

MINUTES

LENOIR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

June 6, 2016

The Lenoir County Board of Commissioners met in open session at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, June 6, 2016, in the Board of Commissioners' Main Meeting Room in the Lenoir County Courthouse at 130 S. Queen St., Kinston, NC.

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

Members Absent: None

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

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

Mr. Hill asked for a moment of silence for the 72nd Anniversary of D-Day (WWII) and for the passing of boxing legend Muhammad Ali.

PUBLIC INFORMATION:

Sheriff Ingram stated he would like to address the Board regarding a post on Facebook dated May 23, 2016. He acknowledged the detention officers in the audience who took the time to show up for this meeting on their day off because they had concerns regarding comments from the Facebook post. He shared the importance of a Detention Officer's position. Sheriff Ingram referenced the post that stated: "Lenoir County was staffed 30-40% higher than other counties our size". Sheriff Ingram shared several statistics from other counties. The eight (8) counties mentioned are running under totally different circumstances, such as Columbus County who has 8 employees per shift and only have 192 beds, Duplin County 7 employees on day shift 4 on night shift, and have 96 beds, Edgecombe county 12 employees 167 beds, Granville county 5 employees 85 beds, Lee County 5 employees 126 beds, Sampson County 9 employees 252 beds, Stanley County 9 employees 133 beds, Craven County 9 full-time 6 part-time 15 total employees 292 beds, Pitt County 33 officers 475 beds, Lenoir County 14 employees 285 beds. According to numbers, Lenoir County is in line with where we should be. We are working with the number of people that this Board approved. We are in a position where we cannot safely and adequately run this facility with less than the number of employees we have. Another comment stated that we should be able to operate with less because we have a state of the art facility.

While we have a new facility, it is certainly not a state of the art facility, and I encourage anyone that has not yet toured the facility to do so.

Ms. Sutton asked where did such comments originate. Sheriff Ingram replied they were quoted from Commissioner Daughety, from his Facebook page on May 23rd at 7:14 p.m. Sheriff Ingram stated the real concern was Commissioner Daughety said the reason he had concerns was “when we compared the other eight similar size communities to ours we were staffing at 30-40% higher than those other counties”, and I did not want that to be the concern with the rest of the Board. Sheriff Ingram stated as he mentioned earlier we are operating with the number of staff that this Board approved prior to him taking office. He has not added nor deleted any numbers. Ms. Sutton stated she wanted Sheriff Ingram and the officers to know that is not her perspective, and she has toured the jail, and we know just how time-consuming those positions are, and she applauds everyone one because she knows there are not many people who would work for that rate of pay, and she appreciates the work the officers do. Mr. Hill stated not defending one or the other, but in the context of the discussion which was brought up about staffing, they did not look at all of the details such as number of beds, etc. During the budget meeting, there were questions that arose regarding staff. At that point in time during the discussion, we looked at raw numbers and did not have the details that Sheriff Ingram brought to our attention today. There is action in this budget that supports this as we will continue to monitor the situation. Sheriff Ingram stated in the future they will be getting back with the Board because when you talk about facilities, we do have a nice facility, but there are still other things that need to be done. I don’t want this Board to think that everything is great and they spent all the money there is to be spent. In essence, the county got what they paid for just like with anything else. For example, when you purchase a car you can get the base model or fully loaded, and I would contend that our jail is the base model. However, at some point, there will be things that we will have to address.

Mr. Daughety stated since he seems to be the subject of this discussion, one must understand his job as a County Commissioner is to look out for the taxpayer. Not having the information which Sheriff Ingram provided today, as a County Commissioner looking at the broad numbers and not having visited the jail, he did have concerns. What was stated in the post was the truth. When it was looked at on the surface without having visited the jail, without knowing other information, there were concerns. As with any person who has concerns, I called and requested a meeting with the sheriff to tour the jail to address my concerns. Commissioner Daughety stated after the tour, his questions were answered and he no longer had any concerns. On the surface if the roles were reversed you would have asked the same questions “why are we staffing at 30% more than the other counties”. Once Captain Dawson gave the tour and provided the explanations, he had a greater understanding of the current situation. Mr. Daughety stated he will always raise concerns about things that are questionable on the surface until he can get in and investigate and find out more information. Sheriff Ingram stated he had no problem with Mr. Daughety questioning, his only concern was the manner and the context of the post on the 23rd, and 2-3 days later several things on Facebook regarding what the sheriff had done. Mr. Hill thanked Sheriff Ingram for the information.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Ms. Susan Moore, DSS Director, stated the month of June is Elder Abuse Awareness month and they are encouraging people in the community to help make it safer for our elderly and the disabled. The elder abuse awareness walk will take place on Wednesday, June 15th at 11:00 a.m. at the Veterans Home on Hull Road in Kinston. All ages are welcome and lunch will be provided. The walk is being sponsored by the Lenoir County Council of Ageing, Veterans Home, and Lenoir County DSS. Please come out and help us spread awareness of the fact of elder abuse in our community and share in with the walk.

