

MINUTES

LENOIR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

April 06, 2015

The Lenoir County Board of Commissioners met in open session at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, April 06, 2015, 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 and Commissioners, Roland Best, Reuben Davis, and Linda Rouse Sutton.

Members Absent: Mac Daughety and Eric Rouse.

Also present were: Michael W. Jarman, County Manager, Tommy Hollowell, Assistant County Manager, Martha Martin, Finance Officer, Vickie F. King, Clerk to the Board, Attorney Robert Griffin, 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. Best led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

A motion was made by Ms. Brown and a second by Mr. Best, to excuse Mr. Rouse and Mr. Daughety from the meeting.

PUBLIC INFORMATION:

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None Scheduled

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Approval of Minutes: Regular Board Meeting: March 16, 2015.
Emergency Meeting: March 12, 2015.
2. Budget Ordinance Amendment: General Fund: Health: (Adult Health-STD/HIV): \$167.00. Increase.
3. Budget Ordinance Amendment: Finance/Sheriff's Department: \$747.00. Increase.
4. Budget Ordinance Amendment: Finance/Sheriff's Department: \$2,045.00. Increase.
5. Resolution Approving Releases and Refunds to the Individuals Listed Herein.

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

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS/RESOLUTIONS:

Item No. 6 was a Proclamation declaring the month of April as Child Abuse Prevention month. Susan Moore, DSS Director, stated, in observance of child abuse month, the agency will be sounding the alarm in hopes of bringing awareness of child abuse across the county. Ms. Moore read the proclamation. Upon a motion by Ms. Brown and a second by Mr. Davis, Item No. 6 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 7 was a Resolution approving a purchase order and contract for attorney services. Susan Moore, DSS Director, stated, beginning with FY 2013-2014, the Lenoir County Department of Social Services hired in-house attorneys to reduce spending. Judge Heath has notified me of an upcoming case that will require additional hours of attorney's services. Due to the increase of caseloads at the agency, our in-house attorneys may not be available. Approval of this resolution will allow for the encumbrance of funds and payments to the contactors as services are performed. Upon a motion by Ms. Sutton and a second by Mr. Best, Item No. 7 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 8 was a Resolution approving the rezoning of property on Ash Davis Road from Rural to Commercial. Mike Jarman, County Manager, stated, the Lenoir County Planning Board held a public meeting on Thursday, March 19, 2015, to review and make a recommendation for the Ash Davis Road property to be rezoned. Through extensive investigation, the Lenoir County Planning and Inspections Department found that rezoning would be consistent with the intent of the Lenoir County Land Use Plan, being that the property is located within a designated highway enterprise corridor. The Planning Board voted unanimously to recommend to the Lenoir County Board of Commissioners the rezoning of the property owned by Rose Whaley at 3248 Ash Davis Road, Pink Hill, for Commercial use. Upon a motion by Mr. Davis and a second by Mr. Best, Item No. 8 was unanimously approved.

Upon a motion by Ms. Sutton and a second by Mr. Best, Item No. 9 was postponed to the end of the agenda or the next meeting, unless Mr. Ellis arrives before the meeting is adjourned.

Item No. 9 was a Resolution approving a Right-of-Way for the Neuse River Greenway on County owned property through Pearson Park.

