

The Alleghany County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, May 5, 2014, at 6:30pm in the Board Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, 348 South Main Street, Sparta, North Carolina.

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

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

Chair Cox stated that Commissioner Goudreau would like to add an item to the agenda as Item 6 under General Business.

Commissioner Goudreau explained that the Supreme Court has ruled on spoken prayer today, and he would like to discuss that.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve the amended agenda for this May 5, 2014, meeting. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

AGENDA
Monday, May 5, 2014
6:30 PM

- 6:30 Meeting Called To Order, Pledge of Allegiance and Silent Prayer
Motion on Agenda for May 5, 2014, Meeting
Motion on Minutes for April 15 & April 21, 2014 Meetings
- 6:35 A. Andy Evans - RE: Mixed Beverage Referendum Discussions
- 6:45 B. DW Miles - RE: Miles Job Fund Status Update
- 6:55 C. John Blevins - Social Services Director
RE: Request an open position to be filled (Social Worker III, Grade 71, \$39,747.81). Action Requested – Vote on the request to fill the position.
- 7:05 D. Piney Creek Volunteer Fire Department Annual Report
- 7:15 E. Alleghany County Schools Annual Report
- 7:30 F. General Business
1. Schedule Budget Meetings for FY 2014/15
Discuss dates to begin holding budget meetings for the upcoming budget year. Action Requested – Vote on the setting dates to begin budget hearings.
 2. Workers Compensation & Property/Liability Insurance Renewals for FY 14/15
Workers Compensation's proposal is \$100,660 as compared to the current year budget of \$102,748. Property/Liability insurance's proposal is \$106,929 as compared to the current year budget of \$106,422.
Overall these renewals are \$1,581 less for FY 2014/15 than the current year. Action Requested – Vote on the Workers Compensation and Property/Liability insurance renewals for 2014/15.
 3. Prathers Cell Tower Color
Review the color recommended by the property owner for the cell tower approved at the last Commissioners' meeting. Action Requested – Vote on a proposed color.
 4. EMS Shift Supervisor Open Position, Grade 67, \$32,701.48.
Action Requested – Vote on the request to fill the position.
 5. Alleghany County Veterans Memorial Park
Received bids for the Park's construction will be discussed at the meeting.
Possible Requested Action – Award the construction contract.
 6. Spoken Prayer (added)
- G. Commissioner Comments
- H. Public Comments—30 minutes
- I. Adjourn

Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve the minutes for the April 15 and April 21, 2014, meetings. Commissioner Leys seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Andy Evans stated that he is part of the Committee for the Economic Growth and Advancement of Alleghany County, and their first item they are working on is a mixed beverage referendum. He explained that they are working on gathering the required signatures by petitions, which started April 1, and knows of 10-11 businesses that are ready to get their licenses to start selling once it is approved. He talked about the alcohol sales would bring money back to the County/Town. He addressed the concern of increased crime rates by talking about areas that have recently started selling and they haven't seen an increase in crime. He further talked about the two questions that have to go on the

ballot are about having an ABC store and liquor by the drink. He said he is talking to the Town tomorrow night to get their support. He explained that he will be asking at the next meeting for this to go on the ballot in November to allow the citizens the opportunity to decide.

Commissioner Smith and Andy Evans discussed how many establishments in the County are already involved in selling liquor by the drink. They talked about gathering signatures and it's going better than the Committee had hoped for this early. Andy Evans explained they are doing petition rallies at different restaurants each weekend to get the word out and help businesses. They talked about Andy Evans has talked to various groups like the Tourism Development Authority, who he talked to up front because tourism is a big area, and they asked him to do a proposal and bring it back, which the Committee is working on.

Andy Evans talked about the need/want from the local businesses/restaurants was surprising. He further talked about the businesses' support. He said that it is unfair to the businesses in the county to have started in the town.

