

February 3, 2014

A regular meeting of the Bladen County Board of Commissioners was held at 6:30 pm on Monday, February 3, 2014 in the Commissioners Meeting Room of the Bladen County Courthouse.

The following members were present:

- James G. "Jimmie" Smith, Chairman
- Mark Gillespie, Vice Chairperson
- Charles Ray Peterson
- Delilah Blanks
- Billy Ray Pait
- Russell Priest
- Daniel Dowless
- G. Michael Cogdell
- Wayne Edge

Attorney: Allen Johnson, Johnson Law Firm

ITEM 1. Chairman Smith called the meeting to order. Reverend Larry Hayes, Good News Baptist Church, Bladenboro, NC provided the Invocation. County Manager Gregory J. Martin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ITEM 2. Consent Items:

Upon a motion by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Gillespie the Board approved the following Consent Items:

- A. Agenda.
- B. Minutes of Regular Meeting on January 21, 2014.
- C. Budget Amendments as follows:

Animal Control

<i>Expenditures</i>		<i>Debit</i>	<i>Credit</i>
105200.499.028	Spay/Neuter Grant	8,115.64	
<i>Revenues</i>			
103260.041	Spay/Neuter Grant	8,115.64	

October-December 2013 Spay/Neuter Grant.

Sheriff

<i>Expenditures</i>		<i>Debit</i>	<i>Credit</i>
105100.212	Uniforms	1,600.00	
105100.212	Uniforms (Ballistic Vests)	1,100.00	
105100.200	Supplies (Service Weapons)	1,100.00	
105100.200	Supplies (Communications Equipment)	4,000.00	
<i>Revenues</i>			
103190.050	Fund Balance Appropriated	7,800.00	

Equipment and uniform needs for the COPs Grant employees.

Extension

<i>Expenditures</i>		<i>Debit</i>	<i>Credit</i>
106500.325	Postage	194.87	
106500.499	Miscellaneous	20.00	
106500.395	Schools & Meetings	250.00	
106500.310	Travel	500.00	
106500.321	Telephone		1,299.00
106500.491	Dues & Subs	104.00	
106500.200	Supplies	3,368.00	
106500.341	Printing		1,373.00
106500.352	M/R-Equipment		800.00
<i>Revenues</i>			
103190.010	Miscellaneous Revenue	964.87	

To cover cost associated with other line items. Also, to purchase supplies for office and kitchen.

Parks and Recreation

<i>Expenditures</i>		<i>Debit</i>	<i>Credit</i>
106600.499	Miscellaneous Expense (Recreation Programs)	2,200.00	
<i>Revenues</i>			
103190.010	Miscellaneous Revenue	2,200.00	

To purchase program equipment for Spring and Summer programs.

Department of Social Services

<i>Expenditures</i>		<i>Debit</i>	<i>Credit</i>
1461006160.650.001	Foster Care Donations	711.13	
<i>Revenues</i>			
143190.027	Foster Care Donations	711.13	

To separate accounts for tracking purposes between Child Abuse and Foster Care.

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Department of Social Services

<i>Expenditures</i>		<i>Debit</i>	<i>Credit</i>
1461006160.650.002	Child Abuse Awareness Donations	1,745.97	
<i>Revenues</i>			
143190.028	Child Abuse Awareness Donations	1,745.97	

To separate accounts for tracking purposes between Child Abuse and Foster Care.

Water

<i>Expenditures</i>		<i>Debit</i>	<i>Credit</i>
254702.610	Contracted Services	1,800.00	
<i>Revenues</i>			
253420.004	Tap Fees	1,800.00	

Pay for water tap being placed on Hwy 87 paid by customer.

D. County Attorney Invoices:

Date	Department	Amount
1/30/14	Planning Department	\$ 1,750.00
1/31/14	Emergency Mgmt.	\$ 950.00
	Total	\$ 2,700.00

E. Proclamation Declaring Bladen County as a Purple Heart County, which follows:



ITEM 3. Matters of Interest to Commissioners:

Commissioner Cogdell stated that he had been contacted by several citizens who are experiencing obtrusive noise emanating from the recently opened shooting range. Commissioner Cogdell asked for advice and direction for a response to the questions. Some of the citizens have contacted the Sheriff's Office related to the nuisance and was told that there was no ordinance being broken and there was nothing that the Sheriff's Office could do. Commissioner Cogdell asked County Manager Greg Martin to research ordinances that may be appropriate to govern this type of business.

