

MINUTES

LENOIR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

May 04, 2015

The Lenoir County Board of Commissioners met in open session at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, May 04, 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, Mac Daughety, Reuben Davis, Eric Rouse and Linda Rouse Sutton.

Members Absent: None

Also present were: Michael W. Jarman, 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. Davis led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC INFORMATION:

Dr. Brantley Briley, President LCC, stated, over the last eleven years we have presented the college budget in a number of different ways. We've presented the request based on square footage and we compared it to other community colleges in the region based on funding per square foot, we have also presented it based on a full time equivalent (FTE) enrollment. The Lenoir County manager, who I think is doing a great job, presents his figures as a percentage of allocations as compared to the total county budget. I've come to the conclusion that we can make these figures do about what we want them to as with most everything. What I would like to share with you is not talking about figures because the Lenoir County budget has always been a concern for us. In the past three years our Vice President of Finance, Debra Sutton, along with some of our board members have spent a lot of time trying to make the Lenoir County budget work. It has turned into almost a battle just trying to make ends meet with this Lenoir County budget. Of course NC G.S.115d talks about the state funds and the local government funds, etc. It appears that we are kind of set up for perfect storm now and I know you have heard this before from others but I will say it again the State of NC is not funding what they once funded. We realize county government is responsible for operating the facilities but on occasion the state would say we are going to let you move a percentage of your equipment state dollars to renovation projects which is a county function but they are no longer allowing that.

In 2000 when the bond was passed Lenoir Community College received \$13 million dollars. We have been very careful with it, but that money is totally depleted and that fund balance is now zero. Now our buildings are aging, the Bullock building is over 50 years old, the Administration building, the library and the Business Technology building are approaching 50 years old. I don't have to tell you the older the building gets it does not matter how much you keep it up there are things that will go wrong. We are continuing to grow as we house the Early College High School which has 168 high school students. High School students are an expensive commodity with lots of wear and tear, lots of paper towels, lots of everything you can imagine associated with an early college high school. Currently we have 3,622 curriculum students and continuing education students that number changes every hour. This year we have 430 graduates receiving 583 awards, and separate from the early college high school students from our county schools. We are teaching 518 of them and that is separate from the early college high school. We have never had a better relationship than we do today with the Lenoir County Public Schools. It is just a beautiful partnership. The numbers are projected and we are tickled to death right now we have 518 counting high school students taking our classes and that number is projected to increase next year by 100, the following year by 100 and the following year by 300 students and that is something everybody in this room should be extremely proud of. When our High School student graduates many of them have under their belt not only their high school diploma but they have accumulated and are well on their way to an associates degree on top of that. What a savings for the parents because tuition is no charge, books are no charge, it is just something that I believe every parent student should take advantage of. It's expensive to be a community college is the message. We try to be great community citizens. We hosted a very successful job fair which we do every year. This year the job fair was over the top fantastically successful. We are hosting Relay for Life and of course we host NC Works which is part of the workforce solutions so we are trying to be everything to everyone. Our budget from 2012-2013 to 2014-2105, three years, has increased cumulatively 1.12% that's 1.12% over a three year period and the battle is becoming almost impossible. This is my message, you say you support us and we believe you do. We would like to see that in the funding of the college, so we have asked for a fairly, relatively significant increase in current expense and capital. When you see the request please keep in mind we are serving the entire community and we are increasing our partnership with the local high school, our buildings are getting older, the general cost go up just like they do for everybody, and we want to serve our community in an excellent manner, but it's getting tough. Any consideration you can give the college on this coming years budget would be greatly appreciated. As I have said many times, appropriations to Lenoir Community College should be viewed as an investment in the future, more than an expenditure. I believe if we could invest more in the college there might would be less needs for other services that the county supports. Any questions?

Rod Evans, LCC Trustee, stated, on the 15th of this month I will complete being in business in Lenoir County for 40 years. During that time we had to invest in our employees, I think the best way to do that is through education on many different levels. We hear people talk about the big factories that have come here to support the community, but there are many small businesses like mine that employ 12-15 people that use the education system at Lenoir Community College every year. I have an operations manager that started with me 25 years ago that got her start at Lenoir Community College, I have a vice president of marketing that was a fork lift driver at four or five nice factories here, used the community college and has succeeded tremendously. So my message is that education is truly an investment and as I look at everybody coming in today I don't think I saw anybody here that doesn't grow through education. It's a continuing process and I would like to say that is what we are trying to do in supporting our community through growth but funding has become difficult. I like to remind you that this is an investment. I personally had to invest in, and I hope the commissioner s choose to invest in us as well because it would be a great investment.

Mr. Hill thanked Dr. Briley and everyone present from Lenoir Community College for the presentation. We will take your information into consideration as we move toward our budget session.

