

February 21, 2008

A special meeting of the Bladen County Board of Commissioners was held on Thursday, February 21, 2008 at 5:00 pm in the Commissioners Room of the Courthouse with the following members present:

Margaret Lewis-Moore
Billy Ray Pait
Lewis Tatum
W.D. Neill, Jr.
James G. Smith
Larry Smith
Charles Ray Peterson
Greg Taylor

Absent: Delilah B. Blanks

Chairperson Moore called the meeting to order. Commissioner Pait provided the invocation and County Greg Martin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. PROJECT UPDATES/DISCUSSION:

A. Solid Waste Matters

- Convenient Centers Hours of Operation – General Services Manager requested that the Board consider changing the hours of operation when day light savings time begins on March 9, 2008. **A motion was made by W.D. Neill, Jr., seconded by Greg Taylor and approved to revert back to the regular hours of operation, 7am-7pm, on March 10, 2008.**

A motion was made by Charles Ray Peterson, seconded by Greg Taylor and approved to enter Closed session in accordance with N.C.G.S. 143-318.11 (a)(3) Attorney-Client Privilege.

Dinner

B. Guaranteed Energy Savings Project – County Manager Greg Martin discussed proposals from Energy Systems Group and Johnson Controls.

C. Rezoning Process – Planning Director Greg Elkins discussed the rezoning process. It was agreed that when there are contested cases, action will be taken at the Board of Commissioners Meeting following the Public Hearing.

D. Carnival Law – The Board reviewed House Bills 512 and 1126 regarding carnivals in Bladen County. It was suggested by the Board to pursue an amendment to the law allowing Bladen County to issue permits.

E. Cape Fear River Projects Update – County Manager Greg Martin provided an update of the Cape Fear River Projects including the Surface Water Treatment Project in Tar Heel and Lock and Dam #2.

F. Water District – Phase III South Project

- The Board reviewed the data for the road selection process for the water project and discussed the best method for obtaining 85% participation. The Board requested a list of the people that have signed up for water. The Board agreed to talk with potential water users in regards to signing up for water in an effort to achieve 85% participation. Hobb Upchurch and Associates will develop a list of five alternative roads to consider.

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G. Courthouse and County Building Security

- The Board reviewed a presentation that was made in 2006 regarding courthouse and county building security. The overview included estimated costs, recommendations, etc. It was agreed that this initiative would be ranked with other capital improvement projects.

H. Court Facilities

- The Board discussed the idea of holding court in various towns throughout the county. The Board agreed for the County Manager to talk with other counties to see how they address court in towns other than the county seat.

I. Gang Activity

- The Board discussed the fact that Gang related activity is increasingly becoming an issue throughout Bladen County. **A motion was made by Greg Taylor, seconded by James G. Smith and approved to form a Gang Strategic Planning Committee consisting of the following members: County Manager Greg Martin, Commissioner Charles Ray Peterson, and Sheriff Steve Bunn.**

2. FINANCIAL MATTERS:

A. Financial Overview

- County Manager Greg Martin reviewed the tax base and sales tax history, 3 year audit comparison, school funding history, and the projections for 2008.

B. Comprehensive Annual Financial Report

- Copies of the CAFR were presented to Board members. Finance Director and her staff were commended for completing this project.

C. State Health Plan Requirements

- County Manager Greg Martin discussed a letter received on January 14, 2008 which stated that counties must pay for all retirees' health coverage or none at all. This would require counties to pay 4.1% of payroll for retirees' health coverage. It was discussed that when the county enrolled in the State Health plan, it was understood that county policies regarding retiree coverage would be followed.

D. Health Coverage for Hospital Retirees

- County Manager Greg Martin informed the Board that Cape Fear Valley Health system will not be paying for Bladen County Hospital retiree health coverage so it will be the county's responsibility to fund this cost for existing retirees until age 65. Cost estimates were reviewed.

E. Animal Shelter Expansion

- **A motion was made by Greg Taylor, seconded by Lewis Tatum and approved to appropriate \$115,480 to complete the animal shelter and finance the Animal Shelter Project for 59 months at 3.4% with First Citizens Bank.**

F. Health Board Compensation

- The Board reviewed the request from Health Director Wayne Stewart regarding an increase in the compensation for Health Board Members from \$15.00 to \$30.00 per month. No action was taken.

G. Process for Mid Year Budget Requests

- The Board discussed recurring requests vs. non-recurring requests. It was agreed to begin a practice of tabling mid-year recurring requests until the following meeting.

3. Capital Improvement Program

- County Manager Greg Martin reviewed the Capital Improvement Program.

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4. Capital Projects Prioritization

- Jan Maynor, Lumber River Council of Governments Planning Director and Lisa Coleman, Finance Director, conducted an activity with the Board to prioritize capital projects. The activity consisted of placing a red (urgent), blue (pressing), green (moderate), or yellow (monitor) dot on each project to rank the need for each project.

5. Revenue Options to Consider:

A. Sales Tax Referendum

- The Board agreed to discuss a proposed sales tax referendum during the budget process.

B. Land Transfer Tax Referendum

6. Board Issues/Priorities

A motion was made by Lewis Tatum, seconded by Greg Taylor and approved to adjourn at 9:30 pm.

**Margaret Lewis-Moore, Chairperson
Bladen County Board of Commissioners**

ATTEST:

Ashley C. Sasser, Clerk