Item No. 10 was a Budget Ordinance Amendment: General Fund: Health: (Adult Health-FP) Increase. Martha Martin, Finance Director, stated, this amendment is for additional funds to support clinical services, such as birth control supplies and long-acting contraceptives, during the period of June 1-29. Upon a motion by Mr. Davis and a second by Ms. Sutton, Item No. 10 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 11 was a Budget Ordinance Amendment: General Fund: Health: (Immunizations) Decrease. Martha Martin, Finance Officer, stated, funds are less than what had been originally allocated and therefore a temporary reduction must be made. Upon a motion by Ms. Brown and a second by Mr. Best, Item No. 11 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 12 was items Budget Ordinance Amendment: General Fund: Health: (Adult Health-FP). Increase. Martha Martin, Finance Officer, stated, additional TANF, out-of-wedlock birth prevention funds, are to be used to support activities such as providing family planning services to at-risk individuals who are not covered by Medicaid. Upon a motion by Mr. Davis and a second by Ms. Brown, Item No. 12 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 13 was a Resolution approving a purchase order to LEA Acquisitions Company in the amount of \$2,895.00. Sheriff Ingram, stated, the Sheriff's Office has utilized surveillance equipment that was purchased more than 15 years ago. The current system has failures with its coverage and does not allow for accurate coverage of a covert operation. The technology is outdated and cannot be upgraded. Upon a motion by Mr. Davis and a second by Ms. Brown, Item No. 13 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 14 was a Budget Ordinance Amendment: Federally Seized Property Fund: Sheriff-Federally Seized Property: \$18,000.00. Increase. Sheriff Ingram, stated, this amendment is to appropriate funds from the Federally Seized Property Funds fund balance to purchase tasers, batteries and holsters for the Sheriff's Department. Upon a motion by Ms. Brown and a second by Mr. Best, Item No. 14 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 15 was a Resolution authorizing a purchase order to Motorola Solutions, Inc. in the amount of \$20,306.04. Roger Dail, EMS Director, stated, Lenoir County Emergency Services was notified that Motorola would be handling the maintenance contract for the NICE voice logging recorder and subcontracting the work to Gately Communications. This resolution is to correct the payee information and the amount of the purchase order. Upon a motion by Ms. Sutton and a second by Ms. Brown, Item No. 15 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 16 was a Resolution to approve and execute a debris management contract with Ceres Environmental Services, Inc. Dustin Burkett, Emergency Planner, stated, on December 2, 2014 the Lenoir County Emergency Services Department formally advertised, issued, and distributed a Debris Management Service Request for Proposal (RFP). We received five responses from contractors. The evaluation of all proposals was completed. Evaluations were based on qualifications/experience, operational plans for the county, resource/availability, past performance, subject matter knowledge, and presentation of the proposal. Staff determined that Ceres Environmental Services, Inc. was the most qualified of the contractors submitting proposals. Upon a motion by Ms. Sutton and a second by Mr. Best, Item No. 16 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 17 was a Resolution to approve a Transportation Improvement Project (TIP) In-Conjunction Agreement with DOT. Chris Harper, Transit Director, stated, during the replacement of the South Queen Street bridges, residents who usually walk or bicycle to work via the bridges may be adversely affected. NCDOT proposes to alleviate this inconvenience by providing \$20,000.00 to Lenoir County Transit to provide transit service to those qualifying residents who travel to work or school via the bridges. Upon a motion by Ms. Sutton and a second by Ms. Brown, Item No. 17 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 18 was a Resolution to approve a reduction in NCDOT Project 15-CT-034 and the purchase of radio equipment. Chris Harper, Transit Director, stated, in October 2013, the Lenoir County Board of Commissioners approved a Resolution allowing Transit to apply for Community Transportation Grant funds in the amount of \$60,428.00. We have been working with EMS Management regarding the purchase of radio equipment. They have indicated that they have already purchased sixteen mobile units and eight portable units for us. By doing that, we will reduce the amount of equipment that must be ordered on the CTP Grant by \$44,722.75. Upon a motion by Mr. Davis and a second by Ms. Sutton, Item No. 18 was unanimously approved.

Mr. Davis asked Mr. Harper, what types of projections are out regarding the bottleneck for traffic on King Street and Heritage Street and King Street and Queen Street when the bridges close?

Mr. Harper replied, I am not the person to address that particular question. I think the Transportation Committee or someone with DOT would be more skilled at answering that question. I will defer that question to Mr. Rouse, since he is a member of the Transportation Committee.

