

MINUTES

LENOIR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

March 7, 2016

The Lenoir County Board of Commissioners met in open session at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, March 7, 2016, in the Board of Commissioners' Main Meeting Room in the Lenoir County Courthouse at 130 S. Queen St., Kinston, NC.

Members present: Chairman Craig Hill, Vice Chairman Jackie Brown, Commissioners, Roland Best, Mac Daughety, Reuben Davis, Eric Rouse, and Linda Rouse Sutton.

Members Absent: None

Also present were: Michael W. Jarman, County Manager, Tracy Chestnutt, Finance Officer, Vickie F. King, Clerk to the Board, Joey Bryan, MIS Director, Robert Griffin, County Attorney, members of the general public and news media.

Chairman Hill called the meeting to order at approximately 9:00 a.m. Ms. Brown offered the Invocation and Mr. Daughety led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC INFORMATION:

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Ms. Colleen Kosinski, District Administrator Guardian Ad Litem Program, stated she is present today on behalf of the children of Lenoir County. Hundreds of children each year go through the juvenile justice system because of abuse and neglect. Each year a flag raising ceremony is held in Lenoir County in honor of all of the children who were lost as a result of abuse or neglect. For the past sixteen (16) years, the flag is flown during the month of April as a reminder to everyone of their responsibility attached to the children in our community. It is flown at the courthouse because it is the largest symbol of administration of justice and protection. Ms. Kosinski stated it is her strongest wish to be able to fly the flag of child abuse awareness during the month of April. Their scheduled rally will be April 4, 2016, in the lobby of the courthouse to kick off child abuse prevention month. The only individuals that would be in opposition of this flag should be those who abuse or neglect their children. Unfortunately, this year they will be memorializing a child from Lenoir County who was killed as a result of abuse, therefore, we would like to continue to have the opportunity to fly the flag and promote the protection of the children throughout our community.

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Approval of Minutes: Regular Board Meeting: February 15, 2016.

Upon a motion by Ms. Brown and a second by Ms. Sutton, the consent agenda was unanimously approved.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS/RESOLUTIONS:

Item No. 2 was a Proclamation honoring St. Baldrick's Day. Ms. Brown read the proclamation. Upon a motion by Ms. Sutton and a second by Mr. Daughety, Item No. 2 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 3 was a Ordinance Regulating Flags Authorized to be Flown on Lenoir County Courthouse Flagpole. Mr. Hill read the ordinance and asked the wish of the Board. Mr. Rouse stated in light of the comments made he would like to see some type of amendment made as an alternate, like adding an additional flag pole for the different groups. Mr. Hill stated he would like to see this ordinance passed as it is currently written. This is really about individual rights and what our responsibility is as a government. However, this is the point of our discussion if we continue to fly the different flags then we put ourselves in a position where we can be engaging in discriminatory practices. If we don't allow any group then that action is on us as a Board. The flip side is we take this ordinance and stop it and we allow the individual groups to be responsible for their actions. This has not been about denying anyone the right to take on an activity, but this will not be the first request that we will have. There will be more requests, and while this has been politicized, the effort is to stop politicking the flag pole. What we offer is an alternative, asking these groups to come up with some alternative ways to do that because there are other places available. Mr. Hill stated that he agrees we are the judicial system, and as a judicial system we have to remain impartial. As an example step back and look at it from a broad perspective "if I'm here on trial for child abuse as someone coming to the courthouse and I want to enter a courthouse that will be impartial and I have to walk by a flag that's promoting child abuse prevention" "the same thing is true for African American that coming to court on the date of the 4th the day the confederate flag will be flown", it puts us in an impartial situation. Mr. Rouse stated what he was alluding to is this Board should develop a set of rules or guidelines for a separate pole and have the individuals report to the Board for directions and they would still have a voice. Ms. Sutton stated the Board would be right back in the same predicament, so approving the ordinance would be the right thing to do, because it does not discriminate against anyone and the same rules apply. Mr. Daughety stated if the ordinance is passed it will only pertain to the flag pole, but it does not prohibit events like was held this weekend and it would not keep the public from gathering on the courthouse steps and standing next to the flag pole with their own flag and flag pole. However, it is regretful in this era of political correctness that we have to have an ordinance like this that harms efforts of Ms. Kosinski for the children. This is probably the simplest and best way to handle this, because we don't want to get too regulated and infringe on people rights. Mr. Daughety stated he is not in favor of having any ordinances prohibiting this type action, but if they are going to enforce one all should be banned as well, just as long as they don't get into regulating events like this weekend so people will have a freedom of expression. Ms. Brown mentioned on the day the flag is flown for the child abuse prevention they always place bows on the columns why not allow the flag to be extended between the two bows. Mr. Rouse asked if the Board could leave it the way it is and just vote on the item each time, because if they made an exception for one, they would have to make them for everyone, and they should be consistent. Ms. Sutton stated this is not what she wants to do but it is the right thing to do. Upon a motion by Ms. Sutton and a second by Mr. Daughety, Item No. 3 was unanimously approved.