Mr. Jarman stated, he has had several conversations with Dr. Briley and he will look at you and state he does not always get the comfort he likes so this is to make him feel a little bit better, because he does not think the board is fully informed on one thing. We did a contract with them for them to maintain a lot of their HVACs equipment but they are in the same situation we are. They have some chillers, and equipment that is very old and we have asked them to bandage it and we are still putting bandage on them and he is nervous that the board is not aware that Lenoir Community College can show up one day needing funding to replace a broken unit. So I wanted to remind the board that Lenoir Community College like us has some 30 to 40 year old chillers that are not covered under the other contract and if we have an emergency situation we will have to deal with it.

Roger Dail stated, the Board requested at their last session that members of North Lenoir Volunteer Fire Department come before the Board to discuss their proposal for a tax increase. He stated George Smith, President, Brian Wade, Fire Chief and Franklin Floyd, Treasurer were present to make a presentation.

Franklin Floyd stated he wished to thank the commissioners for their support over the past 50 years. Mr. Floyd gave a Power Point presentation to the Board. He explained the map of the district stating the light yellow represented the North Lenoir fire district and the blue areas indicated hydrant locations with a 1,000 ft. halo. Mr. Floyd stated they were very proud to have a 5/9 rating from the N.C. rating system. He stated a protection rating of 5 was assigned within the blue area and outside the blue was assigned a 9. Mr. Floyd briefly described how the ratings are derived by the OEMS.

Mr. Floyd stated according to a survey done by the Fire Marshall there was an average 31% savings in insurance cost in a 5 area versus a 9. He stated, residents he had spoken with in the community were seeing a 25-30% savings being located in the 5 protection area. He shared the department's plan for putting in new fire hydrants and stated they would not be adding any water lines or changing any infrastructure. Mr. Floyd stated this will boost the coverage area to over 85% where now it is 60%. He stated once they get above 85% it will give them the ability to change the rating structure and apply for a straight across the board rating.

Mr. Floyd stated in the past an estimated \$7500.00 had been allocated per hydrant for a total of over ½ million dollars for 67 hydrants and this amount could not be absorbed in their current budget. He stated dividing the annual difference into a monthly amount came to \$1.57 per month for the average residential homeowner, \$3.63 for small business and approximately \$10.00 for an average to large farm.

Mr. Floyd discussed how this would impact the fire department. He stated Volunteer Firemen were a "dying breed". He stated a minimum of four personnel were needed to establish a water supply in a hydrant district and this was not counting the firemen inside, on the line, on the roof, the commander or the safety officer. Mr. Floyd stated how he was a 15 year veteran of NLVFD and about the only thing he hadn't seen change is the pay.

He stated their average truck holds about 1,000 gallons of water but they vary between 750-1250. Mr. Floyd stated the City of Kinston had hydrants between every other block but the difference was they have fire and water under the same roof and North Lenoir Water Corporation and North Lenoir Volunteer Fire Department are two separate forces working together to provide that same service.

Mr. Rouse asked if adding pumper truck would accomplish the same thing and Mr. Floyd stated it would not. He stated they would still have to maintain a certain number of trucks in the station.

Mr. Rouse asked if there had been any response from the citizens within the 5 rating and if he was planning to have a hearing. Mr. Floyd stated they had not scheduled a hearing at this time.

Mr. Rouse stated he thought it may be a "hard sell" to the 60% in the 5 area and Mr. Floyd stated it would benefit not only the 60% but the entire area. He stated if you wanted to pinpoint one area, the 60/40 and the insurance, the 40% would get the larger immediate payback. Mr. Floyd stated looking at the long term liability, the fire departments safer operations make it a good investment with minimum requirements per property per person.

Mr. Roger Dail stated the ISO system is setup with points as Mr. Floyd had explained and uses two methods. The tanker method, which requires more people to operate, and the hydrant method. He stated the hydrant method if 85% of the district is covered then the entire district can have the same rating.

Mr. Daughety asked who would be maintaining the hydrants once installed.

Mr. Floyd stated once installed they would become the property of North Lenoir Water and they would contract with them. He stated the fire department will not have any maintenance costs.

Mr. Daughety asked if there would be a significant impact on the commercial property in the district as it relates to the industrial park if the ISO rating is improved. Mr. Floyd stated he thought so.

Mr. Rouse stated he thought this pitch was to bring the entire district to a 5 rating by adding the hydrants. Mr. Floyd stated this will bring the rating to a 5 and has the potential to bring the entire district lower in the future.

Mr. Daughety stated he spoke to a couple of board members from North Lenoir to find out how they were doing their due diligence and to make sure they were following the process since their board had approved this. He stated he had spoken with Roger Dail as well as other chiefs in the community. Mr. Daughety stated everyone he spoke with had a good understanding of the project and supported it. He stated two years ago the Board had taken the Fire Department's general fund money because they had their own fire tax and ability to raise funds for their department. He stated since that time, this was the first time the Board had been approached with a request such as this. Mr. Daughety stated he thought this was a good project and it should be a "no brainer".

