

December 3, 2018

A regular meeting of the Bladen County Board of Commissioners was held at 6:30 pm on Monday, December 3, 2018 in the Commissioners’ Room located on the lower level of the Bladen County Courthouse.

The following members were present:

- Ray Britt, Chairman
- G. Michael Cogdell, Vice Chairman
- Charles R. Peterson
- Arthur Bullock
- Daniel Dowless
- David R. Gooden
- Russell Priest
- Dr. Ophelia Munn-Goins
- Ashley Trivette

Attorney: Allen Johnson, Johnson Law Firm

ITEM 1. Reverend Larry Hayes of Good News Baptist Church provided the Invocation. Guest 4-H'er Aubrey Schwable led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ITEM 2. Consent Items:

Upon a motion by Commissioner Trivette, seconded by Commissioner Gooden, the Board unanimously approved the following Consent Items.

- A. Agenda.
- B. Minutes of November 19, 2018 Special Meeting.
- C. Minutes of November 19, 2018 Regular Meeting.
- D. Budget Amendments, as follows:

Sheriff

<i>Expenditures</i>		<i>Increase</i>	<i>Decrease</i>
105100.5177.740.013	Capital Outlay-Grant 5867-A	10,300.00	
<i>Revenues</i>			
103190.050	Fund Balance Appropriations	10,300.00	

Survey work for Driving Pad Grant.

Sheriff

<i>Expenditures</i>		<i>Increase</i>	<i>Decrease</i>
105100.5177.740.013	Capital Outlay-Grant 5867-A	100,000.00	
<i>Revenues</i>			
103270.033	Sh-Grant 5867-A	100,000.00	

Grading and paving two separate locations related to the driving pad.

Administration/Economic Development

<i>Expenditures</i>		<i>Increase</i>	<i>Decrease</i>
106900.901	To Economic Development	10,000.00	
307200.910.001	Product Development	10,000.00	
<i>Revenues</i>			
103190.051	Fund Balance Appropriation-Product Dev	10,000.00	
303422.002	Fm General Fund	10,000.00	

Funding approved for Incubator project.

Department of Social Services

<i>Expenditures</i>		<i>Increase</i>	<i>Decrease</i>
146100.6160.650.002	Child Abuse Awareness	68.00	
<i>Revenues</i>			
143190.028	Child Abuse Awareness	68.00	

Donations for Child Abuse Awareness.

Lisbon Fire Department

<i>Expenditures</i>		<i>Increase</i>	<i>Decrease</i>
445344.499	Miscellaneous Expense	45,000.00	
<i>Revenues</i>			
443190.050	Fund Balance Appropriation	45,000.00	

To purchase a 2017 Chevrolet Tahoe 4x4 First Responder vehicle to replace 1999 Suburban.

E. County Attorney Invoices.

Date	Department	Amount
10/24/2018	Governing Board	1,975.00
11/07/2018	Sheriff’s Office	475.00
11/16/2018	General Services Department	675.00

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11/16/2018	Sheriff's Office	795.00
12/01/2018	December-18 Retainer	300.00
	Total	\$ 4,220.00

F. Bonds for Public Officials, as follows:

Name and Position	Bond Amount	Premium Cost
Lisa C. Coleman, Finance Officer	\$ 100,000	\$ 350.00
Carol Cain, Tax Collector	\$ 100,000	\$ 750.00
Beverly Parks, Register of Deeds	\$ 50,000	\$ 175.00
Kenneth Clark, Coroner	\$ 25,000	\$ 87.50
James McVicker, Sheriff	\$ 25,000	\$ - 0 - *

*The Sheriff's Bond is paid through April, 2019.

Each of the Bonds are insured through Lacy West-Thomas Insurance Agency.

G. 2019 Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting Schedule.

H. Indemnification Agreement with George H. McDaniel regarding tree removal on property located adjacent to the Board of Elections facility.

ITEM 3. Oaths of Office:

- A. The Honorable Niki S. Dennis, Clerk of Superior Court, provided oaths of office to each newly elected Commissioner, Arthur A. Bullock and Charles R. Peterson.

Chairman Britt expressed appreciation to the Board for the support which he felt during the busy year with which the Board dealt.

ITEM 4. Election of Board Officers: (Greg Martin, County Manager)

- A. Mr. Martin opened nominations for Chairperson. Commissioner Britt nominated Charles Ray Peterson. Commissioner Trivette provided a second to Commissioner Peterson's nomination. Commissioner Bullock nominated Commissioner Cogdell. Nominations were closed by acclamation. Upon a vote of five (5) AYES (Gooden, Peterson, Britt, Dowless, Trivette), Commissioner Peterson was elected as Chairperson for the ensuing year.

Mr. Martin congratulated Chairperson Peterson.