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Approval of Minutes: Regular Board Meeting: May 16, 2016.
Budget Work Session: May 16, 2016.
2. Budget Ordinance Amendment: General Fund: JCPC Parenting Matters: \$2,140.
Increase.

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

Item No. 3 was a Public Hearing Regarding the FY16-17 Budget. Ms. Brown made a motion to go into the Public Hearing with a second by Ms. Sutton. No one from the public wished to comment on the FY16-17 Submitted Budget and Budget Ordinance.

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

Ms. Brown made a motion with a second by Ms. Sutton to approve the FY16-17 Budget. Mr. Hill asked if there was any discussion.

Mr. Rouse asked Mr. Jarman if he had the information he requested during the budget work session regarding county matched programs. Mr. Jarman replied he requested the information from an outside company that handles the county indirect cost study. They stated they would have to get back with him to give a price as to what it would cost and how long it would take to retrieve such information. They stated it was an unusual request and needed time to break it down at a countywide level, but would get the information as soon as they possibly could. Mr. Rouse stated this should be something the department head should be able to identify within their departments and something they should be able handle. Mr. Jarman replied the answer to the question is much more involved than realized. It might be simpler for some of the departments than others, but if we are going to answer, we need to answer thoroughly so it doesn't cause concerns, also that we are not putting information out that is not 100% accurate. Mr. Daughety asked for clarification on the conversation. Mr. Rouse replied he requested information regarding county matched programs that are necessarily mandated to see if there are any potential savings.

Mr. Jarman stated during that time staff was very busy with budget preparation along with other things and did not have the time to do a complete study which is why we requested it from another company that does our cost allocation work. The company did mention that the request was pretty involved and he had to go to someone higher up to see what it would take to grant the request and to be accurate as well. It was also suggested in the last conversation with Mr. Rouse that we take the last complete fiscal year that we already finished and break it down and that is what we have asked for. Mr. Hill stated a great explanation is listed on page 33 of the budget under the history section. It mentioned how revenues are difficult to budget from year to year. Grantee agencies, such as the State and Federal governments often tie funding to a certain match or reduce the level of funding in the subsequent years in hopes that local governments will assume funding of the program. Social Services and health make up a large part of the category of this discussion. Mr. Hill stated although he understood Mr. Rouse question it is a question that should be addressed throughout the year, also at this point in time it would not impact the budget itself. Mr. Daughety stated it would be good information to know because the things that will add to the budget are what we need to watch closely. Mr. Rouse stated again it needs to be addressed. Mr. Jarman stated this Board approves all of the budget amendments, but sometimes there might be additional funding coming in and sometimes funding is reduced and we cut programs. They cut the funding and we cut the programs. It happens a lot during the year. Mr. Hill stated it also impacts your sales and property tax and in ways that are hard to reach. If we are going to get that information we need to get all of the information because the impact of just saying we are matching this may grow your budget in one regard, but it can also reduce it on the sales and property tax side, so we need to know that information as well. This request is a very complicated task and doesn't necessarily work in multiples of seven. Mr. Davis stated he feels very comfortable in the manner in which the budget was presented and would like to commend County Administration for all of the hard work they did in preparing this budget and that they did a fantastic job. Ms. Sutton stated she was glad they were able to do something for the employees this year and is glad we are back on track. Ms. Brown stated all she heard this weekend was the county might get an increase.

