

January 9, 2017

A special meeting of the Bladen County Board of Commissioners was held at 5:00 pm on Monday, January 9, 2017 in the Powell-Melvin Agricultural Center Auditorium, 450 Smith Circle, Elizabethtown, NC.

The following members were present:

Charles R. Peterson, Chairman

Ray Britt, Vice Chairman

Russell Priest

Arthur Bullock

Daniel Dowless

G. Michael Cogdell

Dr. Ophelia Munn-Goins

Ashley S. Trivette

David R. Gooden

ITEM 1. Chairman Peterson called the meeting to order at 5:04pm.

A. Chairman Peterson provided an invocation.

B. County Manager Greg Martin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Prior to continuing with agenda items, Chairman Peterson asked the Board to consider ground rules for the meeting. The Board provided the following:

1. One person should speak at a time
2. Respect all comments
3. Refrain from taking comments personally
4. Rights of the minority rule the majority
5. Everyone should participate
6. Maintain ground rules

ITEM 2. Economic Development: (Chuck Heustess, Director):

A. Chairman Peterson recognized Mr. Heustess to address the Board. Mr. Heustess provided an update regarding Economic Development. He stated that a process by which North Carolina counties and nonprofit entities would construct spec buildings was challenged and deemed to be unconstitutional by the North Carolina Supreme Court. Unfortunately, Bladen County and Bladen's Bloomin'/Agri-Industrial, Inc. had been using a similar process in the past. That type of agreement will no longer be a viable option going forth. Mr. Heustess stated that the Board of County Commissioners will be provided options to be able to continue providing spec buildings to potential employers. Mr. Heustess stated that Bladen County had been providing smaller facilities which has been very well received. Currently, there is only one (1) 30,000 square foot facility available in the Elizabethtown Industrial Park.

Mr. Heustess discussed a potential scenario where three (3) facilities may be built in the incubator sector of the Bladenboro Industrial Park, consisting of 8,100 square feet, 12,000 square feet, 24,000 square feet shell buildings. The initially proposed incubator in the Bladenboro Industrial Park is 8,100 square feet. There is a 14,000 square foot incubator building proposed to be constructed in the Elizabethtown Industrial Park. With newly constructed facilities appraised values often being lower than construction cost, the Board of Commissioners would need to consider its financial responsibility of subsidizing each of the construction projects. Mr. Heustess shared that a few options would be presented to the Board for consideration in order to increase available building inventory. In closing, Mr. Heustess stated that available buildings attract business.

Chairman Peterson polled the Board regarding its anticipated direction for Economic Development and increasing inventory. It was the consensus of the Board for Mr. Heustess to move forward with planned development and provide more specifics at a future meeting.

ITEM 3. Bladen County Vision Statement and Values:

A. Mr. Martin reviewed the County's Vision Statement and Values.

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ITEM 4. Break

The Board recessed at 5:58pm for refreshments.

The Board reconvened at 6:08pm.

ITEM 5. Planning Exercises:

- A. Clerk to the Board Maria Edwards led the Board in a brief icebreaker exercise.
- B. Mr. Martin introduced a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis Exercise. The Board took some time to record their individual opinions for each of the topics.

ITEM 6. Review and Discuss Issues Identified in SWOT Analysis:

- A. Chairman Peterson read aloud each of the recorded items and talking points submitted by the Board members. Chairman Peterson, Mr. Martin and Mrs. Edwards will summarize the items for discussion at a future meeting.

ITEM 7. Update Regarding Home Health:

- A. Mr. Martin reminded the Board that the deadline for submitting Offers to Purchase is January 11, 2017. Mr. Martin indicated that twelve (12) different companies were identified and contacted directly regarding Offers to Purchase the Home Health agency. Consultant Ron Clitherow will review each of the proposals and make a recommendation to the County of Bladen.

ITEM 8. Other Matters:

Mr. Cogdell asked Mr. Martin to include mental healthcare under Weakness, along with other identified issues.

Chairman Peterson polled the Board regarding making a donation to the Bladen County Hospital Foundation. A Masquerade Ball is scheduled for Saturday, February 25 at Lu Mil Vineyard as a fundraiser. The consensus of the Board was to assist the Bladen County Hospital Foundation with a one-time donation of \$750.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:46pm by acclamation.

ATTEST:

Maria C. Edwards, Clerk to the Board

Charles R. Peterson, Chairman
Bladen County Board of Commissioners