

**MINUTES**

**LENOIR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**June 01, 2015**

The Lenoir County Board of Commissioners met in open session at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, June 01, 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, Lashanda Hall, Human Resource Technician, 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.

Mr. Hill thanked everyone for their time and attention that all of you have given the matters in front of us today including the School Board and the school Administrative staff. I appreciate everybody being here and we are certainly glad to see you. We have been through some difficult times and I think we will emerge on the other side. Again, we are excited about having you here and look forward to hearing what you have to say.

Mr. Hill asked for a motion to add to the agenda the Lenoir County Schools Budget Amendment Proposal prior to the public hearing.

Upon a motion by Ms. Brown and a second by Ms. Sutton, the Lenoir County Schools Budget Amendment Proposal was placed on the agenda before the public hearing was unanimously approved.

Mr. Hill asked if anyone was present to speak on anything other than the budget ordinance?

No one responded.

**PUBLIC INFORMATION:**

None

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Mr. Jimmy Rouse was scheduled to appear but will reschedule.

## **CONSENT AGENDA:**

1. Budget Ordinance Amendment: General Fund: Health: Immunizations: \$674.00. Increase.
2. Budget Ordinance Amendment: School Capital Fund School Building: \$1,650.00.

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

## **BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS/RESOLUTIONS:**

Mr. Hill stated, over the last few months the Commissioners have attempted to work our way through the ever changing budget process. As we have attempted to examine in detail the school boards requests, we have found ourselves at odds over our ability to pay for the accelerated Ipad project request and how to balance that request with the issues we have examined with Schools facility needs and usage. At times, as a Board of Commissioners, in an attempt to do our due diligence have found ourselves in discussions that have alienated the school board and have lead to some misinterpretation of our intentions and poor communication between our boards. As the board chair I will shoulder the responsibility for that and will work diligently to improve those communications. Since our last meeting I am happy to report that the Chairman of the Lenoir County School Board, Mr. Jon Sargeant and I have been able to sit down and discuss the issues. We have struggled through issues and would like bring our joint resolution to the Board at this time. In doing so I would also like to thank the leadership team of Lenoir County Schools and our Lenoir County Leadership Team for assisting us as we reached out to each other with this compromise. Mr. Sargeant and I have pledged to continue to keep the dialogue and communication open and clear between our boards moving forward.

I would like to place in the form of a motion that we eliminate the cut of \$197,000 to the 2015-2016 Lenoir County Schools Current Expense budget, remove the ½ cent reduction in property tax, and take the ¼ cent sales tax out of the budget process altogether. Thus restoring the budget to the previous year's amount of \$9.9 million.

Upon a motion by Mr. Hill and a second by Ms. Sutton the 2015-2016 Lenoir County School current expense budget was restored.

Call to Question:

Mr. Rouse yes Ms. Sutton yes, Ms. Brown yes, Mr. Hill yes, Mr. Davis yes, Mr. Best yes, Mr. Daughety yes:

The 2015-2016 Lenoir County School current expense budget restoration was unanimously approved.

Mr. Hill stated, I would like the public to know that we will continue exploring the ¼ cent sales tax in our next meetings as a way to finance the continuation of the Ipad rollout and a way to reduce property tax in the 2016-2017 budget and beyond.

At this time I would like to ask the Chairman of Lenoir County Schools, Mr. Jon Sargeant come to the podium for a few remarks from Lenoir County Public Schools.

Mr. Sargeant stated, I want to especially thank your commissioners for reconsidering their decision to reduce our school funding for next year. As you know, our school system is 2 years into a process to substantially improve our schools. Especially in light of the budget cuts we have received from the state over the last six years, every dollar we receive is critical toward reaching our goals.

I also want the public to understand that the situation that we have been dealing with is new for both our boards. Up until 2009-2010, the state of North Carolina allocated funds to the schools thru the ADM public school building capital fund which came directly to the schools for capital needs. The county still approved those projects, but the funds came from the ADM fund. The State made the decision about 5 years ago to stop giving us those funds. The last of the ADM capital fund balance was used last year. From this point forward we are having to rely more on the county to help us maintain our facilities. This change requires our boards to work together in a way that we haven't before. I certainly understand now that the commissioners are more interested in how we manage our facilities. Unfortunately, in the process of trying to determine how to deal with this new situation, we have created quite a mess.