Mr. Jarman stated for point of clarification and for the record since it is an ordinance with a unanimous vote you only have to do it once. Attorney Griffin stated that was correct and if it had not been passed unanimously then this would have been the first reading it would come back for a second reading, but since its unanimous it is final as of today. Ms. Sutton stated this would remain in force until it's otherwise changed. Mr. Jarman replied yes, and it will be placed in the ordinance book. Mr. Jarman stated so the public would understand, Commissioner Daughety was correct referencing other events being held at the courthouse and the commissioners will not be forced to make decisions regarding them. Law enforcement at the city and county level and county manager will be involved to ensure citizens are receiving the right permission. We look at it from a public safety aspect as to when, how, and what they are doing, so it will be regulated but not as to content. They can hold the flag out front but it won't be this Board saying we agree or disagree with the topic, it will be administrative offices and managerial staff taking it from a safety standpoint and it won't harm public or property. Mr. Hill stated the decision made has given the administrative staff a tool that will allow them to operate in a manner without having to pick or choose. Ms. Sutton stated by doing this, it have take the commissioners out of the mix. If we would have left it like it was it would appear that we would have to take sides and that is not what we are there for, and now it is no longer an issue. Mr. Hill thanked everyone for their part in the discussion.

Item No. 4 was a Resolution Approving Proposal for Advertising and Execution of Contract for Lenoir Community College on fourteen (14) Lenoir County Transit Vehicles. Ms. Angie Greene, Transit Director, stated Lenoir County Transportation began operation in October 1994 and provides transportation to the residents of Lenoir County, serving both Human Service agencies and the general public. The Lenoir County Transportation Program is a partnership between the North Carolina Department of Transportation/Public Transportation Division (DOT/PTD) and Lenoir County Government. July 1, 2007, Lenoir County Transit chose to market advertisements and to allow all revenues to be allocated to the transit system. Lenoir Community College provides quality education in Lenoir County and its surrounding counties. They offer a wide range of studies and various degree programs. Lenoir County Transit and Lenoir Community College are requesting the Lenoir County Board of Commissioners approve the placement of advertisements on fourteen (14) LCT vans. Based on \$100/month for the first advertisement and \$50/month for each additional advertisement we are anticipating \$9,000 in revenues for a twelve (12) month period. ($\$100/\text{month} \times 1 \text{ advertisement} \times 12 \text{ months} = \$1,200$, $\$50/\text{month} \times 13 \text{ advertisements} \times 12 \text{ months} = \$7,800$, total Lenoir County Transit Revenue = \$9,000). Upon a motion by Ms. Sutton and a second by Ms. Brown, Item No. 4 was unanimously approved.

Mr. Daughety stated we help fund Lenoir Community College and yet we are charging them to advertise on county vehicles and they help the community tremendously. It appears we are passing money from the left to the right hand. He mentioned he is all for raising revenue, but should we be charging Lenoir Community College to advertise on Lenoir County vans? Mr. Hill stated the college could not advertise unless someone paid for it, so, either the county would have to pay for it and still be responsible for funding LCC as they will advertise anyway through a public or private sector. Ms. Greene stated LCC have an allotted amount of money set aside for advertisement and they choose to advertise with the county on the vans because it gives them a broader advertisement. Mr. Jarman stated its unknown what pot of money they are using, it could be state, federal, etc.

Mr. Best asked since the agreement was for a twelve (12) month period does that keep others from advertising? Ms. Greene replied no, there are two (2) ads that can be placed on each vehicle, and LCC is advertising on the passenger/curb side and we have twenty-two (22) sides that can be used for advertising.

