

May 31, 2016

The Bladen County Board of Commissioners held a Special Meeting regarding Budget at 9:00 am on Tuesday, May 31, 2016 in the Commissioners Meeting Room of the Bladen County Courthouse.

The following members were present:

Russell Priest, Chairman

Arthur Bullock

Charles R. Peterson

Billy Ray Pait (arrived at 9:15am)

Daniel Dowless

Dr. Delilah Blanks

G. Michael Cogdell

James G. "Jimmie" Smith

Excused: Wayne Edge

Chairman Priest called the meeting to order.

An invocation was provided by Reverend Larry Hayes of Good News Baptist Church. County Manager Greg Martin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ITEM 1. Home Health Program: (David Howard, HHSA Director)

Mr. Howard reviewed recent history, trends, data and future scenarios regarding Home Health. Historically, Home Health provided revenue to sustain ongoing activity. However, with private agencies stepping into the home health business, the county-owned Home Health program has suffered. Also, administration costs have escalated due to more complex and much more strict documentation requirements for Medicaid and Medicare reimbursement. Reimbursements are now being calculated differently, by using episode-type cases, instead of each home visit. Availability of funding for the home health industry has been a recent trend to assist in releasing patients from hospital care.

The Home Health program has recently experienced an increase in caseload, resulting in a 115-130 range. The Joint Commission Accreditation has been awarded following a recent audit and survey, which allows for private insurance to potentially view Bladen County Home Health as an in-network provider. Current Home Health leadership reports that greater caseload can be maintained without the increasing staff. Revenues have recently been trending upward, following several years of decreasing revenues.

Mr. Howard provided several future scenarios, including a FY 2016-17 break-even goal, which entails private insurance, increasing caseload and revenue, while holding expenses steady; continuing to support ongoing activities by accepting non-preferred referrals; or consider initiating a sale of Home Health. A potential sale process would take a minimum of six (6) months and must follow the NC General Statute for sale or lease of medical facilities.

Mr. Howard further indicated stipulations which could be included in the sale of Home Health, including assurances for staff for ongoing employment, continuing services for all county residents. However, the County would have an option to decline a sale if stipulations were not accepted by a potential buyer. A broker/consultant and attorney would need to be contracted to handle the sale, transfer and closing process, which may cost approximately \$40,000.

Mr. Howard stated his willingness to update the Board more frequently regarding the ongoing business of Home Health.

Following discussion and upon a motion by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Smith, the Board approved allowing Home Health to continue operating for six months, with monthly updates to the Board. The motion passed by a vote of six (6) AYES (Peterson, Smith, Bullock, Dowless, Pait, Priest) to two (2) NOES (Blanks, Cogdell).

ITEM 2. Emergency Medical Services: (David Howell, EMS Director)

David Howell provided an update regarding EMS' budget needs. EMS not only provides mandated emergency transport but also non-emergency transport for bed patients to physician

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appointments and dialysis appointments, as well. Recently, there have been a few non-emergency transport clients who have missed appointments due to emergency transport.

Mr. Howell reviewed calls by service level for the period of January 1, 2016 through May 15, 2016. He also provided those same calls by fire service district, including average transport times. Mr. Howell reviewed current staffing levels for each EMT classification, as well as supervisors, administrative support and administration.

Mr. Howell, along with input from Emergency Services Director Bradley Kinlaw, County Manager Greg Martin and Finance Officer Lisa Coleman, reviewed a full staffing model indicating a proposal to add ten (10) full time employees for the fiscal year 2016-17. The proposal includes six (6) paramedics and four (4) EMT-Basic employees, bringing full-time staff from thirty-five (35) to forty-five (45). The budget proposal reflects a reduction in part-time staff expense in order to assist in funding additional full-time staff.

Following discussion, a motion was introduced by Commissioner Peterson to approve hiring ten (10) additional EMS staff to be funded from General Fund Balance and adopt a Resolution Requesting an Advisory Sales Tax Referendum to provide funding for EMS personnel and equipment. Mr. Peterson further stated that if the Sales Tax Referendum was not successful to revisit the ongoing funding of additional EMS staff. Commissioner Blanks seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of seven (7) AYES (Peterson, Blanks, Bullock, Dowless, Pait, Priest, Smith) to one (1) NO (Cogdell).

Upon a motion by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Smith, the meeting was adjourned at 10:22 am.

ATTEST:

Maria C. Edwards, Clerk to the Board

Russell Priest, Chairman
Bladen County Board of Commissioners