

MARCH 19, 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 B. Blanks
Larry Smith
W. D. Neill, Jr.
James G. Smith
Greg Taylor
Charles Ray Peterson

Attorney: Wes Johnson, Johnson Law Firm

Chairperson Moore called the meeting to order. Commissioner Greg Taylor provided the Invocation and County Manager Greg Martin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

ITEM 1. CONSENT ITEMS:

- A. Approve Minutes:** March 12, 2007 (Regular Session)
- B. Approve Agenda:**
- C. Approve Budget Amendments:**

	Increase	Decrease
<u>Public Library</u>		
Exp. 106700.330 Supplies	\$100.00	
Rev. 103190.010 E-town Kiwanis Club	\$100.00	
Expenditure:		
106700.280 Audiovisual		\$1,000.00
106700.280 Audiovisual		\$450.00
Revenue:		
106700.330 Supplies	\$1,000.00	
106700.450 Contracted Services	\$450.00	
<u>Health Department</u>		
Exp. 105920.330 Supplies	\$3,375.00	
Rev. 103530.090 DHHS-Family Planning	\$3,375.00	
<u>Register of Deeds</u>		
Exp. 104800.740 Capital Outlay	\$3,000.00	
Rev. 103190.050 FBA	\$3,000.00	
<u>Social Services</u>		
Exp. 146160.455 Caring for Kids Foster Care	\$117.00	
Rev. 143530.344 Caring for Kids United Way	\$117.00	

- D. Approve County Attorney Invoices:** Tax Foreclosure \$34.00
- E. Approve Tax Refunds/Releases for February: Docket # 104**
- F. Approve Child Abuse Prevention Month Proclamation.**
- G. Approve Request for Town of McDonald to Join Lumber River Council of Governments.**
- H. Approve Rural Center Grant Contract #02-66-64, Amendment No. 3.**

ITEM 2. MATTERS OF INTEREST TO COMMISSIONERS:

MARCH 19, 2007

- A. Chairperson Moore called on Families First Representative Marjorie Walker to step forward to receive the adopted Child Abuse Prevention Proclamation. She expressed appreciation to Ms. Walker and the Families First organization for championing the rights of children.
- B. County Council President Linda Rivenbark updated the Board on activities of the Bladen County Extension and Community Association. She discussed the following items pertaining to Extension and Community Association: Purpose, Membership, Mission, History, Membership Benefits, and Opportunities. Ms. Rivenbark concluded the presentation and advised that she wanted to inform the Board of who the Extension and Community Association is and what it contributes to Bladen County. Ms. Moore expressed appreciation to Ms. Rivenbark for the presentation and for the contributions to the citizens of Bladen County as well as across the State.
- C. **Consider Resolutions Supporting NCACC Priority Goals: A motion was made by W. D. Neill, Jr., seconded by Lewis Tatum and approved to adopt the following resolutions in support of the NCACC's priority goals:**

**RESOLUTION
SUPPORTING MEDICAID RELIEF FOR COUNTIES**

WHEREAS, Bladen County pays \$3,500,000 for services to Medicaid eligible citizens; and

WHEREAS, the counties share of Medicaid reimbursements has increased 96 percent since 2000 and is projected to total more than \$517 million during the 2007-08 fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina is the only state in the nation that requires counties to pay a fixed share of all Medicaid services costs; and

WHEREAS, in Bladen County, the per capita cost of Medicaid is \$106.06

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Bladen County Board of Commissioners urges the North Carolina General Assembly to provide immediate Medicaid relief to Bladen County.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the members of the General Assembly representing Bladen County and the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners.

**RESOLUTION
SUPPORTING A STATEWIDE REFERENDUM
ON A BOND ISSUE FOR SCHOOL FACILITY NEEDS**

WHEREAS, North Carolina has the fourth fastest-growing elementary school population in the nation; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Public Instruction's School Planning section 2006 Long Range Facility Plans recently identified \$9.7 billion of school facility needs over the next five years, and \$37 million in needs in Bladen County; and

WHEREAS, the state's mandate that counties pay 15 percent of North Carolina's Medicaid share mandate is projected to cost Bladen County roughly \$3,500,000 during the 2007-08 fiscal year, compromising the county's ability to meet the demands for new classroom space and fund other critical infrastructure needs; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Education Lottery is projected to provide just \$140 million statewide for county school capital needs, and just \$359,350 for Bladen County; and

WHEREAS, a priority goal of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners is to support legislation to provide state assistance to meet school construction needs caused by increased enrollment and mandated reduction in class size, through a statewide referendum on a bond issue and/or through authority for counties to raise additional revenues to meet school facility needs; and

WHEREAS, the N.C. Department of Public Instruction found the statewide average to construct a new school in 2006 to cost more than \$146 per square foot – up from a \$96.23 average in 2003;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Bladen County Board of Commissioners urges the North Carolina General Assembly to hold a statewide referendum on a bond issue for school facility needs.

