

MINUTES

LENOIR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

December 07, 2015

The Lenoir County Board of Commissioners met in open session at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, December 07, 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, 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, Robert Griffin, County Attorney, members of the general public and news media.

Mr. Hill asked everyone to join in for a moment of silence in remembrance of Pearl Harbor.

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

Mr. Hill turned the meeting over to Attorney Robert Griffin for the election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

Election of Chairman *Attorney Robert W. Griffin Ms.*
Ms. Sutton nominated Mr. Craig Hill with a second by Ms. Brown; there was no opposition to the nomination and no further nominees; Mr. Hill was named Chairman by unanimous approval of the Board – One Year Term.

Election of Vice-Chairman *Attorney Robert W. Griffin Ms.*
Ms. Sutton nominated Ms. Jackie Brown with a second by Mr. Best; there was no opposition to the nomination and no further nominees; Ms. Brown was named Vice-Chairman by unanimous approval of the Board – One Year Term.

Mr. Hill thanked the Board for their vote of confidence and stated he looks forward to serving for another year as Chairman. Mr. Hill stated the Board has had a very successful year and he is looking forward to the upcoming year.

Ms. Brown thanked the Board and stated she also looks forward to working with the Chairman and other members of the Board.

PUBLIC INFORMATION:

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Ms. Annie Whitehead stated she has a plan she would like to present to the Lenoir County Board of Commissioners. Ms. Whitehead stated it is the same plan she shared with members of the Klu Klux Klan (KKK) many years ago. In 1960 a message was sent from the Lenoir County Court House to the White House and they listened and we were able to make a big difference. Lenoir County is filled with youth that are in need of our help, and additional jails are not the answer. I have a program in place with volunteers ready to assist. There is one problem we are lacking a building to provide the necessary services. Ms. Whitehead asked the Board to furnish a building to her organization so she along with volunteers can provide the troubled youth of Lenoir County with the help they need. It is time for the people in Lenoir County to come together and make a difference. Mr. Hill thanked Ms. Whitehead for coming and encouraged her to share this message with City Council members as well.

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Approval of Minutes: Regular Board Meeting: November 16, 2015.
2. Budget Ordinance Amendment: Trust and Agency Fund: Finance/Extension-Family Caregiver: \$2,135. Increase. Ms. Martin stated this amendment is to increase the budgeted amount for the Partnership for Children Program. The original budget for this program was funded at \$52,100. The County received notification on November 17, 2015 that the budget was being increased by \$2,135. This will bring the total budget to \$54,235. Upon a motion by Ms. Brown and a second by Ms. Sutton, Item No. 2 was unanimously approved.

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 Resolution Honoring DSS Employee Donna Grady. Ms. Susan Moore, Social Services Director, read the Resolution aloud for members of the Board and the viewing public. Ms. Moore stated many years ago due to major health problems, Ms. Grady's family was in need of assistance from Lenoir County DSS. After Ms. Grady left the office she was determined to get a job with DSS. Ms. Grady felt she could provide greater customer service than her family had received at the agency. Needless to say from the time Ms. Grady became employed with DSS she has gone above and beyond to provide great customer service. Ms. Grady has taught employees at the agency to treat people with dignity and respect. She has constantly reminded everyone to realize they could be that person on the other side needing help. Ms. Grady's motto throughout her entire career has always been "customer service; these are your neighbors." Upon a motion by Mr. Hill and a second by Ms. Sutton, Item No. 3 was unanimously approved.

Ms. Grady stated it has truly been a pleasure to serve the citizens of Lenoir County. She stated she has made lots of new friends and met many good people throughout her career. She is grateful for the opportunity she had to work for Lenoir County. Ms. Sutton stated Ms. Grady has overcome many obstacles. She has been strong and has done exceptionally well, and I am very proud of her.

Ms. Brown stated since her association with DSS there has never been a more congenial person than Donna Grady. Ms. Grady takes everything seriously. After Lenoir County began using NC Fast, Ms. Grady was asked by several different counties to come and teach the NC Fast program. I would say that speaks volume about the person of Ms. Grady.

