

The Alleghany County Board of Commissioners met in special session on Thursday, February 11, 2016, at 6:00pm in the Board Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, 348 South Main Street, Sparta, North Carolina.

Present: Chair Tom Smith, Vice-Chair Karen Leys, Commissioner Larry Davis, Commissioner Mark Evans, Commissioner Bobby Irwin, County Manager Don Adams, Clerk to the Board Karen Evans and Administrative Assistant Lauren Linker. County Attorney Donna Shumate was absent.

Chair Smith called the meeting to order and recognized members in the audience.

County Manager Don Adams explained the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the expanded sales tax, community college operations and economic development.

Special Called Meeting
February 11, 2016
Agenda

- 6:00pm Meeting Called to Order
Motion on Agenda
- 6:05pm Dale Caveny, Manager
Blue Ridge Business Development Center
- 6:30pm Jeff A. Cox, Ed. D., President
John Hauser, Ed. D., Vice President, Industrial & Workforce Development
Wilkes Community College
- 7:00pm Question and Answer Session
- 7:20pm Other Business
- 7:25pm Motion to Adjourn

Dale Caveny explained the background of the economic development plan including the two visionary statements 1) Promote an environment where the economy can grow by fostering job creation that will nurture and support opportunities for our citizens throughout Alleghany County 2) Promote retention and expansion of existing businesses and the recruitment of new businesses. He talked about developing tourism and agriculture industries and provide opportunities for youth and families in the community to succeed. He went on to explain that there are 76 strategies to move the visions forward so they had to prioritize the strategies with marketing. Marketing strategies and outreach programs being the top priorities. He said many groups have marketing functions and broadcasting access throughout the county. He then went on to explain the marketing needs and that the BDC (Blue Ridge Business Development Center) are willing to offer and assume responsibility for a marketing strategy. He had spoken with, Destination by Design, to help with marketing ideas: how can we incorporate all the assets of our county to grow businesses, agriculture and real estate in our county without knowing what money there is to work with. They put together a 6 point outline for the County with estimated costs:

- 1) **Branding analysis** (who we are, who we want to be then how do we market our brand how do people describe their experience, that is our brand) -\$35,000
- 2) **Website**- primary site-\$10,000
- 3) **Develop print material**-\$8,000
- 4) **Promotional Video**-\$6,500 (Boone video)
- 5) **True Developmental plan analysis**-\$37,000
- 6) **Implementation**-\$30,000

TOTAL: \$126,500 by vague guideline so with plenty of cushion

He suggested very organized marketing campaign and has to communicate why someone wants to come to Alleghany County. He said the request is the BDC would implement the marketing strategy and the Board of Commissioners would need to set a budget for it.

County Manager Don Adams said everyone understands the need, but there is no strategy and nothing put together to bring people into the area.

Commissioner Leys said encouraging this is a good idea, but asked Dale Caveny if he wasn't just part-time. He said yes. She asked how he could do this all on his own. Dale Caveny answered that his hours would either have to increase or they would have to hire someone else.

Commissioner Evans said he likes having the website showing all the events.

Commissioner Leys asked how can all the work be accomplished with only working part-time. Dale Caveny answered he will not be able to without hours increased or hiring someone with a marketing background to help with this project. She inquired about business recruitment and if he thought it could be done along with all the other points. He explained it is hard to compete, but to promote what is best about the county to bring people to live and in turn that brings businesses.

County Manager Don Adams said we need focus on infrastructure. He said the County does not have the buildings, land, or labor force to bring in large businesses. He went on to say that the County should be focused on bringing businesses providing 25-30 jobs for places where we already have buildings.

Commissioner Leys added that we need to market ourselves and really need to be promoting our small businesses.

Dale Caveny informed the Board that Ashley Gambill from the Chamber of Commerce has helped start a program through the BDC for small businesses including focusing on social media marketing.

Commissioner Irwin encouraged heavy use of agriculture as businesses in the county, and informed the Board that we are the only county that does not have natural gas and explained it could be big hurdle to draw larger businesses here since some business need the natural gas to operate.

County Manager Don Adams informed the Board that each county must reach a certain usage of natural gas for the State to run lines to it and that we are nowhere close to the usage to bring the lines here.

Dale Cavney states that agriculture is a growing industry and that there is room for production growth as well as the arts community's recent growth. He added from both we will see economic benefits.