MARCH 19, 2007

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the members of the General Assembly representing Bladen County and to the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners.

**RESOLUTION
SUPPORTING LOCAL-OPTION SALES TAX FOR EDUCATION**

WHEREAS, North Carolina is one the only state that requires its counties to pay a fixed percentage of the state's Medicaid services costs; and

WHEREAS, the counties' share of Medicaid services costs is expected to eclipse \$517 million during the 2007-08 fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, counties are not allowed to set Medicaid policy, eligibility criteria, service options or provider rates; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that in the 2007-08 fiscal year Bladen County will spend approximately \$3,500,000 for services to Medicaid eligible citizens; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Public Instruction's School Planning section 2006 Long Range Facility Plans recently identified \$9.7 billion of school facility needs over the next five years; and

WHEREAS, the county Medicaid mandate is compromising Bladen County's ability to meet the demands for new classroom space and fund other critical infrastructure needs; and

WHEREAS, a one-half cent local-option sales and use tax could generate \$750,000 for Bladen County to help meet the demands for new classroom space and classroom improvements and fund other critical infrastructure needs;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Bladen County Board of Commissioners urges the North Carolina General Assembly to authorize Bladen County to enact a local-option, one-half cent sales and use tax to be used for public school capital outlay purposes.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the members of the General Assembly representing Bladen County and to all 100 counties in North Carolina.

**RESOLUTION
SUPPORTING LOCAL-OPTION REAL ESTATE TRANSFER TAX**

WHEREAS, the property tax is the only source of revenue that counties have control over; and

WHEREAS, the State of North Carolina requires counties to pay 15 percent of the state share of Medicaid – a program for which counties are not allowed to set policy, eligibility criteria, service options or provider rates; and

WHEREAS, the total county share of Medicaid is now projected to eclipse \$517 million during the 2007-08 fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that in the 2007-08 fiscal year Bladen County will spend \$3,500,000 or approximately ten percent of its expenditures for services to Medicaid eligible citizens; and

WHEREAS, other unfunded mandates from the state such as reduced school class sizes are forcing county property tax rates higher; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Public Instruction's School Planning section 2006 Long Range Facility Plans recently identified \$9.7 billion of school facility needs over the next five years, and \$37,252,000 in needs in Bladen County; and

WHEREAS, seven counties in North Carolina – Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Pasquotank, Perquimans and Washington – are all authorized by the General Assembly to levy a 1 percent real estate transfer tax; and

WHEREAS, any revenue source that is made available to one county should be made available to all 100 counties; and

WHEREAS, a priority goal of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners is to seek legislation to allow all counties to enact any or all of several revenue options from among those that have already been authorized for any other county, including local option sales taxes, impact taxes and real estate transfer taxes; and

MARCH 19, 2007

WHEREAS, the tax is tied closely to the real estate market and generates money to pay for growth at the time it is needed; and

WHEREAS, a 1 percent local-option real estate transfer tax could generate \$750,000 for Bladen County to help meet the demands for new classroom space and classroom improvements and fund other critical infrastructure needs;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Bladen County Board of Commissioners urges the North Carolina General Assembly to authorize Bladen County to enact a local-option, 1 percent real estate transfer tax to be used for any lawful purpose capital expenditures.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the members of the General Assembly representing Bladen County and to the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners.

- D. Introduction of Boy Scout Matthew Allen – Chairperson Moore introduced Mr. Matthew Allen who was in attendance as a civic activity for the Boy Scouts organization.

