

SCHOOL BOARD NOTES \$2.4M IN CAPITAL NEEDS

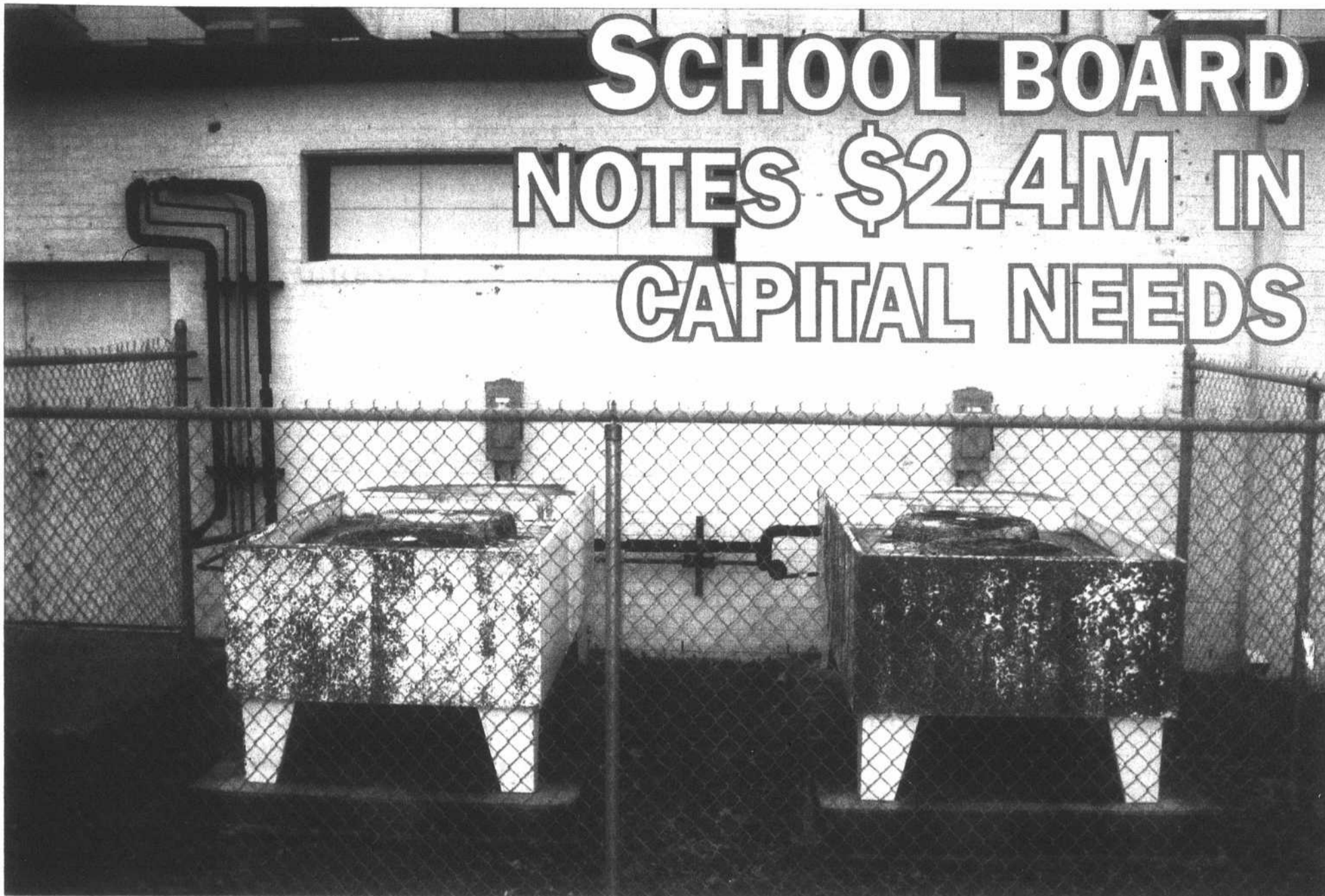


PHOTO COURTESY EDENTON-CHOWAN SCHOOLS

These split system units that are supposed to heat and cool the gym dressing rooms at Chowan Middle School have not worked in 10 years.

Staff: Old heating systems sap energy efficiency

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writer

Outdated heating and cooling systems in the county's schools form the bulk of \$2.4-million in identified capital needs discussed during the school board's Jan. 26 annual retreat.

During a presentation at the retreat by Superintendent Rob Jackson and Maintenance Director Brad Bass, board members were told that at least 24 units at John A. Holmes High School and 15 units at Chowan Middle School have exceeded their

life expectancy by eight years based on the manufacturers' specifications.