Mr. Hill stated #1 we did not raise the property tax, #2 we have some increased revenues, sales and property taxes. We were able to do something for our employees, we were able to address the issue of some employee salaries and looking at all employees and the dollars that were placed in certification training for highly qualified law enforcement which is a very crucial piece of this budget. My concerns with this budget are very similar with Mr. Rouse and Mr. Daughety in reference to wanting to see property taxes go down. However, we all know one of the ways to get property tax to go down is growth, what we do with economic development, transportation, and infrastructure in cooperation with the city in some of the projects they are doing is very important if we are going to drive this train in another direction. Mr. Daughety stated this is a different kind of budget because there are two variables unknown in this budget that we had no control over which is unusual. One is we still don't know an exact figure from the legislative change last year, and we don't know how that will affect us, and the other is the revaluation next year. To the taxpayer, he said in his heart he would love to see property taxes reduced because that is what he is about. On the other hand this budget shows us being very responsible. We were able to give county employees a raise in this budget and able to make some adjustments in the detention center, and add merit pay in the sheriff's office. In our discussions, questions have been asked, can we do this, and it is sustainable.

If there was not a revaluation in the picture and we knew what the potential sales tax revenue would do for us it would be different. Hopefully, within the next 24 months we can take a serious look at where we are fiscally and try to figure out if we could do something to generate a tax base. Mr. Hill stated it might take another year before we get the revenue in and take action. We had this same conversation last year to bring in the sales tax and reduce funding and return a penny back to the citizens. That did not go through for various reasons, the schools and other things. Yet this is very important and with the overlap year will we know what the revenues are going to look like. It may take 24 months to get there, but I think if we keep our eyes on the prize and keep looking at the things we are looking at, and also keep looking at ways to keep our employees in a competitive situation with salaries. Mr. Hill asked if there was any other discussion. Mr. Best stated Sheriff Ingram has done a great job with this budget compared to other counties around us. Overall, the positives outweigh the negatives based on the amount of money he was given to work with. I am well pleased with the budget. Ms. Brown stated this is a good budget. A word to the general public, they should be aware of where and how you spend your money in other counties, because that makes their tax rate stabilize, and not be as high as ours, and when you spend your tax dollars in Lenoir County those tax dollars stay here.

Upon a motion by Ms. Brown and a second by Ms. Sutton, the FY16-17 Budget was approved with one dissenting vote from Mr. Rouse.

Mr. Jarman commended the Board for the way they approached this budget and the matters before them and asking questions. The chairman alluded to the fund balance. We stressed that we needed to have a strong fund balance so that we did not have to take a quick reaction to a change that could affect us one way or the other and continue to look at it conservatively. He commended all the department heads and all employees. He stated it's important for this Board to recognize how each department head understands how they feel about the tax rate. They work extremely hard to keep the cost of doing the business as low as possible with the highest quality of service so they can take care of staff. I think we are all working for the same thing although sometimes in discussion it does not sound like it. They are trying to accomplish the same thing and they work very hard and I sit in the middle and see both groups working hard. Again, I commend both groups getting to this point and I think you are approaching it the right way for the future. If we don't know what's coming in we don't go and spend extra money we try to remain conservative. If we think it going to be a tight year we still don't make unnecessary cuts until we see what we have to do. The staff will do whatever is necessary. Thanks again.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS/RESOLUTIONS:

Item No. 4 was a Resolution Approving Purchase Order for Fast Forward Signs for Placement and Removal of Mobile Advertisements: \$4,000. Ms. Angie Greene, Transit Director, stated Lenoir County Transportation began operations in October 1994 to provide transportation to the citizens of Lenoir County. The Lenoir County Transportation Program is a partnership between the North Carolina Department of Transportation/Public Transportation Division (DOT/PTD) and Lenoir County Government. In July of 2007, Lenoir County Transit chose to market advertisements to allow all revenues to be allocated to the Transit System. In doing so, there are costs associated with the removal and placement of each advertisement.

Fast Forward Signs provides services to Lenoir County Transit for placement and removal of advertisements. Lenoir County Transit is requesting approval by the Lenoir County Board of Commissioners for a purchase order for \$4,000 to Fast Forward Signs to cover the costs associated with the placement and removal of mobile advertisements. Upon a motion by Mr. Davis and a second by Mr. Best, Item No. 4 was unanimously approved. Ms. Greene stated one of her part-time scheduling and dispatch Mr. Shawn Howard was a recipient of one of the NC Public Transportation Association Annual conference scholarships. He was awarded this based on an essay he had to submit explaining the services that we provide in Lenoir County and also his interest in furthering his career in the transportation industry. Mr. Howard has obtained his bachelors and masters degrees in public administration and he desires to stay in Lenoir County and eventually get a full-time position with Lenoir County Transit.