Item No. 5 was a Resolution Authorizing the Acceptance of NC AgVentures Community Grant from the North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission: \$10,000. Ms. Eve Honeycutt, Cooperative Extension Live Stock Agent, stated the grant award was announced in mid-February. Upon acceptance, the first check should arrive within 4-6 weeks. Purchasing will begin upon receipt of funds and active use of the equipment should start by late summer. Cattlemen in Lenoir, Greene, and Pitt counties will have access to the equipment. Many farms in Lenoir County diversify their operations with the addition of cattle. However, because cattle are only a side item to bigger farms, most families lack adequate facilities to safely work their animals. Working cattle involves ear tagging, vaccinating, deworming, castrating, and sorting. These tasks are virtually impossible if the farmer does not have access to equipment that will keep him safe and the cattle properly restrained. Cooperative Extension has been awarded a \$10,000 grant that will be used along with other funds acquired to purchase portable cattle handling equipment that will be shared within the community. This equipment includes a portable chute and head gate, portable scales, portable corral system, and a livestock trailer. The equipment will be housed in the Lenoir County Livestock Arena. Cooperative Extension will also use the equipment to hold demonstrations and field days to teach safe cattle handling and husbandry techniques. Upon a motion by Ms. Sutton and a second by Ms. Brown, Item No. 5 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 6 was a Resolution Approving the Purchase of a 2015 Ford Expedition XL 4x4 from Capital Ford, Inc.: \$28,969. Mr. Roger Dail, EMS Director, stated the EMS Community Paramedic is based out of the main Emergency Services Building located at 200 Rhodes Avenue in Kinston. The Community Paramedic is required to attend in-county and out-of-county meetings, visit pre-identified patients requiring specialized assistance in the management of their health care. This position also provides any necessary assistance to all EMS personnel stationed throughout Lenoir County and is subject to respond to calls during each duty day, with the majority of those calls being driven emergency lights and siren. As a result of the job responsibilities, the Community Paramedic requires a county-issued vehicle to adequately perform the assigned duties. The Community Paramedic's vehicle is a 2004 Ford Explorer, with a current mileage of 166,000. This vehicle is currently mechanically out of service, with service technicians recommending replacement. Upon a motion by Ms. Sutton and a second by Mr. Best, Item No. 6 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 7 was a Budget Ordinance Amendment: Capital Improvements Fund Vehicle Replacement: \$32,000. Increase. Ms. Tracy Chestnutt, Finance Director, stated the purpose of this amendment is to appropriate an increase to the vehicle replacement fund to cover expenditures unbudgeted for ambulances. A line item transfer will be completed in the general fund to cover the increase in the budgeted transfer to vehicle replacement fund by reducing the EMS Department budget. Upon a motion by Mr. Davis and a second by Ms. Brown, Item No. 7 was unanimously approved.

Mr. Rouse asked if this was a one-time or an on-going issue. Mr. Jarman replied, one-time. For clarification, we budgeted \$140,000 which is generally the purchase price of an ambulance.

We can either purchase a new ambulance or re-box two (2) and the re-boxing has become a bit expensive, instead of \$70,000 its \$80,000 and we actually remounted two this year. Each year during the budget session we try to budget enough to purchase a new ambulance or remount two which will be ongoing, just as we do vehicle replacement for the Sheriff's Department. Mr. Rouse asked will we remount two every year? Mr. Jarman replied we either purchase one or remount two. Mr. Jarman stated we have been remounting for a while and now we are getting to a situation with some old boxes and technology changes that will force us to make new purchases. Mr. Dail stated every year EMS tries to evaluate if it is best to purchase or remount. For the past several years we felt the best use of money would be to remount which has saved us a lot of money. Currently we are getting to the point where we can only remount a certain number of times. Mr. Rouse asked how many ambulances do they currently have? Mr. Dail replied twelve (12). The prices of ambulances are rapidly increasing and it's been a while since we purchased a new one. Mr. Dail stated if he had to estimate the cost of a new ambulance it would be approximately \$140,000-\$160,000. Mr. Daughety stated if at an estimate the price of a new ambulance is \$140,000-\$160,000 and the replacement for the box approaching \$80,000-\$85,000 it seem like we are getting to that point where it's better to purchase instead of remounting the boxes. Mr. Dail stated probably within the next year or two they will be to the point where they have done all the remounting they could do. Mr. Rouse asked what is the useful life of an ambulance before remounting is required? Mr. Dail replied there is not a set time you would have to consider repair costs and other factors. We just switched over to gas from diesel because we were very disappointed with diesel, so we have not had it long enough for us to determine. By using a gas motor it is a lot less to service. With diesel, we may have gotten two years out of them. Mr. Jarman stated years ago we leased several trucks for a five year period and they were worn out before we were finished paying for them. Some had a couple hundred thousand miles on them, and you can get a lemon in any purchase, once your repair bills exceed \$30,000-\$40,000, you really have to question putting any more money in that vehicle. The trucks get various usages and there are changes because we are no longer providing nonemergency transports which have affected the costs and could wear out one in three-four years tops. Ms. Brown stated she was in favor of the new ambulance because she experienced a ride in one recently, and it was a very bad and bumpy ride. The attendant in the ambulance asked her to please tell Mr. Dail about her experience in the ambulance. Mr. Davis asked Mr. Dail if he was receiving a big price break by getting a 2015 rather than a 2016. Mr. Dail replied they were currently getting what was available. Mr. Jarman stated at the end of the day if Mr. Dail doesn't find one then we could be forced to wait until the 2016 pricing charts are out. This past year when the Sheriff's department was looking at some of the models they were seeking an explorer, and they saw a new model which was not on the state contract and when it did it there was quite an increase in the price. If we have to look at a 2016 it could be at a different price. Mr. Dail has already started working on his list of vehicles, so we will have a more updated list to see if we need to change our replacement schedule and more information on the mileage and the years of the service in the budget information.