I personally want to apologize to the people of Lenoir County for what you have seen going on between the Board of Education and the County Commissioners over the last several weeks. For the last several weeks our two boards have not been communicating with each other the way we need to be, and I accept my part of the responsibility for that lack of communication. With the cooperation of our Superintendent, Dr. Steven Mazingo, County Manager, Mr. Mike Jarman, Mr. Hill and I have discussed these issues. We are working to insure better communication between our boards in the future. However, due to decreased state capital funding, we still have some very difficult decisions facing Lenoir County and our schools.

With our limited resources, we must look closely at how we use our facilities. While these decisions concerning the use of our facilities will ultimately be made by the Board of Education based on what is best for our children, we plan to work with our Commissioners to make the best decisions for Lenoir County.

I wish to acknowledge that we did submit a request for additional funds to expand our one to one technology project to the high schools. This was a year ahead of the schedule.

Therefore, I understand the county's reluctance to fund that request a year early. We were here a year before we said we were going to need that funding (Ipad). However, thru our negotiations with Apple we have been able to negotiate a savings of approximately \$700k per year over the estimate that we previously discussed with the Commissioners. In light of these savings to our system we can't afford not to do it. We plan to move forward with our plans next year with or without the additional funding from the county.

However, I want the Commissioners to understand that to sustain this project for the future, we will need additional county funding in the following year. This project will provide our students with the latest technology, up to date resources and differentiated learning opportunities. We believe this project is essential to the success of our school system. We are willing to finance the entire project ourselves to start, but we will need your help to sustain this program.

For the last two years as chairman of the Board of Education, I have been proud that we had such a good relationship with our County Commissioners. You don't see that kind of relationship in other counties around our state. But like any relationship, we will have disagreements and differences of opinion. It is how we choose to resolve those disagreements that will define what kind of county we are. It will also determine what we can accomplish for Lenoir County. Today, it is time to put the last couple of weeks behind us and move forward.

Mr. Hill thanked everyone and stated I look forward to our renewed relationship as we move forward.

Upon a motion by Ms. Brown and a second by Ms. Sutton, the Board moved into the Public Hearing regarding the Budget Ordinance.

Mr. Jarman asked Ms. Martin to hand out copies of the Budget Ordinance. Mr. Jarman stated, this is the budget ordinance that was submitted to the board on May 26, 2015. The one Budget Ordinance located in your agenda packet contains changes back to the original \$9.9 million funding to the schools, and the 83 1/2 cent tax rate. This board had several preliminary meetings to let us know the policies and wishes you had for county staff incorporated into the budget. We did choose the line item request for every department along with their justification together. This information was on the website and available to you on April 27, 2015. We delivered the submitted budget to the commissioners on May 6, 2015. We had a full presentation that we spent close to three hours going over topics during our May 18<sup>th</sup> budget work session which lead to further discussions and the May 28<sup>th</sup> meeting.

The budget you have submitted before shows the general funds are in balance and your general fund is at \$66,694,918 which represents a 1.9% increase. We do show \$2,853,792 fund balance appropriated to balance this budget and that has been our practice in the past. We were conservative on the revenues and we worked hard to keep the expenditures down because we typically do not use any of the fund balance.

Because of the changes in the government accounting standards if we do use some of the fund balance it will be assigned fund balance for specific purposes. We can put it in your saving account to either pay an economic development project or to pay a certain debt. We do not go into the unassigned, because if we do, we will have to make some serious corrections. There's been a lot of discussion about this budget as you have heard and at this time I will turn it over to the public hearing for comments.

### **Public Comments**

Mr. Hill advised the speakers of the time limit of 3 minutes to talk.