Commissioner Leys and Andy Evans discussed the petition numbers and the petitions. Andy Evans explained that the Board of Elections is busy with the primary, and they don't want to release the number of signatures yet because they want all the people they can get to sign since they need 2,496. They discussed that number is 35% of the registered voters as of April 1 when the petitions started. They further discussed a committee has been formed. She stated \$3.75 per fifth will be collected if the referendum passes and asked where the money goes. He explained that 50% goes to the State, 5% goes to DHHS, and 45% is distributed among the county/town.

Commissioner Leys asked the County Attorney for comments. County Attorney Donna Shumate said will provide comments if the Board goes forward but she is not prepared to comment tonight.

County Manager Don Adams explained the two ways to get the issue on the ballot; petition or the County Commissioners put the issue on the ballot.

Commissioner Leys talked about 31% of establishments' sales must come from food sales. Andy Evans agreed. They discussed 10-11 businesses are currently interested.

Commissioner Goudreau and Andy Evans talked about the two issues must be put on the ballot. Andy Evans quoted North Carolina General Statutes regarding the issue.

Commissioner Leys and Andy Evans discussed there is already an ABC store that is ran by the Town.

Commissioner Smith and Andy Evans discussed the goal is for this issue to be on the ballot in November for the citizens to decide.

DW Miles provided an update to the Commissioners for the Miles JOB Fund. He talked about there isn't any public money used in their Fund and explained ways that they use their monies to assist the county and the people. He talked about their progress. He explained that they have been asked to expand to other counties. He reviewed their mission statement and his personal mission with this Fund. He talked about five counties currently working on the Blue Ridge Seeds of Change program. He said they want everyone to know that this assistance is available. He talked about another thing they are doing is the Take A Break from the Interstate initiative. He explained the success with the other towns has been great, and the towns are totally committed. He reviewed the Initiative is a 70-mile corridor that features all of the areas including each town and national parks. He explained the things they have been doing to promote this Initiative. He talked about these different funds are kept completely separate. He updated everyone on the Charleston Forge property where they are taking the office space and making it into event space. He talked about they will have an open house within the next 30 days.

Commissioner Leys said thank you for your dedication and loyalty to this community. She talked about the Miles Job Fund has created 100 jobs. She provided some examples and should be proud of the accomplishments. She talked about the different initiatives and ideas.

DW Miles read a quote about people helping people.

John Blevins, Social Services Director, came before the Board to request that an open position be filled for a Social Worker III/Foster Care Social Worker. He explained that this employee is going back to school. He explained the duties of this position including there are currently 17 in foster care, and this position helps with the transition after foster care. He stated that this position is greatly needed.

Chair Cox asked John Blevins to discuss what happens when the children age out of foster care at a future meeting. John Blevins agreed to do so.

Chair Cox stated that the request is to fill an open position of a Social Worker III at a grade 71, \$39,747.81

John Blevins explained that the State sets the salary levels, and the person may start out as a Social Worker I and work their way up, which is less money.

County Manager Don Adams and John Blevins talked about there is currently no one on staff to move into this position.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to fill this position as requested. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Larry Adams, Chief for Piney Creek Volunteer Fire Department, presented the fire department's annual report including they are the 2nd oldest fire department, 2nd largest fire district, 3rd largest in the number of homes, currently have 18 members with 3 applications, 2013 number of calls, types of equipment, types of calls they response to, types of fundraisers they will be having this year including the drawdown on August 2 at Piney Creek School and their Christmas letter drive. He explained their training events in 2013 and so far in 2014. He talked about the State has a 50/50 matching capital grant, and they have been able to purchase 18 new air packs, 6 per truck. He stated their appreciation for the financial assistance from the County because without it, they couldn't operate. He said they have a video of the Piney Creek fire department on YouTube, if anyone would like to watch it.

Commissioner Smith stated his appreciation to all of the fire departments. He asked does Piney Creek have a junior firemen program. Larry Adams stated that they do not; they have discussed it but don't have the time to put into it.

Commissioner Goudreau said thank you for everything you do.

