

The Alleghany County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, April 21, 2014, at 10:00am in the Board Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, 348 South Main Street, Sparta, North Carolina.

Present: Chairman Larry Cox, Vice-Chair Tom Smith, Commissioner Larry Davis, Commissioner John Goudreau, Commissioner Karen Leys, County Manager Don Adams, County Attorney Donna Shumate and Clerk to the Board Karen Evans.

Chair Cox called the meeting to order, led the Pledge of Allegiance and a silent prayer.

Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve the agenda for this April 21, 2014, meeting. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

AGENDA
Monday, April 21, 2014
10:00 AM

- 10:00 Meeting Called To Order, Pledge of Allegiance and Silent Prayer
Motion on Agenda for March 17, 2014, Meeting
Motion on Minutes from March 31, 2014 and April 7, 2014, Meetings
- 10:05 A. Rita Miller - Tax Administrator
1. March Releases and Refunds - Standard release and refund of both automobile and real property taxes due to reasons listed on report. Actions Requested – Vote on releases and refunds.
 2. March Collections Report - Monthly 2014 collection rates through March as compared to 2013 monthly collection rates. No action requested.
 3. Enforced Collections Report – Summarizes enforced collections for the month of February 2014. No action requested
 4. Payment Agreement Report - List of people with payment agreements who did not make payments. No action requested.
 5. Motor vehicle value appeal. Action Requested – Vote on the appeal.
- 10:15 B. Regina Brown – Jackson Hewitt (Tax Tyme, Inc.) District Manager
RE: Library annex lease. The proposed lease is between Alleghany County (Lessor) and Tax Tyme, Inc. (Lessee) for property located at 136 North Main Street, Sparta, NC 28675. Action Requested – Vote on the proposed lease.
- 10:25 C. Kate Cosner – Director of Elections
RE: Request to permanently fill the Director of Elections' position at Grade 67 - \$32,701.49. Action Requested – Vote on the request.
- 10:30 D. Travis Dalton – County Planning Director
RE: Cell tower application for placing a cell tower in the County.
Action Requested — Vote on cell tower application.
- 10:45 E. Emergency Medical Services Annual Report
- 10:55 F. Tourism Development Authority Annual Report
- 11:05 G. General Business
1. Alleghany County Transportation Priorities
Continued discussions regarding priorities. Top three priorities must be submitted to the High Country Council of Governments by April 22, 2014.
Action Requested – Vote on top three priorities.
 2. Farmers Market
Continued discussions regarding a permanent Farmer's Market about seeing if there is an interest from the County to financially partner with the Town of Sparta in building a permanent Farmer's Market.
 3. Sheriff's Department Budget Amendment
General Fund Budget Amendment # 17 in the amount of \$29,716 to budget for additional deputies for courthouse security as previously approved. Action Requested – Separately vote on General Fund Budget Amendments # 17.
 4. Home & Community Care Block Grant—Lead Agency & Board Appointments
Action Requested – Vote on request from Alleghany Council on Aging that they be appointed as the Lead Agency for the Home & Community Block Grant and to approve the Advisory Board.
 5. Cecil Brooks Proclamation
Action Requested – Vote on proclamation.
 6. FY 2014/15 Budget Requests Summary
Basic summary of FY 2014/2015 budget requests will be presented.
- H. Commissioner Comments
- I. Public Comments—30 minutes
- J. Adjourn

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve the minutes from March 31, 2014 and April 7, 2014. Commissioner Goudreau seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Rita Miller, Tax Administrator, presented the March auto releases.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve the March auto releases. Commissioner Goudreau seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Rita Miller presented the March auto refunds.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve the March auto refunds. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Rita Miller presented the March auto refunds under the vehicle tax system (VTS).

Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve the VTS March auto refunds. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Rita Miller presented the March real property releases.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve the March real property releases. Commissioner Goudreau seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Rita Miller presented the March real property refunds. She explained one refund that was due to a certification error.

County Manager Don Adams, County Attorney Donna Shumate and Chair Cox talked about this was business personnel property that can't be collected from the deed transfer. County Attorney Donna Shumate explained that there are other methods to collect these taxes.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve the March real property refunds. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Rita Miller presented the March 2014 collections' report and the payment agreement report.

Commissioner Leys talked about the excellent collection report.

Chair Cox talked about these collection rates are better than the two previous years.

Rita Miller presented the enforced collection report.

Rita Miller presented a motor vehicle appeal on a 2004 GMC, the owner's personal opinion and an appraisal without any documentation for \$6,000. She reviewed how she figured her recommendation of \$6,300.

Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve the Tax Administrator's recommendation. Commissioner Goudreau seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Rita Miller stated that the unpaid taxes will be in this week's newspaper. She explained the difference in the ad from previous years showing multiple owners.

Rita Miller said she received her Tax Collectors certification from the State.