Item No. 19 was a Budget Ordinance Amendment: General Fund: Process funds: \$101,481.00. Increase. Martha Martin, Finance Officer, stated, this budget amendment is to appropriate funds from the American Battlefield Protection Program through the National Park Service. The county was approached by the Civil War Preservation Trust in 2011 to act as the governmental sponsor for the acquisition of a conservation easement on a property designated as a portion of the Wyse Fork Battlefield. The county will act as a pass through agent in regards to these funds. Upon a motion by Ms. Brown and a second by Mr. Davis, Item No. 19 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 20 was a Resolution approving appointments of citizens to boards, commissions, etc. Chairman Hill stated, there are no applicants, so no action is required at this time.

CURRENT VACANCIES: Lenoir County Health Board – (1) Optometrist, (1) Member, Equalization & Review (1).

Mr. Hill stated, in regards to the question Commissioner Davis had about the projections for the bridge closure, it would be a good idea if we could get someone to come from DOT to talk to us about that situation in a public setting.

Mr. Jarman stated, I agree with Mr. Harper I can get someone here that can address all of the issues.

Mr. Hill stated, that would be a good idea because I think our public will want to know what is going to happen when that transition takes place. If we can get someone from DOT to do a small presentation that would be of great assistance to everyone.

Ms. Sutton stated, the Transportation committee will be hosting the Hwy 70 Corridor Commission here in May at the Woodmen Community Center.

Ms. Brown stated, she will be presenting some of the public education goals and guiding principles found on page 22 in the book by 100 States by 100 Counties to the Legislative Goals Committee next week. The association wants to restore the lottery funds 40% and at the meeting two weeks ago they brought it down to 17%, which would not cover a lot of things for public schools.

Item No. 21 was items from the County Manager, Mike Jarman. Mr. Jarman stated, I have a few reminders. Each year the NCACC hosts a series of District Meetings throughout the state. The NCACC will host its 2015 County Assembly Day on Wednesday, May 6, 2015, at the Quorum Center in Raleigh. The evening will be open to meet and visit with your Legislative Delegates. This is something the Board should be thinking about and decide who will be able to attend. The Thursday, April 9, 2015 meeting will be in Onslow County at the Onslow County Government Center in Jacksonville, NC. Dinner is included and there is no cost to attend the meeting, which begins at 5:30 p.m. and should conclude by 8:00 p.m. At the meeting they will be asking questions and discussing issues like school capital funding and debt funding. Let Vickie know if any of you are able to attend, so she can notify the association. On that date, your chairman will be in a class with me in Chapel Hill and neither of us will back in time to attend.

Mr. Hill said, I think it's important and would be a good idea to have some representation from our Board at the meeting.

Mr. Jarman stated, our next regular scheduled commissioners' meeting is at 5:00 p.m. on April 20th, I ask that you be here by 3:00 p.m. and we will meet over at the Tax Office in the Administrative Building Conference Room where we will have a budget work session from 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. and then we will come back over here for our regular meeting. We may have a couple of presenters that might want to make requests from you. Generally we try to have the budget in your hands around the first of May for your review. We will have another meeting mid May and then our public hearing. The only other thing I have is, I would like for Mr. Pope to come to the podium.

Some of you may have seen the articles or heard some talk regarding the relationship with the GTP, whether it was going to be part of commerce or not. The reason I am asking Mr. Pope to come up is because he is the one who has called the Secretary of Commerce and asked “what can we do to partner with you to get the job done and do the best for economic development.” He asked how they view its structure, because the marketing arm of Commerce is no longer in Commerce, it’s now in a public/private partnership. Mr. Pope has been involved with that and can give you an update.