Mr. Vernon Foster stated, I want to congratulate the Board of Commissioners and the Board of Education. I'm excited, you guys worked some things out and is going to move forward in a positive manner. I will throw an extra wrench in. Some of you know what I do for a living and I have done it for 31 years is a property manager. I deal with people who come to Kinston/Lenoir County people who laterally move within our community as well as coming in. I've seen some trends that have been worrisome and I think you have too. There was a study done by the NC Department of Commerce in 2007 and the title of the study was NC Commission Work Force Development January 2007. I will email you a copy of the pdf format for your viewing purposes. It talks about the poor job performance in the coastal plain and the mountain region as opposed to Charlotte Mecklenburg and the Triangle area and that is because of lack of technological job as well as importation. I see the job of the Board of Education as well as all other elected officials to put our citizens in a better position and a lot of that will come through education. When companies come to Kinston Lenoir County one of the things they look at is schools and opportunities. How many of them have actually brought houses here as opposed to going to Craven, Wayne or Pitt County and that has to change. With the \$9.9 million allocation given to the schools I believe for three years running would be correct.

Mr. Jarman stated, it's closer to five years and that's just for current expense it doesn't include capital or debt services.

Mr. Foster said at any rate the revaluation is on us for the most part. The values are not flat, they are down. I'm glad to pay 83 1/2 cents on the 100 value or whatever it is. In fact, I'll even pay a higher tax if it would help our schools out. I don't have a problem with it and I'm a Democrat. I appreciate your time. Thanks again for getting this thing back in the right direction.

Virginia Wade stated, I too want to thank the School Board and the County Commissioners. I emailed everybody my letter this weekend. I would like to apologize to Commissioner Davis, because I put in the letter that you voted against our budget and you weren't here to vote. I would like to talk to you about the future of our children because I am vested in this community. I have a child in the fourth grade and I will have another child that will be going through 12 years of school in public schools here. It is a proven fact that education and children's education is the more they are educated the more likely they are to succeed.

If we can get them in a community that they want to come back to. Right now we have a lot of people leaving, not wanting to come back, because of a lot of different things. If we can get our education system and community back up to where it is I think we can improve and get people coming back here.

It's very important to me to show our teachers and education system and our children that we care about their future and we care about how to make them grow and become better citizens. To know that you guys care about them by showing them and now giving them back the money you originally said you would not give them. You are showing them and the rest of the people who are looking for a place to relocate that this is a good place to come. We are on the up and up with the 1 on 1 on technology and are only a few in the state that are trying to do this. I encourage you to continue to put our children first because they are our future.

Angela Foster, stated, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Eric Rouse and Mac Daughety for your vote on May 28, 2015. I was prepared to fight you all, but I do want to thank you for coming together for the betterment of our children. Our children are the future and without education they have no future. I was not opposed to the \$300,000 if the Board could not afford it but I was opposed to the cut. We cannot go on if we keep cutting what we have. Again I want to thank you all for coming to an agreement so we would not have to fight this battle. I have not slept since Thursday night. I can't tell you how many miles I have put on my vehicle getting petitions and signatures ready. I have been inner-city south and north of the river. Just so you know I'm prepared to do it again but I don't want to. It is my desire that everyone work together for a common cause. We are one community and we should act as one community. Thank you and the last thing I would like to leave you with because I feel like I need to say this to all boards "Do Not Tread on the Future of Our Children".

Donna Vincent stated, I would like to thank the boards for the positive dialog in the past couple of days. I'm here as a parent who supports every school not just the north side where I go. I want to reiterate that the County Commissioners do not have the ability to close a school. I know that has been a huge concern for a lot of folks. They do have the ability to cut at such a great length that we would not have the opportunity or other alternatives other than to close schools. That is something the public, the county, tax payers should be equally involved in. This is not a decision that we want the Board of Education or the County Commissioners suggesting or making for us. I also would be willing to pay a higher tax. I have three children and their education and health are my utmost concern as I want to see their even better than mine. I think I speak for all parents when I say that and I encourage you all to continue this positive dialog and make sure no ones personal feelings comes before our children's future.