County Manager Don Adams explained that she had to do this within two years of her appointment.

Jessica Brown, District Manager for Jackson Hewitt, came before the Board to discuss the option of leasing a building from the County. She provided background information about herself, Jackson Hewitt and their local staff.

County Manager Don Adams explained the Board has a proposal from Jackson Hewitt along with a draft lease. He reviewed the highlights of the lease; first month free due to work they want to do to the facility, 12 month lease starting today, \$600 security deposit. He said that the Library Board did vote for this lease to be approved by the Commissioners.

Commissioner Smith agreed about the Library Board's actions.

Commissioner Leys said she is happy to see someone going into the building.

Jessica Brown talked about updating the building with their color scheme and to their standards.

Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve the proposed lease with Tax Tyme, Inc. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Kate Cosner, Director of Elections, came on the behalf of the Board of Elections to ask for approval to fill the Director of Elections' position.

Commissioner Smith and Kate Cosner talked about the timeline for the current Director and taking applications through May 9.

Commissioner Leys and Kate Cosner talked about this has already been advertised because the Board of Elections wanted to get the ad out because of the May 9th deadline.

County Manager Don Adams explained that there was some misunderstanding between the County Commissioners and the Board of Elections when Kate Cosner was hired, \$32,701.49 is what the Board of Elections is authorized to offer the new person unless the Commissioners approve additional monies. He further explained that the Board of Elections hires this position.

Commissioner Smith made a motion to allow the Board of Elections to fill the Director of Elections position at a starting pay of \$32,701.49. Commissioner Leys seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Travis Dalton, Planner, explained that the cell tower application is for the Prathers Tower, which is proposed to be a 120-foot monopole constructed at 5396 NC Highway 113 in Laurel Springs. He further explained the application has received a Conditional-Use Permit from the Planning Board.

Dave Pokela presented a PowerPoint presentation showing information about the tower including the need, existing tower sites, additional tower sites and the location of this tower. He talked about there is no detrimental impact to the surrounding area. He asked the Board's approval for this tower site. He said he brought color samples for the Board to choose a color for the tower.

Commissioner Leys explained that she spoke to the property owner, Beth Phipps; the property owner has knowledge about selecting colors and can select the color on Wednesday,

Commissioner Leys made a motion to allow Beth Phipps to select the color.

Commissioner Smith said he lives in Twin Oaks and has no problem with that tower's color. He further said he has no problem with the property owner picking the color as long as it's not too bright.

Commissioner Goudreau talked about the colors should be earth tones.

Dave Pokela reviewed the Ordinance's language on colors.

Commissioner Smith seconded the motion on the floor and added the property owner not having final approval.

Chair Cox stated the language of the motion was allowing the property owner to select the color for the tower.

Commissioner Smith withdrew his second.

Chair Cox asked for second on the motion. No one spoke.

The motion died due to lack of a second.

Commissioner Leys talked about this is farm land and is an appropriate area for a tower.

County Manager Don Adams talked about speaking to the property owner to select a color and it will be on the next agenda for the Board to approve the color.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve the Prathers Tower application as presented. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Chair Cox, County Manager Don Adams and County Attorney Donna Shumate discussed the vote on the matter and the rules of procedures talk about how votes are counted if a member doesn't

vote. County Attorney Donna Shumate stated this motion carries because there were 4 audible yes votes.

Linda Edwards, EMS Administrative Director, presented the annual report for EMS. She talked about how they are monitored by the NC Office of EMS. She reviewed their statistics. She talked about their revenues and how things have changed with Medicaid.

Commissioner Smith and Linda Edwards talked about how there are currently 11 landing zones in the county.

Commissioner Leys and Linda Edwards talked about EMS doesn't use the Debt-Set Off for bill collection with Linda Edwards saying she will look into it. Linda Edwards mentioned that other counties are attaching the bills to property taxes.

Jim Connor, Tourism Development Authority chairman, presented the annual report for the Tourism Development Authority (TDA). He reviewed the annual occupancy tax monies. He explained they put an ad in the Our State magazine for the June edition and are currently working on a new venture for an electronic billboard using coolSparta.com which can be measured about the success. He explained he went to two conferences this year and explained the conferences. He reviewed information that was received at one of the conferences regarding tourism's impact on western North Carolina and Alleghany County's 2012 tourism economic impact. He talked about how the TDA worked on Doughton Park being open starting in May. He talked about a planned control burn in the Doughton Park area in late April or early May. He said that Superintendent Mark Woods will be here on May 20 at 9:30am at the Alleghany Inn conference room and invited the Commissioners to attend. He continued presenting the TDA's annual report including having a new website, assisted several businesses during the year. He said they will continue to work to be good stewards of the occupancy tax monies.

Commissioner Leys stated her appreciation and the importance of the tourism.

Chair Cox declared a brief recess at 11:17am.