Mark Pope, Economic Development Director, stated, after the meeting that was reported by the Free Press, I had a lot of text messages, e-mails, phone calls, and was interviewed by Channel 9. Just to bring you up to date with where we are from an economic development stand point, when Governor McCrory was elected in 2012, his whole mission was to roll Commerce into a public/private partnership. When you think of the question of rolling the GTP from DOT to Commerce, you would first think that might be a good solution. But Commerce rolled all of their business and industry sectors into the partnership and now they are doing economic development. I don’t think it would be a good solution since Commerce is downsizing. They developed this relationship and a contract with the public/private partnership to do economic development, so to roll the GTP back under that arm, would create more burdens for the Department of Commerce, because of their limited funding. In my opinion they will have to answer a lot of questions of how that would happen. We have offered help from our department since the transition to DOT. We have offered and have helped the GTP in some of their marketing efforts. Some of the responses that have gone through the GTP have come from our office. We are helping them as much as possible, as they allow us. I did have a conversation with Secretary Skvarla and he assures us that he and his office are ready to help us as we are ready to assist them as needed. I did talk with Rudy Lupton, with the GTP, and they are very thankful for what we have done to help them. DOT has done some scaling back and they have a limited staff, so we have offered to help them as the need arises. Also, with the new public/private partnership, I am on the advisory committee and we will have a meeting next week to sit down and talk about the things in economic development that are needed or not needed, as well as having some conversation about the GTP. Wherever the GTP ends up, we will be there to assist that partnership. I have my own ideas where I think the ownership may go if it changes, so we will cross that bridge as it may or may not open. The GTP, as it stands with Spirit and the other entities that contract with Spirit, are a life line for us. Not only the Industrial Park, but the GTP stands to bring more jobs to our community and we will support and make sure it’s done properly. We will get back to creating Section C of the Parkway and getting that highway and rail brought into the GTP, because that will open us up to three other communities. DOT has been a wonderful partner for Lenoir County in what they have done in assisting us and with the GTP. The Department of Commerce has always been an ally since Mike and I have been on board, and we have a very close relationship with those folks. I wanted to clear up where things are and where we think we should be. At this time, I will answer any questions, if I can.

Mr. Hill thanked Mr. Pope for following up on the GTP meeting, because there were a lot of questions regarding that meeting. Our city officials were involved, but we did not have any county officials there because we were not aware of the meeting. I appreciate the follow up and extending our base of knowledge on what is going on.

Mr. Jarman stated, while we are extending our base of knowledge, I would like to make sure this Board and the public understand. When Mr. Pope referred to the Department of Commerce working with the partnership, the State of North Carolina set up the public/private partnership. We choose to work with the public/private partnership and we were not sure about that structure when we started. We said we would work with them. The Governor is leading and we are going to be a part of that team and that is what we are doing. Then the NC Eastern Alliance that he mentioned. This Board looked at that group when they switched from the Eastern Region to a private partnership. We looked at that and we decided we were not getting the bang for our buck. We decided the \$120,000.00 they had of county money should come back to the county and we put it in our savings for economic development purposes. So when he says we are working with the partnership, it is the state partnership that covers the State of North Carolina. It is not the NC Eastern Alliance. At this time, we are still waiting to see how things are going to shake out and see what that organization is going to do, and whether or not it warrants us being a part of that. So when he refers to working with the partnership, I wanted everyone to understand it's not the NC Eastern Alliance partnership, because the partnership he is referring to is the State partnership, set up by the Governor and the General Assembly.

Ms. Sutton stated, I have been receiving a lot of calls and hearing a lot of people talking about retail in Kinston and Lenoir County and I would like Mr. Pope to come back to the podium and explain.

Mr. Pope stated, economic development consists of two different programs. Our department works with manufacturing industries, corporate offices, films and things like that. We are set up to follow the way the original Department of Commerce was, since our incentives are based off of manufacturing industries, job creations, and capital investments through that sector. The retail part is separate. We have talked to a lot of these folks but they look at population, cars, and traffic counts. We do try to assist them if they are looking for sites and contacts. We give them demographic information, but as far as incentives, we usually do not play any part in that, so retail is a different animal. They also look at a lot of different aspects of our community, because they are population driven. I know we get a lot of questions, like why don't we get a Star Bucks and Cracker Barrel, but once again, they are driven by a whole different set of numbers.