- A. Chairman Smith recognized Sarah M. Meshaw upon her retirement as Income Maintenance Caseworker III with the Department of Social Services. Health and Human Services Director Cris Harrelson congratulated Sarah on her retirement and commended her for her longevity with the County (23 years and 5 months). He acknowledged Ms. Meshaw's care and concern for her clients and the excellent job she had done for the citizens of Bladen County.
- B. Chairman Smith presented a Proclamation Declaring Bladen County as a Purple Heart County to Mr. Jimmy Goins, Monty Oxendine and Reverend James Jones representing the Military Order of the Purple Heart. Chairman Smith asked the Clerk to read aloud the Proclamation.

ITEM 4. Individuals/Delegations Wishing to Address Commissioners:

Skylar Buchanan of Classy Kids 4-H addressed the Board to request its consideration of financial support in the amount of \$1,000 to assist in costs associated with a new 4-H venture including Legos, parliamentary books, crafts, play money for instructional purposes, two sewing machines and materials and experiment sets for water testing.

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Kylie and Sarah Thraikill, representing East Arcadia School 4th Graders who would like to start a Garden Club, requested consideration of financial support in the amount of \$500 for start-up costs, to include repairs to a greenhouse and tools, to assist them in planting, raising and caring for flowers during and after school. They intend to sell bouquets, which will teach entrepreneurship, economics and work ethics.

Ashanti Munn-Goins and Vivian Mitchell, representing the East Arcadia Humanities Club and Jr. Beta Club, requested the Board's consideration of financial support in the amount of \$700. With this financial support, the clubs intend to connect with the community through drama, dance and community service. The funds would be used to purchase costumes, props and other supplies.

Mr. William Hemphill of Elizabethtown requested information of the Board related to the homeless in Bladen County, some of whom may be suffering from mental illness. Mr. Hemphill stated that there had been a meeting at the library several months ago, with approximately 60 in attendance, to address concerned individuals regarding homelessness. Since then, Mr. Hemphill has not heard about any progress. Several county employees who were in attendance offered information related to the on-going efforts to identify the homeless, where they are located and the number of homeless. Commissioner Peterson stated that Bladen County School System has identified several students who are homeless. Chairman Smith asked Health and Human Services Director Cris Harrelson to gather information on the process and share with Mr. Hemphill.

ITEM 5. Health and Human Services (Cris Harrelson, Director):

A. Cris Harrelson provided an update regarding Food and Nutrition Services and NCFAST. USDA has enacted hard deadlines in North Carolina for the resolution of backlogged FNS applications. Should the State of NC not be successful in resolving the backlogged FNS applications, it will begin the process to suspend federal funding. NC Department of Health and Human Services has asked the local Departments of Social Services to concentrate their resources on resolving its share of the backlogged cases by February 10 and then all backlogged cases by March 31, 2014. Bladen County has identified its cases and has worked diligently to resolve them. The majority of those backlogged cases were attributed to the technical issues related to NCFAST. As of 3:47pm on Monday, February 3, Bladen County had seven cases to be completed, four of which are pending at the NCFAST helpdesk and three needing follow-up information from the applicant. The staff at DSS has identified areas to improve the applicant process, developed a new standard operating procedure for daily monitoring of incoming applications and their progress through the system, and has assigned staff to ensure all applications meet the state processing requirements in a timely manner.

All of the Commissioners commended Cris Harrelson and the staff at DSS for their diligent efforts to ensure continuing federal funding of FNS for the citizens of Bladen County.