Commissioner Davis apologized for being absent at the special called meeting, He stated, I would have had to close my place of business or either miss this meeting, so I choose after almost 60 years in business to remain open and miss the meeting and again, I apologize for that.

Upon a motion by Ms. Brown and a second by Ms. Sutton, the board voted unanimously to move out of the Public Hearing.

Mr. Rouse addressed the tax increase that North Lenoir Fire department proposed. He stated, I've been in contact with and I have requested information regarding their initial presentation and how they arrived at their numbers. I am currently waiting to receive it so I can send to David Rouzer and John Bell. There seems to be potential possibility and David Rouzer feels like we can get some money from DENHR to help fund this project.

John Bell has already helped me out with Woodington Middle School parking issue and he thinks there might be a potential to help us with this project. If either one of them come through then it would make their request doubled. I would recommend and make a motion that we table the increase in their budget at this time until we can get that information and get it back.

Mr. Rouse made a motion to table the increase for the North Lenoir Volunteer Fire Department with a second by Mr. Davis.

Mr. Davis stated, I think that the citizens in Falling Creek Township are in favor of the project and it is very much needed. To get additional funding outside of taxpayer dollars is going to be very difficult. If we don't table it and try to get the grants and other possible funding before we go forward with this.

Mr. Hill stated, the ability to table it and get information or funding to it will not happen inside the budget window we have. That's the issue and the second issue is we made statements in reference to how we were going to work with our volunteer fire departments boards. I feel strongly that if the volunteer fire department boards bring us a request that is a good project for the community we ought to respond. While I understand that's your crunch and that's not an absolute dollar and it won't arrive in time to pass our budget so that's my discussion.

Ms. Sutton agreed with Mr. Hill, I understand where Eric is coming from, I agree to disagree. We did in good faith when the money was taken from the budget. We said that we would allow them to have jurisdiction over their area and trust them to make decisions. So I think this is one of the first examples that we need to have faith in them and let them be allowed to do that.

Mr. Hill stated, we have a motion on the floor by Mr. Rouse and a second by Mr. Davis, to table the North Lenoir Volunteer Fire Department project.

Call to Question:

Mr. Rouse yes, Ms. Sutton no, Ms. Brown no, Mr. Hill no, Mr. Davis yes, Mr. Best no, Mr. Daughety no

Mr. Jarman stated, the tax rate increase to the North Lenoir Volunteer Fire Department is included in the budget that was submitted at this time. Mr. Jarman stated, once you have the public hearing you can vote on the budget any time, unless you have a motivating reason to hold off. That is the boards call, but you can't hold off past June 30, 2015.

Ms. Sutton made a motion to approve the budget as presented, we had numerous discussions on it and I think we have gone over everything enough times. We had time to research and to look into everything that was in it and I feel good about it. So I will make a motion to approve the budget with a second by Ms. Brown.

Mr. Hill stated, as difficult as parts of the budget has been I'd like to describe why we arrived there and after all of these difficult discussions and grid lock we worked our way through it. We've come to a point where we have a budget that strengths: there has no property tax in or sales tax increase in it; for this year it provides sound support for education both for the local schools and the Lenoir Community College; It protects employees insurance benefits in an extremely volatile and uncertain market; it provides additional hourly resources for our law enforcement; it solves long term issues with our financial software that we been working on for over fifteen years; it provides support for new employees to transition in strategically critical positions that will be open during the course of the year; it maintains a strong balance and protects the long term goals and objectives of the board; and it provides fiscal responsibility. It does have some weakness; we don't have any raises for our employees for this year, and the issue with the fire tax is the other issue. So at this time if there is no other discussion I will call for a vote on the budget.

Upon a motion by Ms. Sutton and a second by Ms. Brown, to approve the 2015-2016 budget.

Call to question.

Mr. Rouse no, Ms. Sutton yes, Ms. Brown yes, Mr. Hill yes, Mr. Davis yes, Mr. Best yes, Mr. Daughety yes

The budget was approved in favor with one dissenting vote from Mr. Rouse.