Mr. Rouse stated Mr. Daughety had brought out some good points but he wanted to talk about the money. He asked if the cost of the hydrants included material, labor, engineering cost and all the cost associated.

Mr. Floyd stated that it was provided for North Lenoir based off projects completed in the past.

Mr. Rouse asked if he had any estimates on material costs, labor or engineering costs.

Mr. Floyd stated he has rough numbers from the initial meeting but would have to commit money to get firm numbers. He stated the fire department felt they would be wasting tax payer's money if they were to pursue this prior to funding.

Mr. Hill stated he appreciated the well-done presentation and he thought it was a great project. He stated what both commissioners said was true and he thought it would be appropriate to take this as a presentation item today and take it to the May 18th budget discussion meeting. Mr. Hill commended Mr. Floyd on his presentation.

Mr. Jarman stated a comment was made regarding an entity that has the ability to tax. He stated he knew it wasn't meant that way and he wanted the public to understand the board's philosophy.

Mr. Jarman stated the philosophy is the user of the service pays for the service if it can be directed that way and that has been the focus of the board, whether it is landfill fees, planning, inspections or a fire department. Mr. Jarman stated the general fund money is not going in the individuals' pockets and is not just tied to taxing ability it's tied to the fees and other things.

Ms. Sutton stated NLVFD had done a great job and it was a great presentation.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None Scheduled

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Approval of Minutes: Regular Board Meeting: April 20, 2015.
Budget Work Session: April 20, 2015.
2. Resolution Approving Releases and Refunds.

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

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS/RESOLUTIONS:

Item No. 3 was a Proclamation: Older Americans Month. Ms. Mineko Holloway, Council on Aging Director, read the proclamation. Upon a motion by Mr. Davis and a second by Ms. Brown, item No 3 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 4 was a Proclamation: Foster Care Month. Ms. Sutton read the proclamation. Upon a motion by Ms. Sutton and a second by Ms. Brown, item No 4 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 5 was a Proclamation: Honoring Social Services Employees. Ms. Brown read the proclamation. Upon a motion by Ms. Brown and a second by Ms. Sutton, Item No. 5 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 6 was a Resolution Declaring Property as Surplus and Authorizing the Sale of the Surplus Property by Auction. Ms. Martha Martin, Finance Director, stated, the County has a small inventory of various vehicles that have outlived their useful life. These vehicles are no longer of use to any County Department and there are no plans to put them back into service. We are requesting the approval of the Board to sell the vehicles by auction on GovDeals.com. Upon a motion by Ms. Sutton and a second by Ms. Brown, Item No. 6 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 7 was a Resolution Approving Repair of Roof by Curtis Construction. Ms. Martha Martin, Finance Director, stated, the Administration Building on Queen Street is owned by the County. The building is fully occupied by the Tax Department, the Register of Deeds, Environmental Health, Economic Development, and Planning and Inspections. She stated the roof had developed a number of leaks and Mr. Wiggins had received a quote from Curtis Construction Company, Inc. to make the necessary repairs in the amount of \$3650. Upon a motion by Mr. Davis and a second by Mr. Daughety, Item No. 7 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 8 was a Resolution to Authorize the Transit Director or his designee to execute all paperwork on behalf of Lenoir County to add the Interactive Voice Response Module to the current lease of the Community Transportation Services Trip Master Enterprise Edition scheduling software for one (1) year at a cost of \$6,500: \$5,000 to purchase the software and the remaining \$1,500 to cover the monthly service fees for one year. Mr. Chris Harper, Transit Director, stated, approval of this Resolution will authorize Lenoir County Transit to purchase the interactive voice response module. This is the third and final part of the scheduling software system. He stated this system calls each passenger at approximately 6:30 pm that is scheduled for the following day and also calls approximately 30 minutes prior to pick up time, which makes it very beneficial. In his brief tenure as Transit Director he has learned that “no shows” encumber time, labor, gas for a vehicle and the trip costs the department approximately \$16.50. He stated there is a potential savings of over \$200-\$300 a day by using this system. Mr. Harper stated the passengers had been overwhelming positive in their response to receiving the reminders because they know they can call the next morning and cancel if the need should arise. Upon a motion by Ms. Sutton and a second by Mr. Best, Item No. 8 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 9 was a Budget Ordinance Amendment: State Controlled Substance: Sheriff State Controlled Substance: Ms. Martha Martin, Finance Director, stated, Sheriff Ingram asked her to present this in his absence. She stated the budget amendment is to appropriate funds from the state controlled substance fund to cover the costs of miscellaneous expenditures. Upon a motion by Ms. Brown and a second by Mr. Rouse, Item No. 9 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 10 was a Budget Ordinance Amendment: Federally Seized Property: Sheriff Federally Seized Property. Ms. Martha Martin, Finance Director, stated, Sheriff Ingram asked her to present this in his absence. She stated the budget amendment is to appropriate funds from the Federally Seized Property fund to cover the cost of purchasing miscellaneous items for the Sheriff's Department. Upon a motion by Mr. Davis and a second by Ms. Sutton, Item No. 10 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 11 was a Resolution to approve the Lenoir County Personnel Policies. Ms. April Martin, Human Resources Technician, stated, the personnel policies are the rules that govern how to deal with personnel related issues. She stated they not only inform employees of the county's policies and expectations, but also provide guidelines for decision making.

