

Haywood County "Toeprints"

February 18, 2014

Vol. #5 Issue #3 (Subject: **June Ray, David Francis, Me against the democrats**)

www.haywoodtp.net

What's Happening?

The purpose of this newsletter is to inform Haywood County Taxpayers of what transpires at the bi-monthly County Commission Meetings. This newsletter will be written from the perspective of a casual observer, myself. Any opinions expressed will be mine.

Still been very busy...

But not busy enough to attend the Haywood County School Board meeting last night. Whenever there is an interruption in Toeprints issues, it is because I am busy. Look for the following topics soon...

- **June L. Ray**, Clerk of Superior Court,
- **Sam Hyde**, Assistant Clerk of Superior Court,
- **David Francis**, Haywood County Tax Collector,
- **FLS Solar Thermal system** at HCC,
- **Barbara Parker**, President, HCC
- **A whole bunch of lawyers.**
- **Common Core**

Haywood County Board of Education meeting, 2/17/2014.

There were two controversial items on the agenda:

- 15 - Resolution to participate in NCSBA (North Carolina School Boards Association) School Voucher's lawsuit – Chuck Francis,
- 18 - Request to access SBE Waivers – Ron Moss

Resolution to participate in NCSBA School Voucher's lawsuit.

I had been asking questions for information relating to the School Voucher's lawsuit from Chuck Francis, Chair of the School Board, and had evidently rattled someone's cage, because a call was made to the democrat party to have a bunch of people show up at this meeting to support the board. It was a full house. Fortunately, an SRO (School Resource Officer - Haywood County Sheriff's Deputy Eddie New) was present at the meeting. There were four (4) people who had something to offer during the public comment period, of which one was my comment. My timing was a little off, and was cut off at three (3) minutes, so I am printing my entire public comment in this newsletter.

Public Comment, February 17, 2014

I'm going to address your Item 15 on your agenda today - "Resolution to participate in NCSBA School Voucher's lawsuit."

Before I do that, I'll read a quote from Joe Haas, Executive Director of the North Carolina Christian School Association: "At the end of the day, parents have the ultimate responsibility concerning the education of their children – not the state."

This is what I have learned about the funding of this lawsuit-

- The NC Schools Boards Association initiated this litigation and wants School Boards to join in, 50 out of 116 last count.
- Litigation funding is from a "Legal Assistance Fund", funded by membership from each local school board.
- Haywood County paid approximately \$18,000 in dues, again coming from taxpayer dollars, of which \$800 went to this "Legal Assistance Fund".
- This litigation is funded by taxpayer dollars.

Ed Dunlap, Executive Director of the NC School Boards Association, dated 2/6/2014, and said: " If your local board would like to join the litigation as a plaintiff, we need to know no later than 10 a.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 12."

When asked why this item was still on the agenda after this date, Chuck Francis said "The Agenda Item 15 will remain on the agenda so the board can decide any action or no action."

Have you looked at the Haywood County Report Cards lately, on <http://www.ncreportcards.org> ?

It shows the percentage of Students Scores At or Above Grade Level in English and Math for each school. There are 9 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, 3 high schools, and something called Haywood Early School.

I examined the math grades, as my background is engineering and I have a solid math background. These were the average math scores for these categories.

Remember, these score are students at or above grade level in math.

Elementary	62.4%
Middle School	37.7%
High School	12.3%
Haywood Early	54.5%

Central High was the lowest, coming in at 5.6% at or above grade level.

Is everyone getting this?

If I had a child at one of these high schools, I would want the option to do something about it. If I qualified for a voucher assistance grant, I would want to look into that.

I resent that you as a board are even considering using taxpayer funds to vote on a Resolution to participate in NCSBA School Voucher's lawsuit.

[**Editors Note:** It was at this point that my three (3) minute time period had expired.]

Notice that I have not placed any blame on these report card scores. I am not blaming

- teachers
- the school superintendent
- the school board
- the county commissioners

or anyone else.

I believe this is a result of total emersion into something called **Common Core**, and will need to be addressed at a North Carolina General Assembly level. I am sure I will be discussing this with you in the future.

I appreciate the time you have allowed for me to express my opinion.

The board went on to pass this resolution on a straight party line vote, 7 democrats to 1 Republican, even though the vote did not mean anything.

I have posted the actual lawsuit, 13CV16484 on my website, www.haywoodtp.net. It is interesting to read, as the basis for the lawsuit is the apparent violation of the State Constitution. To me, it is hypocritical of democrats to use the State Constitution as a shield in this case when our county commissioners use it as a door mat when they hold county commission meetings -
[re: <http://haywoodtp.net/pubTP/T100317b.pdf>].

Article V

Article V, Section 4 of the **Constitution of the State of North Carolina** states:

“Limitations upon the increase of local government debt.

(2) Authorized purposes; two-thirds limitation. **The General Assembly shall have no power to authorize any county, city or town, special district, or other unit of local government to contract debts secured by a pledge of its faith and credit unless approved by a majority of the qualified voters of the unit who vote thereon, ...”**

Let me interpret this for you -

It was the intention of the founders that no county could incur debt unless voted on and approved by a majority of the voters of the county.

Request to access SBE Waivers

The second issue was a complete surprise to me, as I did not understand what it meant as it was written on the agenda.

It had been brought to my attention while attending a Common Core Seminar in Asheville last month that there is such a thing as a third grade reading test. If third graders do not pass this test, they have to go to summer school or repeat

the grade. It is my understanding that 2/3rd’s of Haywood County third graders flunked this test. This ought to be some concern to parents with third graders.

It was unclear if Haywood County had the resources to handle this number of third graders in summer school.

But the State comes to the rescue, which is what Item 18 was all about. The state offered 16 different “waivers” or level of standards, that if a student was at any of these level of standards, they could pencil whip that student right out of summer school. Ron Moss indicated the School System had selected two (2) of these standards and were in the process of pencil whipping students. Bill Nolte added additional explanation to help Ron Moss out. A board member asked “why not apply any of the 16 waivers?” It would take too much resources to learn all these different waivers, they indicated.

So I am sure that after this process is complete, there will be minimal angry parents coming to these board meetings.

One really has to ask the questions (which no one asked) -

- Why did this happen in the first place?
- What test were they using?

We will be getting into a really nasty area shortly, called Common Core.

No one that I have spoken to really knows much about Common Core.

I have posted some information about questions relating to Common Core, and the actual Common Core Math and Language Standards, on www.haywoodtp.net.

Outstanding County Employees.

Amie Owens resigned from the position of Executive Assistant and Clerk for the position of Town Clerk in the City of Waynesville. Consequently, since she is no longer a county employee, her name has been removed from this list.

- Sherrie Rogers Register of Deeds
- Judy Hickman Assistant Tax Assessor
- Greg Christopher Haywood County Sheriff
- Anne Garrett Superintendent of HC Schools

Legend: If any name is in **bold**, it can’t be a good thing.

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