- B. Mr. Martin opened nominations for Vice Chairperson. Commissioner Peterson nominated Commissioner Gooden, with a second provided by Commissioner Dowless. Commissioner Cogdell nominated Commissioner Trivette. Upon a motion by Commissioner Munn-Goins, the nominations were closed. Upon a vote of six (6) AYES (Priest, Gooden, Peterson, Britt, Dowless, Trivette) Commissioner Gooden was elected as Vice Chairperson for the ensuing year.

Mr. Martin congratulated Vice Chairperson Gooden.

ITEM 5. Special Recognition:

- A. Chairman Peterson and the entire Board recognized Mrs. Veronica Hester upon her retirement effective December 1, 2018. General Services Manager Kip McClary and Water District Director Alan Edge both expressed appreciation to Ms. Hester for her professionalism and excellent customer service.

ITEM 6. Reception:

Chairman Peterson briefly recessed the meeting at 6:42pm for a reception.

Chairman Peterson reconvened the meeting at 6:57pm.

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ITEM 7. Individuals/Delegations Wishing to Address Commissioners:

Chairman Peterson provided an overview of the Board of County Commissioners Procedures regarding Public Comment Period (Rule 12) during a meeting. He stated that “each speaker must provide his/her name, both orally and in writing, before speaking. Speakers will be limited to three minutes. Comments are to be directed to the Board as a whole and not to one individual commissioner. Speakers should not discuss matters which concern the candidacy of any person seeking public office or matters in current or anticipated litigation.”

Chairman Peterson recognized Mr. E. W. Bowen to address the Board. Mr. Bowen expressed concern regarding an over-abundance of beavers in the East Arcadia community. He stated that since Hurricane Florence, the issues have escalated. He shared that the State is opening ditches, but the water is not flowing into the creek to alleviate flooding and drainage issues. He shared that the creek is full of debris, downed trees, and branches. He expressed his frustration with continuing to have to deal with the same issue year after year.

County Manager Greg Martin stated that he understands that beavers have caused and continue to cause issues. However, he stated that Soil and Water Conservation District Director Dean Morris was in attendance and may be able to share additional information regarding ongoing efforts to clear stream debris from creeks and tributaries.

Mr. Morris provided an overview of an upcoming stream debris removal project. He stated that bids are out currently to secure a contractor to provide stream debris removal. He stated that the entire East Arcadia area is scheduled to be a part of the process. He stated that removal of beaver dams is a part of the process. He also provided information regarding a cost-share federal program in which Bladen County participates, Beaver Management Assistance Program (BMAP). The program provides assistance for beaver assessment, trapping, removal of beavers, and removal of beaver dams. He stated that, following free assessment, landowners would share in the cost of the trapping and removal of beavers and removal of beaver dams. Mr. Morris stated that the current level in the BMA Program in which Bladen County participates allows for twelve (12) working projects per year. Bladen County provides annual funding in the amount of \$4,000. Mr. Morris stated that the next level of participation, which compensates a full position, would cost the county \$60,000 annually.

Commissioner Munn-Goins stated that the beaver problems have affected the entire community of East Arcadia. She shared that a number of landowners are unable to construct homes on property because of drainage, and permits are not approved because of unsuccessful inspections. She expressed concerns over losing tax base in the East Arcadia area and suggested investing in the area in order to receive tax base benefits.

Commissioner Cogdell stated that he understood that some landowners in the community would not allow individuals to cross their property to clear debris or to establish new ditches to enhance drainage. Mr. Morris did indicate that each landowner would partner with the federal BMA Program, but it is not mandatory.

Mr. Bowen expressed frustration that once a beaver dam is removed, other beavers build and cause the same issues.

Chairman Peterson expressed his appreciation of Mr. Bowen’s frustration. Mr. Martin, Mr. Morris and Planning Director Greg Elkins, and county attorneys, if necessary, were asked to further discuss the situation and report back to the Board and Mr. Bowen. Mr. Elkins reported that Cape Fear Resource Conservation and Development has been made aware of the community efforts to reduce and/or eradicate the beavers.

Mr. Bowen also shared that the creeks in the East Arcadia community empty in to the Cape Fear River in Columbus County. He recommended that Columbus County be involved in an overall solution as well.

Chairman Peterson recognized Sabrina Murchison to address the Board. Ms. Murchison stated that she had been terminated from employment with Bladen County earlier in the day for posting information on Facebook regarding a commissioner’s business. Ms. Murchison shared her opinion that the termination was based on an EEOC charge which she filed some time ago. She shared that she was advised of a pre-disciplinary conference. She stated that she requested an opportunity to seek legal advice and stated that the Social Media Policy is vague. Ms. Murchison shared her opinion that the Personnel Policy worked for some employees, but not all employees. Ms. Murchison stated her intent to appeal her termination with Mr. Martin and Human Resource Director Shontea Keaton in the coming days.