Ms. Sutton stated, our citizens need to realize that retailers ask questions and receive their information in advance.

Mr. Pope stated, as for our growth mode, Spirit continues our manufacturing base but we still have to get our population up, because we are currently on a flat line. I see that changing with connectivity to Greenville; nevertheless, we have had some good luck.

Mr. Hill stated, we received a schedule from Dr. Mazingo's office regarding the school tours that would have stretched the visits out through May, which was unacceptable. We need to address the issues on a quicker pace. I realize everyone cannot make all of the visits, so what we have proposed is to meet here around 7:30 a.m. and begin the tours. I ask that we drive separate vehicles rather than ride with the school system, because it will give us the opportunity as we are riding to discuss the visits among ourselves. It will be good for us to have this information before we sit down with them and discuss what we saw during the visits. The major two points that I hope we will be looking at are school needs and facility usage. We've asked at each visit that we receive a map so we can take notes on specific needs as we are walking through the facilities. I would encourage you to go through the materials that we were given at our last meeting and make notes as we go. I will contact you sometime next week to see who plans on attending each day and set up a schedule. I will contact Mr. Daughety and Mr. Rouse to make sure they are involved. In the end we can sit down at one of our meetings and discuss what we saw during the visits. We have a lot at stake with these visits and I encourage as many as possible to attend.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Brown and a second by Ms. Sutton, Item No. 9 was placed back on the agenda.

Item No. 9 was a Resolution approving a Right-of-Way for the Neuse River Greenway on County owned property through Pearson Park. Bill Ellis, Parks & Recreation Director, stated, the Kinston and Lenoir County Parks & Recreation Department received DOT funding for Phase 1 of the Neuse River Greenway. This Greenway is approximately 1 mile long and will travel through Pearson Park along Blount Street and Atlantic Avenue, stopping at the old city power plant. Once the Greenway is constructed, it will be maintained and operated by the Kinston/Lenoir County Parks & Recreation Department. Phase 1 should be completed by January 2016. Upon a motion made Ms. Brown and a second by Mr. Davis, Item No. 9 was unanimously approved.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:55a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Vickie F. King". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Vickie F. King
Clerk to the Board

MINUTES
LENOIR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
March 30, 2015

The Lenoir County Board of Commissioners' met in a special called meeting at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, March 30, 2015 in the Board of Commissioners' Main Meeting Room in the Lenoir County Courthouse at 130 S. Queen Street, Kinston, NC.

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

Also present were: Michael W. Jarman, County Manager, Tommy Hollowell, Assistant County Manager, Martha Martin, Finance Officer, Vickie F. King, Clerk to the Board, Attorney Robert Griffin, Mark Pope, Economic Development Director, 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.

Mr. Hill stated, at this time the Board will go into closed session.

Upon a motion by Ms. Brown and a second by Ms. Sutton, a closed session was entered into at approximately 9:01 a.m., with the following cited: Number 4: To discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by (public body).

Mark Pope, Economic Development Director, passed out copies of an Agreement and a Resolution. Mr. Pope stated, this is a new company moving to Lenoir County from West Sacramento, California. It fits under our \$2 ½ million investment with 45 new jobs. This company resulted from a meeting with Associated Materials Inc. announcing new jobs at their plant and the manager introduced this company's leadership. This company was looking to get on the eastern seaboard and they saw what has been done with AMI. They followed us for a while and approached us three times. We showed them several sites and shell buildings. They were very impressed and will be setting up shop in Kinston at a leased facility owned by Mr. Poole. They will be doing the painting of vinyl windows at Alside. They are the exclusive painters for Alside and we are excited they decided to set up shop here in Kinston. If things go well and they continue to grow on the eastern seaboard, we hope they will look at another site, or if the shell building is still available, they will consider that. The way we figure this agreement is if you look at the \$2 ½ million or less program, it is \$600 per job and \$1,500 per thousand dollars in investment. We did get the investment in machinery and equipment, but the joy of this agreement comes from the 45 new jobs created averaging \$10-\$11 per hour, which is a good payroll for us, with benefits. Mr. Pope stated, he has the Resolution with the job titles and payouts.

