt Library at NC State University and Wake Tech’s North Campus. Dr. Gatewood noted that the Board of Trustees wants this building to be situated prominently along I-40/I-85 for maximum visibility. They would like for the

building to be a “gateway” to the campus and to draw attention of passers-by.

The same architects and CMR hired for the Center of Excellence are also hired for the parking deck project for the sake of consistency and moving the projects along together. Because there is limited space to fit these two projects together, there has been some discussion about the optimal size for each. For example, a larger parking deck means a smaller Center of Excellence. Dr. Gatewood noted that there are three options for sizing. The option that gives the Center of Excellence the smallest size is 16,000 square feet. The option that gives the Center of Excellence the largest size is 28,000 square feet. Dr. Gatewood noted that while parking is valuable, the additional training space is perhaps more valuable. The college will apply for a \$2.4 million federal economic development grant, which could provide funding for about 5,000 more square footage of building space.

While there has been no action taken on the Child Care Center project at this point, Dr. Gatewood addressed a question from Commissioner Sutton about the project. He said that the project will modernize the Child Care Center to today’s early childhood education standards. The space is currently becoming cramped, and the plans call for a 1,000-2,000 square foot expansion.

Modernization of classrooms and the library renovations project will take place much later, and no action has been taken yet.

There are plans to put out an RFP for the architect and CMR roles for the Public Safety Training Center. The ACC Board of Trustees Building & Grounds Committee will be updated and presented with a potential property for the facility.

With the growth of industry in places like Mebane, Dr. Gatewood said that this is the opportune time for this satellite campus construction project, because those industries will need a trained workforce. Therefore, this project may become a priority to begin sooner than originally thought. These satellite campuses will be placed on leased properties, but the lease terms have not yet been finalized. The State is likely to have no issues with a 20 year lease, although a longer one is preferred. The ACC Building & Grounds Committee will be updated on leasing opportunities.

Dr. Gatewood said the Student Services Building project is desperately needed, because administrative offices (financial aid, academic advising, etc.) are situated in dispersed buildings and students currently have trouble finding the services they need. These projects will require careful timing and planning for staging space so as not to disturb academic and campus operations.

Project Financing – Bryan Hagood

The county is currently living within the plan that was adopted in June, and no fiscal plans have changed. The county is currently putting aside the incremental increase to the adopted property tax for future spending on capital needs and debt service for schools. The County's fiscal condition has not changed since Davenport developed its financing plan, and the fiscal condition is not expected to change by the time the first bond issuance goes out.

Article 46 sales tax is not yet levied by Alamance County, but could go on the ballot for the next county-wide election, which is either the primary election in March 2020, or the general election in November 2020. Article 46 sales taxes are estimated to generate \$4.8 million in revenue, according to the Davenport firm. If the County would like to put the required referendum on the ballot for the primary election, the Board of Elections would need to know by early November 2019. The possible options for using Article 46 revenues are: operating the new space created by capital projects (~\$2.3 million), reducing property taxes, funding projects that were not previously funded, or increasing school security. Whatever the intended use of the funds are, the county may not manipulate the referendum language to communicate that intent, because under current law, the exact wording is determined by state statute.

There has been some discussion in the State Legislature about making Article 43 sales tax unrestricted. Currently, Article 43 sales tax revenues may only be used to fund public transportation.

Alamance County Commission Chair Amy Scott Galey asked if next year's budget would include Article 46 revenue projections (if passed by voters in the primary election and approved by the Board of Commissioners). Andrea Rollins responded that there is a delay of a few months before the revenue is transferred in by the State Department of Revenue.

Bryan Hagood shared the recommendations from consultant Kennon Briggs in support of the Construction Manager at Risk (CMR) delivery model for capital projects, due to the guarantee of a maximum price. He noted that the new high school, Southern High School, ACC parking deck, and ACC Center of Excellence projects are all utilizing the CMR model.

Closing

In closing, Bryan Hagood noted that the next Oversight Committee meetings are to be held quarterly, with the next meetings tentatively scheduled for 9 AM on the mornings of December 12 2019, February 27 2020, and June 4, 2020.

Blake Williams asked for data on the average daily population growth in Alamance County. Bryan Hagood agreed to have staff research and provide that data. He mentioned that the Piedmont Triad Regional Council and the Chamber of Commerce may have such data.