Item No. 3 was Public Hearing/Lenoir County Budget Ordinance Introduction and Public Hearing: Fiscal Year 2015-2016 Lenoir County Submitted Budget. Upon a motion by Ms. Sutton and a second by Ms. Brown, item No 3 was approved with one dissenting vote by Mr. Rouse.

Mr. Hill stated, for those that were present for the public hearing if you would like to stay for the meeting you are certainly welcome to do so. If you would like to take a moment to step out and leave before we move into our other items on the agenda.

Mr. Hill stated, at this time we would like to resume our June 1, 2016 meeting. Again, I would like to thank everyone that was here today and I didn't get a chance to personally thank a couple of people that were in the room that I meant to thank. I wanted to make sure they were mentioned because they were very much engaged when we did our school tours and have been involved with us throughout this process. I would like to thank Assistant Superintendent, Diane Lynch, Executive Director of Operations, Brent Williams, and Cecil Outlaw, Director of Maintenance. The job they do every day is amazing and what they do with our facilities. We know we have some more issues but those folks were very instrumental in providing us information and taking us on the tours.

At this time we will move forward and we have a proclamation

Item No. 4 was a Proclamation: Vulnerable Adult and Elder Abuse Awareness Month. Susan Moore, DSS Director, stated, elder abuse awareness occurs between mother's day and father's day. Between July of 2014 and April 2015 we had 141 reports in our county to DSS of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of seniors and disabled adults. Of those 141 reports, 78 resulted in evaluations and the others were either screened out or referred to law enforcements services. Of the 78 evaluations the majority was due to self neglect, not by another person and 4 included exploitation by a caregiver. Lenoir County is holding an elder abuse awareness walk Monday June 15, 2015 at 11:00am at the Veterans Home on Hull Road in Kinston, all ages are welcomed to come and walk with us and lunch will be provided. Ms. Moore read the proclamation. Upon a motion by Ms. Sutton and a second by Mr. Best, item No 4 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 5 was a Resolution Declaring Property as Surplus and Authorizing the Sale of the Surplus Property by auction. Martha Martin, Finance Director, stated, the County has acquired various properties over a period of time mainly through tax foreclosures. Some of these properties have structures on them and some are vacant lots. The properties add no value to the operations of the County. The sale of these properties will return them to private owners and add them once again to the tax scrolls. Upon a motion by Ms. Brown and a second by Ms. Sutton, Item No. 5 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 6 was a Budget Ordinance Amendment: Vehicle Replacement Fund: Vehicle Replacement: \$35,000.00. Increase. Martha Martin, Finance Director, stated, this budget amendment is to appropriate fund balance from the vehicle replacement fund to cover the cost of purchasing a used 2004 Ford E-450 ambulance from Select Custom Apparatus. Upon a motion by Mr. Davis and a second by Mr. Best, Item No. 6 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 7A was a Resolution Approving additional Lenoir Community College Current Expense Funding: \$75,000.00. Mike Jarman, County Manager, stated, after our budget presentation a lot of the information became public and that's when discussions started with the school board. Our liaison with Lenoir Community College, Ms. Sutton received several questions about no increase in the funding.

Dr. Briley telephoned me and Ms. Martin and I had a meeting with him and Debra Sutton VP of Financial services. We went over items like we should have always been doing with every department. Went line item by line item, we even reviewed previous years. In FY 11-12, 13-14 there were no increases given to the college. At the college there are about seventeen (17) employees that perform maintenance and facility type work which is a responsibility of the commissioners. These employees are like the situation we have with the recreation department, where there are city employees but we send funding over there for nine (9) people we have funding out here for these employees on LCC payroll but they are our responsibility. When we went back and looked at the insurance increase we looked at all of the situations they had faced and did the percentages over the years and what prompted this there at a situation right now where they are \$62,000 short in their county funding. We met and had discussions and we saw some areas where maybe some different funding other than county funding could be used. We agreed to meet further and have other meetings set up so we would not change the budget as it was submitted to you with no increase. This is the reason this request is before you and we want you to consider. Because of the way the deficit is and has been done there is a shortage but we are not changing the future budget at this point because there are other things that we could work out.

