

**July 1, 2010**

A Special Meeting of the Bladen County Board of Commissioners was held on Thursday, July 1, 2010 at 5:30 p.m. Due to the large crowd in attendance, the meeting was relocated from Room G8 to Room 218 of the Bladen County Courthouse, Elizabethtown, North Carolina. The purpose of the meeting was to consider the appointment of the Sheriff.

The following members were present:

Billy Ray Pait, Chairman  
Delilah Blanks, Vice-Chairperson  
W. D. Neill, Jr.  
Daniel Dowless  
David Gooden  
Albert Beatty  
Charles Ray Peterson  
Lewis Tatum  
Larry Smith (Arrived at 5:39 p.m.)

Chairman Pait called the meeting to order. Vice-Chairperson Delilah Blanks provided the Invocation and County Manager Greg Martin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Pait welcomed those in attendance. He stated that the appointment of the Sheriff is a matter that the Board of Commissioners takes seriously. He thanked the citizens for their interest and indicated that they will be given an opportunity to speak prior to the Board entering closed session to discuss the appointment. Chairman Pait stated that the appointment would be made in open session.

Steven Hill addressed the Board to ask how a person can enter the election after the primary and a run-off election.

James Blanks from Bladenboro stated that he attended the meeting to see if there is any justice in Bladen County. He stated that if justice would have been done, we wouldn't be here. He further stated that something is wrong with the system and we'll deal with it in November.

Jerry Graham, a retired New York City Transit Manager, stated that he thought the good ole boy system was gone, but it's still in place.

\*Commissioner Larry Smith arrived at 5:39 p.m.

Another individual stated that she wants to know how her name is on Billy Ward's petition and she never signed the petition.

Horace Munn stated that he watched the election process from the start and the commissioners said they would appoint whom ever won the run-off election.

Merlen Smith stated that her name is on Billy Ward's petition, but she never signed it.

Joe Lacewell, a lifelong resident of Bladen County, stated that what the Board is doing is legally right but morally wrong.

Mary McMillan, who moved from New York, asked why Prentis Benston is not the Sheriff, since he won the election.

There were no further comments received.

A motion was made by Delilah Blanks, seconded by Daniel Dowless, and approved to enter closed session in accordance with General Statute 143-318.11 (a)(6)

A motion was made by Charles Ray Peterson, seconded by Delilah Blanks, and approved to exit closed session and re-enter open session.

Chairman Pait called for nominations for Sheriff. Delilah Blanks nominated Earl Storms. Lewis Tatum nominated Phillip Little.

Commissioner Larry Smith rose to speak. He asked the Board why would you not appoint the man who has been elected Sheriff or why wouldn't you appoint Chief Deputy Phillip Little if not Prentis Benston.

Chairman Pait called for those in favor of Earl Storms. Commissioners Pait, Blanks, Gooden, Peterson, Beatty, Dowless, and Neill voted in favor of Mr. Storms.

Chairman Pait called for those in favor of Phillip Little. Commissioners Smith and Tatum voted in favor of Phillip Little.

Chairman Pait declared Earl Storms as the Sheriff, effective Tuesday, July 6, 2010 at 10:00 a.m.

A motion was made by Charles Ray Peterson, seconded by Delilah Blanks, and approved to adjourn at 6:25 p.m.

  
Billy Ray Pait, Chairman

**ATTEST:**

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**Gregory J. Martin, Deputy Clerk**