

April 7, 2014

A regular meeting of the Bladen County Board of Commissioners was held at 6:30 pm on Monday, April 7, 2014 in the Commissioners Meeting Room of the Bladen County Courthouse.

The following members were present:

- James G. "Jimmie" Smith, Chairman
- Mark Gillespie, Vice Chairperson
- Charles Ray Peterson
- Delilah Blanks
- Billy Ray Pait
- Russell Priest
- Daniel Dowless
- G. Michael Cogdell
- Wayne Edge

Attorney: Leslie Johnson, Johnson Law Firm

ITEM 1. Chairman Smith called the meeting to order. Reverend Larry Hayes, Good News Baptist Church, Bladenboro, NC provided the Invocation. County Manager Gregory J. Martin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ITEM 2. Consent Items:
Upon a motion by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Dowless the Board approved the following Consent Items:

- A. Agenda.
- B. Minutes of Regular Meeting on March 17, 2014.
- C. Minutes of Special Meeting on March 24, 2014.
- D. Budget Amendments as follows:

Sheriff

<i>Expenditures</i>		<i>Debit</i>	<i>Credit</i>
105100.741	Capital Outlay-Vehicles	8,792.30	
<i>Revenues</i>			
103190.011	Insurance Claims	8,792.30	

To provide funds to replace 2011 Crown Victoria that was involved in a collision.

Soil Conservation

<i>Expenditures</i>		<i>Debit</i>	<i>Credit</i>
106400.499.014	Miscellaneous Expense - District	90.00	
<i>Revenues</i>			
103470.001	Soil Conservation - Ad Sales	90.00	

Funds deposited into District funds and are payable to Area VII NCASWCD.

Division on Aging

<i>Expenditures</i>		<i>Debit</i>	<i>Credit</i>
106200.493	Refunds	46,297.18	
<i>Revenues</i>			
103190.050	Fund Balance Appropriated	46,297.18	

NCDOT allocated additional funds for 2013 that were unspent.

Parks and Recreation

<i>Expenditures</i>		<i>Debit</i>	<i>Credit</i>
106600.499	Miscellaneous Recreation	2,000.00	
106600.803	Insurance	800.00	
106600.350	M/R - Building & Grounds	2,000.00	
<i>Revenues</i>			
103660.010	Recreation Fees	4,000.00	
103190.010	Miscellaneous Revenue	800.00	

To pay insurance and purchase maintenance supplies for spring and summer programs.

JCPC - Administration

<i>Expenditures</i>		<i>Debit</i>	<i>Credit</i>
106806.499	Miscellaneous Expense		1,800.00
<i>Revenues</i>			
103230.023	JCPC-Administration		1,800.00

Reduction in Administration to Juvenile Services.

Administration

<i>Expenditures</i>		<i>Debit</i>	<i>Credit</i>
106900.903	To DSS		1,781.00
<i>Revenues</i>			
103190.050	Fund Balance Appropriated		1,781.00

Additional funding received in LIEAP Administration expenses.

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Extension - Grant

<i>Expenditures</i>		<i>Debit</i>	<i>Credit</i>
106805.120	Salaries	275.00	
106805.122	Bonus	3.78	
106805.121	Longevity	10.22	
106805.181	FICA	22.26	
106805.182	Retirement	19.92	
106805.800	Unemployment Insurance	9.72	
106805.185	Retiree Health Insurance	14.56	
106805.183	Group Insurance	56.26	
106805.451	Workers Compensation	7.28	
106805.721.002	RS Fixed Charges		1,092.00
106805.200.013	LS Computer Supplies	400.00	
106805.200.017	TC Computer Supplies	800.00	
106805.200.009	TC Supplies & Materials	673.00	
106805.200.010	LS Supplies & Materials	600.00	
<i>Revenues</i>			
103230.022	JCPC-Teen Court 4H Juvenile	1,800.00	

Line items adjusted to correspond with approved FY 13-14 JCPC Grant.

Department of Social Services

<i>Expenditures</i>		<i>Debit</i>	<i>Credit</i>
146100.688	Crisis Intervention	8,925.00	
<i>Revenues</i>			
143531.220	Crisis Intervention	8,925.00	

Reallocated CIP Funds. Funding Authorization #4.

Department of Social Services

<i>Expenditures</i>		<i>Debit</i>	<i>Credit</i>
146100.689	Energy Neighbor Fund	446.00	
<i>Revenues</i>			
143531.031	Energy Neighbor Fund	446.00	

Increased funding – Authorization #13.

Department of Social Services

<i>Expenditures</i>		<i>Debit</i>	<i>Credit</i>
146100.706	Low Income Home Energy Assistance (LIEAP)	13,407.00	
<i>Revenues</i>			
143531.033	Low Income Home Energy Assistance (LIEAP)	13,407.00	

Additional federal funding.