County Manager Don Adams talked about having the same information in the packets about the Transportation Improvements Project projects. He said he talked to Mike Pettyjohn about data rankings. He further said the Sparta Loop scored well as a regional project, Highway 21 Roaring Gap Mountain scored data-wise fairly well, and on the roundabouts scoring he guessed that the one in Town would score higher. He stated they did have a conversation about public transportation, and he isn't sure how it will play into this.

Chair Cox asked is it safe to say Sparta Loop, Highway 21 Roaring Gap Mountain and the Town roundabout. County Manager Don Adams said yes but not necessarily in that order.

Commissioner Leys said she likes the three projects mentioned, and they've scored well.

Commissioner Goudreau agreed. He talked about how the roundabout might be something that could be done quicker and anything on Highway 21 would help.

Commissioner Davis and County Manager Don Adams talked about the roundabout at the 113/221 intersection and other ways to address that intersection.

Commissioner Smith said he agrees with these priorities.

Chair Cox asked how we rank them.

County Manager Don Adams said the Sparta Loop, the Town roundabout, Roaring Gap Mountain, with the understanding when the data comes in to change the last two if needed, is his recommendation.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve Sparta Loop, the Town roundabout, Roaring Gap Mountain as the priorities. Commissioner Goudreau seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams reminded everyone about the conversations regarding the Farmers Market. He updated the Board that Larry Davis, Larry Cox and himself met with Bryan Edwards, Chris Jones and Mike Parlier at the site. He explained that both houses would be torn down; one of the houses had a little asbestos and the other house does have asbestos. He further explained that he found a company to test both sites to identify the asbestos for around \$500 and the costs of testing then he can contact certified contractors to get quotes to remove the asbestos. He explained he talked to Aaron Ray Tompkins with the Extension Service who has made some contacts with people who will come here about designing a farmers market in this area. He said his goal is to have two plans. He

stated he will schedule the individual to come do an environmental report. He explained that he explored burning of the houses for a training exercise for the fire department. He said he hopes to be able to put together a budget and have a couple of plans.

Commissioner Smith said he continues to be encouraged with these talks for a permanent place for a farmers market. He talked about how the Farmland Preservation Plan talks about promoting local foods and a farmers market. He explained that he has talked with some people about the location in comparison to other locations, and things have gone well at the Park. He summarized conversations from the last meeting including putting \$50,000 aside to help leverage grant monies.

Commissioner Smith made a motion to set \$50,000 aside from the economic development fund to help construct a permanent farmers market structure at Crouse Park. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion.

Commissioner Goudreau said he can't vote to spend money without a plan.

Commissioner Smith said this isn't spending the money the money; it's earmarking the money to help obtain grants.

Commissioner Leys said she agrees with Commissioner Goudreau, however, for grant planning it is easier to get a grant with money associated. She talked about it isn't an obligation to spend the \$50,000. She said we expect to see a plan on how to spend the money before it is spent.

Chair Cox talked about both boards would have to agree on the plan, and he sees this as a good investment in the community.

The Board voted on the motion on the floor. Vote 4:1 (John Goudreau).

County Manager Don Adams clarified that he is authorized to set aside \$50,000 to go after grants, and he is authorized to spend up to \$5,000 to work on the plan.

County Manager Don Adams presented General Fund Budget Amendment # 17 in the amount of \$29,716 to budget for additional deputies for courthouse security as previously approved.

Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve General Fund Budget Amendment # 17 in the amount of \$29,716. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams presented a letter from Karon Edwards requesting that Council on Aging be the Lead Agency for the Home and Community Care Block Grant and approve the advisory board. He talked about this advisory board prioritizes how much of the money is spent for the different types of meals.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to appoint Council on Aging as the Lead Agency and approve the advisory board. Commissioner Goudreau seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams presented a proclamation for Cecil Brooks.

Chair Cox explained that he was contacted by Jane Doughton asking that the Commissioners approve a proclamation honoring Cecil Brooks for his long time commitment to Alleghany County. He reviewed the process she went through to get this on the agenda.

County Manager Don Adams read the proposed proclamation.

Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve the proclamation. Commissioner Leys seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams reviewed the 2014/15 budget requests for the General Fund including the department's summary, special appropriations, and capital/capital improvements. He talked about he is still collecting quotes on security for offices. He started reviewing the breakdown of personnel salary increases requests.

Commissioner Goudreau left the meeting at 12:02pm.

County Manager Don Adams continued reviewing the requested salary increases.

Commissioner Leys noted that the debt service is less.

County Manager Don Adams explained we have level principle payments by law.

Chair Cox opened the floor for public comments. None were received. He closed that portion of the meeting.

Being no further business, Commissioner Davis made a motion to adjourn this meeting at 12:05pm. Commissioner Leys seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

Respectfully submitted,

Attest:

Karen Evans
Clerk to the Board

Larry Cox
Chairman