

November 17, 2014

A special meeting of the Bladen County Board of Commissioners was held on Monday, November 17, 2014 at 5:00pm regarding proposed Golden LEAF projects.

Members present:

Chairman James G. Smith

Mark Gillespie, Vice Chairman

Charles Ray Peterson

Dr. Delilah Blanks

Daniel Dowless

Billy Ray Pait

Wayne Edge

Russell Priest

G. Michael Cogdell

ITEM 1. Chairman James G. Smith

Chairman Smith called the meeting to order and provided an invocation.

ITEM 2. County Manager Greg Martin

Mr. Martin provided a brief overview of each of the three proposed projects to be presented by Bladen Community College, the Town of Elizabethtown and Bladen County Schools. Mr. Martin reviewed the structure of this competitive Golden LEAF Community Based Grants Initiative. There are twenty-two (22) counties within the Northwest and Sandhills Prosperity Zones eligible to apply for a total of \$12.5 million dollars. Each county will have an opportunity to submit up to three proposals, not to exceed a total of \$1.5 million.

- A. Bladen Community College President Dr. William Findt and Board of Trustees Chairman Dennis Troy presented a proposed Advanced Manufacturing Technology facility which would support STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) programs for college and high school students. The proposed facility would strengthen the ability of BCC and Bladen County Schools to provide STEM programs for students, businesses and industries in Bladen and surrounding counties.

The proposed Advanced Manufacturing Technology facility will house an industrial chemistry laboratory, an advanced manufacturing technology simulation laboratory, a STEM computer classroom, a designated STEM courses classroom, office space and an advanced manufacturing technology industrial bay. The proposed structure to house these facilities is an 8,500 square foot building. Bladen Community College requested \$540,000 through Golden LEAF, \$900,000 through the US Economic Development Administration and \$50,000 from Bladen County for the proposed \$1.49 million for the project.

Dr. Findt shared with the Board that BCC had individually submitted this proposed project to Golden LEAF during a previous funding campaign. The project was not funded at that time. However, Golden LEAF representatives contacted BCC to encourage resubmitting the project through the Community Based Grants Initiative.

Dr. Findt thanked the Board for its consideration and for allowing BCC to make its presentation.

- B. Elizabethtown Town Manager Eddie Madden and Town Council Member Richard C. Glenn presented a proposed Elizabethtown Airport/Industrial Park Expansion and Master Planning Project. Mr. Madden further explained the proposal includes five (5) projects, including: a Taxiway extension, a Master Planning Project, a Water/Sewer extension project, a Service entrance improvement project and a Roadway extension project.

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Mr. Madden stated that with successful Golden LEAF funding, the North Carolina Department of Transportation, Division of Aviation has recommended that \$700,000 be granted to assist in a Taxiway extension.

Mr. Madden presented an overview of the proposed project, noting additional project sponsors including the Town of Elizabethtown, Bladen County Economic Development Commission, Elizabethtown Airport/Economic Development Commission and Bladen's Bloomin.

A Taxiway extension was proposed for a total of \$1,100,000, with \$700,000 from NCDOT and \$400,000 funded by Golden LEAF. A Master Planning project for the existing Industrial Park was proposed for a total of \$50,000, to be funded by Golden LEAF. A Water/Sewer improvement project was proposed for a total of \$197,000 in Golden LEAF Funds. The balance of the overall proposed project, Service Entrance improvements and a Roadway extension project was proposed to be funded by NCDOT/Department of Commerce funds.

A total of \$647,000 is proposed to be funded by Golden LEAF Community Based Grants Initiative.

Mr. Madden and Mr. Glenn expressed their appreciation to the Board for its time and consideration.

- C. Public Relations and Communications Officer Valerie Newton, representing Bladen County Schools, voiced Superintendent Dr. Taylor's regret being unable to attend the Special Meeting.

Ms. Newton provided the School's proposed STEM-focused Academy and enhanced STEM curriculum for middle school students at four other middle schools within the county. An Academy is proposed to be created at Elizabethtown Middle School for 100 participants. Students would be required to apply for acceptance into the Academy in order to receive rigorous and accelerated curriculum beyond the regular middle school offerings, rich in laboratory and work-based experiences. Courses would be designed to challenge students with integrated technologies and extensive problem-solving opportunities. Opportunities to work with experts in the field and current technology both within the school and community would be an essential part of the program.

Some upgrade renovations would be necessary at Elizabethtown Middle School to construct a STEM Academy. STEM labs at the four other middle schools would be upgraded with lab equipment. Curriculum materials would be the same throughout the county. However, Academy students would receive a laptop to use not only at school, but at home as well. The balance of STEM programs would receive a rolling cart to store and recharge up to 32 laptops. The proposed project would impact an estimated 1,126 middle school students, with an estimated total middle school enrollment of 1,447.

In summary, the cost breakdown for Bladen County Schools' proposal includes laboratory equipment of \$85,000; curriculum materials in the amount of \$192,000; student computer equipment of \$188,000; and facility upgrades of \$35,000, for an estimated total of \$500,000 in Golden LEAF funding. The balance of \$100,000 would be funded by Bladen County Schools and would include additional student computer equipment estimated to be \$12,000; an Academy facilitator in the amount of \$48,000; and additional facility upgrades of \$40,000.

Ms. Newton extended her appreciation to the Board for its time and consideration.

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Chairman Smith thanked each of the representatives for their professional and informative presentations.

Upon motion by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Gillespie, the Board adjourned the meeting at 5:45pm.

ATTEST:

Maria C. Edwards, Clerk

James G. Smith, Chairman