Item No. 8 was a Resolution Approving Purchase Order to Lawmen's for Two (2) Night Vision Sets: \$6,477.98. Ryan Dawson, Major, stated in 2009, the Lenoir County Sheriff's Office purchased twelve (12) Night Vision sets to aid the Special Response Team and other specialized units with investigations, apprehensions and other night time operations. This equipment has proven to be useful numerous times since acquired. As with any piece of equipment, normal wear will cause the units not to work which is what has occurred with two (2) sets.

Major Dawson stated based on the age of this equipment and changes in technology they budgeted for the purchase of two (2) units this fiscal year. This purchase will allow them to begin a replacement schedule of two (2) units per year to assure deputies will have this equipment to aid in their safety while conducting high risk operations. This will be the first year of the replacement schedule. Upon a motion by Mr. Daughety and a second by Ms. Brown, Item No. 8 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 9 was a Resolution Approving Purchase Order to American Uniform Sales: \$9,000. Ryan Dawson, Major, stated the Lenoir County Sheriff's Office currently uses ASP expandable batons to give deputies a tool to defend themselves when confronting a person resisting or attacking. Detention Officers are trained to use this same tool during their certification classes but have never been issued one. He wishes to equip all detention officers with an ASP expandable baton to use in the detention center during incidents, while conducting normal operations, and in the event an inmate may assault them. This order will also allow them to keep an additional 10 batons in case one is required to be taken out of service. Upon a motion by Ms. Brown and a second by Mr. Daughety, Item No. 9 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 10 was a Resolution Approving Purchase Order Increase to B&G Electronics: \$45,000. Ryan Dawson, Major, stated each year the Sheriff's Department will purchase new vehicles which require equipment purchase and installation to include emergency lights, sirens, consoles, canine carriers, striping, etc. This year we choose B&G Electronics to install equipment on seven (7) Dodge Chargers, and two (2) Ford Explorers as canine vehicles. The original purchase order for B&G Electronics was for \$35,000.00. Based on the last bill received, this purchase order is \$9,430.77 to the negative. The original purchase order was opened believing it to cover the full amount, but at the time it was not known that B&G would be the chosen seller and installer for all vehicles. There are budgeted funds to cover the invoices currently pending for this line and purchase order. Upon a motion by Mr. Rouse and a second by Ms. Brown, Item No. 10 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 11 was a Budget Ordinance Amendment: General Fund: Health: (Adult Health-Maternal Health). Decrease: \$2,532. Mr. Joey Huff, Health Director, stated the purpose of this amendment is to reduce state funds due to a reduction in the Maternal and Child Health Block grant. Upon a motion by Ms. Sutton and a second by Ms. Brown, Item No. 11 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 12 was a Budget Ordinance Amendment: General Fund: Health: (Adult Health-Family Planning). Decrease: \$12,757. Mr. Joey Huff, Health Director, stated the purpose of this amendment is to reduce state funds due to a reduction in the Maternal and Child Health Block grant. Upon a motion by Ms. Sutton and a second by Ms. Brown, Item No. 12 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 13 was a Budget Ordinance Amendment: General Fund: Health: (Adult Health-Health Promotions) Increase to Budget: \$4,160. Mr. Joey Huff, Health Director, stated the purpose of this amendment is due to the increase in healthy communities to increase the number of new interventions implemented. Upon a motion by Mr. Davis and a second by Mr. Best, Item No. 13 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 14 was a Budget Ordinance Amendment: General Fund: Health: (WIC Program) Increase to Budget: \$5,063. Mr. Joey Huff, Health Director, stated the purpose of this amendment is to provide additional funding to the local Health Department to compensate for providing services to more than 100% of their assigned base caseload. These additional funds will further enhance its ability to continue with the objective of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children. Upon a motion by Mr. Davis and a second by Mr. Best, Item No. 14, was unanimously approved.