Chairman Peterson thanked Ms. Murchison for her presentation. He stated that Ms. Murchison would need to follow the appeals process which is included in the Personnel Policy.

Commissioner Bullock asked Mr. Martin about progressive disciplinary steps. Mr. Martin stated that disciplinary action is divided into two categories; performance-based steps and personal

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misconduct. He stated that performance-based discipline is a progressive disciplinary step process. However, personal misconduct can be handled more swiftly. Chairman Peterson thanked Ms. Murchison.

ITEM 9. Public Hearing:

- A. Chairman Peterson declared open a Public Hearing to receive comments regarding a rezoning request. No one addressed the Board. Chairman Peterson declared closed the Public Hearing.
- B. Planning Director Greg Elkins provided an overview of the property (PIN No. 1385-00-22-4173 (1.89 acre tract) and the request submitted by the property owner, April Rich. Following discussion and upon a motion by Commissioner Britt, seconded by Commissioner Gooden, the Board determined that the request is consistent with the adopted 2013-2020 Bladen County Land Use Plan; and that the rezoning request is reasonable and that the rezoning request is in the public interest, and unanimously approved the rezoning request.

ITEM 10. Bladen County Water District:

- A. Upon a motion by Commissioner Munn-Goins, seconded by Commissioner Bullock, the Board unanimously exited Regular Session and entered session as Water District Board of Directors.
- B. Chairman Peterson recognized LKC Engineering representative Adam Kiker to address the Board. Mr. Kiker expressed appreciation and provided a brief update regarding a Phase IV Water System expansion project. He stated that the design phase process has met USDA representatives' expectations. He also shared that the water tested from the test well site proved to be high in iron. There may be an additional site identified for testing. The Board expressed appreciation to Mr. Kiker.
- C. General Services Director Kip McClary and Water District Manager Alan Edge addressed the Board regarding a Local Water Supply Plan for the Bladen County Water District-Tar Heel 03-09-040. Following brief discussion and upon a motion by Commissioner Britt, seconded by Commissioner Trivette, the Board unanimously approved a 2017 Local Water Supply Plan for the Bladen County Water District-Tar Heel 03-09-040 and adopted the following Resolution:



Mr. McClary and Mr. Edge asked the Board to combine the next three items into one motion as they are all involving a Water Shortage Plan for each of the current Bladen County Water District systems.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Cogdell, seconded by Commissioner Gooden, the Board unanimously approved the following Water Shortage Response Plans for the Bladen County Water District systems:

- D. Water Shortage Response Plan for Bladen County Water District-West Bladen 03-09-055, and adopted the following Resolution:



- E. Water Shortage Response Plan for Bladen County Water District-East Bladen 03-09-060, and adopted the following Resolution:



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- F. Water Shortage Response Plan for Bladen County Water District-Tar Heel 03-09-040 and adopted the following Resolution:



ITEM 11. Health and Human Services Agency: (Wayne Raynor, Director)

- A. HHSA Director Wayne Raynor and Health Department Administrative Officer Djuana Register provided an overview of delinquent accounts receivable which are eligible for a Debt Set-Off program. Mrs. Register stated that the delinquent accounts carry balances of \$50 and greater and have had no activity in the past year. Following discussion and upon a motion by Commissioner Munn-Goins, seconded by Commissioner Trivette, the Board unanimously approved submission of delinquent accounts receivable in the amount of \$21,008.99 to the Finance Office to be included in a Debt Set-Off program.
- B. Deputy Registrar Rebecca Culbreth reviewed a 2016 and 2017 Vital Statistics Report.

ITEM 12. Division on Aging: (Kelly Robeson, Director)

- A. Mrs. Robeson provided an overview of two (2) amended Division on Aging policies regarding Congregate Nutrition Site reservations and Level I (Housekeeping) Programs. She further explained that the programs have experienced meal and services reservations which were not kept which have created a loss of the meals and funding to purchase those meals. She provided a spreadsheet reflecting the cost for those meals not served. Following discussion and upon a motion by Commissioner Gooden, seconded by Commissioner Britt, the Board unanimously approved the amended Reservation and Participation Policies.

ITEM 13. Public Library: (Kelsey Edwards, Director)

- A. Mrs. Edwards provided an overview of a Memorandum of Agreement with Bladen County Schools. She stated that the MOA would allow for student access to library resources using their Student ID number. She did inform Board members that parents would have an opportunity to opt-out their children using a specific form. Following discussion and upon a motion by Commissioner Munn-Goins, seconded by Commissioner Trivette, the Board unanimously approved a Student Access Memorandum of Agreement with the Bladen County Schools.

