

The Alleghany County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, August 18, 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 offered the Invocation.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve the agenda for this August 18, 2014, meeting. Commissioner Goudreau seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

AGENDA

Monday, August 18, 2014

10:00 AM

- 10:00 Meeting Called To Order, Pledge of Allegiance and Silent Prayer
Motion on Agenda for August 18, 2014, Meeting
Motion on Minutes for August 4, 2014, Meeting
- 10:05 A. Linda Edwards, Karen Evans, April Hamm, Rita Miller
1. Wellness Program Update – Members from the Wellness Committee will provide an update about wellness activities and level of participation.
2. Wellness Drawing – All employees who have earned Healthy Outcomes points through Blue Cross/Blue Shield are entered into a drawing to win NC State football tickets, which were donated to the wellness committee. One winner will be drawn.
- 10:10 B. Rita Miller, Tax Administrator
1. July 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. July Collections Report - Monthly 2014 collection rates through June as compared to 2013 monthly collection rates. No action requested.
3. Enforced Collections Report – Summarizes enforced collections for the month of July 2014. No action requested
4. Payment Agreement Report - List of people with payment agreements who did not make payments. No action requested.
5. Residential Solid Waste Fee Appeal – Action Requested – Vote on the appeal.
- 10:20 C. April Hamm, Transportation Director
RE: System Safety Program Plan for Alleghany in Motion. She will be presenting the System Safety Program Plan. Action Requested – Vote on the Plan.
- 10:30 D. Linda Edwards, EMS Administrative Director
RE: Debt Set-Off. Ms. Edwards will present information about participating with the debt set-off program to collect delinquent EMS bills.
- 10:45 E. Jason Joyce, NC Department of Transportation
RE: Highway Beatification Projects. Mr. Joyce will be presenting proposed landscape plans for the Fairgrounds and Veteran Memorial Park. Also included in the packets is the proposed landscape agreement between Alleghany County and the North Carolina Department of Transportation.
- 11:00 F. General Business
1. Deputy Open Position, Grade 62, \$25,622.61. Action Requested – Vote on the request to fill the position.
2. General Fund Budget Amendment #3 in the amount of \$705 for adding AWD to Social Services' new vehicle. Action Requested – Vote on General Fund Budget Amendment # 3.
3. Veterans Service Officer—part-time. To employ part-time person (former Veteran Service Officer) for 2 weeks in September in order to allow for training of the new personnel as the Veteran Service Officer. Action Requested – Vote on General Fund Budget Amendment #4 in the amount of \$1,850 for part-time position.

4. Morgue Agreement. The Memorandum of Agreement between Alleghany County and Alleghany Memorial Hospital for the operation of the morgue.

Action Requested – Vote on the Agreement.

G. Public Comments—30 minutes

H. Commissioners Comments

I. Closed Session—NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (1)—confidential records

J. Adjourn

Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve the minutes for the August 4, 2014, meeting. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Linda Edwards, Karen Evans, April Hamm, Rita Miller came before the Board representing the Wellness Committee to provide a brief update on the Committee's activities.

Rita Miller presented information to the Commissioners regarding the Wellness Committee's walking club. She stated that 51 participants walked a total of 12,213,018 steps or 5,782 miles. She talked about Aaron Finney walked the most steps with 602,528, 2nd place was Jim Brown with 572,000 steps, and 3rd place was Deb Oliver with 567,000 steps. She explained that 6 people had over 500,000 steps and will be entered into a drawing for Martinsville race tickets that the Commissioners will draw for in September. She said the walking club was very popular and the next session begins in September.

Rita Miller and County Manager Don Adams talked about the program was for 2 months; June and July.

April Hamm talked about the rewards and incentives that the Wellness Committee has had donated or purchased at low costs. She named several of the prizes; demolition derby tickets, Horn in the West tickets, fiddlers convention tickets, NC State tickets, Grandfather Mountain tickets, Wellness Center monthly passes, Martinsville Motor Speedway tickets, Carolina Panthers tickets. She talked about having the same incentive as last year for the BCBS Healthy Outcomes program. She mentioned having items for goody bags, Sparta Entertainment Center bowling, UNC basketball, G&B Energy gift bag, Merlefest tickets, Wake Forest basketball and football, numerous Hendrix motorsports items, Food Lion gym bag and 5 prizes from Mark III valued at \$25 each.

Linda Edwards provided participation numbers for the activities; June/July walking club 51, biggest loser 23, BCBS 59 people gaining points as of August 9, 2014, movement/dance on Wednesdays having between 2 to 6 participants, Wellness Center \$1 per day during lunch for employees and that participation number is increasing, a lot of employees using the extra 30 minutes at lunch for exercise. She mentioned that the Committee worked to get healthier snacks in all of the vending machines.

Chair Cox said he hopes this will continue to everyone including employees' families in getting healthier also.

Commissioner Leys said this is an inspiration.

Clerk Karen Evans updated the Board about the drawing is for 4 NC State football tickets, and everyone who has earned any BCBS Healthy Outcome points by August 9 is entered into this drawing.

Commissioner Goudreau drew the name and Chair Cox read the name; Jackie Duncan.

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

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

Rita Miller presented the July auto refunds.