E. County Attorney Invoices:

Date	Department	Amount
3/24/14	Sheriff's Office	\$ 250.00
4/1/14	Apr-14 Retainer	\$ 300.00
4/2/14	Sheriff's Office	\$ 765.00
4/3/14	Administration	\$ 565.00
4/3/14	Solid Waste	\$ 515.00
	Total	\$ 2,395.00

- F. Tax Releases and Refunds No. 3-14, incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.
- G. Baltimore Center's Request to Waive Solid Waste Fees and Charges for the disposal of shingles.
- H. The following Proclamation Declaring April 2014 as National County Government Month:



ITEM 3. Matters of Interest to Commissioners:

There were no matters of interest brought to the floor by the Board.

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ITEM 4. Individuals/Delegations Wishing to Address Commissioners:

A. Reverend Bruce Cannon of The Bladen Baptist Association was recognized by Chairman Smith. Mr. Cannon invited Reverend G. C. Bryan to join him to address the Board. Mr. Cannon submitted numerous petitions signed by 285 Bladen County citizens voicing their opposition of the Beer and Wine Referendum, which will be on the ballot during the May 6 primary election. Mr. Cannon intended to ask the Board to reconsider including the referendum on the ballot, but understands that the request is late, as absentee ballots have already been requested and mailed out.

Currently, there are 250-275 churches in Bladen County, representing various denominations. Mr. Cannon stated that the Beer and Wine Referendum has brought denominations and races together, like no other issue he has witnessed in the past twenty-five years. He also asked the Board for its help in quieting some of the discussions and divisive comments.

Mr. Cannon stated that county taxpayers deserved to know the truth about potential revenue which would be generated by countywide beer and wine sales. He has found that very little revenue is generated from the sale of alcohol within the Bladen municipalities who have already voted to allow beer and wine sales. He also stated that he had spoken with an individual who has worked in an Economic Development role who shared with Mr. Cannon that beer and wine sales within a county has little to no impact in attracting new industry to an area.

Reverend G. C. Bryan asked that Bladen County citizens “vote nay in May” to follow up on Mr. Cannon’s presentation.

Chairman Smith stated that Mr. Cannon’s comments are accepted and would be duly noted in the minutes. He thanked Mr. Cannon for his invaluable work in the county.

B. Mr. E. W. Bowen of East Arcadia wished to address the Board concerning a large beaver population by building dams that is creating many flooding issues in his immediate area. Ms. Lillian Graham from East Arcadia joined Mr. Bowen to address the Board of the community’s concerns. Ms. Graham submitted petitions signed by 312 Bladen County citizens in support of requesting help from the County. Not only are the beavers creating flooding, but the flooding is creating mosquito issues, septic tank problems and crop drowning. County Manager Greg Martin stated that Greg Lee of the USDA has been in the East Arcadia area and discussed the beaver problems with Mr. Bowen, and submitted a proposal to eradicate problem beavers and dams for a fee of \$200 to remove the beavers and \$125 to destroy the dam with explosives. Mr. Lee has received permission from the landowner where the dam is located to destroy the dam. However, Mr. Bowen is disturbed to have to pay for the service.

During discussion, Commissioner Dowless stated that the State of North Carolina introduced beavers into Bladen County in the 1930’s and he was of the opinion that the State should be involved in a solution.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Cogdell, the Board unanimously approved to schedule a meeting including Chairman Jimmie Smith, County Manager Greg Martin, Greg Lee of the USDA and others to consider viable options to alleviate the beaver problem.

C. Megan Bennett, Codi Pait and Madison McLamb, representing the West Bladen High School Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) club, along with their teacher/sponsors Debra Kinlaw and Gail Marsh, presented a brief overview of their award of a state level Silver medal in a Sports and Nutrition Event which presented the opportunity to participate in the National FCCLA Conference in San Antonio, TX in July. Upon a motion by Commissioner Peterson, and a second provided by Commissioner Priest, the Board unanimously approved a \$1,000 appropriation to assist with travel expenses to the National FCCLA Conference in July.

ITEM 5. Bladen County Board of Education: (Dr. Robert Taylor, Superintendent):

A. Dr. Taylor presented an Executive Summary of the 21st Century Facilities Planning Committee related to its findings. The committee is comprised of various community members, several County Commissioners, representatives

of the County Board of Education and representatives of School administration.

Dr. Taylor provided a brief overview of how the Committee was divided into several sub-committees to more closely review Census Data, Finance, School Programs and Marketing. The final recommendation was for the current debt to be retired before any other new construction would be considered. Bond debt for construction of East and West Bladen High School facilities is scheduled to be satisfied in 2021. The committee found that there is not enough tax base to support the cost of new school facilities. Enrollment levels are expected to remain static, with a possible slight decline.