Commissioner Leys said it goes back to pushing the use of social media and small business education for our county's growth and marketing.

Dale Caveny introduced many in the audience that have a part in the economic development groups.

Town Manager Bryan Edwards stated we need to have a plan first, then evaluate what happens next.

Fred Pfaender said we will all be involved and help out.

Chair Smith thanked Dale Caveny for a great presentation.

Dr. Jeff Cox, President of Wilkes Community College, explained what will be happening with the NC Connect Bond and how it applies to our local areas. Wilkes Community College will be receiving \$5,240,000 from the bond and wanted to have some input from the county on what they felt they needed most from the college.

Chair Smith let Dr. Cox know that the Board is in support of the Connect NC Bond.

Commissioner Evans added that it was surprising how many people don't know about the Bond or that it is to be voted on.

Commissioner Irwin asked Dr. Cox what tier Alleghany County was, in comparison to Wilkes.

Dr. Cox replied that Alleghany was tier 1 whereas Wilkes was a tier 2.

Jayne Phipps-Boger commented on some of the new options at the Alleghany Campus. She summarized some of their assessments and evaluations from the September priorities.

Commissioner Irwin asked about the new mannequin at the College.

Jayne Phipps-Boger, Director of Wilkes Community College, Alleghany Center, explained it is what all our health care providers are trained on in this county, and it is an amazing new addition to their training.

Commissioner Irwin asked if the nursing program was a 2 years degree and where do most students go after they have completed their 2 years?

Dr. Cox replied yes it is a 2 year degree and explained that WCC has a partnership with Lenoir Rhyne.

Jayne Phipps-Boger also added that WCC has a strong relationship with Appalachian State and Winston Salem State.

County Manager Don Adams recognized WCC for their rapid response after the identification of health care needs.

Chair Smith and Jayne Phipps-Boger discuss general education courses at the Alleghany campus.

Commissioner Leys asked if they were using interns with the marketing situations since there was a market program. Jayne Phipps-Boger informed the Board that they were not using interns at this point, but were hoping to get that started soon.

Dr. John Hauser Vice President of Wilkes Community College, discussed the priorities from the WCC standpoint for the Alleghany Campus and all priorities involved increasing student numbers and increasing the retention rate of students. He went over the budget development:

One Time

Bond Referendum Money Proposal

Welding, diesel & Heavy Equipment \$100,000

Culinary Lab \$20,000

3 New small offices \$10,000

Glass enclosure and front doors \$15,000

Stripe Parking Lot \$5,000

Reallocated Sales Tax Money Proposal

HVAC \$50,000

Ongoing

Annual Personnel \$ 50,000-from reallocated Sales Tax after the 2nd year

Requesting-\$50,000 upfront one time for the HVAC work and an ongoing \$50,000 added to what is already being allocated to WCC after year 2 from the reallocated taxes (1/4¢ sales tax).

County Manager Don Adams explained why WCC wants to partner with Board of Commissioners to invest in our community through the Alleghany Campus.

Commissioner Irwin, Dr. Cox and Dr. Hauser discussed when they were at a recent agriculture meeting and how you could tell there was a change in energy towards helping our county from WCC, and Connect NC Bond has helped this come about.

Dr. Cox discussed an idea in the works from WCC providing tuition-free education for students at Alleghany High School. He said beginning with this year's freshmen class if students take as many classes throughout High School as possible, they will work with other groups such as the Education Foundation so that no student in Alleghany County will have to pay tuition for a 2-year degree at Wilkes Community College.

Commissioner Leys asked where the Welding, Diesel and Heavy Equipment Facility will be. Dr. Cox replied we only want a commitment from the Board for the \$150,000 in bond money as well as the \$50,000 from the Board to go along with it. We can work out the specifics later, since there maybe something else that comes up they may need at the Alleghany Campus.

Commissioner Leys expressed her gratitude for Dr. Cox along with WCC and all they have done for our county.

Chair Smith exclaimed there were 2 excellent presentations tonight.

Being no further business, Commissioner Davis made a motion to adjourn at 7:44PM Commissioner Irwin seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Respectfully submitted,

Attest:

Karen Evans
Clerk to the Board

Tom Smith
Chair

Minutes Prepared By:

Lauren Linker
Administrative Assistant