Item No. 15 was a Budget Ordinance Amendment: General Fund: Health: (Adult Health-Infant Mortality) Increase to Budget: \$60,000. Mr. Joey Huff, Health Director, stated this increase from State enables local Health Departments to implement evidence-based strategies to lower the infant mortality rate in their community. Upon a motion by Ms. Sutton and a second by Ms. Brown, Item No. 15 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 16 was a Resolution Authorizing Purchase of a Caterpillar D6T XL Dozer for use at the landfill: Gregory Poole (Washington, NC): Not to exceed \$325,000 off State Term Contract 760H. Mr. Joey Bryan, MIS Director, stated The Lenoir County Landfill operates an MSW (Municipal Solid Waste) transfer Station and a C & D (Construction and Demolition) cell. A landfill employee was utilizing a Caterpillar D6R until its transmission failed. We have been leasing a Dozer until we could evaluate a replacement. We looked at several different vendors including Case, John Deere, and Caterpillar. While there was some concern about the power of the old D6R, we discovered that the new D6T model is 12% heavier, and has approximately 22.38% increase in Gross horsepower and 30.27% in Net horsepower. This should more than handle the increase in power we need. The actual quoted price for the new D6T XL is \$328,328.28. The optional 5 year/5000 hour warranty is \$11,705. The Waste handling package with landfill blade is \$32,730, the PM costs \$19,750.83. We will receive a \$45,000 trade-in on old D6R and we will also receive a credit on the lease amount we have been paying on the leased dozer which in all likelihood will be around \$60,000 by the time we take delivery on the new dozer. We would then be billed \$56.00 per hour used which will come to approximately \$5,264. The total with tax is estimated to be \$312,355.71. However due to the delivery time of 3 months we are using estimates on the reimbursement of lease amounts and the cost of the actual hours used. The reason we requested a not to exceed purchase order is because while we have a price, Caterpillar will be refunding/rebating the \$10,000 per month we have paid for leasing and the charge of \$56 per hour used. Also, since the delivery is two or three months away, we're unable to total all of the rebates, credits, and hours used. We are financing the dozer at 3.2% over eighty-four (84) months. Upon a motion by Ms. Sutton and a second by Ms. Brown, Item No. 16 was unanimously approved.

Mr. Daughety stated for clarification for himself and for the public is this being paid out of the landfill fund. Mr. Bryan replied the landfill is an enterprise fund much like transit and it is self supporting from the fees. Mr. Bryan stated the best trade-in they received was for \$23,000, and Caterpillar are giving them \$45,000. Mr. Jarman stated at the beginning of this project our first bid received was for \$680,000. Mr. Bryan did a good job researching and he actually tried to purchase the one we were leasing but it's not the one with the higher horsepower and would not fit the bill. Overall he did a great job on the project.

Item No. 17 was a Resolution Authorizing Support of Connect NC Bond in the amount of \$2 Billion. Ms. Linda Sutton stated the Connect NC bond includes \$2 billion of targeted long-term investments projects in seventy-six (76) counties. Infrastructure investments are vital to NC's competitiveness. Connect NC will pay for assets that will last for fifty (50) years and interest rates are historically low. Connect NC will not jeopardize North Carolina's strong credit ratings, and there will be no new tax increases as a result of Connect NC. Locally the Connect NC Bond will provide \$8,001,502 for Lenoir Community College to address longstanding critical facility needs related to the health and safety of students, employees, and guests. These dollars will support the renovation and repair of aging facilities to keep current with training for the 21st century. The Connect NC Bond will provide \$85 million for the Plant Sciences Complex at North Carolina State University to establish NC as the world leader in plant sciences research and innovation, spurring economic growth in our state and county's largest agriculture industry. Locally, agriculture claims nearly 29% of the economic development in Lenoir County. The bond invests \$309.5 million in statewide water and sewer loans and grants to meet the demands of a growing population. Since the passing of the last water and sewer bond in NC, our state's population has grown by more than 2 million people. The City of Kinston has identified approximately \$26 million in needed sewer system improvements including additional rehabilitation of the Briery Run Outfall, the Upper and Lower Catfish Branch Outfall and several residential line replacements; and the City of Kinston has identified approximately \$13.2 million in needed water system improvements including multiple water line replacements, tank renovations and installation of transmission loops to improve water quality. The City of Kinston depends on grants and low-interest loans in order to fund these improvements and to reduce the cost impacted to our citizens and customers. Once the Connect NC bond passes, the distribution of funds and renovations will begin. Lenoir Community College will address facility needs related to the health and safety of students, employees, and guests. The City of Kinston will begin needed sewer and water system improvements, and the Plant Sciences Complex will be constructed with the mission of research that will aid in increasing the quality production of food sources in rural North Carolina. Upon a motion by Ms. Sutton and a second by Ms. Best, Item No. 17 was approved with one descending vote by Mr. Rouse.

