

June 6, 2017

A Special Meeting of the Bladen County Board of Commissioners was held on Tuesday, June 6, 2017 at 5:00 pm in the conference room at the Powell-Melvin Agriculture Center, 450 Smith Circle, Elizabethtown, NC. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss budget and capital needs related to Bladen County Schools.

Members present were:

Charles R. Peterson, Chairman

Ray Britt, Vice Chairman

Michael Cogdell

Daniel Dowless

Arthur Bullock

Russell Priest

David Gooden

Ashley Trivette

Excused: Ophelia Munn-Goins

Chairman Peterson called the meeting to order and provided the invocation. County Manager Greg Martin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Peterson recognized Commissioner Priest to address the group. Commissioner Priest recognized Bladen County Schools Superintendent Dr. Robert Taylor as a recipient of the 2017 Friday Medal from the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation at NC State University's College of Education. This medal honors distinguished superintendents for their contributions in advancing education. Dr. Taylor expressed appreciation.

Dr. Taylor and Finance Officer Sharon Penny provided a brief review of the school system's FY 2017-18 budget request. The original budget requested an increase in County funding in the amount of \$394,342 in current expense, along with a \$500,000 capital request to construct a ten classroom addition at Bladen Lakes Primary School as a part of school realignment.

Due to state education budget cuts and anticipated loss of students to charter schools, Mrs. Penny estimates a reduction in funding of \$678,000 for FY 2017-18. Mrs. Penny stated that actual cuts could affect the budget by approximately \$1,000,000. Cost increases are expected for retirement, health insurance, and salary increases. She indicated that some salaries may need to be funded with local dollars.

Dr. Taylor stated that until schools start in the fall there is no exact information to indicate how charter schools could affect the student population of Bladen County Public Schools. Mrs. Penny stated that should charter school enrollment be at maximum estimates along with anticipated state-funding decreases, additional employee reductions would be necessary.

Following discussion regarding possible consolidation, realignment possibilities, and capital expenditures, Chairman Peterson stated that the Board of County Commissioners does not support a proposed consolidation plan which has recently been presented during town hall-type meetings.

Chairman Peterson thanked everyone for their time.

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Peterson at 6:30 pm.

ATTEST:

Maria C. Edwards, Clerk to the Board

Charles R. Peterson, Chairman