

March 9, 2020

A community meeting was held at Narrows High School at 7 p.m. on March 9th, 2020. The purpose of the meeting was to have a representative from Crabtree, Rohrbaugh and Associates share information about the facilities study process.

Dr. Arbogast welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending the community meeting. He then introduced Mr. Josh Bower, an architect from Crabtree, Rohrbaugh and Associates. Mr. Bower presented a PowerPoint presentation that outlined the process that CRA would take to conduct the facility assessment. He shared that CRA has conducted over 200 of these studies and proceeded to share the parts of the assessment. The 3 main areas of the facility assessment are facility needs, educational needs and space needs. During the facility needs portion, the buildings are evaluated for their existing conditions, code analysis, utility costs, maintenance, etc. In addition, each site will be given a facility condition index, which is a comprehensive evaluation of all major building components. During the educational needs portion, information will be gathered about the current education programs, existing use of space, desired programs, 21st century learning, etc. Representatives from CRA will meet with educational staff to gather this information. The Superintendent will work with building administrators to identify the group of educators for each school. During the space needs portion, data will be gathered on the existing enrollment, building capacity, current space needs, historical data, etc. Once all this data has been gathered and evaluated, a list of options will be developed outlining what needs to occur immediately, five years, ten years, etc. These options may include any renovations needs, additions needed, new construction or consolidation options. Additionally, cost estimates for these options will be provided as well. It is anticipated that this entire process will take approximately 5 months to present the final document to the School Board. CRA emphasized that they will continue to communicate with the community throughout this process.

Following the presentation by Mr. Bowers, members of the community asked questions and voiced their concerns about the possibility or consideration of consolidation. Community members also asked about past projects that CRA had completed and stated their concerns and asked questions about the educational specialists from CRA in regards to the educational needs of all the students. Several GCPS staff members expressed their concerns in making sure that the teachers will be able to provide their input in regards to the educational needs. A student also spoke about making sure they had input. Mr. Wilburn spoke and stated that he was one of the children who struggled in school and that's why he is on the board. He stated that he supports the teachers and the board has worked hard for pay raises and they will continue to work hard for the teachers. He stated that no decisions have been made to consolidate – he does however think that we need a middle school here. He stated that it is all about our students and what's best for them. He stated that there have been no hidden goals behind closed doors. A community member asked about whether the public would continue receiving reports from CRA and would information be posted on the school board website. Mr. Steele stated that information will be put out there when it becomes available. A past board member explained the process that occurred in 1989 and stated that they were told that consolidating the two high schools would not save money for Giles County. He explained that he feels like we are doing this process backwards, but wants us all to remember the quality of education that all of the students of Giles County will receive. A past Board of Supervisors member expressed his concern saying that while he was on the Board of Supervisors, he was not able to see an itemized copy of the school budget. He stated that we know that our schools are old, but thanks to previous board members, they decided to invest in the buildings. Community members expressed their concerns about having educational specialists without the “bias” part with CRA. Mr. Steele stated that there is no benefit to CRA as a company to provide the school system an option that they can't afford. He stated that ultimately, the BOS, has the final say as to what option to fund. A community member asked if CRA was going to look at our itemized budget to see if there was anywhere that could be saved. Mr. Steele stated that it's up to the school board members to look at that. He asked the community to give them a chance to do their jobs. He emphasized for the community to email them if they have any comments or concerns. Community members also asked how many of the 200 studies have turned into consolidation. Mr. Bowers is going to find out, but does not have them tonight. Community members also expressed the concern with paying the architect money, when the heat needs to be fixed at NEMS.

Chairman

Clerk