Mr. Rouse stated the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) voted this resolution down. Ms. Sutton stated as the comments were made in the resolution approval of this bond would mean over \$8 million going directly to our Lenoir Community College. In turn, they will be addressing facility needs and if the facility needs are not met then this Board will have to address them. Mr. Hill stated this bond also offer some engineering buildings being built on some of our historic black colleges across the state. It has a big impact on East Carolina University from a regional standpoint, so with this resolution, there are positives and negatives. We understand while there are no tax increases someone still has to foot the bill of the \$2 billion. Let's be mindful that we do have a state that is growing and an infrastructure that is crumbling that has to be fixed. Mr. Davis said we all have acknowledged the needs at the college and we don't have the resources in Lenoir County to foot the bill ourselves. Ms. Brown stated Governor Pat McCrory will be in Greenville, NC today to try and push this bond. Ms. Sutton stated one good thing about this bond issue is it has been a united effort to get it passed, with both Democrats and Republicans. Also, to show how important this bond is, they recently had the Dean of Life and Agriculture Sciences and his associate here in Lenoir County who provided a great presentation explaining how it would help the colleges and our citizens. Mr. Hill stated the biggest part is the research that will impact all of the local agriculture, both large and small farmers that are moving into different crops.

This is one of the very few times that agriculture has been included in a bond issue. The importance of agriculture in our state and to our county is beyond belief, and when you start looking at the numbers it's astronomical. Approximately 7-9% of the bond is agriculture related. That in itself is another reason to do what they are doing. Mr. Hill commended Lenoir Community College Board for the work they've done because their choice could have been to build or add additional square footage to their space which would have impacted our budget. The discussions we had as a Board in reference to how our budgets are interconnected certainly has been important as to sending a message as to where we are as a county, and they have taken that under consideration as they have looked at their budget. Those meetings sometimes have been volatile, but were important meetings and impacted the discussions as we moved forward. Mr. Hill stated he respects every one's position for or against this bond. Mr. Daughety stated as Commissioner Sutton alluded to, there is no local tax increase either property or sales associated with this bond. This bond is providing millions in maintenance funds which is our responsibility as a Board, and it also helps keep property taxes down in Lenoir County.

Item No. 18 was a Resolution Approving Grant of Easement. Mr. Jarman stated the county was contacted by Piedmont Natural Gas and Mr. Buddy Ritch. A representative from Piedmont and Joey Bryan met and they agreed to get the necessary paperwork together and return to the county office. They requested to run a gas line from Caswell Street near the courthouse property next to Mr. Ritch's building. We were okay with their request because we realized they needed access to the building, however, upon reviewing the paperwork giving them the right to install the line we had a problem with the wording of the last sentence that stated "Lenoir County would be assuming liability for any damages occurred". Mr. Bryan emailed Piedmont and advised them the county would not be responsible for their damages, they, in turn, contacted Mr. Ritch and stated the county's response was no. We involved this Board because we have received a new request from Piedmont in the form of an easement which is included in your agenda packet. In the past, this Board has had two (2) incidents involving easements. One situation called for power lines out in the Asphalt Road area that you agreed to grant. During that time, the debate was whether or not there would be a charge and they found a different way to access that property. The second easement you were involved with was during the construction of the new jail when you were looking at granting an easement on Highway 70 which had to be approved by state emergency services. We charged the gas company \$4,000 for the easement since they were charging us \$4,000 to provide services to the new jail. There was a fire in the basement of Mr. Ritch's building caused by an old heating system which led to his decision to convert to natural gas. In order for them to convert to natural gas they need this Board's approval.

