

**June 8, 2020**

The Bladen County Board of Commissioners held a Special Meeting regarding FY 2020-21 Budget at 6:00pm on Monday, June 8, 2020. The meeting was held in the Superior Courtroom, 106 East Broad Street, Elizabethtown, NC.

Members present were:

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

Excused: Russell Priest

**Call to Order:**

Chairman Britt called the meeting to order. Bladen Community College Board of Trustee Chairman Dennis Troy provided an invocation. County Manager Greg Martin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ITEM 1. Public Hearing Regarding the Proposed FY 2020-21 Budget:**

Chairman Britt declared open the Public Hearing to receive comments regarding the proposed FY 2020-21 Budget. Prior to the meeting the following individuals and delegations requested an opportunity to address the Board:

- A. Bladen Community College President Dr. Amanda Lee expressed appreciation and understanding regarding the budgeting difficulties due to COVID-19. She provided an update regarding an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) bathroom renovations project. The three-year plan, as she explained, was under estimated for budgeting purposes. She requested an additional \$67,000 to assist in funding FY 2020-21 bathroom renovations to meet ADA requirements.  
Board of Trustees Chairman Dennis Troy expressed appreciation to the Board for past, present and future support of BCC. He voiced support of Dr. Lee's presentation.  
Following discussion and upon a motion by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Trivette, the Board unanimously approved funding an ADA-compliance bathroom renovations project during FY 2020-21.
- B. Computer Operations Director Robin Hewett addressed the Board regarding concerns about the telephone system. He stated that he has purchased all available spare parts for the system currently in place. He expressed concern regarding the possibility of a catastrophic event with the system.  
Following discussion and upon a motion by Commissioner Cogdell, seconded by Commissioner Munn-Goins, the Board unanimously approved moving \$251,000, previously placed in a budget line item earmarked for future capital projects, to a contingency line item for the purchase of a new telephone system. Mr. Hewett stated that he had not yet published a Request for Proposals for the telephone system and was unsure of a specific cost. He indicated that once the bid process is complete, he will return to the Board for approval to proceed with the replacement project. Mr. Hewett expressed appreciation.
- C. Mr. Martin read aloud a memo submitted by Bladen County Schools Superintendent Dr. Robert Taylor. Dr. Taylor expressed his absence due to a Board of Education meeting scheduled for the same evening. Through the correspondence, Dr. Taylor shared his concerns regarding challenges and considerable disruptions due to COVID-19. He requested a one-time allocation of \$5,000 to be included to fund a safety assessment.

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Dr. Taylor also requested the Board consider authorizing monthly Capital Outlay allocations, in lieu of quarterly project requests presented to the Board of Commissioners.

Following discussion and upon a motion by Commissioner Cogdell, seconded by Commissioner Munn-Goins, the Board voted to include a one-time allocation in the amount of \$5,000 to fund a safety assessment, but to revisit the allocation prior to the approval of the FY 2020-21 Budget. The motion carried upon a vote of six (6) AYES (Cogdell, Munn-Goins, Bullock, Trivette, Britt, Gooden) to two (2) NOES (Peterson, Dowless).

- D. Mrs. Lynn Warren addressed the Board regarding Christmas decorations on the courthouse property. She requested the Board consider allowing additional and larger decorations be displayed. Commissioner Peterson expressed willingness to assist Mrs. Warren if she would like to work together to raise necessary funds. Mrs. Warren expressed gratitude.
- E. A Town of Clarkton delegation, comprised of Mayor Tim Tart, Commissioner Jerome Myers, and Public Works Director Chris Hall, addressed the Board regarding a \$34,800 request for funding to assist in renovations and repairs of the Dixie Youth Park. During discussions, town officials expressed willingness to return to a future meeting in order to request a 50/50 matching grant for renovations and repairs not yet completed. The Board, voicing support of a renovation project, acknowledged that the ballfields could support state tournaments and produce sales tax revenue. Mayor Tart, Commissioner Myers, and Mr. Hall expressed appreciation.

**ITEM 2. Public Hearing to Receive Comments Regarding the Proposed Economic Development FY 2020-21 Budget:**

Chairman Britt declared open the Public Hearing to receive comments regarding the proposed Economic Development FY 2020-21 Budget.

Mr. Martin provided an overview for information of the Economic Development budget.

No one addressed the Board.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Gooden, the Board unanimously declared closed the Public Hearings.

**ITEM 3. FY 2020-21 Budget Discussion:**

Mr. Martin provided an overview of requested revisions to the proposed Budget. He stated that the revisions increased the Fund Balance appropriation by \$106,595. The revisions included funding the purchase of ten (10) patrol vehicles to the Sheriff's Office budget, funding the purchase of an ambulance to Emergency Medical Services' budget, and transitioning a Women-Infants-Children (WIC) Nutritionist position to fund a Registered Nurse position. Mr. Martin reminded the Board that the purchase of seven (7) patrol vehicles and the ambulance purchase had been placed in a contingency line item originally. However, the Board requested that the number of patrol vehicles be increased to ten (10), as has been practice in recent years.

Following budget discussion, the Board reviewed current requested revisions, including \$67,000 for Bladen Community College's bathroom renovations, and moving \$251,000 from a future capital project fund savings to contingency for the purchase of a new telephone system, as well as a one-time allocation of \$5,000 to Bladen County Schools to fund a safety assessment project.

Mr. Martin provided a brief update regarding a Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) Plan which was established through the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Funding in the amount of \$782,398 has been granted by North Carolina to assist in offsetting costs associated with COVID-19 related expenses. He stated that he and Finance Officer Lisa Coleman would participate in a teleconference on

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Tuesday to receive additional guidance related to reimbursable expenses. He reminded the Board that the funding had been granted to the County, but municipalities have been requested to submit plans through the County.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Trivette, the Board unanimously adjourned the Special Meeting at 7:37pm.

ATTEST:

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Maria C. Edwards, NCCCC  
Clerk to the Board

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Ray Britt  
Chairman