Now I am going to step out in an area that might get a little uncomfortable and I don't mean for it to. Part of my reason is we had comments and we didn't immediately come to discuss them with the school board and it ran wild. Someone sent me part of a social medial text from Mac Daughety yesterday and I would like to read it and then I would like some discussion. It says" you need to know come this Monday on the agenda for the Lenoir County Commissioners is an request to increase the funding by \$75,000 to LCC. Again, double talk, folks this has to lead one to believe that what is happening here is nothing but pure and simple politics and good ole boy government of you do what I want or I'll get even with you or your department even if it goes into the expense of the children". Mr. Jarman stated, if there is something political or something that I am not aware of this board should have discussion on it before you vote on this additional funding that I am recommending. I just like some open healthy discussion because I don't want us to have something festering like what just passed.

Mr. Daughety stated, I hope now that we've approved the budget we can move on from that and we restored the funding to education so as it relates to this being in the 2014-2015 budget that's different matters.

Ms. Sutton stated, they needed to hear what you're referring to and why you would make those statements?

Ms. Brown stated, I need to know.

Mr. Daughety stated, it was simple, just what I said. If you at this point were going back and continue the dialog about previous budget we approved and we restored the fund for education and the truth of the matter is if you had not restored the funds for education and you had then approved the money for the LCC then that would have been a double standard and that is my personal opinion.

Ms. Sutton stated, that is not what you said and I would like more detail about why you said what you said about the good ole boys I think the public needs to know and we as your fellow commissioners need to know what specifics and why you said that? I think the community college is owed that.

Ms. Brown asked, who are the good ole boys?

Mr. Daughety stated, I just said all that I am going to say on the matter.

Ms. Sutton said but you will leave here and get on Facebook and say a whole lot.

Mr. Hill stated, we had a positive meeting the situation on Facebook is a place where anybody can hide and be invisible and say whatever they want. As public officials sometimes we have to take what comes at us and know that where the truth really lies. Like I said before and I will say it again I have tried to do my work in the board room where it's suppose to be. I've tried not to go in that direction. I've addressed commissioner Daughety on some issues regarding Facebook and I could go there but I'm not. We will have a private conversation when the appropriate time is correct to address issues that have been said about me particularly in our recent dialog.

Today is a day for us to all get to a point where we can be as big as we can be. I understand the questions that the manager posed because we need to stop jabbing swords at each other in the public media. We've all been guilty of that at some point in time. We have some that have repeatedly done it but we just need to stop it. I hope that this is a lesson learned in our recent budget discussion with the schools. Work in the board room and private meetings need to stay one on one because conversations are just general conversations about general ideas. The real work that has to be done has to be done in an open public setting that you can hear every detail and all the minutes are kept. I have done my business and that's the way I will continue to do my business and when I have issues with someone I will address that on a one on one basis.

Mr. Jarman stated, I want to make sure everybody understands and give the community college credit. When they brought out the issue we met and they justified the \$62,000 current shortage that could grow by the end of the year. Hence the \$75,000, they agreed that we needed to discuss the additional funding source for the line items. They agreed not to impact the next years budget. We are having that open dialog and the community college financial status and we are on the same page.

Ms. Sutton stated, that was the one reason I wanted to address Mr. Daughety's comment. Serving as liaison I felt like the statements he made I would be questioned in regards to them. That's what I wanted clarification for so I can go back and have to face conversations and get them answers because I could not based on what was said. I commend them on pleading their case. They drilled me thoroughly but in a very respectful manner. There were some questions that I couldn't answer but I got them the information because that is my job. I just want to tell them how much I appreciate them acting as professional as they did. I did not want a sore thumb with them and to think I had anything to do with it.

Ms. Brown stated, as for social media is concerned I think we as adults as individuals we need to be very careful as to what we post because we don't know who is looking and that is a cause for great concern.

