

June 22, 2015

A Special Meeting of the Bladen County Board of Commissioners was held on Monday, June 22, 2015 at 6:00 pm in the Commissioners Room on the lower level of the Courthouse. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss FY 2015-16 Budget, Medicaid Transportation vendors, a revised Medication Assistance Program (MAP) grant application, potential sales tax legislation and an update regarding a timber bid for the detention and law enforcement center property.

Members present were:

Charles R. Peterson, Chairman

Russell Priest, Vice Chairman

Delilah Blanks

Michael Cogdell

James G. "Jimmie" Smith

Daniel Dowless

Billy Ray Pait

Wayne Edge

Arthur Bullock

County Attorney, Leslie Johnson

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

ITEM I. Consider Approving a Department of Social Services Medicaid Transportation Vendor:

Following discussion regarding insurance coverage, and clarifying mileage rates and the recommendation by the Health and Human Services Advisory Board of one (1) vendor for services and upon a motion by Commissioner Smith, seconded by Commissioner Priest, the Board voted to approve JOSS Transportation as the non-emergency Medicaid Transportation vendor for FY 2015-16, by a vote of six (6) AYES (Dowless, Edge, Pait, Peterson, Priest, Smith) to three (3) NOES (Blanks, Bullock, Cogdell).

ITEM II. Consider Approving a Revised Medication Assistance Program (MAP) Grant Application in the amount of \$35,305:

Health and Human Services Director Cris Harrelson presented a revised grant application to the Board. The original amount has been amended, and the new grant amount has now been recorded to be \$35,305.00. Upon a motion by Commissioner Smith, seconded by Commissioner Edge, the Board unanimously approved the Medication Assistance Program (MAP) grant application.

ITEM III: Review of Property Tax Rate:

Chairman Peterson reviewed the proposed tax rate, as follows:

- 0.7489 Revenue Neutral Rate
- 0.0479 New Jail Expenses
- 0.0175 EMS
- 0.0057 Economic Development
- 0.8200 Total Proposed Tax Rate

Chairman Peterson shared that the increase attached to the new jail would fund a new Information Technology position, new jail expenses and debt service. The EMS allocation would allow for the purchase of a remount ambulance, the purchase of a used ambulance, three (3) QRV's and the necessary revenue to assure critical services would be funded. The allocation for Economic Development would generate approximately \$144,000 to assist in developing a new shell building.

Commissioner Pait voiced his discomfort regarding the detention center construction project and timeliness of increasing the tax rate now for the property which would not be fully completed or staffed until possibly January, 2017. County Manager Greg Martin reminded the Board that construction loan interest payments would be paid by the County much sooner than January 2017. Chairman Peterson reminded the Board that if the tax

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rate wasn't increased now, it would necessitate another tax increase in the following fiscal year.

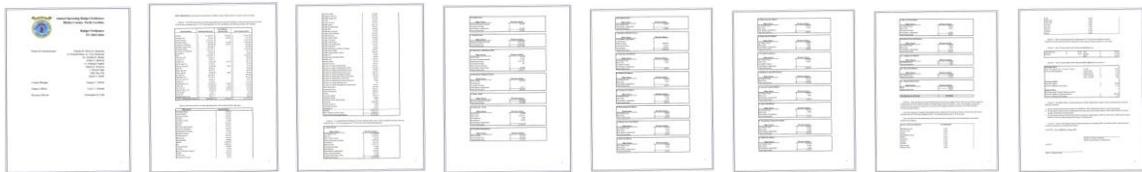
Commissioner Blanks stated that she wanted to discuss county salaries and a specific position. Chairman Peterson called for a motion to enter Closed Session under NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (6) Personnel matters.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bullock, seconded by Commissioner Blanks, the Board entered Closed Session at 6:14pm, by a vote of eight (8) AYES (Blanks, Bullock, Cogdell, Dowless, Edge, Pait, Peterson, Priest) to one (1) NO (Smith).

Upon a motion by Commissioner Dowless, seconded by Commissioner Bullock, the Board unanimously exited Closed Session at 6:33pm.

ITEM IV. Budget Discussion:

Chairman Peterson called for a motion to approve the property tax rate of \$0.82 and the Budget for FY 2015-16. Upon a motion by Commissioner Cogdell, seconded by Commissioner Edge, the Board, by a vote of six (6) AYES (Blanks, Bullock, Cogdell, Edge, Peterson, Priest) to three (3) NOES (Dowless, Pait, Smith), approved the tax rate of 0.82 and adopted the FY 2015-16 Budget Ordinance, as follows:



Following the adoption of the FY 2015-16 Budget and approving the tax rate, Chairman Peterson read from a prepared statement, addressing the challenges experienced in the development of the budget, with the addition of a detention and law enforcement center project and the countywide revaluation. He addressed budget shortfalls of the school system recently and the recognition of the need to develop a long-term, sustainable plan that is in the best interest of Bladen County's children and the community as a whole. He also discussed potential sales tax legislation, if passed, would assist rural counties by shifting the distribution of sales tax. He also shared his view regarding the possibility of the Board requesting a referendum to allow voters the opportunity to approve Article 46 ¼ cent sales tax, with the revenue to be earmarked for the specific purpose of relieving the property tax burden for Bladen County citizens.

ITEM V: Other Items:

- A. **Sales Tax:** Chairman Peterson and County Manager Greg Martin briefly discussed proposed legislation which may allow counties to hold a referendum to increase county sales tax. This legislation would benefit Bladen County and the municipalities in Bladen County.
- B. **Timber Bid Update:** Mr. Martin provided an overview of the Timber Bid process. Two companies responded by sealed bid, which were opened on Thursday, June 18, 2015. Gooden Land & Timber Company provided the high bid of \$3,600 to clear cut the new detention and law enforcement center site (7 +/- acres). This matter will be included on the July 20, 2015 agenda for formal approval.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Dowless, seconded by Commissioner Pait, the meeting was adjourned at 6:41pm.

ATTEST:

Maria C. Edwards, Clerk to the Board

Charles R. Peterson, Chairman