Dr. Taylor stated that there are currently thirteen schools throughout the county but that he thought that the county could manage with eight. However, support for reducing the number of school facilities in the county will not be an easily supported plan, because it would mean that communities would likely lose their neighborhood schools.

Commissioner Cogdell asked Dr. Taylor if a third-party consultant may need to be hired to review the school facilities, financial status and student enrollment, and to generate a feasibility study for a more concise plan of action.

Commissioner Blanks stated that it appeared that the school in East Arcadia was being re-roofed. She questioned the decision to spend that much money on a facility that is in "intolerable" condition. Dr. Taylor stated that it was necessary in order to maintain the facility for students, teachers and staff.

Commissioner Peterson stated that he opposed Commissioner Cogdell's position to potentially hire a consultant. Commissioner Peterson also stated that anyone who did not vote for the quarter cent sales tax did not care for children. The quarter cent sales tax, on the May 6th ballot, if passed, would fund facility renovations and other capital projects related to school facilities.

ITEM 6. Planning Department: (Greg Elkins, Director)

A. Greg Elkins provided an update related to a Rezoning request for which a Public Hearing was held on March 17, 2014. At that time, the Board voted to table the request until a future meeting. Mr. Elkins restated the Planning Board's rezoning recommendation regarding a 4.0 acre tract of land (PIN: 1332-00-67-3170), located on US 701 North, across from Merritt's Pottery, between Elizabethtown and White Lake. The Planning Board met on February 18, 2014 and made a favorable recommendation to the Board of Commissioners to rezone the subject property from Residential/Agricultural to Commercial. He stated that the current landowner wished to have the property rezoned in order to create a more marketable and desirable property.

Mr. Elkins had spoken with Mr. Jeff Futrell, an adjacent landowner who previously had questioned the rezoning request and stated his concerns at the Public Hearing. Mr. Elkins stated that Mr. Futrell had an opportunity to speak with the current landowner and the business owner who has submitted a deposit for the subject property. Mr. Futrell informed Mr. Elkins that he was satisfied and would have no issue with the property being rezoned.

Commissioner Wayne Edge also stated that he, too, had spoken with Mr. Futrell earlier and Mr. Futrell had shared the same sentiments to Commissioner Edge.

Mr. Merritt and the owner of G and E Golf Carts were both present and would be glad to address any other concerns that may arise.

Mr. Elkins indicated that the approval of this request as presented will signify the Board of Commissioners' recognition that this request is consistent with the adopted 1999-2010 Bladen County Land Use Plan, the request is reasonable, and the rezoning request is in the public interest.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Priest, seconded by Commissioner Edge, the Board unanimously approved the rezoning request of the subject property (PIN: 1332-00-67-3170) from Residential/Agricultural to Commercial.

ITEM 7. Revenue Department: (Chris Ellis, Tax Assessor)

A. Mr. Ellis provided a brief overview regarding five citizens who would like to have an opportunity to address the Board of Equalization and Review, including two individuals regarding the valuation of their property and three citizens would be heard regarding the release of interest and penalty charges.

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Per North Carolina General Statute 105.322(e), “the board of equalization and review shall hold its first meeting no earlier than the first Monday in April and no later than the first Monday in May”.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Dowless, the Board unanimously approved scheduling an Equalization and Review Board meeting on Monday, April 22, 2014 at 5:30pm.

ITEM 8. Parks and Recreation: (Grant Pait, Director)

A. Mr. Pait provided an update regarding PARTF Grant projects underway. Bids have been received from various contractors for resurfacing tennis courts, new playgrounds, fences for ball fields, paving walking trails and paving of the park entrance road and parking lot. Mr. Pait also shared bids for each of the projects underway. One project, a multipurpose building, is currently on hold as bids received far exceeded estimates. This project will be reviewed for cost cutting measures.

B. Mr. Pait presented information and a request to the Board for approval of an indoor batting facility to be located in the former Armory in Bladenboro. Interest has been expressed by Bladen County citizens for additional indoor facilities for sports training. This project meets the criteria of Bladen County’s Master plan, which emphasizes more indoor recreational opportunities and meets one of the Goals recently identified by the Board, which includes providing services in other communities in the county.

Mr. Pait presented an approved Proposal for the use of the former Bladenboro Amory property, signed by Bladenboro Mayor Rufus Duckworth, who was in attendance should there be questions from the Board. The Proposal states that the Town of Bladenboro would be responsible for building maintenance, including annual inspection of the boiler, as well as for major structural repairs and building repairs such as electrical, roofing and plumbing. The Bladen County Parks and Recreation Department will pay for all utilities (electricity, gas and water) each month to the Town of Bladenboro and will be responsible for damages caused by the operation of the facility, as well as keeping the facility clean, maintaining the interior and accepting responsibility of lawn and landscaping upkeep. Each party will also maintain liability insurance listing each other as “additionally insured” during the life of the project.