4. CONSIDER PROTOCOL REGARDING FIRE DISTRICT

COMMISSIONS: Fire Marshal Mitchell Byrd addressed the Board regarding the revision of Fire Protection District Commission Protocols. Included in the agenda packet were the old protocols with revisions indicated in red. Mr. Byrd discussed the changes and answered questions from the Commissioners. *A motion was made by James G. Smith, seconded by Greg Taylor to approve revision of the Fire Protection District Commission protocols as indicated.* Chairperson Moore called for discussion on the matter. Discussion was held regarding the number of fire commissioners required to sign off on huge purchases; the need for guidelines for fire district commissioners to follow; the fact that firemen serve on the fire district commission and the unfair advantage; and training of fire commissioners. County Manager Greg Martin advised that the fire chief communicates the needs of the department to the district board members in order for the Board to make sound recommendations to the Board of Commissioners. **A substitute motion was made by Larry Smith, seconded by Delilah B. Blanks and approved by a vote of 5 AYES (Larry Smith, Delilah B. Blanks, Lewis Tatum, Billy Ray Pait and W. D. Neill, Jr.) to 4 NOES (James G. Smith, Greg Taylor, Margaret Lewis-Moore, and Charles Ray Peterson) to adopt the fire protection district commission protocol with the revisions to remove the words *active fireman* from Item II. Membership; add the words *provide quarterly report on activities* and add the words *members of the Board of County Commissioners* to number 8 under IV. Duties and Responsibilities.**

5. ADVISORY BOARDS:

- A. **Library Board – A motion was made by W. D. Neill, Jr., seconded by Greg Taylor and approved to appoint Phyllis Swindell to the Library Board effective immediately with an expiration date of December 31, 2007. Ms. Swindell is filling the unexpired seat of Sherman Graham. A motion was made by Delilah Blanks, seconded by Billy Ray Pait and approved to table the seat held by Irene Creech. (Ms. Creech declined the position.)**
- B. **Southeastern Economic Development Commission – A motion was made by Greg Taylor seconded by James G. Smith and approved to reappoint Dr. Delilah B. Blanks and Mr. Robert Henry Jessup to the SEDC Board effective immediately with an expiration date of March 31, 2011.**

MARCH 19, 2007

6. COUNTY MANAGER:

- A. Calendar Update – County Manager Greg Martin reviewed upcoming calendar events with the Board:
- March 22 at 2:00 p.m. – Economic Development Meeting
 - April 6 – Employee Holiday
 - April 11 – NCACC District Meeting, Laurinburg
- B. Charitable Contributions: **A motion was made by Lewis Tatum, seconded by Delilah B. Blanks and approved to distribute Charitable Contributions as follows:**

Arts Council	\$300.00
Bladen Free Clinic	\$500.00
Camp E-tik-Etu (Eckerd Youth Alternatives)	\$1,000.00
Literacy Council	\$700.00
Senior Games	\$200.00
Special Olympics	\$1,000.00
Elizabethtown National Guard	\$400.00
Lower Cape Fear Hospice	\$400.00
SENC Radio Reading	\$175.00
United Way of Bladen County	\$500.00
VFW c/o Frank Baker	\$500.00
Total	\$5,675.00

Commissioner Blanks referred to a request received from a citizen requesting financial assistance in the amount of \$500 to send her child to state gymnastics competition. Discussion was held and the following action was taken: **A motion was made by Delilah B. Blanks, seconded by Charles Ray Peterson to provide \$200 toward financial assistance regarding state gymnastics competition. Chairperson Moore called for a vote on the motion. The motion failed by a vote of 5 NOES (Lewis Tatum, Billy Ray Pait, Margaret Lewis-Moore, Larry Smith, and W. D. Neill, Jr.) to 4 AYES (James G. Smith, Charles Ray Peterson, Delilah B. Blanks, and Greg Taylor)**

- C. Consider Seeking Bids for Property and Liability and Workers Compensation Insurance Coverage for FY 08: **A motion was made by W. D. Neill, Jr., seconded by Lewis Tatum and approved to authorize staff to seek bids for Property and Liability and Workers Compensation Insurance coverage for FY 08.**
- D. Consider Closed Session in Accordance with N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(1). **A motion was made by Billy Ray Pait, seconded by W. D. Neill, Jr. and approved to enter Closed Session in accordance with N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(1).**

A motion was made by Billy Ray Pait, seconded by W. D. Neill, Jr. and approved to enter Regular Session.

Chairperson Moore advised that Keep Bladen Beautiful Coordinator Gloria Dove visited East Arcadia School and provided a presentation to the students. She praised Ms. Dove's efforts and her communication with the students.

A motion was made by Lewis Tatum, seconded by Larry Smith and approved to adjourn at 8:20 p.m.

Margaret Lewis-Moore, Chairperson
Bladen County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST: _____

Kathy P. Britt, Clerk