Mr. Rich stated the church had a fire in the basement which destroyed the entire basement. They will close off the basement and disconnect all power and water and place a gas pack on the outside of the building. The church is ready to get back in the building and all he needs to hear is an approval from this Board. Mr. Daughety stated he has a concern with the contract because it has a lot of blank spaces. Mr. Jarman stated he had that discussion with the Attorney Griffin and he advised us to make sure we referenced the proper deeds and lots. If this Board approves this easement we will send it back to Piedmont to fill out all the information and we will hire an additional real estate attorney because that is outside of Mr. Griffin's contract. This is just the basic paperwork without everything official. We will make sure it has been reviewed and approved with the proper checks and balances.

Mr. Daughety asked if this is approved today will it be returned to the Board with a completed contract for approval again. Mr. Jarman replied he would be glad to bring it back before the Board but as you heard Mr. Rich state they are ready to tell Piedmont Natural Gas to move forward. If we did it that way would require a two (2) week process, or you can approve them moving forward as long as it does meet the guidelines. We will get Piedmont Natural Gas to fill it out and a real estate attorney to approve and have Mr. Griffin to approve the other groups work to assure the requirements have been met. Mr. Hill stated the second part is an administrative component. Ms. Sutton asked if Mr. Jarman was recommending approving this easement. Mr. Jarman stated his recommendation is that the Board has to decide whether or not you will grant an easement. Ms. Brown asked the way this easement read now if something goes wrong will the county or Mr. Ritch be responsible. Mr. Jarman replied in his opinion with this agreement, it would be on the gas company because they would have been granted the easement. However, this is why it will go to the attorneys to get all of the spots filled out. Mr. Alvin T. Harris, Sr. stated the church has had the area surveyed and was assured 99% that there are no pipes located in that area that would be damaged by the gas company, and they really need to get in their church as soon as possible. They are hoping the commissioners will grant this request so they can call the gas company and give them the ok to move forward. Upon a motion by Mr. Davis and a second by Ms. Sutton, Item No. 18 was approved with one descending vote by Mr. Daughety.

Item No. 19 was a Resolution Approving Citizens to Boards, Commissions, Etc. Upon a motion by Ms. Sutton and a second by Mr. Daughety, Item No. 19, was unanimously approved for Ms. Ella Hall and Mr. James L. Evans appointment to Lenoir County Nursing Home & Adult Care Board, and Mr. Dexter E. Floyd and Mr. Michael G. Haddad appointment to Lenoir Memorial Hospital Board, and Mr. Woodard H. Gurley and Mr. Bobby Merritt appointment to Lenoir County Economic Development.

Mr. Hill stated he currently serves on the Lenoir Memorial Hospital Board and Mr. Floyd has been on the Board two (2) or three (3) times and he is very consistent and always present. He has been a very solid member providing outstanding work and has a tremendous impact on the tax base. Lenoir Memorial Hospital Board changes the medical person on the board from time to time to allow involvement and Dr. Haddad will be an exciting addition to the board as well.

Item No. 20 was Items from the County Manager. Mr. Jarman stated hopefully the transit and inspections reports are self-explanatory and the only other thing was the concealed carry survey and Mr. Bryan will address that issue.

Mr. Joey Bryan stated he was tasked with creating an electronic survey based on the survey conducted in Pitt County on concealed carry weapons for county employees and the general public on county facilities, with the exception of the courthouse and the jail due to federal statutes in place. A survey was written up utilizing the online survey site Survey Monkey. We sent an email out to every county employee that had a county email address. In addition, each supervisor was asked to make sure all part-time and full-time employees that did not have an email address or access to a computer be notified about the survey and given the link and or be allowed to use a county machine to take the survey. This survey was available for access for a period of one week via a personal computer, laptop, tablet, or smart phone. After the survey was closed, of the 785 full-time and part-time employees only 300 responded which is a 38.22% response rate.