Ms. Martin stated a well-developed personnel policy is a valuable communication tool which can also help reduce exposure to litigation. She stated Lenoir County's Personnel Policies Book had not been updated, nor any amendments included since its' inception in 2004. Ms. Martin stated revisions began in 2011 once the centralized Human Resources Department was developed. She stated a draft copy was reviewed by County Administration and all Department Heads to provide suggestions and/or input.

Ms. Lashanda Hall, Human Resources Technician stated, there are three areas covered in the Personnel Policies and Procedures which are employer expectations, employee expectations and administrative issues. She gave a brief description of each. Ms. Hall stated the goal of Human Resources and County Administration is to develop clearly written policies and procedures as well as to comply with Federal and State laws governing Public Employment practices. She stated the policy will be accessible to all county employees on the website. She stated this is a working document which will be brought before the Board with any amendments. Upon a motion by Mr. Davis and a second by Mr. Best, Item No. 11 was unanimously approved.

Mr. Jarman stated, a lot of effort has gone into this revision since inception of the centralized HR Department. He stated it had been written and rewritten due to differing opinions. Mr. Jarman stated consistency was needed and the employees needed to be able to easily access what was expected. He stated in the past information had to be printed for new employees and now the information could be easily accessed online from their desk. Mr. Jarman stated Federal and State guideline links were also available pertaining to the policies. He also confirmed Ms. Hall's comment regarding this being a working document and as changes are made it would be brought before the Board for approval. Mr. Jarman commended the HR Department on a job well done.

Several Board Members commended the Human Resources Department on all their hard work.

Item No. 12 was a Resolution approving Eastern Carolina Workforce Development Area Consortium Agreement and Appointing Chief Elected Official. Mr. Best introduced Mr. Bob Kehres, with Eastern Carolina Work Force Development and read the Resolution. Upon a motion by Ms. Brown and a second by Ms. Sutton, Item No. 12 was unanimously approved.

Mr. Jarman stated as a point of clarification to note the way the resolution was worded. He stated normally it would read A and B but this one is grouped together. Mr. Jarman advised the Board to be aware they are approving both, by signing, authorizing both the chairman to sign and authorization of the agreement.

Item No. 13 was a Resolution approving appointments of citizens to boards, commissions, etc. Chairman Hill stated, this was 1st appearance so no action is required at this time.

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

Item No. 14 was items from the County Manager, Mike Jarman. Mr. Jarman stated he had a couple of items. He stated the May 18th meeting will be at 2:00 pm instead of 3:00 pm in order to give the Board more time. Mr. Jarman reminded the Board of their previous request for the breakdown of the line item budget and justification for the changes. He stated due to the size of the document it is no longer being printed and he will send a line in an email today to make that information available to the Board. Mr. Jarman stated he is planning to submit the budget next Monday or Tuesday so it would be available about a week in advance of the May 18th meeting. He stated he would like to thank Ms. Martin, Ms. King, Mr. Harper and Mr. Hollowell for all their hard work. Mr. Jarman stated the public hearing is scheduled for June 1st.

Mr. Hill stated he thought the extra time on May 18th was a good idea.

Mr. Rouse stated he spoke with Representative John Bell on Friday concerning paving the parking lot at Wooding Middle School. He stated he also spoke with David Rouzer and John Bell about securing funds for the bleacher situation at South Lenoir. Mr. Rouse stated they told him they would look into it but nothing was promised.

Ms. Sutton stated the BBQ Festival appeared to be a great success and she had heard nothing but positive comments. She commended all involved.

Mr. Hill stated it was a well-attended event and that type of activity is needed for the benefit of our community.

Mr. Jarman stated there had been comments about the number of visitors from out of town that were in attendance and Mr. Rouse said he had been told there were approximately 40,000 people that attended.

Mr. Hill and Mr. Best comments on how well the Board had been received on the tour of the schools.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:22 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Vickie F. King
Clerk to the Board