Mr. Jarman stated, for those who don't remember, and I am not sure of what year, but it was during my time in Economic Development, the previous Board approved the economic development agreement that sets the investment per thousand and the investment per job for any project that is less than \$2 ½ million. This way we are still competitive to get them here. With some the investment is so strong it gives you a lot of variables. The Board chose to set a predetermined amount. The Board chose to go with the set thing, because when investments get down to a certain level the return is the benefit of the jobs and the payroll.

Mr. Pope stated, we want the public to know this is all about partnerships.

Mr. Rouse asked what was the return on this investment?

Mr. Jarman stated, the return on the larger ones is the actual tax dollars received from the company. You are in essence making an investment of other tax dollars to a degree to get these 45 jobs, but still it's a very good investment when you look at the cost per job and that is the main difference.

Mr. Rouse asked what does it cost to get about 59 or 60?

Mr. Jarman stated, there is a bigger cost, but there is also a much bigger visible return over the years. There is a huge return for 45 people having jobs and benefits.

Mr. Pope stated, I really think after a couple years, they are looking to branch out because they are exclusively on the West Coast of the US and I think we will see them move over here.

Upon a motion by Mr. Daughety and a second by Mr. Best and unanimous approval, the Board moved out of closed session at approximately 9:12 a.m. The meeting re-convened in open session at approximately 9:13 a.m.

Mr. Hill stated, we went into closed session to discuss an announcement. At this time, I will ask Mark Pope, Economic Development Director, to return to the podium.

Mr. Pope, stated, it's great to see everyone bright and early on a Monday morning. This is for a good cause and I appreciate everything each one of you does for Economic Development. When we talk about partnerships and some of the things we have been doing over the past seven years with some of the announcements, it sheds light on our community. When we have folks like DOT, the Department of Commerce, the public/private partnership, and the community college working together, it sheds a positive light on us. When you can bring companies like this from West Sacramento, California, to Kinston, North Carolina, you are doing something right. This all results from a partnership with one of our existing companies. I applaud our partners, because without them, none of this would have happened. Today, I would like to announce that ColorCoat, Inc. of West Sacramento, California, will be moving to Lenoir County, creating 45 new jobs and investing about \$300,000 in machinery and equipment. They will be setting up shop in a leased facility in Poole Park at 4100 Berkley Avenue, across from Wal-Mart. We are very pleased to have them.

The performance agreement you have before you falls under our \$2 ½ million or less agreement that was established back in 2003. Performance agreements are based on performance criteria when creating jobs and investments. Incentives will be paid out beginning in 2016 if the performance agreement is met. If not, it will be pro-rated, as with all other agreements. I'll answer any questions before I read the Resolution. Mr. Pope read the Resolution.

Upon a motion by Mr. Daughety and a second by Ms. Sutton, the Board unanimously approved the Economic Development Agreement with ColorCoat, Inc.

Mr. Pope stated, again I would like to thank our partners that helped with this project, LCC, Lenoir County, City of Kinston, Department of Commerce, and the Economic Development Partnership of NC. It is a good day and we want to thank AMI for the introduction, because it would not have happened without their introduction. We are working hard in our Department. It's been a good year so far. Some good things have happened and we will stay busy creating new opportunities for our citizens.

Ms. Brown stated, that speaks volume for a company coming from California to North Carolina.