Item No. 7B was a Budget Ordinance Amendment: General Fund Community College: \$75,000.00. Increase. Mike Jarman, County Manager, stated, this amendment is to appropriate additional funds for Lenoir Community College. In fiscal years 2011-2012 and 2013-2014, there were no increases to the appropriation to LCC. (With the increase in their salaries County funded positions, increase in health insurance and liability insurance and the increase in retirement rates, additional funds are necessary).

Mr. Rouse asked if what has happened with LCC is when we had the increases in the past and since these were county employees they did not receive those increases and the college made up for it out of their budget?

Mr. Jarman replied, they received their increases but they received them from the college. If their cost to insure them for health insurance, if the retirement went up, if there was a raise given to county employees, so they did the same for them as for other county employees. The insurance is different because it is state and the retirement is a greater percentage than we have to pay so we don't compensate them for the 401K because that's in their retirement. So the answer is yes the college had to pay for that out of other sources and the reality of it is they are employees we are responsible for and we did not do it.

Mr. Rouse asked, Mr. Jarman to elaborate on the further funds that might be available?

Mr. Jarman replied, I have not had a lot of discussion with them but the area that comes into play the general statues for county responsibility says to fund a "watchman". If you look in Webster Dictionary for the definition of watchman that somebody is like a night watchman that keep an eye on the buildings at night. We are currently participating in funding the whole security contract. The maximum amount the college can participate in that is \$120,000 and there are some other needs that they have. With those issues up for discussion we need to work with them and move forward to resolve it.

Mr. Rouse asked, how does this impact the budget moving forward because you said it does not but obviously the \$75,000?

Mr. Hill replied, it has no impact on this year upcoming budget.

Mr. Jarman stated, the short fall we are facing now we think some changes internally like with that money not coming from a different source might off set that to get through the year. But we still need to look at making sure we are covering those employees. Moving forward we will make sure that those elements of the line item budget are specifically discussed and we make sure we cover it.

Mr. Rouse stated, what it all boils down to is it was a county responsibility and we were not funding it to the detriment of the college.

Mr. Jarman replied, yes, on the employees side. Also, there are some items that we will discuss later to see if there are some different ways to share the responsibilities, but for this shortfall we did not fund those employees.

Upon a motion by Ms. Sutton and a second by Ms. Brown, Item No. 7A & B was unanimously approved.

Mr. Hill stated, in regards to Lenoir Community College and the watchman term, they have made some adjustments in that law but that might be a law that we need to get in front of our legislature folks regarding the terminology and how it changed. Because when the community college systems started that's what they had was a watchman. With all of the issues you have with security and all of those types things getting more clarity in that law might not be a bad idea.

Mr. Jarman stated, with that said that's not just a windfall for us because the issue is as we discuss personnel they have some other personnel out there. Some of what they are doing may very well be our responsibility hence we need to have a lot of internal meetings to discuss it. We need to see exactly what the job descriptions are and see what the people are doing. At the same time that would take some pressure off of us, but there might be some that put some pressure on us. So I don't want you to think I'm saying we have extra money from where they are at because as we look into these items there are some that could go the other way. This is why we need to have more face to face conversations to work through this issue. We need to truly understand we have budget discussions with the schools and everybody in the past but not to the extent we did with our departments because we didn't want the outside agencies to feel we were micromanaging as the conversations was shared about the schools. Now everybody understands for you to be responsible to the tax payers we have to take it to that level although it has caused some work but we are having some good discussions to get to the right point.

Resolution Approving the Lenoir County Work First Block Grant Plan for SFY2016-2019. Susan Moore, DSS Director, stated, in September she brought to the commissioners a resolution requesting approval of the Lenoir County Work First Block Grant Plan. It has taken NC Department of Health and Human Services Division of Social Services this long to review the information. The Division of Social Services requested that we make changes to the plan and resubmit the revised plan by June 8, 2015. These changes were made by the Work First Management team on May 21, 2015 and approved by the Lenoir County Board of Social Services on May 28, 2015. Upon a motion by Ms. Brown and a second by Ms. Sutton, the Lenoir County Work First Block Grant Plan revision was unanimously approved.

Item No. 8 was a Resolution approving appointments of citizens to boards, commissions, etc. No appointments at this time therefore no action is required.