Mr. Bryan shared the four (4) questions asked along with the results of the survey. Mr. Bryan mentioned he shared the survey results at the department head meeting last month and possibly at the next commissioners meeting some of them may be speaking regarding concerns they have. Mr. Hill stated he would like to hear from our department head and also law enforcement. This would be the next step in where we are trying to go. Mr. Hill asked if there was anyone else the Board would like to hear from other than department head and law enforcement. Mr. Davis stated he felt the Superior Court Judge input would be good since he is here at the courthouse and he was instrumental in getting the guards and the metal protectors. Mr. Davis stated if the judge made a recommendation he would be inclined to go along with his recommendation. Mr. Rouse stated a good job was done with the survey and it was very informative. When you look at question 4 it shows about 67% of the people saying it would either have no impact or they would feel much safer. He's in for getting more information but at some point, he would like to know where it is going. Mr. Hill stated once they hear from law enforcement they will be ready to make a decision. Mr. Rouse asked would that be at the next meeting. Mr. Jarman stated Sheriff Ingram informed him earlier that he would be out of town today however he did provide the survey to you showing the decision of other counties. Mr. Hill stated this particular issue is extremely important and time is needed to fully investigate it. Mr. Hill asked if there was anyone else the Board would like to hear from other than department heads and law enforcement, and possibly the Superior Court Judge. Mr. Hill stated, if possible, it would be good to hear from all of the people at the same meeting so we could move forward with a decision. Mr. Jarman stated the department heads and the Sheriff are already aware of the next meeting and he feels good about them representing, but he has not idea about the judge. Mr. Jarman stated this courthouse is already set due to federal statutes. We have a survey that went out to all the employees, and he would be careful putting too much weight with a group of one or two people or a select group of people who could completely negate what we are trying to do here which is already reflected in what people feel and how they are concerned. Mr. Daughety stated he would much rather hear from the sheriff on his thoughts and how he would enforce this upon approval. Mr. Hill stated hearing from the leadership is important and it is up to the Board individually to weigh and balance this issue. We all have the ability to discern all the information and compare it to what our leadership is bringing to us. Keep in mind they have a unique perspective on this because each department has its own set of volatile issues. If we hear that on the front end I think all of us have the ability to discern and place it in the proper balance. Ms. Sutton stated they can cause the Board to face issues we may not think about. Mr. Jarman stated he understands Mr. Rouse concerns, however it's like hearing comments from citizens about decisions this Board makes but if you had all the information you had when trying to weigh in you might have made a different decision. Mr. Rouse said the people we are not hearing from that this would impact are the general citizens of Lenoir County. That is where I stress caution bringing the department heads in because he does know some of the opinions are both ways. Mr. Davis said the superior court judge should not be part of the recommendation since we are not referencing the courthouse it does not involve him. . Mr. Hill stated after the Board hears from law enforcement and department heads we will be ready to move forward and bring it to the meeting and be ready to vote and make a decision.

Mr. Jarman stated the boiler at the courthouse is operating but it is very old, however, it is not operating in the manner in which the state inspector would like for it to operate. We have to gather information and deliver some things to them.

They gave us a deadline of March 25, 2016, to provide information, so this Board will most likely be having information brought to you which will share the cost of replacing the boiler. We can make it operate but we are not sure it's operating in a safe manner.

Mr. Hill asked if anyone had any upcoming meeting and dates?

Mr. Jarman replied the District meeting is April 20th. However, it does not look like there is any individual meeting with the legislative delegates. It may be easier on our delegates and everyone if we all met at the ECC luncheon. He has sent the information back to Ms. Hill who is in charge of it. Maybe we could cut out a meeting by utilizing the upcoming meeting there.

Mr. Best stated he does not have the date with him but they will have a luncheon at 11:30am – 2:00 p.m. and will have the date available at the next commissioners meeting.

Mr. Hill stated by now everyone should have received the new association directory via email. Our own Eric Rouse is serving on the board of the state County Commissioners which is a big honor and we appreciate him serving as District Director. This takes commitment and responsibility we thank Commissioner Rouse for being willing to serve in that capacity. We also have several members serving on other committees and we appreciate everyone willingness to serve because we realize each committee takes additional time with many meetings.

Mr. Davis asked for if it was possible for the ABC Board Chairman to attend a meeting to make a report and share their profits. Maybe they can make a report, at least, every 12 months.

Mr. Jarman said he would be glad to arrange that, however, our profits have been up for the last couple of years, and Brantley Uzzell has done a great job. The money will decline next year but he thinks it was a good managerial decision. We agreed to allow the profit from the ABC Board new store to accelerate their payments to reduce the debt. They have done a good job and sales have been up so overall the board members have managed it well.

Mr. Davis stated with Mr. Jarman's report maybe they don't need Mr. Uzzell to show up.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Vickie F. King
Clerk to the Board