Item No. 4 was a Resolution in Support of Lenoir Community College New Access Road. Mr. Bruce Parson, Business Manager, Lenoir Community College, read the Resolution. Upon a motion by Ms. Sutton and a second by Ms. Brown, Item No 4 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 5 was a Resolution Declaring Property as Surplus and Authorizing the Sale of Surplus Property by Auction. Ms. Martin 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. These properties add no value to the operations of Lenoir County. County Administration is requesting the approval of the Board to sell the two (2) listed properties through the negotiated offer and upset bid process. The sale of these properties will return them to private owners and add them once again to the tax scrolls. Upon a motion by Mr. Davis and a second by Ms. Brown, Item No. 5 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 6 was a Budget Ordinance Amendment: General Fund: Finance/Social Services: \$17,288. Decrease. Ms. Martin stated this amendment is to correct the original budget for federal adoption assistance. This is a roll forward amount each, and was rolled forward on Budget Amendment G-16 in August 2015. There was an amount included in the original budget, but should not have been, as there is no offsetting revenue coming in. This is an amount originally received in FY 04-05 and has had the unexpended balances rolled forward each new fiscal year. Upon a motion by Ms. Sutton and a second by Mr. Daughety, Item No 6 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 7 was a Resolution Approving Purchase of a Billing Service Agreement with SouthData, Inc.: Not to exceed \$9,500 Fiscal Year 2015-2016. Mr. Darrell Parrish, Tax Administrator, stated in the past, the Lenoir County Tax Department has purchased blank forms, printed, processed, and mailed all listing forms, tax bills and delinquent notices. Performing these duties required the Tax Department to maintain and repair printers and bursters and involved many hours of labor. Since the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) now collects motor vehicle taxes, the number of notices printed and mailed has been reduced by more than 50%. The Tax Department is now responsible for three major mailings each year; listing forms at the beginning of the calendar year, delinquent advertising notices in February, and the annual bills in August. Contracting out the printing and mailing of major mailings required by the Tax Department will cost about the same as completing the processes in house and will allow the Tax Department to provide better services to the citizens of Lenoir County. Also note that the "not to exceed" amount is less than the annual estimated cost due to the fact that the Tax Department has already printed and mailed the annual bills in August of this year. Upon a motion by Ms. Sutton and a second by Ms. Brown, Item No 7 was unanimously approved. Mr. Jarman stated this is something we have always done in house and close to the same cost. Mr. Parrish has worked with us as we have progressed with billing and numbers. He has also reduced his staff by three people over the last couple of years. He is operating with less people in place, so there is more of a need to outsource a few things. Mr. Hill stated this is a good move and it's in line with some of the updates we've made with technology. Management held out during difficult times and this falls right in line with all the other updates. I think it's important that we stay in line with other counties around us. Mr. Hill told Mr. Parrish the Board appreciates his work and how he continues to look for ways to reduce cost and increase efficiency.

Item No. 8 was a Resolution Approving 2016 County Holidays. Mr. Jarman stated each year, Administration brings before the Board a list of the holidays for the next year. With this being the last meeting in 2015, the Board is asked to approve the 2016 Holiday schedule. Upon a motion by Ms. Brown and a second by Ms. Sutton, Item No 8 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 9 was a Resolution Approving 2016 Calendar of Board Meeting Dates and Times. Mr. Jarman stated this schedule is customary to what the Board had this year, which shows the Board having one business meeting in July and one business meeting in December. Mr. Hill stated last year the Board changed its' second meeting of the month from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and we agreed to evaluate it over the course of the year. This is the opportunity to keep it at 5:00 p.m. or make any adjustments. Mr. Hill stated he knows the Board had some issues with citizens and department heads trying to get here at 5:00 p.m. It has been stated the Board would have more citizen attendance if the meeting changed to 5:00 p.m. Mr. Hill stated a motion was made by Mr. Davis and a second by Ms. Brown, to move the Commissioners second meeting of the month back to 4:00 p.m. At this time the floor is open for discussions.

Mr. Davis stated it appears since the change to 5:00 p.m. it has not caused anyone to attend. My concern is our county employees should be able to attend the meetings, but 5:00 p.m. meetings extend their day without any benefits. My suggestion is to change the meeting back to 4:00 p.m. Ms. Brown stated she concurred with Mr. Davis. If there is not a hot item on the agenda you can count the number of people in attendance at the 5:00 p.m. meeting. In my opinion we had more people to attend the meetings when it was set at 4:00 p.m. versus 5:00 p.m.

