

**January 8, 2007**

A regular meeting of the Bladen County Board of Commissioners was held in the Commissioners Room of the Courthouse at 6:30 p.m. with the following members present:

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

Attorney: Wes Johnson, Johnson Law Firm

**ITEM 1. CONSENT ITEMS:**

**A motion was made by James G. Smith, seconded by Delilah Blanks and approved to adopt the following Consent Items:**

- A. Approve Minutes: December 4, 2006 (Amended) and December 18, 2006**
- B. Approve Agenda:**
- C. Approve Budget Amendments:**

**Sheriff**

Exp. 105100.741 Capital Outlay Vehicles	\$4,194.00	
Rev. 103190.011 Insurance	\$4,194.00	

**Administration/Workers Compensation Fund**

Exp. 136800.540 Work Comp. Ins.	\$85,147.00	
Rev. 133190.010 Misc. Rev.		\$411,084.00
Rev. 133190.150 FBA	\$496,231.00	
Exp. 106800.540 Insurance/Bonds		\$496,231.00
Rev. 103190.050 FBA		\$496,231.00

**Water District**

Exp. 254700.480 Bulk Water	\$56,000.00	
Rev. 253490.010 Fund Balance	\$56,000.00	

**Health Department**

Exp. 105900.330 Supplies	\$3,892.73	
Rev. 103560.092 Hep B/Flu/Pneumonia	\$3,892.73	

JANUARY 8, 2007

**Division on Aging**

Exp. 106210.331 Health Promotion	\$3,000.00	
Rev. 103530.024 In Home Health	\$3,000.00	

- D. Approve County Attorney Invoices:
  - Tax Foreclosure – James White \$17.00
  - Retainer for January \$300.00
  - CVS 00066 \$365.00
  - Glenn Thompson Estate \$1,500.00
  - Billy Cook Legal Matter \$250.00
- E. Approve Rural Center Grant Co. #:02-71-24 Amendment No. 3
- F. Approve Proclamation Declaring January as 4-H Friends of Youth Mentoring Month:

JANUARY 8, 2007

**ITEM 2. MATTERS OF INTEREST TO COMMISSIONERS:**

- A. Present 4-H Friends of Youth Proclamation: Chairperson Moore** called on 4-H Friends of Youth Director Stephanie Hollis to step forward to accept the proclamation. Ms. Hollis introduced Mr. Robert Jessup (current mentor) and Mr. Arthur Bullock (past mentor).

Mr. Jessup advised that he enjoys mentoring and helping children. Ms. Hollis called on the child that Mr. Jessup mentors and asked him to stand for recognition.

Mr. Bullock advised that he is a past mentor, and he talked about things that he and the child he mentored did together. He indicated that he talked with the child about the importance of a good education and that he carried him to many of the organizations that he was affiliated with, such as rescue squad and church. Mr. Bullock also advised that he carried the child to doctors' appointments and school and that he basically showed him lots of attention. Mr. Bullock concluded his remarks and advised that later the child's father became more involved and that the child graduated from Bladen Community College. He indicated that he still communicates with the child on occasion.

The Board expressed appreciation to Mr. Jessup and Mr. Bullock for the positive influence they have had on children they have mentored and for their dedication of time as volunteers in a worthwhile organization.

- B. Recognize Mr. Craven Kinlaw and Mr. Matthew Kinlaw for Acts of Heroism:** Chairperson Moore introduced Mr. Craven Kinlaw and Mr. Matthew Kinlaw and advised that Bladen County is home to two heroes. She further advised that it takes spiritual fortitude to perform an act of heroism such as what the Kinlaws did. Chairperson Moore expressed appreciation to the gentlemen on behalf of the Board of Commissioners.

Ms. Moore called on Emergency Services Director Mitchell Byrd. Mr. Byrd advised that the Kinlaws came upon an accident involving a vehicle on fire with a lady pinned inside. He indicated that they immediately started trying to free the lady along with the assistance of the Bladenboro Fire Department. Mr. Byrd advised that Medals of Valor were presented to the department at a meeting of the Bladenboro Fire Department. Mr. Byrd further advised that on behalf of Emergency Services and the National Fire Association, he was presenting a District Service Award to Mr. Craven Kinlaw and Mr. Matthew Kinlaw for their acts of heroism. Mr. Byrd advised that the two gentlemen put themselves in harms way when they took the action to rescue the lady pinned in her vehicle.

