

To Sell or Not to Sell--Tabled to Today

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To paraphrase Shakespeare; "To sell now, or not to sell now: that is the question". A healthy debate ranged among the three commissioners in attendance at yesterday's monthly meeting as to whether it's better for the county to sell the old Watauga High School property now or to wait until later. The Commissioners have received two bids for the property, both of which are below what is believed to be a fair price. The topic was put on the agenda for the purpose of discussing the possibility of making a counter offer to the interested parties. Mr. Gable began the discussion by stating he believed the information from the appraisal should be made public as soon as they had opportunity to discuss it with the county attorney. He said the "people have a right to know" and made a motion to release it after attorney review. The motion died for lack of a second. Commissioners Gable and Miller are proponents of selling now, if the price is right. They think the benefits to the county of the taxes the property will bring and jobs the project will create offset the potential increase in income from the property later on. Commissioner Deal believes its better to wait until the economy recovers so the county can get more value from the property instead of selling it during a depressed economy when values are at their lowest. He stated that the old high school property is the most valuable asset the county has and he wanted to get the greatest value possible from it which means waiting till they can get a price closer to the value of the property during good economic times. After a good deal of debate and even the suggestion by Commission Chair, Nathan Miller, of making a counter offer of twenty million dollars, it was decided to defer the issue till today's work session so the two absent commissioners could have input on this important decision.