Mr. Rouse stated he understands the points that are being made, but he does not get off work until 5:00 p.m., which makes attending the meetings better for him. Mr. Rouse stated he doesn't see a big conflict. Mr. Hill stated the Board said they would evaluate it for a year. Now is the time to decide to keep it at 5:00 p.m. or change it back to 4:00 p.m.

Mr. Daughety stated he agreed with Commissioner Rouse. Yes, the Board has not had a significant change in attendance from the general public. However, when the Board has big issues arise, having the extra hour allow those who work the opportunity to get to the meeting at 5:00 p.m. I understand what we're saying, and I agree ninety-nine percent (99%) of the time we won't have any difference in attendance. My concern is when we have big issues the working public needs access to us and that extra hour makes a difference. Mr. Hill stated the Board has the flexibility to move or change the time of a meeting with proper notice if needed which might serve both purposes.

Ms. Sutton stated the flexibility is a better rule of thumb. Also, we have to consider the dollar amount it is costing the county to staff employees after regular working hours. If there is an issue we can adjust the schedule accordingly. In all of my years if there is something going on the people will be here.

Mr. Best stated he supported the initial idea for the change to 5:00 p.m., and the Board did as we stated we would do. However, I feel 4:00 p.m. is the more suitable time for the meeting. Upon a motion by Mr. Davis and a second by Ms. Brown, Item No 9 was approved along with a time change for the second Board meeting back to 4:00 p.m. with three descending votes by Mr. Rouse, Mr. Hill and Mr. Daughety.

Mr. Jarman stated we will send out a new calendar reflecting the 4:00 p.m. change. County Administration has had some issues with other meetings scheduled after hours. When this happens, and department heads have to attend, it forces them to send someone else to represent their department. This change will definitely help the staff. I will also say if we have an issue to come up and the Board feels it needs to be changed, we can change the order of your meeting to fit a work session and a public session later. Administration is open to work with you to accommodate the public as best as we can.

Item No. 10 was a Resolution Approving Citizens to Boards, Commissions, Etc. Chairman Hill stated, there are no applicants, so no action is required at this time.

Item No. 11 was Items from the County Manager. Mr. Jarman stated we have property located at 902 Herbert Drive that we received a \$2,000 bid on. This property is declared surplus so we can place it back on the market for bids. This is a single wide mobile home with a permanent foundation and a concrete driveway. It is my suggestion that you decline this bid at this time. I have not been inside the dwelling but I think it is worth more. Upon a motion by Ms. Sutton and a second by Ms. Brown, the \$2,000 submitted bid for property located at 902 Herbert Drive is declined.

Mr. Jarman reminded everyone of the Lenoir County employee Christmas Luncheon, which will be held Friday, December 11, 2015 at the Lenoir County Shrine Club. We are asking everyone to arrive by 11:30 a.m. because we will start promptly at 11:45 a.m. We had several employees to step up to the plate to help provide the venue and entertainment; Joey Bryan, Sheriff's Office, and the Health Department will be providing entertainment, and DSS will have their 50/50 drawing. I think this will be a good time and I am looking forward to it.

The Commissioners dinner will be next week, Wednesday, December 16th. I will get more information together as to where we will meet to ride to Silver Lake Restaurant. Mr. Davis stated he is glad the Commissioners and their spouses are going to Silver Lake Restaurant however; he wanted everyone to know that it was not his idea or suggestion. Mr. Jarman stated we have patronized various restaurants in and around town, and for the past several years the Commissioners dinner has been Dutch treat. Some of us thought it would be a good gesture to do something different this year.

On another note it is actually much more comfortable today than we anticipated. Our boiler stopped working Friday. The boiler is a very old system that we have patched together for years and today we are without heat. The old jail and the court house annex are on the same boiler. In order to accommodate the people housed here, we moved out inmates to the new jail which is now at capacity. We were able to send all the female and some male inmates to other locations. This is a very serious issue and we will keep you posted. We are hoping to get it up and running however, some technicians do not want to service the system because of its age. Major Ryan Dawson of the Sheriff's Office is here if you need further information.

Ms. Brown thanked the Commissioners for their prayers, calls and visits during the unexpected death of her sister in law. Also, on tomorrow, the Kinston Teens will be celebrating their first anniversary at the Woodmen Community Center.