Chairperson Moore expressed appreciation to Mr. Byrd on behalf of the Board of Commissioners.

- C. Recognize County Employee Retirees:**

Chairperson Moore called on three County Employee Retirees, Ms. Floratine Mitchell, Ms. Elaine Potter, and Mr. Charlie Tatum to step forward for recognition of long time service to Bladen County Government. Ms. Moore read each plaque and recognized Ms. Mitchell for 21 years, 4 months of service, Ms. Elaine Potter for 25 years, 5 months of service, and Mr. Charlie Tatum for 34 years, 5 months of service.

Ms. Potter advised that she enjoyed working for the Bladen County Register of Deeds Office during her career and thanked the Board. She advised that she was looking forward to her retirement.

Mr. Tatum expressed appreciation to God for being blessed with 34 years of service to Bladen County. Mr. Tatum reminisced about his career and discussed the progression made by the Solid Waste Department from its beginning until the development of Solid Waste Convenience Centers.

JANUARY 8, 2007

Ms. Mitchell advised that she had enjoyed working for the County and that she was also looking forward to her retirement.

Register of Deeds Charity Lewis expressed appreciation to Ms. Potter and Ms. Mitchell for their dedicated service as County Employees. She advised that Ms. Potter was an employee within the Register of Deeds Office and that she was a very dependable employee who performed exemplary service.

D. Chairperson Moore discussed the litter problem along the highways in Bladen County. She provided examples of large items such as mattresses, couches, chairs, and bags of trash being strewn along the roadside. Ms. Moore requested County staff to check into the problem. General Services Manager Robert Mazur advised that he is trying to get the Department of Correction to schedule roadside cleanup activities. Chairperson Moore indicated that it would take more than the Department of Correction to clean up the debris she referred to. She advised that the citizens of Bladen County would have to get involved and bring attention to the problem as well.

ITEM 3. INDIVIDUAL/DELEGATIONS WISHING TO ADDRESS COMMISSIONERS:

White Lake Resident Tim Kinlaw addressed the Board regarding the 2007 Revaluation. He indicated that his values have quadrupled since he purchased property at White Lake several years ago. Mr. Kinlaw advised that people are genuinely upset that they will lose their property if values remain as reflected on the 2007 notices because they can't afford to pay the tax bill. Mr. Kinlaw requested that the Board look at a seven-year history of valuations, not just a few months. Mr. Kinlaw concluded his remarks and expressed appreciation to the Board for hearing his concerns.

ITEM 4. REVALUATION UPDATE:

Mr. Tim Cain of Assessment Solutions, Inc. addressed the Board and expressed appreciation to Mr. Kinlaw for his comments. He advised that there are three reasons for the change in revaluation values. (1) Demand for two lakes, Bay Tree and White Lake. He indicated that these are the two largest appreciating areas in the County. He indicated that several sales were disregarded because they were not true "arms length" transactions. (2) Woodlands in Bladen County have not been revaluated since 1975. He indicated that there have been no changes in woodlands until now and that the changes are still less than the rate of inflation. (3) Change in General Statute that converts Manufactured Homes from Personal to Real Property. Mr. Kinlaw advised that Single and Doublewide Mobile Homes changed to Real Property if they are permanently attached to the land.

Commissioner Delilah Blanks questioned why trees are valued higher along the 87 corridor than trees located in other areas of the county. Mr. Kinlaw explained that the values are based on the sales comparison approach. Dr. Blanks advised woodlands in East Arcadia are wasteland when the trees are gone. She advised that the area is wetlands and won't perk. Dr. Blanks further advised that in her opinion there is no way that woodlands will value \$1,200 in East Arcadia and \$700 in another area.

Commissioner Neill provided an example of a tract of land that is landlocked with no road, and valued at \$40,000. He questioned how the property could be valued so high. Mr. Cain indicated that timber was not looked at as a cash crop, the land was valued.

Commissioner Peterson questioned the classification of farmland. Discussion was held regarding the Present Use Program. He also questioned why Assessment Solutions couldn't review all of the parcels instead of inconveniencing the taxpayers by putting the burden of proof on the taxpayer. Mr. Peterson questioned the value of a particular home

JANUARY 8, 2007

that increased from \$93,000 to \$281,00 in valuation. He further advised that the home has no County water and is surrounded by chicken and hog houses. Mr. Cain indicated that he would relook at the home to which Mr. Peterson was referring.