Mr. Hill stated, we appreciate your work on this and it's important to note, when we have major companies like we have here, the spin off companies at any some point will come. It is important that we begin to develop clusters and things along that line. We have some of the same things going on with some of our other larger companies. I think it's important that we link all of the jobs that have come in the last few months and the announcements, and realize this did not just take place over a few days. It has happened over a period of years. Economic Development continues building relationships with companies that want to come to Lenoir County. I thank you very much and it is a good day in Lenoir County anytime you can provide citizens with job opportunities that will improve our economy. It is indeed a great day.

Upon a motion by Ms. Brown and a second by Ms. Sutton, the meeting adjourned.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Vickie F. King". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Vickie F. King
Clerk to the Board

MINUTES
JOINT MEETING OF THE LENOIR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
AND LENOIR COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
MONDAY, MARCH 9, 2015

The Lenoir County Board of Commissioners' and the Lenoir County Board of Education met in a joint meeting on Monday, March 9, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. at the Woodmen Community Center.

The meeting was called to order at approximately 6:00 p.m. by Craig Hill, Chairman of the Board of Commissioners and Jon Sargeant, Chairman of the Board of Education.

Ms. Brown offered the Invocation and Ms. Sutton led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Hill stated, I have a few remarks that I would like to share in an effort to bring this group together. I would like to welcome the members of the Lenoir County Board of Education and their leadership teams, and members of the different schools, our Board, and citizens. I think it's important and I greatly appreciate the willingness of both of our Boards to meet on the important issue of facilities and capital needs for our schools' immediate, short and long term. We requested some specific information that Mr. Williams and Dr. Mazingo will be sharing with us shortly. We requested anything that has to do with facility or capital, activity buses and the current needs we have. We realize the requested information is probably in more depth than previous requests. We are simply trying to do our due diligence in reviewing and understanding while preparing our budget both from a short and long term perspective. While I think we have made progress, there is still a growing concern with the changing face of North Carolina's direction on school funding regarding facilities and capital. I think that's a concern we share jointly with our School Board. I think the loss of expected lottery and ADM funds has put more pressure on our budget locally and it has a compounding affect on counties like ours that are caught in the middle of bond issues. Some of the concerns that have us here today are lack of growth, loss and migration of population, transfers, and HVAC systems. Several of our commissioners and our leadership team attended a strategic planning meeting this past Friday in Duplin County. It was interesting that the number one priority that emerged from that meeting was "how do we meet the growing demands of the schools across the state on local tax dollars." We applaud your efforts as a school system and your work with technology, career paths, your partnership with the community college, and all the good things you are doing in our community. We recognize how both competition and changes in instructional delivery models will impact our facilities and capital needs. This will require great communication and cooperation between both of our collective boards. This is what we hope to get from working together with you over time, and this is just the beginning of a series of meetings that we will have to get to where we need to be.

Mr. Sargeant welcomed everyone to the meeting. We welcome having open dialog regarding education in Lenoir County, which is critical to all of us. I've always said I felt like we had a special relationship with our County Commissioners in Lenoir County. You are aware of the value that education has in communities and the difference education makes for our pupils. I also know you realize the climate of education in North Carolina. Right now, we are facing cuts from our state legislature and those cuts have created a situation where more responsibilities are placed on both the counties and schools as opposed to the state. The bottom line is, if we want quality education in the future of Lenoir County, a lot of the responsibilities are going to fall on us and we are going to have to make sure things happen. On the other hand, we can appreciate the capital side due to the lack of lottery and ADM funds. As you are required/obligated to provide more for capital needs, I am sure you will want more input into our facility needs and how we use our facilities. I think it's understandable, reasonable, and worthy of discussion. I think in the end, one thing we all need to keep in mind, the big picture is we are all here for the same reason. We want to see Lenoir County and our children prosper and have the best possible education they can have. By working together I think we can see this happen.