Ms. Sutton stated LaGrange and Pink Hill had great parades and they both were well organized. Mr. Best stated for the first time the town of Grifton had a Christmas Parade and he was able to attend and represent the Lenoir County Commissioners.

Mr. Hill stated the Kinston Christmas Parade will be Saturday, December 12th at 10:00 a.m. and the Commissioners are to meet at 9:00 a.m. Some of the Commissioners will be riding on the float and others will use their private vehicles.

Ms. Sutton shared information from the December 3rd US 70 Corridor Commission meeting. It was a well attended meeting. There are a lot of good projects going on in the eastern part of the state. Ms. Sutton asked Mr. Pope to share information from the meeting. Mr. Mark Pope, Economic Development Director, stated a major focus is how fast they are pushing for the Felix Harvey Parkway Extension Section C. Mr. Pope stated a conference call will take place with members from ECU to bring leaders from all different areas to gather in Kinston to talk about Connect NC, in a round table discussion. The Havelock bypass is in its last phase before it goes out to bid and it should happen shortly after spring 2016. Mr. Pope shared information about the three (3) year deal regarding Hwy 11 Southern Bypass and the design changes through Greenville, near Vidant Hospital and Highway 264.

Mr. Davis stated Kinston High School football players had an undefeated season and Lenoir County should be proud. Also, the team will play in the championship game this coming Saturday in Raleigh at NC State University.

Mr. Rouse stated in light of recent shooting events that have occurred he would like the Board to consider revising our policy concerning concealed weapons on county property. Mr. Rouse stated he feels it is a God given right and everyone has the right to defend themselves. He would really like for this entire Board to consider amending policy to allow individuals who have concealed permits, and have been properly vetted, to carry a weapon on any county property, except for the court house. The way things are trending in our society we are doing a disservice to our citizens that we the Board represent by disarming them. Since we do have a well vetted concealed weapons policy we owe it to the citizens of Lenoir County to help them protect themselves wherever they are as long as they have gone through the proper process.

Mr. Daughety stated he agrees with Mr. Rouse and I too have some concerns. When our local DSS employees leave from the parking lot and it is later than 5:00 p.m. it is already dark. I would like to see the policy revisited with some restrictions so they will be able to carry concealed weapons.

Mr. Hill stated at this point I am not sure what we should do. However, I do think it would be wise to see what other boards are doing since this is something they will be faced with. We need to gather information, survey our employees and get their feelings on the situation because they are the people in the buildings every day. We also need to seek information from law enforcement before we take any type of action. I believe Pitt County Commissioners will vote at their meeting today regarding concealed weapons on county property. I am open to the research to enable us to receive more information.

Mr. Jarman asked if the Board was asking for a survey of all county employees pertaining to people being able to carry concealed weapons in county buildings except the court house. Mr. Rouse asked before the survey is released he would like to review the questions to make sure the survey is neutral. Mr. Jarman replied Mr. Rouse is more than welcome to send to him the sample questions that are down the line of what you are seeking and we can go with that.

Mr. Rouse stated his concerns are those in charge of the facilities that will feel one way or another about it. Mr. Jarman stated there are multiple things involved that would require research like liability and insurance premiums that we would need to check on as well.

Mr. Jarman asked if anyone had seen the Pitt County Survey and if it was satisfactory to the Board. Mr. Rouse stated he thinks the survey should go to the public as well as county employees because we are representing the citizens and if we just surveyed the employees it would be a skewed sample. I think if we surveyed the public as well, statistics will tell what I am trying to say.

Mr. Hill stated he did not know if we had the ability to survey the general public in this short period of time. We probably can look at national surveys and see the impact. I think this is a decision that County Boards and School Boards have to make and this is not unique to this Board; this is going on across the country. Mr. Rouse stated this will work out for those lawfully vetted licensed citizens.

CLOSED SESSION

Upon a motion by Ms. Brown and a second by Ms. Sutton a closed session was entered into at approximately 9:55 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.

OPEN SESSION

Upon a motion by Ms. Brown and a second by Mr. Daughety and unanimous approval, the Board moved out of closed session at approximately 10:20 a.m. The meeting re-convened in open session at approximately 10:21 a.m. Mr. Hill stated 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 Mr. Daughety, the meeting was adjourned.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:22 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Vickie F. King
Clerk to the Board