Item No. 5 was Budget Ordinance Amendment: Process Funds: \$10,000. Increase. Ms. Tracy Chestnutt, Finance Officer, stated the purpose of this amendment is to appropriate funds for the AG Venture Grant received by Lenoir County Cooperative Extension for the purpose of purchasing livestock scales. Upon a motion by Mr. Daughety and a second by Mr. Best, Item No. 5 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 6 was a Budget Ordinance Amendment: Trust and Agency Fund: Finance/Extension-Family Caregiver: \$5,000. Increase. Ms. Tammy Kelly, Cooperative Extension Director, stated this amendment in the amount of \$5,000 discretionary funds was awarded to purchase supplies and materials to families with children age's birth to kindergarten to purchase curriculum kits, age appropriate books, toys, storage containers, etc. for each age group. Also, to be able to purchase shelving for playgroup room for storage and other needed supplies and materials related to the program. Upon a motion by Mr. Daughety and a second by Mr. Best, Item No. 6 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 7 was a Resolution Approving a contract with Johnny Stroud Painting Contractor, for wallpaper removal and repainting of walls in the lobby, auditorium, and kitchen of the Lenoir County Cooperative Extension Facility. Ms. Tammy Kelly, Cooperative Extension Director, stated the Cooperative Extension Facility was renovated in 1999 following Hurricane Floyd. Since that time the wallpaper has been removed from the lobby and it has been repainted. The lobby, kitchen, and auditorium have not been upgraded and the wallpaper installed in 1999 has begun to peel. We have made attempts in the past to have the paper re-glued; however, it no longer will stay on the wall. Three bids were obtained for the project and the lowest bid is reflected in this quote from Johnny Stroud Painting Contractor. Johnny Stroud Painting Contractor will successfully complete the wallpaper removal and re-painting of the lobby, auditorium, and kitchen. Upon a motion by Ms. Sutton and a second by Ms. Brown, Item No. 7 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 8 was a Resolution Authorizing Lenoir County Health Department to Execute a Purchase Order Contract for TSI, Inc., :\$12,347.60 (includes shipping) for an 8038 PortaCount Pro + Respirator Fit Tester and a Five Year Warranty Contract: \$4,590. totaling: \$16,937.60. Mr. Joey Huff, Health Director, stated The Board is asked to grant permission to the Lenoir County Health Department to execute a purchase order for TSI, Inc. for the amount of \$16,937.60.

This order is placed under GSA Schedule number 142-GS07F-0428U State/local Disaster Recovery under the authority of the GSA Disaster Purchasing Program. The products and services purchased will be used in preparation or response to disaster or recovery from a major disaster declared by the President, or recovery from terrorism, nuclear, biological, chemical or radiological attack. The additional funding was made available for the Health Department from the Ebola Funds to plan and facilitate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) training for staff and partners for responding to EVD (Ebola Virus Disease) by May 31, 2016. This action is necessary to focus on its response system including risk communication, training, and response materials and because of that quick response system; public health plans that are coordinated within their public health authority are able to function effectively. Mr. Huff stated each employee must be personally fitted for the M95 mask because it is a protective tool. It must be fitted twice, once for odor and once for taste. This special device has a sensor that will detect the odor and the air to make sure the air is ok. It is expensive but it works. Upon a motion by Mr. Davis and a second by Mr. Best, Item No. 8 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 9 was a Resolution Authorizing Approval and Execution of Lease Agreement: Eastpointe: \$62,500 for Lease Period of July 1, 2016, through June 30, 2017. Mr. Mike Jarman, County Manager, stated the Board is requested to authorize approval of a lease agreement for the Lenoir County Mental Health Building located at 2901 N. Herritage Street in Kinston, N.C., between Lenoir County and Eastpointe and authorize the County Manager or his designee to execute the agreement. Eastpointe provides mental health services to the citizens of Lenoir and a host of other Counties. Eastpointe wishes to continue to lease the Lenoir County owned Mental Health Facility located at 2901 N. Herritage Street in Kinston, N.C. so as to offer a central location for service providers who serve the citizens of Lenoir County. Lenoir County owns the land and building located at 2901 N. Herritage Street, Kinston, N.C. that has been the home for mental health services in Lenoir County for a number of years. Eastpointe provides mental health services to the citizens of Lenoir County. In an effort to provide a central location for service providers who offer mental health services to the citizens of Lenoir County, Eastpointe wishes to continue to lease the mental health facility from the County of Lenoir. Approval of this lease agreement will provide Eastpointe with a well-known, established location to offer their services to the citizens of Lenoir County and assure the County that the building will only be used as a mental health facility for years to come. We have leased the mental health building that is owned by Lenoir County out by the hospital we leased at \$100,000 a year for several years to Eastpointe and they have service providers in that building. We had multi-year leases however, this is a one-year lease and it is not at \$100,000 it's at \$62,500 and as we discussed during the budget the reason the amount was lower is because Eastpointe has agreed to move about 60 of their employees back to areas of the building that was vacant, so we will have Eastpointe employees and those jobs coming back to our community. Basically they are filling up two wings of that building having the same service providers that were in there Eastpointe also will be renting one of our, not the county but another building in the county, for additional employees and to date they have spent over \$50,000 no more than if we would have kept it at the \$100,000. The reason for the one-year lease is because they were having the capital expenditure and Eastpointe will as it's scheduled now will merge with another provider called Trillium and we don't know exactly where that will go.

