

June 20, 2017

A recessed meeting of the Bladen County Board of Commissioners was held at 3:30 pm on Tuesday, June 20, 2017 in the Commissioners Meeting Room of the Bladen County Courthouse.

The following members were present:

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

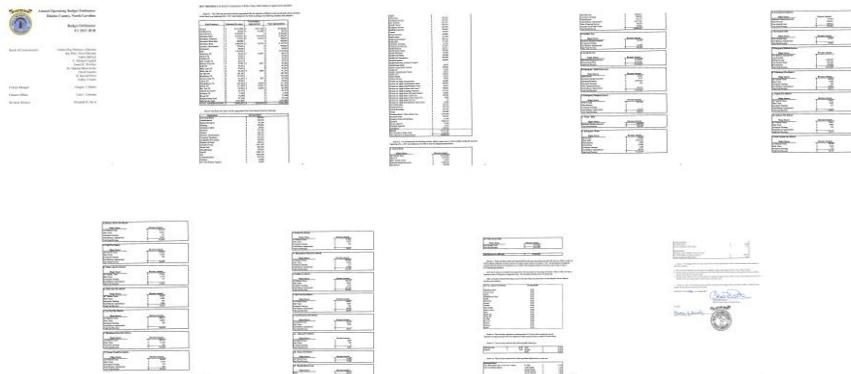
Chairman Peterson called the meeting to order.

Chairman Peterson provided the Invocation. County Manager Greg Martin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Priest made a motion to fully fund a recent compensation study, providing a 2% cost of living adjustment for those positions which were appropriately funded according to the compensation study. Commissioner Trivette provided a second.

Following discussion regarding the compensation study, Bladen County School appropriation for FY 2017-18, Chairman Peterson revisited the motion on the floor.

Commissioner Priest amended his motion to fully fund a recent compensation study, providing a 2% cost of living adjustment for those positions which were appropriately funded according to the compensation study, and also to adopt the Fiscal Year 2017-18 budget. Commissioner Trivette provided a second. The Board unanimously approved the following FY 2017-18 budget ordinance, including fully implementing the compensation study and 2% COLA:



Chairman Peterson thanked the Board for its diligent work during the budget process and read aloud a prepared statement, as follows:

The development of the FY 2018 Bladen County Budget has been a challenging process, requiring a great deal of thought and consideration by members of the Board of County Commissioners. I would like to take a moment to thank each commissioner for the time and attention you've put into this budget and for the professional, respectful interaction and conversation we've had related to the budget.

During this process, important projects and initiatives have been discussed and funding for a number of these projects is included in the budget. I am pleased that, included in this budget, is a key initiative that benefits our organization and our valuable employees by funding the implementation of an employee compensation study, conducted by the Piedmont Triad Council of Governments. While no compensation plan is perfect and each position is uniquely effected, this plan is a step in the right direction for Bladen County in terms of strengthening our ability to recruit and retain knowledgeable, service oriented employees. I would like to point out that, as an elected official, the sheriff has discretion to structure the compensation for his employees. Therefore, using the funds appropriated by the Board of Commissioners that would provide 100% implementation of the pay study for employees in the Sheriff's Office, Sheriff McVicker has tailored the compensation plan for his employees in a manner that he believes will best serve the departments under his authority.

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Over the years, Bladen County has been fiscally responsible in managing the county's finances, and this is reflected in the County's healthy financial condition. However, I do want to take a moment to point out that in order to fund new ongoing initiatives such as the compensation plan and increased staffing and operating expenses associated with Emergency Medical Services and the new detention facility, revenue estimates have been pushed up to the point that they closely mirror recent history and actual projections. Therefore, healthy surplus margins that we've enjoyed in recent years are not to be expected.

The budget does fund a number of necessary one-time, non-recurring capital projects. These include roof replacement projects at DSS and Bladen Community College, totaling approximately \$650,000, as well as renovation projects at the Health Department, the Sheriff's Office and the Powell-Melvin Agricultural Services Building. In an effort to maintain the county's public safety vehicles, funding is also included for the purchase of ten patrol vehicles and two ambulances.

Current expense funding for Bladen County Schools will largely maintain the current year level, with the exception of a reduction in the amount of \$251,000 previously used for debt service, but no longer needed for that purpose. Therefore, this amount is included in a separate line-item in the County budget, earmarked for future school related needs. Capital funding has increased, related to an increase in sales tax revenue earmarked for school capital needs. With a continuing decline in students and State revenue, both the Board of Education and Board of County Commissioners recognize the need to develop a long-term, affordable, sustainable plan for Bladen County Schools that is in the best interest of our children and the community as a whole.

Each member of the Board of County Commissioners cares very deeply about Bladen County. Individually and collectively, we have a strong desire to fund critical services such as education, public safety and human services, while maintaining a reasonable tax burden for our citizens. By adopting the budget tonight, the Board has demonstrated this for the upcoming year and I would like to commend you for your efforts.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Trivette, seconded by Commissioner Munn-Goins, the Board unanimously adjourned the meeting at 3:49pm.

ATTEST:

Maria C. Edwards, Clerk to the Board

Charles R. Peterson, Chairman
Bladen County Board of Commissioners