

March 30, 2015

A special meeting of the Bladen County Board of Commissioners was held on Monday, March 30, 2015 at 2:00pm. The purpose of the meeting was to view a School of Government webinar, "Best Practices for Boards of Equalization and Review", receive information regarding the 2015 Revaluation, set a date for the Board of Equalization and Review to convene, receive information regarding the Home Health Program, receive an update regarding Senate Bill 369 Sales Tax Fairness Act and other planning items.

Members present:

Chairman Charles R. Peterson

Vice Chairman Russell Priest (arrived 2:08pm)

Dr. Delilah Blanks

Daniel Dowless

Billy Ray Pait

Wayne Edge

G. Michael Cogdell

Arthur A. Bullock

James G. Smith (arrived 2:10pm)

ITEM 1. Call to Order

Chairman Peterson called the meeting to order at 2:00pm and provided an invocation. County Manager Greg Martin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Peterson stated that Item 3A would not be addressed at this meeting, due to Mr. Tim Cain's absence.

ITEM 2. Webinar: Best Practices for Boards of Equalization and Review:

- A. With the link to the On-Demand webinar having just been received via email and access not yet completed, the Board proceeded to Item 3 on the Agenda.

ITEM 3. Revenue Department: (Chris Ellis, Tax Assessor)

- A. Update Regarding 2015 Revaluation: Mr. Tim Cain was unable to attend the meeting. An update will be provided at an upcoming meeting.
- B. Mr. Ellis requested the Board to consider convening the Board of Equalization and Review on Monday, April 27, 2015 at 10am in order to begin hearing tax appeals. Upon a motion by Commissioner Dowless, seconded by Commissioner Pait, the Board unanimously scheduled to convene the Board of Equalization and Review on Monday, April 27, 2015 at 10am.

ITEM 4. Health and Human Services Agency: (Cris Harrelson, Director)

- A. Mr. Harrelson provided an overview of the Home Health Program and the ongoing challenges, including competition of for-profit agencies, shrinking reimbursement rates, and increasing program standards. Facing challenges listed previously, inconsistent revenue in order to sustain the program has also been realized. Since FY 2011-2012, the Program has realized less revenue than expenditures to provide direct health care and related services to people in their homes or places of residence. The Program's fund balance has been adversely affected since FY 2011-2012 and Mr. Harrelson stated that the Program is unsustainable without the County subsidizing the Program. Mr. Harrelson shared numerous aggressive efficiencies and advertising programs which have been attempted in an effort to improve the financial situation.

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Mr. Harrelson reviewed options to continue to restructure and compete in the marketplace or to consider selling the Home Health business to a Home Health provider who wishes to increase its footprint into Bladen County.

Following discussion, the consensus of the Board was for Mr. Harrelson and County Manager Greg Martin to continue researching the process associated with selling the program and to report back to the Board.

Webinar: Best Practices for Board of Equalization and Review

The Board viewed the educational webinar hosted by the School of Government. The webinar was designed to encourage more consistent procedures across North Carolina, emphasizing efficiency and equity for all taxpayers.

ITEM 5. County Manager: (Greg Martin)

- A. Mr. Martin provided a brief overview of Senate Bill 369, Sales Tax Fairness Act. Mr. Martin stated that the bill would face challenges as it creates winners and losers regarding sales tax revenue. Also, the legislation would abolish County Sales Tax, which would be absorbed as a State Sales Tax and distributed to counties by a per capita calculation. Another concern with this type of calculation is legislation could be amended to reduce the percentage of sales tax distributed to counties, as has been realized with the NC Education Lottery revenue for school construction.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Pait, seconded by Commissioner Dowless, the Board adjourned the meeting at 4:06pm.

ATTEST:

Maria C. Edwards, Clerk

Charles Ray Peterson, Chairman