We will have to adjust the cost and several factors after this and it is better to do it on a one year lease to accommodate where we are in the scheme of things. Upon a motion by Ms. Sutton and a second by Ms. Brown, Item No. 9 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 10 was a Resolution Approving Citizens to Boards, Commissions, Etc. Upon a motion by Ms. Brown and a second by Ms. Sutton Item No. 10, was unanimously approved to appoint Mr. Wiley Dawson to the Lenoir County ABC Board, and Ms. June Cummings to the Lenoir County Department of Social Services Board. Since it was the first appearance for others no action was needed at this time.

Item No. 11 was items from County Manager Mike Jarman. Mr. Jarman stated he did not have anything other than the inspections and permit reports included.

Mr. Hill asked if any of the commissioners had anything to report.

Mr. Davis shared condolences and information on the passing of a Greene County resident by the name of Jim Ray Hart who was a well-known baseball player. He stated he wished the Kinston Free Press would have done a nice article on his accomplishments.

Mr. Rouse stated there is an issue in the old Rivermont area with people dumping trash and all sorts of things on the property. He and Mr. Pope have been working together and came up with an idea. Most of the roads in that area are abandoned with the exception of two houses on the very back side. He shared information from a map he had available. Mr. Rouse stated the rest of the area is devoid of infrastructure and is filling up with trash. He stated they were thinking about going to the beginnings of each of the roads that county owns, cutting across the ditch, pushing up the asphalt, and isolate it off and the only road in and out would be to the houses located back there. In talking with DOT they would be tickled for the county to take over and abandon the roads and power. The only road that would need to be maintained is the one access to the homes. Mr. Jarman asked if they have looked for all the landowners in that area. Mr. Jarman stated it is a good idea because the county has had issues with dumping for years. Mr. Dail has patrolled the area and we had our Landfill Department to clean it up several times, and we have had cameras set up. As we move forward, and if we can gate certain roads, we may have to provide access to those landowners and there are some issues we will have to work through, but the overall idea of cleaning it up is a good idea. Mr. Ellis stated the City of Kinston received a grant and tried to purchase a lot of that property for a park and most of it is tied up by family estates. We spent a lot of time researching for family members and everything that could be easily purchased has been purchased.

Ms. Brown shared information regarding Kinston's 1st Annual Funk Day activities and tribute to Maceo Parker.

Ms. Sutton shared information regarding former Pink Hill Mayor Ethro Hill that recently passed, and an event at Rochelle Middle School she attended.

Mr. Hill shared information regarding Lenoir Memorial Hospital having signed negotiations with UNC Systems. In a recent meeting they shared a lot of good and detailed information. The partnership is moving along well for the first 90 days. They are looking at services and ways to keep our health system alive which is a positive move for our community.

Mr. Best shared information from the County Assembly day he recently attended.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:11 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Vickie F. King
Clerk to the Board