Mr. Cain advised that the Board of Commissioners has the opportunity to provide a tax rate reduction to the lowest tax rate this Board has ever seen.

Commissioner Taylor questioned why until now has no revaluation been done on wooded acreage since 1975. Mr. Cain advised that in his opinion, the value of wooded acreage did increase but the assessed value hasn't changed since 1975.

Commissioner Tatum advised that he has been getting lots of question regarding the revaluation and that he has advised citizens to call for an appointment with Assessment Solutions.

Mr. Cain expressed appreciation to the Board for being able to explain the Revaluation Process and advised that at the end of this process, he wants everyone to agree that the revaluation was fair.

ITEM 5. EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES:

- A. Consider Purchase of Automatic External Defibrillators – Emergency Services Director Mitchell Byrd advised that Automatic External Defibrillators (AED's) have been placed in locations where large groups of people work and meet and that the devices have saved lives. He advised that he believed it is in the best interest of Bladen County Government to purchase six AED's to be placed in areas of high volume work and assembly areas to include the Courthouse, Social Services, Parks and Recreation, Division on Aging, and the Powell-Melvin Building. He indicated that the cost of one AED and locking cabinet is approximately \$1,800 and total cost of the project would be \$10,800. **A motion was made by Greg Taylor, seconded by W. D. Neill, Jr. to purchase six Automatic External Defibrillators for County Buildings at a cost of \$10,800.00.** Commissioner Blanks called for discussion. She questioned whether other agencies assist or share in the cost. County Manager Greg Martin advised that other agencies, such as DSS, would share in the cost. **Chairperson Moore called for a vote on the motion. The vote was unanimous.**
- B. Consider Ambulance Purchase – Mr. Byrd addressed the Board regarding a previous meeting in which the need to purchase a new ambulance was discussed. He indicated that if a new ambulance was purchased, it would assist with the increasing call volume and allow the same rotation of the County's present fleet.

Mr. Byrd advised that the 1997 Kelly Rescue truck is presently being used in the non-emergency service. He indicated that the vehicle has 165,000 miles on it and this year will be ten years old. Mr. Byrd advised that it is not feasible at this time to purchase a different make such as a Chevrolet or GMC. He indicated that the two primary vendors located in North Carolina do not have a Chevrolet or GMC chassis and could not accommodate the county's needs for about three to four months. Mr. Byrd advised that it is his recommendation to purchase the Wheeled Coach Type III Ambulance at a price of \$82,019.00. He indicated that the price does not include NC Office of EMS mandates such as lettering, communication equipment and ALS medical equipment which would bring the entire cost to approximately \$89,000, but is still below State contract price. **A motion was made by Charles Ray Peterson, seconded by Larry Smith to approve the purchase of a Wheeled Coach Type III Ambulance at a price of \$82,019.00. The vote was unanimous.**

- C. Consider EMS Crew Stationed in White Oak for 90-Day Trial Period – Emergency Services Director Mitchell Byrd advised that the County has seen an increase in the volume of calls to the Tar Heel and Tobermory

JANUARY 8, 2007

communities. He indicated that presently this area is served by the medic truck stationed in Bladenboro, which also serves Dublin, Bladenboro, and the Abbottsburg communities. Mr. Byrd further advised that some of the communities have fire department sponsored first responders who provide pre hospital care to the citizens of life threatening emergencies until EMS or rescue arrives on the scene. He advised that Tar Heel and White Oak communities do not have a first responder program. Mr. Byrd also advised that due to volunteer firemen working different shifts, their employer sometimes may not allow them to leave to respond on an EMS call and that the Ammon and Hickory Grove fire departments do not have any firemen that are available to respond to medical emergencies. Mr. Byrd further advised that he would like to move one of the reserve medic trucks to the White Oak Fire Department to provide coverage to White Oak, Tar Heel, Tobermory and to assist with covering the Ammon and Hickory Grove communities. Mr. Byrd advised that he would like to place this truck in the area on a three month trial basis at a cost of approximately \$25,000 and that he planned to use part time employees to cover the hours. **A motion was made by Charles Ray Peterson, seconded by Billy Ray Pait to approve request to station an EMS crew in White Oak for a 90-day trial period. The vote was unanimous.**

