

**April 29, 2015**

A special joint committee meeting of the Bladen County Board of Commissioners and the Board of Education was held on Wednesday, April 29, 2015 at 5:00 pm in the Health Department Conference Room, 300 Mercer Mill Road, Elizabethtown. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the school system's FY 2015-2016 Budget and Capital Needs.

Members present were:

Charles R. Peterson, Chairman

Russell Priest, Vice-Chairman (arrived at 5:07pm)

Delilah Blanks

Michael Cogdell

Arthur Bullock

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

Superintendent Robert Taylor reviewed the Projected Current Expense Budget for FY 2015-2016, totaling \$7,422,148, an increase of \$846,903 over the FY 2014-2015 Budget. He stated that the proposed budget includes a 3% increase in salary and benefits, and additional funding for clerical positions resulting from cuts in state funding.

Dr. Taylor also reviewed a capital project request for the 1:1 Program which would supply laptops for each high school student. This capital project would continue for three (3) years at an annual cost of \$167,000 each year.

Dr. Taylor indicated that the Board of Education identified reductions and cuts in the amount of \$642,000 which is not reflected in the projected current expense budget. The potential cuts would affect transportation costs, maintenance services, janitorial services, supplies & materials, athletics, school resource officers, and employee positions. Drivers' Education is an unfunded mandated program, which the county must bear in the amount of approximately \$57,000. He stated that an additional \$205,000 in cuts would need to be identified in order to maintain current year budget levels.

Dr. Wilbur Smith, Board of Education member, expressed his appreciation to Bladen County and its residents for caring for the school system. He stated that the Board of Education is continually looking for ways to make the budget work and that additional funds would do that.

Following discussion regarding the budget, possible cuts, charter schools, average daily membership (ADM), Dr. Taylor shared his view regarding consolidation of schools in order to better maintain facilities and overhead.

Dr. Taylor and the Board of Education members expressed their appreciation to the County Commissioners for their time and consideration.

There being no other business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 6:24pm.

ATTEST:

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Maria C. Edwards, Clerk to the Board

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Charles R. Peterson, Chairman