ITEM 14. Sheriff's Office: (Jim McVicker, Sheriff)

- A. In Sheriff McVicker's absence, Captain Jeff Singletary provided an overview of a Pilot Roadside Litter Pick Up Program. She shared the most recent information (June 28, 2018 through November 30, 2018), as follows:
- Total bags collected: 2,098
 - Trash debris collected: 12.98 tons / 25,960 lbs.
 - Brown goods collected: .66 tons / 1,320 lbs.
- Following discussion regarding cost of the ongoing project and how it is being funded and upon a motion by Commissioner Gooden, seconded by Commissioner Trivette, the Board unanimously approved an ongoing Roadside Litter Pick Up Program.

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ITEM 15. Advisory Board Appointments:

- A. **Child Fatality Protection Team (2):** Upon a motion by Commissioner Bullock, seconded by Commissioner Munn-Goins, the Board unanimously tabled appointments.
- B. **Keep Bladen Beautiful (3):** Upon a motion by Commissioner Britt, seconded by Commissioner Dowless, the Board unanimously appointed Shane Freeman and Stacie Kinlaw to unexpired terms of service, with the terms expiring March 31, 2019 and October 15, 2019. The Board took no action on a third appointment for an unexpired term.
- C. **White Lake Planning and Zoning (ETJ) (1):** Commissioner Trivette stated that the appointment approved at a previous Board meeting was not an eligible candidate. Upon a motion by Commissioner Trivette, seconded by Commissioner Munn-Goins, the Board unanimously tabled an appointment to a three-year term of service, with the term expiring October 14, 2021.

ITEM 16. Advisory Board Appointments for Consideration During December 17, 2018 Board Meeting:

- A. Ammon Fire Department Firefighters Relief Fund Board (1)
- B. BARTS Advisory Board (5)
- C. Bay Tree Lakes Fire Department Firefighters Relief Fund Board (1)
- D. Division on Aging Advisory Committee (3)
- E. East Arcadia Fire Department Firefighters Relief Fund Board (1)
- F. Economic Development Commission (4)
- G. Health and Human Services Agency Advisory (4)
- H. Hickory Grove Fire Department Firefighters Relief Fund Board (1)
- I. Kelly Fire Department Firefighters Relief Fund Board (1)
- J. Library Board (3)
- K. Lisbon Fire Department Firefighters Relief Fund Board (1)
- L. Personnel Advisory Board (2)
- M. Tar Heel Fire Department Firefighters Relief Fund Board (1)
- N. Tobermory Fire Department Firefighters Relief Fund Board (1)
- O. White Oak Fire Department Firefighters Relief Fund Board (1)

ITEM 17. County Manager: (Greg Martin)

- A. Mr. Martin reviewed Board calendars for the months of December 2018 and January 2019.
- B. Mr. Martin requested the Board consider scheduling a Planning Session to discuss priorities for the upcoming year. Following discussion and upon a motion by Commissioner Cogdell, seconded by Commissioner Bullock, the Board unanimously scheduled a Planning Retreat for 10am on Tuesday, February 5, 2019. A location will be determined.
- C. Mr. Martin provided copies of the current Rules of Procedure for the Bladen County Board of Commissioners for review. He asked that the Board members let him know if there are any concerns or proposed amendments to the procedures. If so, those amendments would be addressed at a future meeting.

ITEM 18. Individuals/Delegations Wishing to Address Commissioners:

Chairman Peterson recognized Mr. Ander Wilds to address the Board. Mr. Wilds expressed appreciation to the Board and requested information and guidance regarding Hurricane Florence recovery efforts. He shared his concern regarding some citizens who have returned to their damaged homes with mold issues because they felt they had no other options. He asked for guidance how to share within his community since he felt that the federal programs have not been working for citizens. Chairman Peterson asked that Mr. Wilds contact Mr. Martin and Emergency Services Director Bradley Kinlaw for additional information. Commissioner Bullock asked Mr. Wilds to share household contacts with him as well. He indicated that his church was working with a group which may be able to assist those citizens.

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Mr. Martin stated that the FEMA Disaster Recovery Center has been closed in Bladen County, but the one in Whiteville is still open. However, he indicated that citizens are welcome to visit the Public Safety Training Center on Hwy. 701 North if they require additional assistance. Commissioner Munn-Goins asked Mr. Martin to request an update from the NCDOT regarding storm debris pick up. She stated that debris is still on the roadside in the Kelly community. Mr. Martin assured her that he would follow up and provide information to the Board.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Cogdell, seconded by Commissioner Trivette, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:03pm.

ATTEST:

Maria C. Edwards, Clerk to the Board

Charles R. Peterson, Chairman
Bladen County Board of Commissioners