

May 23, 2016

The Bladen County Board of Commissioners held a Special Meeting regarding Budget at 5:30pm on Monday May 23, 2016 in the Commissioners Meeting Room of the Bladen County Courthouse.

The following members were present:

Russell Priest, Chairman

Arthur Bullock

Charles R. Peterson

Billy Ray Pait

Daniel Dowless

Dr. Delilah Blanks

G. Michael Cogdell

Wayne Edge

James G. "Jimmie" Smith

Chairman Priest called the meeting to order.

An invocation was provided by Commissioner Smith. County Manager Greg Martin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ITEM 1. Review Proposed Budget Information:

Mr. Martin reviewed the proposed budget, which included a detailed review of EMS, Home Health and Public Safety. Mr. Martin provided an overview of issues impacting the budget, including sales tax expansion for education and economic development, local funding for health department programs and available funding for capital and non-inventorable items.

Ongoing financial concerns were discussed which included health services, public education and challenges associated with minimal growth in revenues. Challenges identified with health services are: structural changes in funding for mandated programs, home health and Community Alternatives Program (CAP). Identified challenges regarding public education continue to be a shift in student population to charter schools and long-term capital needs. Bladen County, as well as other rural counties within the state, encounters challenges associated to tax base and local sales tax.

Mr. Martin briefly discussed that the proposed budget includes a 3.2% increase over the prior year's budget. The increase was attributed to the increase in one-time capital outlays for non-inventorable items, and the sales tax expansion for Education and Economic Development. The proposed budget figures also included debt service and operating expenses associated with the future detention center. The property tax rate is proposed to be maintained at the current rate of \$0.82 per \$100 tax value.

Mr. Martin also noted a slight decrease in the real property value following a recent revaluation project. The tax collection rate was estimated to be 94.44% for the proposed budget.

Sales Tax Expansion has been included and is expected to generate an additional \$550,144 (a 12.96% increase over current year's budget). Approximately 29.41% of sales tax revenue has been earmarked for debt service and capital expenditures for Bladen County Schools.

ITEM 2. Discussion:

Discussions encompassed sales tax, EMS capital and staffing needs and the Home Health program.

ITEM 3. Upon a motion by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Smith, the Board unanimously scheduled a Public Hearing for 6:30pm on Monday, June 6, 2016 regarding Economic Development Appropriations.

ITEM 4. Other:

Upon a motion by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Pait, the Board unanimously scheduled a Special Meeting regarding Budget for 9:00am on Tuesday, May 31, 2016.

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Upon a motion by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Smith, the meeting was adjourned at 6:30pm.

ATTEST:

Maria C. Edwards, Clerk to the Board

Russell Priest, Chairman
Bladen County Board of Commissioners