STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF AVERY  

The Avery County Board of Commissioners met in a Joint Meeting with the Avery County Board of Education on Tuesday, February 23, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. at the Avery Community Center, 661 Vale Rd., Newland, NC. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and take any action necessary regarding the Avery County High School Addition and Renovation.

Members Present:  Martha Hicks, Chair; Tim Phillips, Vice-Chair; Dennis Aldridge; Wood Hall Young, Jr.; Blake Vance

Members Absent:  None

Board of Education Members Present:  John Greene; Kathy Aldridge; Jane Bumgarner; Pat Edwards; Ruth Shirley

Others Present:  Branch & Associates; Boomerang Architects

Call To Order  
Chair Hicks called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

Kathy Aldridge led prayer.  
The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Dr. Dan Brigman, Superintendent, welcomed everyone to the meeting and stated that this meeting was to update everyone on the progress of the high school project.

Jack Hale, Branch & Associates project engineer introduced the other representatives from Branch; Greg Cook, Senior Project manager, Heather Bowman, Vice President; Dave Olsen, Superintendent and Mike Love, Superintendent.

Mr. Hale stated that the completion date for the high school on the new schedule is August 5, 2021 but that this depends on several different factors. One of the factors is the weather. We had not built any weather days into the schedule but we have built in days to the new schedule.

Another factor was the sequencing. We had the sequencing so that everything fell in place but because of some other factors one of them being the soil nailing we had to change our sequencing.

Another factor was critical path items. One of those items is the roof. We need five clear days without rain to be able to put the roof on. We should have the roof on in 45 days. We had some lumber stolen so there was a delay in some things.
Greg Cook explained the soil nailing and retaining wall that has to be taken care of before the sanitary sewer from Pod 100 is relocated and finish the science wing. We have the same issue at Pod 100 that we had with the previous soil nailing. We are looking for help to figure out how to overcome this hurdle and be able to complete the entire science wing with the entire classroom wing. If we can’t get back here to do this safely we can’t dry in the south wall of the science room. We are proposing as an option in place of that retaining wall we would like to do another round of soil nails that would be part of the wall that would allow us to do all of the infrastructure during this timeframe. That is the logical way to go about it.

Kathy Aldridge asked who should have been aware that this was going to be a problem. Mr. Cook said the condition of the soil was an unforeseen problem. There were some borings done but this was just unforeseen.

Rob Johnson stated that the contractors are responsible for construction engineering under their responsibility.

Mr. Hale stated that we don’t have insurance to design that type of things. We are not designers for that and that is why we reached out. Kathy Aldridge said when you knew that the soils were bad at the beginning would you not think that it would be bad there also. Mr. Hale stated that they thought that the whole area was bad but I was not here at the time so I can’t speak to that.

Blake Vance questioned if you knew that unsuitable soil was an issue all along why are we just hearing about it now?

Discussion regarding the soil nailing and the retaining wall and what needed to be done. Mr. Hale stated the problem is Pod 100. If Pod 100 was gone, we would not have a problem.

Blake Vance asked when was that realized that the soil was unsuitable here it only states to reason that 50 feet up the hill there was bad soil then. Mr. Hale stated that he was not here then. Mr. Vance stated that if that was known then we shouldn’t be hearing about it now and it should not be listed as a critical factor in the timing because it should have been accounted for before.

Chair Hicks stated “we had a walk through on December 10th, why were we not notified about it at that time?”

VP Heather Bowman stated that we have been talking about this issue for six to eight months