Dr. Mazingo stated, Brent Williams, Executive Director of Operations, has put together information regarding the list we received. I do want to make it clear before Brent starts, we did not come with a five, ten or fifteen year plan for what we are going to do with facilities and their needs. We came with some ideas saying we would like to be very careful in how we move forward and how we make projections. We need to have dialog about when we think we can consider any new facilities, so we can tie this into any studies. When running 17 facilities, we need to consider the parents, demographics, and growth for example. Are there savings patterns because we are not growing or are we shrinking. That's a very different picture. At this time I will turn it over to Mr. Williams, and after Mr. Williams, we will be happy to answer any questions.

Mr. Williams thanked everyone for the invitation and stated, I hope this is a conversation starter because with all the issues, one meeting will not help with everything. Mr. Williams shared information with a slide presentation. He listed information regarding LCPS capital projects, HVAC replacement and HVAC unit replacement projects at North Lenoir, Rochelle, Banks and Kinston High, roof replacements at Kinston High, Northwest and Southwood, and bleacher repair at South Lenoir. He briefly described facilities' issues at each elementary school, middle school, high school, the non-traditional schools, and other sites such as the Central Office, Teachers Memorial Professional Development Center, Environmental, Maintenance, and the Transportation Department. He touched basics on the enrollment totals for the last five years and schools sold during the last ten years. Mr. Williams stated, the facilities situation is a mixture of different scenarios even with almost new schools, you still have to contend with older facilities. Our schools currently represent safe and positive learning environments and are well maintained.

Tonight we are proposing to strengthen our partnership with the Lenoir County Board of Commissioners and to implement school visits and tours of LCPS facilities for Commissioners and our Board of Education members. Does anyone have any questions?

Mr. Hill thanked Mr. Williams for the information. The big part of this meeting was to help educate our Board. We look forward to touring the schools and facilities. This will allow us to see the real issues, children in the classrooms, and see how this factor impacts them. One of the big issues is capacity and how we feel some of our schools are under capacity. We would like to see where we are in all of the areas. I applaud the idea of a review of our facilities by bringing in an outside source to evaluate all of us and allow us to step back from our own biases and start fresh and new. I think in finding the solution to our capital needs, my hopes are that traditions don't stand in the way of progress, and the most important thing to do, is to do what is right for this system. To do this requires us to do our homework and move forward doing what is right both financially and educationally, for our citizens. We need to use an outside source to help us look at all the information. I hope this Board reads the information and will be ready to discuss this at a later time, because we have a lot of good things going on in the county and schools need to be our top priority.

Mr. Daughety stated, I appreciate the information, but I need more time to be able to digest what is going on and visit the schools so we can better educate ourselves. After that, we can sit down and have some dialog and have the complete study to compare after having digested this.

Ms. Sutton stated, she appreciates the information from Mr. Williams. A lot of this was mandated by the legislators and this was not an idea the County Commissioners came up with.

Mr. Rouse asked Mr. Williams did he have cost data other than 2013-2014 and operating costs for current year gas. I would like to see the trending information on the cost of gas since it's gone down this year.

Mr. Williams replied he did and could get the information to Mr. Rouse if needed.

Mr. Sargeant stated, he did not want to play the blame game and point fingers because of the loss of funds that caused them to make adjustments. We will be open and honest because there are no incentives for our Board to hold back information when making data driven decisions. I think we can get beyond that because we are in this together.

Dr. Mazingo stated, we all have biases, but this decision needs to be based on the data of our community, and what's best for our kids, not our internal biases. The schools belong to the tax payers. We should get the parents involved in the decisions, because they should know what we are doing every step of the way, being an open book.

Mr. Hill stated, that is why we are here tonight around this conference table, sitting face to face, in an environment like this. We have a lot of work to do and it's time for us to make a long term commitment to work together through the problems. We have to realize that we might have to give up something we all really want, because that's the way facility studies really work. Do we really want the whole concept, and if so, I think we are heading in the right direction. It's been a very quiet group tonight and I appreciate all of the Board members. The next phase will be the visitation tours, and after the tours, we will figure out how to restart this conversation.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:55 p.m.