Dr. Cox, Superintendent, came before the Board to present their annual report for Allegheny County Schools. He talked about the graduation rate at Allegheny High School; this year's test scores are alarming because the State has a whole new curriculum. He addressed how they are working to improve the scores, State law change that mandated a later start date which made them start school later and without any weather waiver, no way to get exams in before Christmas, and everyone thinks that had a negative impact on the students including the scores were down. He talked about encouraging the legislators to put it back into local control. He further talked about the Read to Achieve legislation and the 6-week summer school requirement. He publicly thanked the Board for the support for the Glade Creek School project, Allegheny High School renovation on the 2 classrooms and the new façade, lighting at Woodruff Stadium and Jarrett Field, Piney Creek School's work on the new septic system and the renovation on the science classroom along with all of the safety improvements at all four schools. He described the safety improvements at the schools. He reiterated his appreciation for the Commissioners making safety a priority. He said he is going to be making a transition at the end of the school year and the Board of Education named Dr. Kim Mattox as the new superintendent starting July 1. He introduced Dr. Kim Mattox.

Dr. Mattox talked about continuing to work hard for the students of Allegheny County.

Chair Cox said congratulations to both Dr. Cox and Dr. Mattox.

Commissioner Leys asked about last year's test scores and didn't Glade Creek have the best scores.

Dr. Cox talked about yes, for the highest growth. He further talked about the standards have been raised, and they are continuing to work on this to better the scores.

Commissioner Leys and Dr. Cox talked about the student-to-teacher ratio. Dr. Cox explained how teachers stay with students for several years at Piney Creek, and they looking into that possibility at other schools.

Commissioner Goudreau and Dr. Cox talked about the higher standards are due to the Common Core. Commissioner Goudreau said that is a hot topic now, and will continue to be a topic in the short session. Dr. Cox agreed and said there is a lot of conversation about it, and he thinks we will see the name of Common Core gone.

Commissioner Smith and Dr. Cox talked about the teacher assistants are primarily for K-1 grades.

Dr. Mattox talked about how fortunate it is to have retired educators to fill in the gaps where Teacher Assistants used to be.

Commissioner Leys and Dr. Cox talked about hoping to hang onto those positions in the upcoming budget.

Chair Cox declared a brief recess at 7:50pm.

County Manager Don Adams talked about scheduling budget hearing dates. He explained that he is planning to present his budget recommendations on June 2, and the Board typically schedules a couple days for people to present budget information to the Commissioners. He asked could the Board also discuss the date for the public hearing.

The Board discussed dates and times for the budget hearings. They decided on June 3 and June 4 for budget hearings and the public hearing on June 25 with all of the meetings starting at 6:30pm.

County Manager Don Adams reviewed the dates set by the Board. He said the Commissioners can either schedule additional meetings now or keep calendars open for additional meetings.

The Board talked about additional dates for the budget and decided on June 17 and June 18 starting at 6:30pm. They decided on June 26 at 6:30pm for the budget approval.

County Manager Don Adams presented the workers compensation and property/liability insurance renewal information. He explained that the workers compensation's renewal is \$100,660 as compared to \$102,748 this year. He further explained that the property/liability insurance's renewal is \$106,929 as compared to \$106,422 this year. He stated that overall these renewals are \$1,581 less than the current year.

Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve the workers compensation and property/liability insurance renewals for 2014/15. Commissioner Leys seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams presented the color for the Prathers Creek cell tower, Tea Chest, SW 6103. He passed the color sample to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Leys talked about her conversations with the property owner regarding the selection of the color, and the property owner selected this color.

Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve Tea Chest as the color. Commissioner Leys seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams talked about Rex Tolliver is retiring soon. He asked that EMS be allowed to fill the EMS Shift Supervisor's position at a grade 67, \$32,701.48. He talked about an interview team will be involved in the selection of this person. He reiterated that this is due to a retirement.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve the request to fill the EMS Shift Supervisor position at a grade 67, \$32,701.48. Commissioner Goudreau seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams presented the bids for the Alleghany County Veterans Memorial Park and explained that the bids were opened on April 30 at 2pm. He provided copies of the bid tabulation sheet to the Board. He explained that the numbers he was working with are 4+ years old. He reviewed the bid tabulation sheet for the base bids; J.G. Coram \$231,470, Carolina Grading & Utilities \$274,325, MBI Builders \$293,350, Vannoy Construction \$534,400. He displayed, on the rendition board, what the base bid covers. He described the additives for the paved parking lot, pedestrian walking trail and paved walking trails. He explained that the concession stand was bid separately and J.G. Coram got the low bid on that too but we don't have the funds for all of that. He stated that he recommends awarding the base bid to J.G. Coram of \$231,470, removing the fence and landscaping from the base bid to make it \$213,670, which will leave around \$86,000 to fix the trail, the fencing and build the concession stand. He explained that the maintenance staff priced out the materials and using our own staff we should be able to get it completed but it will be close. He explained that is about \$40,000 for the concession stand and \$30,000 for the trail, and doesn't count the amount to pay staff. He further explained that we will be missing the paving for the parking lot, and may have to look at volunteer groups to help with the landscaping. He described the concession stand with a picnic shelter. He said he is comfortable with the numbers. He talked about the aluminum bridge that is in the contract. He gave the Board copies of the notice of award/change order #1 and explained them. He explained that the request before the Board is to award the contract to J.G. Coram in the amount of \$231,470 with the understanding that change order #1 will bring the costs down to \$213,670.

Chair Cox thanked the County Manager for his work on this. He added that on a personal note there were no local contractors who bid.

County Manager Don Adams said that before the ad came out in the newspaper all the contractors were notified.

Commissioner Leys thanked Don Adams for making this work within the budget.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve the contract with J.G. Coram in the amount of \$231,470 reduced to \$213,670 with the first change order. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams talked about the remaining money is already budgeted. He updated the Board about the remaining amount will be spent locally and how it will work to be constructed.

Commissioner Goudreau talked about the Supreme Court upheld spoken prayer at governmental meetings earlier today. He said he would like to add the spoken public prayers at the beginning of the meeting. He read portions from USA Today regarding today's Supreme Court ruling. He said he would like to add it to the next agenda for a vote and allow time for the County Attorney to review it.

Chair Cox said his point then was we need to follow the law and that is his point now.

County Attorney Donna Shumate explained that she doesn't have the actual ruling and has only seen news articles.

Chair Cox talked about in previous years it wasn't on the agenda, very informal and not made such an issue. He said after the Commissioners hear from the County Attorney he will be glad to start it.

Commissioner Smith said this is appropriate to have the conversation after the ruling today.

Chair Cox reiterated that he would like for this not to be such an issue.

Commissioner Leys talked about reading information about unemployment and economic statistics. She read a portion about the economy in the county. She urged the Commissioners to focus on business development.

Chair Cox agreed that it isn't a good report but he sees the Economic Development Plan as an active, positive document that could help.

Commissioner Leys talked about the unemployment rate percentage is decreasing because people are leaving the county rather than people finding work here.

Commissioner Goudreau talked about he drives down the mountain everyday for work because there is no work here. He said he agrees with Commissioner Leys that we need to take a strong look at it and maybe the proposal of liquor by the drink because it could tie into help tourism.

Chair Cox opened the public comments' portion of the meeting and asked for comments.

Ginger Collins came before the Board to introduce the Blue Ridge Read Alleghany County One Book. She explained the Blue Ridge Read and how it works plus it brings talent and experience to help the County. She further explained this is a community read where they will provide copies of *To Dance With the White Dog* by Terry Kay to anyone who wants to participate, and they have five weeks of activities ranging from conversation groups to art projects to musical event to a visit by the author followed by movie night. She talked about ways for people to participate and encouraged everyone to participate.

Chair Cox asked for additional public comments. None were received. He closed the public comments' portion of the meeting.

Being no further business, Commissioner Goudreau made a motion to adjourn at 8:51pm. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Respectfully submitted,

Attest:

Karen Evans
Clerk to the Board

Larry Cox
Chairman