Bass said that has resulted in the units not being as energy efficient as newer systems and costing more to operate and repair.

"And what we would have on our hands is a big mess, if they go out," he said.

Jackson was very clear with the board that the re-



JACKSON

"These figures reflect needs, not wants."

Rob Jackson

Superintendent,
Edenton-Chowan
County Schools

port on facility needs was focused on things that will require action to address.

"These figures reflect needs, not wants," Jackson said.

Board of Commissioners Chairman Jeff Smith said this week that the commissioners would consider the

school board's request as part of the 2015-2016 county budget process.

"As with any other thing, we will look at the school board's request and do what we can," Smith said.

The capital needs report talks about leaking boilers and aging radiators that are a cause for concern, Bass said. And the needs don't stop there.

"We currently have a DOS-based Unity automation system (at John A. Holmes) that was installed in 1989," Bass said during a PowerPoint presentation. "Our IT department

specialist Bill Linton has rebuilt the power supplies for the CPU's along with replacing boards and modules that he had on hand. All spare parts that were on hand have been exhausted. This system is no longer supported by the manufacturer and parts are no longer available."

According to the report the dressing rooms for the Chowan Middle School gym have split-system heating units that have not worked in a decade. And Jackson said that at Holmes, shower doors have been bolted

shut because the showers don't work.

"That's something we need to take care of," he said. "Certainly our students deserve better."

A critical step in dealing with the situation, said board member Glorious Elliott, is making parents and the community at large aware of the conditions in the county's aging schools. Jackson said he would be willing to do a presentation at each of the four schools as well as taking it to local civic groups.

News Editor Reggie Ponder contributed to this report.

School officials seek bigger role in funding decisions

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writer

Edenton-Chowan Schools officials are seeking a more active role in deciding local funding for school needs.

The Chowan County Board of Commissioners is responsible for funding school facilities and has

the sole taxing authority for providing local funds for school needs.

But school board member Gene Jordan said during the board's annual retreat last week that he felt the school board needed to be able to do more than just present the information to the county commissioners at one of their upcoming

meetings and then leave as if they were a committee, not a board with equal standing.

Jordan suggested that instead the commissioners be asked to hold meetings with the school board with both boards playing an equal role. The commissioners should help set the agenda and active, produc-

tive discussion between the two boards that gets results should be a priority, Jordan said.

Board of Commissioners Chairman Jeff Smith said this week that the county commissioners understand the school board's role.

"The school board is the school board," Smith said. "They are elected officials

just like we are."

The boards in the past have held joint meetings, and there have been meetings between a county commissioners' liaison and a school board liaison, Smith said.

The issue arose at the school board's retreat

See DECISIONS, 3A

"This is not pointing fingers at anybody. But we must address these needs now or we could have a crisis."

John Guard

School board chairman

Summer ground breaking eyed for new police station

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writer

Town officials hope to break ground on a new police station this summer.

The town council got its first look during its Jan. 26 work session at the proposed layout for the new Edenton Police Department, slated for a site along Oakum and

Albemarle streets.

The town is in the process of acquiring the property. The projected budget for the new police station is \$2 million.

The layout was part of a presentation by Ann Collier and Tim Oakley from Rocky Mount-based Oakley Collier Architects.

Collier began by noting that while the new space will be somewhat smaller than the old, nothing of value will have been lost. For example, the new lobby will be just 252 square feet rather than the 500 square feet the police

See NEW STATION, 3A

Woman's suit against dealership advances

■ Defense's motion for dismissal denied by judge

BY REGGIE PONDER
Editor

ELIZABETH CITY — A lawsuit against an Elizabeth City auto dealership by a Chowan County woman whose infant son died

in the wake of last April's tornadoes will be allowed to move forward, a Superior Court judge ruled Monday.

At a hearing in Pasquotank County Superior Court, Judge Quentin Sumner denied attorney Kevin Rust's motion on behalf of Alliance Nissan to dismiss Ashley Bain's claims of intrusion

upon peace and solitude, unfair and deceptive trade practices, and intentional infliction of emotional distress.

The lawsuit stems from a radio spot aired frequently on stations in the region following the April 25, 2014 tornadoes in

See LAWSUIT, 2A

Board mulls moratorium on turbines

BY REGGIE PONDER
Editor

The Chowan County Planning Board is scheduled to meet Feb. 17 at 7 p.m. in the Public Safety Center to hear public comment

on a proposed moratorium on the issuance of zoning permits for the development of wind energy facilities in Chowan County.

The meeting that had been scheduled for Feb. 3 was cancelled.

Planning Board Chairman Lou Surratt said last week that the board has discussed a 90-day moratorium on wind turbine permit applications.

See TURBINES, 2A



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