

School Merger Study Approved

By KATHY HARRELSON
Telegram Staff Writer

TARBORO — Edgecombe County Commissioners have approved the formation of a committee to collect facts and figures on the school merger issue.

Commissioner John Williams said he thought the formation of such a committee would be "just spinning wheels," but commissioner J. Vines Cobb suggested the formation because "we need more facts."

Cobb said the committee would not be a "decision-making committee," but one that will gather information that will be helpful in an overall solution to the merger controversy.

The committee, when formed, will have 11 members, consisting of county manager Ellis Williford, board chairman Tom Bardin, Edgecombe County School superintendent Lee Hall, Tarboro City School superintendent Phillip Beaman, Rocky Mount City School superintendent Max Abbott and two members from each system's school board. The school boards will have the responsibility of appointing

their members to the committee.

Action to form the committee came late in the day, but the issue was brought up first thing at the beginning of the meeting by Tarboro Town Councilman Steve Hoard.

Hoard asked the board of commissioners to consider doing a fact-finding study. Hoard said the issue of merger is "paramount" in Rocky Mount and that the leadership in Rocky Mount and Nash County is working diligently for a solution. Hoard said he did not want Edgecombe County left behind.

Hoard said there have been many studies in the past and many efforts, but the results do not show that the groups have been working together to solve the problems.

Hoard said he did not want Nash County and Rocky Mount to be getting information about merger when "Edgecombe County isn't getting the same."

Hoard said the economic growth of Rocky Mount is "dependent" on the economic growth of Tarboro and the Rocky Mount side of Edgecombe

County. Hoard said it comes down to deciding what is best for the children and the area and having "the guts to do what is best."

"Somebody has got to change the direction of growth in Edgecombe County," said Hoard, who added that someone is "already doing it in Nash."

Hoard said the leadership in Rocky Mount, which is moving to get the merger controversy settled, "is a different breed of people. I know most of them." Hoard encouraged the commissioners to take their own initiative in merger leadership. He said Nash County is going to do "what is best for Nash County people."

If the merger situation is solved, Hoard said, it will be "the greatest economic stimulation that Edgecombe County can get." If it is not solved, he said, it will be taken "through the courts."

The Edgecombe Board of Commissioners has opened itself to any suggestions and proposals on the merger situation, except for the proposal that "Rocky Mount City School Administrative unit be divided along the Nash-Edgecombe County line and the resulting portions be merged into the county in which each is geographically located." They have opposed this proposal, which has been referred to as county-line merger.

Edgecombe County commissioners have urged all parties "to cooperate in conscientious efforts to find a better solution to the problems" confronting the area in relation to school merger."

County commissioners met with members from the Rocky Mount City, Tarboro City and Edgecombe County school boards on March 14. Although no action was taken at the meeting, Cobb said he has had several comments from members about the good of the meeting.

Call Made For RM Social Services Office

By KATHY HARRELSON
Telegram Staff Writer

TARBORO — Edgecombe County children could go hungry and Edgecombe County elderly, needy and disabled are suffering because there is not a branch office of the Edgecombe County Department of Social Services in the Rocky Mount area, according to

the Tarboro office.

"We need it bad," said Greene, stating that they "need it so bad" that they are willing to picket or have sit-ins "to get it."

Dickens said she would be waiting for the commissioners to act on the branch office. "Don't forget to help those who cannot help themselves," she said.

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