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

Item No. 9 was items from the County Manager, Mike Jarman. Mr. Jarman stated, this board asked us to look at a public comment policy and rules. Chris Harper has been assisting with this and has done a lot of work to get it together. I will ask him to present to you the policy that we have and at that point once he presents it you can take it and review it and if you want to make any changes you can let us know and then we can put it on the agenda at a later time for adoption.

Chris Harper stated, at the request of this board I have compiled a public comment policy. The public comment is required by N.C. G.S. 153A-52.1 public comment period during regular meetings and a copy of that statute is attached as attachment #1. In the statute itself it says a public comment period must be available at least one meeting and I put it in the policy that this board will observe public comments at both of their meetings if necessary. Public involvement is where an individual or group can come make a brief statement to the board of commissioners regarding issues or can make statements. This policy before you today gives this board process, structure, guidelines and procedures. It requires a group or individuals to sign up on a list provided as attachment #2. I brought this before you today for you to review and or approve or make comments or make improvements. If there is any part of this that you would like to ask questions about I'd be happy to address it.

Mr. Hill asked if anybody had any questions?

Upon a motion by Mr. Rouse and a second by Ms. Sutton, the Lenoir County Board of Commissioners Public Comment Policy Rules and Procedures was unanimously approved.

Mr. Hill stated, I appreciate Mr. Harper's work on this and being involved in a variety of public meetings. Throughout the last thirty years this is something that we really had needed and it will provide a balanced approach to how we listen to all citizens on all matters and I appreciate the work you've done on getting this together.

Mr. Rouse stated, on the last page in the agenda is a update from DOT regarding TIP Projects, Non-TIP Projects and Resurfacing. With the TIP projects you have bridges 42 and 43 over the Neuse River on US 70 Business awarded to Thalle Construction Company and the utility work starting with the road closure tentatively set for July 6, 2015. NC 11 construct 21 left turn lanes at existing median openings from Highland Avenue to North of Odham Road, scheduled date is some in the month of June 2015. The Kinston Riverwalk, multi-use path from downtown through Pearson Park to the Power plant design is complete and awaiting R/R approval for ROW with a anticipated date of June 2015. In regards to Non-TIP projects Smithfield Way plans are to extend road from SR 1548 Hill Farm Road to US 258, the state forces to complete box culvert and grade work and the paving will be done by Barnhill Contracting Company. Hill Farm Road extending the existing turn lane on SR 1548 Hill Farm Road past Kinston FD Station 3 to 465 ft north of SR 2021 Smithfield Way was awarded to Barnhill Contracting Company with an estimated completion date of December 2015.

Resurfacing items are NC 55 from NC 11 to the Craven County line contract was awarded to Barnhill Contracting Company, the paving is complete and the shoulder work will start soon. In the Castle Oaks Sub-divison roads resurface and reconstruction of shoulders was awarded to Barnhill Contracting Company with a estimated completion date of November 2015. Secondary Roads was awarded to Barnhill Contracting Company with a completion date of November 2015. SR 1116 Jonestown Road from NC 11 to US 258, widen and resurface, Sr 1578 Airport Road from 2 land section to NC 58, mill and resurface, and SR 1569 Carey Road from US 70 business Vernon Avenue to SR 1571 Plaza Blvd, mill and resurface.

Mr. Hill made a motion to move into closed session.

### **CLOSED SESSION**

Upon a motion by Ms. Brown and a second by Ms. Sutton a closed session was entered into at approximately 10:13 a. m. with the following cited: Number Four (4):

To discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by Lenoir County.

Upon a motion by Ms. Brown and a second by Ms. Sutton and unanimous approval, the Board moved out of closed session at approximately 10:35 a.m. The meeting re-convened in open session at approximately 10:36 a.m.

Mr. Hill stated, we are back in open session. The board went into closed session to discuss a potential industry in Lenoir County. No action was taken. Mr. Hill asked if there were any additional comments? There were none.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Hill and a second by Ms. Brown, the meeting was adjourned.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:36 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Vickie F. King

Clerk to the Board