

February 8, 2016

A Planning Session of the Bladen County Board of Commissioners was held at 5:30 pm on Monday, February 8, 2016 at the Powell-Melvin Agricultural Center, 450 Smith Circle, Elizabethtown.

The following members were present:

Russell Priest, Chairman

Arthur Bullock, Vice Chairman

Charles R. Peterson

Billy Ray Pait

G. Michael Cogdell

Daniel Dowless

Wayne Edge

James G. "Jimmie" Smith

Excused: Dr. Delilah Blanks

ITEM 1. Chairman Peterson called the meeting to order.

Commissioner Smith provided the Invocation. County Manager Gregory J. Martin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ITEM 2. Bladen County Water District Matters:

A. LKC Engineering representatives Adam Kiker and Tim Carpenter provided a detailed overview of a proposed Phase IV project to replace mechanical water meters with magnetic meters, install new water lines and a new well with filtration. Mr. Kiker reviewed potential funding, including USDA-Rural Development financing, as well as a possibility of grant eligibility.

Following discussion, the Board indicated its interest in receiving additional information at an upcoming meeting. Mr. Carpenter and Mr. Kiker stated their intent to make a more formal request during a March 2016 Board meeting.

B. Mr. Martin provided an update regarding the Tar Heel Water Corporation. A representative of the North Carolina Department of Revenue is processing the necessary corporation tax information to restore its status with the Secretary of State in order to complete the transfer of the corporation and its customers to the Bladen County Water District.

Commissioner Wayne Edge departed the meeting.

ITEM 3. Emergency Services: (Bradley Kinlaw, Fire Marshal)

A. Mr. Kinlaw provided an overview of certified water points to more effectively assist with firefighting. He stated that a minimum number of staff would be needed with a certified water point versus hauling water from other sources. A certified water point would be certified to hold 30,000 gallons of usable water. A landowner would need to approve the use of the water source, with all-weather ingress. The Board expressed its appreciation to Mr. Kinlaw.

ITEM 4. Revenue Department: (Renee Davis, Administrator)

A. Mrs. Davis presented a proposed office restructure involving two (2) vacant positions, Real Estate Appraiser and Assistant Revenue Director. A proposal to contract specific appraisal responsibilities to a third party was discussed, along with revising the Assistant Revenue Director position to a Tax Data Entry position. The Board thanked Mrs. Davis for her research and input on the matter.

ITEM 5. Parks and Recreation Department: (Grant Pait, Director)

A. Mr. Pait provided an overview of an upcoming Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) grant opportunity, including proposed projects to further

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upgrade the Bladen County Park, located on Hwy. 701, south of Elizabethtown. Mr. Pait stated that the deadline to submit PARTF grant application for the upcoming grant cycle is May 2, 2016, with the grant recipients selection in the early fall of 2016. The Board commended Mr. Pait for the progress at the county park, which was accomplished with funding from a PARTF grant awarded in 2013.

ITEM 6. Finance Department: (Lisa Coleman, Finance Officer)

- A. Mrs. Coleman shared a proposed Pre-Budget Survey developed for the upcoming budget year for Fiscal Year 2016-17. She stated that the information will be sent to local publications to be advertised, encouraging citizens to complete the survey. A Pre-Budget Hearing is proposed to be held on Monday, March 21, 2016 to allow additional citizen input.
- B. Mrs. Coleman provided detailed information to the Board regarding capital requests by department.
- C. Mrs. Coleman provided an overview of planned increases in retirement system expenses, along with State Health Plan anticipated cost increases for the upcoming calendar year.

ITEM 7. Computer Operations: (Robin Hewett, Director)

- A. Mr. Hewett provided a brief overview of a Request for Proposals for copier/printer services recently submitted to several providers. Mr. Hewett stated that he anticipates providing a recommendation at a future Board meeting.
- B. Mr. Hewett provided an update to the Board regarding an updated audio system in the Board of Commissioners Room. He stated that with upgraded microphones and other minor repairs, the system is capturing audio as it should. Mr. Hewett asked for direction regarding video recording of the Board meetings. He has received several quotes for equipment and installation of a video-recording system. Mr. Martin stated that Bladen Online continues to video record Board meetings and uploads to a Bladen Online YouTube channel for the public. The consensus of the Board was to not go forth with purchasing video recording equipment at this time.

The Board expressed its appreciation to Mr. Hewett for his diligence and follow through.

ITEM 8. Matters of Interest to Commissioners:

- A. Mr. Martin provided a brief overview of educational information available to citizens regarding an upcoming one-quarter cent Sales Tax Referendum, which, if accepted by Bladen County citizens, could increase sales tax revenue approximately \$460,000 annually for Bladen County and allow the Board of County Commissioners to reduce the tax rate from \$.82 to \$.80 per \$100 valuation.
- B. Mr. Martin provided a brief update regarding a Lock & Dam #2 and #3 potential project to design, engineer and construct rock arch fish passages into the upper Cape Fear River. Mr. Martin stated that of a \$21,000,000 harbor project earmarked for Wilmington, \$750,000 has been designated to the fish passages design for Locks and Dams #2 and #3.
- C. Mr. Martin stated that Requests for Proposals are being developed to publish for workers compensation, general liability and property insurance, as well as supplemental insurance for employees. Supplemental insurance offered to employees would not affect budget issues, as these types of employee insurance would be completely funded by participants through payroll deductions.

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- D. Mr. Martin stated that a department focus will be provided at the February 15, 2016 Board meeting by Mr. Larry Hammond of the Veterans Department. Mr. Martin stated that this type of departmental focus will be an on-going agenda item, focusing on different departments monthly.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Pait, seconded by Commissioner Bullock, the meeting was adjourned at 7:21pm.

ATTEST:

Maria C. Edwards, Clerk to the Board

Russell Priest, Chairman
Bladen County Board of Commissioners