Commissioner Blanks requested Mr. Pait to consider a public facility in East Arcadia for upcoming projects for Parks and Recreation Department, to which Mr. Pait assured Commissioner Blanks he would explore opportunities.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Gillespie, the Board unanimously approved the purchase and installation of the indoor batting cages and equipment in the former Bladenboro Armory facility for a total of \$13,000.

ITEM 9. Health and Human Services: (Cris Harrelson, Director)

A. Mr. Harrelson presented the following logos for consideration to represent the consolidated Health and Human Services Agency. Upon a motion by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Gillespie, the Board unanimously approved the logos as presented.



B. Mr. Harrelson presented a Consolidated Agreement for the Bladen County Health Department and the State of North Carolina. This Agreement outlines the duties and responsibilities of both the County and the State for providing services to the citizens of Bladen County. Upon a motion by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Edge, the Board unanimously approved the Consolidated Agreement as presented.

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- C. Mr. Harrelson was prepared to share and discuss with the Board the recently released 2014 County Health Rankings by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Bladen County is ranked #91 out of 100 counties, which is an increase of 7 places from 2013 data. However, due to the many agenda items already addressed and more to address, Mr. Harrelson asked if the Board would prefer to postpone the discussion to a future meeting. Upon a motion by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Dowless, the Board unanimously approved postponing the topic to a future meeting.

ITEM 10. Emergency Services: (Bradley Kinlaw):

- A. Mr. Kinlaw presented information and a request to the Board to schedule a Public Hearing on Monday, May 12, 2014 at 6:30pm to receive comments regarding a proposed Rowan Fire District. Upon a motion by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Dowless, the Board scheduled a Public Hearing for Monday, May 12, 2014 at 6:30pm.
- B. Mr. Kinlaw provided a brief overview of the updated First Responder Plan, which has been reviewed and accepted by the Medical Director and the Bladen Community College staff. This plan addresses and allows for the early intervention of trained personnel at the scene of an incident to enhance the chances of life saving actions to take place, before the arrival of EMS units at the scene. Upon a motion by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Edge, the Board unanimously approved the First Responder Program as presented.
- C. Mr. Kinlaw updated the Board regarding a plan to provide an EMS unit in the eastern part of the county around the clock. There are still ongoing discussions with Riegelwood rescue and fire management to have an understanding of mutual aid should there be a need. Commissioner Blanks thanked Mr. Kinlaw for what he has done and his ongoing efforts to supply emergency assistance to citizens in the eastern part of the County.

Mr. Kinlaw presented a request to reclassify one of five Intermediate level EMT positions to a Paramedic position which will aid in covering the eastern part of the county. Upon a motion by Commissioner Cogdell, seconded by Commissioner Blanks, the Board unanimously approved the reclassification of one (1) Intermediate level EMT position to a Paramedic position.

ITEM 11. Sheriff's Office: (Captain Jeff Singletary)

- A. Captain Singletary presented State of North Carolina Lease Agreements related to a telecommunications tower to be located on Bivens Bridge Road. This telecommunications tower will aid the Public Safety community in the eastern portion of the county and will be used by the VIPER system. County Attorney Leslie Johnson reviewed the agreements and considered this partnership with the State of North Carolina to be mutually beneficial. Upon a motion by Commissioner Gillespie, seconded by Commissioner Cogdell, the Board unanimously approved the State of North Carolina Lease Agreements.

ITEM 12. Advisory Board Appointments for Consideration at the April 22 Meeting:

- A. Bladenboro Rural Fire District Committee (3)
B. Keep Bladen Beautiful (2)

ITEM 13. County Manager: Greg Martin

- A. Mr. Martin presented a proposed Tuition Assistance Policy for consideration. This policy was presented for review and discussion at a previous meeting. Upon a motion by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Pait, the Board unanimously approved the Tuition Assistance Policy as presented.
- B. Mr. Martin presented a proposed Facilities Use Request Form for information and feedback. A final draft will be presented at an upcoming meeting for approval.
- C. Mr. Martin presented a draft Funding Policy Regarding Non-Profit Organizations. This was offered for information and feedback. It will be presented for consideration at a future meeting.

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- D. Mr. Martin provided a brief overview related to a proposed Summer Internship proposal which was presented for information and feedback. A final draft will be presented at an upcoming meeting for consideration.
- E. An update related to a proposed Lock and Dam #2 Rock Arch Ramp project was presented by Mr. Martin. The Board had approved to be the lead applicant for a similar grant application at a special meeting in July 2013.
- F. Mr. Martin reviewed the calendars for April and May, 2014.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Gillespie, seconded by Commissioner Dowless, the meeting was adjourned at 8:12pm.

James G. Smith, Chairman
Bladen County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Maria C. Edwards, Clerk to the Board