**ITEM 6. GENERAL SERVICES:**

General Services Manager Robert Mazur advised that he has been working to develop a plan to better facilitate presentations at the commissioners meetings so that everyone in the meeting could view the presentation. He indicated that he has been working with Evans Computer Solutions on pricing to utilize technology to achieve a versatile, state-of-the-art professional presentation system. Mr. Mazur also advised that the courts could also benefit from the use of the technology and those facilities fees could be utilized to pay for the project. **A motion was made by James G. Smith, seconded by Delilah B. Blanks and approved to purchase AV Technology equipment for the Board of Commissioners Meeting Room. The motion also included that the funds to purchase the equipment will be paid from the Facilities Fees Account.**

**ITEM 7. ADVISORY BOARDS:**

- A. Child Fatality/Protection Team – Tabled**
- B. BARTS Advisory Board – Tabled**
- C. Library Board – A motion was made by James G. Smith, seconded by Delilah B. Blanks and approved to appoint Irene Creech and Barbara Wilkins to the Bladen County Library Board. The appointments will expire December 31, 2009.**
- D. Keep Bladen Beautiful Advisory Committee – A motion was made by James G. Smith, seconded by Billy Ray Pait and approved to appoint John Henry Creech in the unexpired seat held by Ed Bradshaw and to table the William McNeill seat. Mr. Creech’s appointment will expire March 31, 2008.**

**ITEM 8. COUNTY MANAGER:**

- A. Calendar Review - Mr. Martin reminded the Board of upcoming calendar events:
  - (1) He advised that the Legislative Goals conference is scheduled for January 11-12 in Pinehurst.
  - (2) Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday and Employee Holiday – January 15, 2007.
  - (3) Millwork Specialties Appreciation Luncheon – January 16, 2007 at 11:30 in Clarkton.
  - (4) Board of Commissioners Meeting rescheduled to January 22, 2007.**
- B. A motion was made by Lewis Tatum, seconded by W. D. Neill, Jr. and approved to schedule a Planning Session for Tuesday, January 30, 2007**

JANUARY 8, 2007

**at 5:00 p.m. in the Commissioners Meeting Room. The purpose of the meeting is to conduct a Board Planning Session.**

- C. Legislative Liaison Appointment – **A motion was made by Delilah B. Blanks, seconded by Billy Ray Pait and approved to appoint Chairperson Margaret Lewis-Moore as Legislative Liaison person for the NCACC.**
- D. Account for Payment of Local Matching Funds for Rural Center Sewer Grant  
Mr. Martin advised that a request from the Town of Elizabethtown for release of \$29,100 in local matching funds for the Rural Center Grant Sewer project was received. He indicated that Bladen County committed the matching funds for the Rural Center Water Grant to Bladen County as well as matching funds for the Rural Center Sewer Grant to the Town of Elizabethtown. In the original agreement, these funds were to be paid from the Agricultural Facilities Trust Account which totals approximately \$62,000. Mr. Martin asked the Board if it still wishes to use the Agricultural Facilities Trust Account to make the payment.

A motion was made by Charles Ray Peterson, seconded by Lewis Tatum to use the Agricultural Facilities Trust Account funds to provide local matching funds for sewer.

Chairperson Moore called for discussion. Commissioner Taylor advised that volunteers raised the funds for a specific purpose, to purchase property free and clear and he further advised that he hesitates to use funds raised by volunteers.

Commissioner Peterson advised that he never understood that tax money would be used for matching funds to the Town of Elizabethtown.

Commissioner Blanks advised that volunteers raised \$50,000 and that she hesitates to vote for a match and not get land without consultation with other persons involved.

Commissioner Tatum advised that he has no problem with taking the balance of money to purchase six acres after providing the match to the Town of Elizabethtown and do both projects at \$5,000 per acre.

**A Substitute Motion was made by Delilah B. Blanks, seconded by Greg Taylor to table the discussion. The vote was unanimous.**

**A motion was made by Larry Smith, seconded by Billy Ray Pait and approved to adjourn at 8:40 p.m.**

---

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

**ATTEST:**

---

**Kathy P. Britt, Clerk**