ITEM 6. Revenue Department: (Chris Ellis, Tax Administrator)

A. Chris Ellis, along with Tax Collector Carol Cain, presented the Report of Unpaid 2013 Taxes that are liens on real property. However, since the publication of the agenda and attached Report of Unpaid 2013 Taxes, the updated report showed uncollected taxes in the amount of \$2,668,000, and a total amount of \$3,507,000, including fees. This represents the collection of approximately \$273,000 in taxes and \$112,308 in taxes and other charges (including land fill fees, solid waste fees, and late list fees) within the past several days.

Commissioner Peterson asked about uncollected taxes from previous years and a report that would detail all unpaid taxes throughout the county. Commissioner Peterson stated that it was not fair to those who pay their taxes, when others do not pay. Mr. Ellis stated that he would be able to have the necessary reports available to the Board by the end of the week. Upon a motion by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Edge, the

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Board unanimously voted to schedule a special workshop for the purpose of reviewing delinquent taxes. The date for the meeting will be scheduled before the end of the Board meeting.

- B. Mr. Ellis asked the Board to consider a deadline of March 14, 2014 for citizens to pay their taxes in order to avoid advertisement. Upon a motion by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Edge, the Board unanimously approved the March 14, 2014 deadline to pay 2013 taxes that are a first lien upon the property, with an advertising date of March 25, 2014.
- C. According to NC General Statutes, January 31 is the deadline to file listing forms, property deferments and exemptions. However, due to the recent inclement weather, the county offices were closed for 2 ½ days the last week of January, allowing for no filing of forms in the Tax office. Mr. Ellis asked that the Board consider an extension of three days to allow citizens to come into the Tax office to file with no penalty assessed. Upon a motion by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Priest, the Board unanimously approved the extension, related to the filing of listing forms, property deferments and exemptions, through February 5, 2014.

Commissioner Cogdell asked Mr. Ellis about vehicle taxes and the confusion related to the newly established Tag and Tax Together program. Several citizens feel as if they are paying their vehicle taxes twice. Mr. Ellis stated that if a vehicle was registered prior to September 1, 2013, the vehicle owner was required to pay 2013 at the Tax office before the vehicle could be registered for 2014. At the time of registering for the current year, the owner would be required to pay current year taxes.

Mr. Ellis stated, in closing, that he and Tim Cain would provide an overview of the revaluation process at the next Board meeting.

ITEM 7. Advisory Board Appointments for Consideration at the February 17 Meeting:

- A. Bladen County Nursing Home Advisory Committee (2)

ITEM 8. County Manager: (Greg Martin)

- A. County Manager Greg Martin reviewed the calendars for February and March 2014.
- B. Upon a motion by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Dowless, the Board unanimously scheduled a workshop regarding Water District matters for 5pm on Monday, March 10, 2014.

Chairman Smith asked County Manager Greg Martin to extend the Board's appreciation to the DOT for assistance during the inclement weather by keeping the main roads in the county clear of ice and snow. In fact, all of the county staff who worked long hard hours to keep sidewalks and parking areas cleared for the safety of the public and employees, are greatly appreciated and to be commended.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Peterson, the second provided by Commissioner Priest, the Board unanimously scheduled a special workshop related to Unpaid Taxes for Monday, February 24, 2014 at 6pm.

Commissioner Blanks addressed the individuals who addressed the Board related to requests for financial assistance with projects. Commissioner Blanks asked each of them to prepare the county's standard application for charitable contributions, so that the Board could review and fully consider their requests.

Commissioner Blanks suggested that the charitable contribution applications be added to the February 24, 2014 workshop.

Commissioner Peterson shared that a YouCaring.com web page (Caring for Cody) has been set up to collect donations for the family of Cody Clark. Cody is

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the six year old son of Tina Clark, a Finance Department staff member. Cody has recently undergone brain surgery at Duke. He has been in the hospital and in close proximity to the hospital for ongoing treatments since December 20, 2013. Commissioner Peterson encouraged the entire Board and everyone in attendance to visit the web page and donate.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Pait, seconded by Commissioner Gillespie, the meeting was adjourned at 7:25pm.

James G. Smith, Chairman
Bladen County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Maria C. Edwards, Clerk to the Board