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

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

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve the VTS July auto refunds. Commissioner Goudreau seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Rita Miller presented the July real property releases.

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

Rita Miller presented the July real property refunds.

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

Rita Miller presented the July 2014 reports; collections' report, enforced collection report, and payment agreement report.

Rita Miller presented a residential solid waste fee release. She explained the property location, electricity is on and the water is on. She said her field inspection showed that it appeared habitable but the property owner said it needs work.

Chair Cox and Rita Miller talked about the taxes are paid, and they still have the electricity on.

County Manager Don Adams explained that normally the Board looks to see if it is habitable and if there is power. He asked with the power being on, how would the Tax Department know.

Commissioner Smith said the answers to those questions are yes.

Rita Miller said if that is the guidelines the Commissioners are using then her recommendation is to deny the request.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to accept the Tax Administrator's recommendation to deny this request. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Rita Miller talked about an advertised tax foreclosure sale on August 29. She explained that it is a very small tract of land, trees growing up through the structure; normal bid opening procedure is to start the bid at the amount owed to Alleghany County. She further explained that this opening bid would be \$3,900; she doubted anyone would pay that for this property then the County would own it. She read a portion from the tax foreclosure book about situations where an opening bid isn't submitted. She asked about opening the bid of the taxes/fees due or let people open the bid. She stated she believes that if we start it our normal way then we will own it.

County Manager Don Adams stated that she showed him the pictures of the property. He said he doesn't think the County wants to own a house that is half collapsed. He talked about adjoining property owners' interest and the limited access to the property. He said the question is to stay with standard process and start it at \$3,900 or let other people start it.

Commissioner Leys said she wants to hear from the County Attorney.

County Attorney Donna Shumate said if the County puts a bid on it the County will own it then have to tear it down to make it safe. She explained that the heirs know that it isn't worth the taxes owed.

County Manager Don Adams talked about the wording of the motion to deviate from the standard policy.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to forgo the standard policy and sell it for what it brings, and it is for the property that has been advertised for sale on August 29. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

April Hamm, Transportation Director, presented the System Safety Program Plan. She explained that she has corrected all of the deficiencies and have to submit it back to Raleigh. She further explained that she has made it available for the past two weeks for everyone to review it.

Commissioner Smith and April Hamm talked about areas of concerns in the Plan that has been addressed in this revision including security at the building, which she noted in the Plan that the Commissioners approved for cameras to be added to the building.

County Manager Don Adams explained that will be a winter project because the price quoted to the Board was for the Maintenance staff to run all of the cable so Skyline is just installing the equipment.

Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve the System Safety Program Plan. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Linda Edwards, EMS Administrative Director, presented information about the NC Debt Set-Off program for EMS. She explained that EMS is different from Tax because EMS is only for 3 years rather than 10. She reviewed the number of patients with unpaid claims during this time period; 398 for a total of \$190,321.47, 186 are eligible for debt set-off for \$98,628.76, 95 are without social security numbers for \$41,084.37 and 117 are \$50,608.34. She said the ones without social security numbers and out of state aren't eligible for the program. She stated that out of the 95 she may be able to get social security numbers for a fourth of them. She explained the process is if the Board approves this, she will send a letter to the patients, they have 30 days to pay and then she will submit the information to the State for people who didn't pay. She talked about the State's timeline and approval in mid-September in order to submit to the State for their deadlines.

Commissioner Leys thanked Linda Edwards for all of this work. They talked about having 186 eligible for \$98,628.76. They further talked about the hardest part of the work is done, about the remaining amount of work and the State will help. They discussed the out-of-state patients and how EMS transported them.

Commissioner Smith and Linda Edwards talked about she isn't aware of anything to do for collections in Virginia.

County Manager Don Adams said maybe to look at a collection agency. He talked about if she keeps this broken out like this it may be worth talking to a collection agency for those.

Commissioner Smith, Chair Cox, Commissioner Davis and Linda Edwards talked about out-of-state patients and challenges to collect from the out-of-state patients.

Commissioner Smith said if this was passed today he would like to see us trying to do something with the other people too. He further said that 186 out of 398 isn't a lot.

Chair Cox and Linda Edwards talked about she works with people about making payment arrangements. She provided examples.

Chair Cox and Linda Edwards talked about Board action isn't necessary until mid-September. Commissioner Smith and Linda Edwards talked about mid-September and looking at the others.

Commissioner Leys asked about having her on the next agenda with the additional information. Linda Edwards talked about she has the information but it isn't public record because it is about people's health.

Chair Cox thanked Commissioner Leys for her involvement with NCDOT and this next topic.

Jason Joyce talked about the Department of Transportation's beautification projects. He explained that the plans were drew up and plans are to install the planting, warranty for one year then turn it over to the County to maintain. He said the project is removing the chain-link fence around the fairgrounds except for the gates, install spilt-rail fence, build a rock wall and install plants along the sign locations, install plantings between the signs along Highway 21, and everything being in a mulch bed. He described the different types of plants in that area.

County Manager Don Adams stated that the last page in the plans is for the Veterans Memorial Park. He talked about the spilt-rail fence goes behind the sign at the fairgrounds, moving the fence line to expose the sign more. He further talked about this will dramatically change the

look at the entrance. He explained that the only chain-link fence that will remain is along Bledsoe Creek Road past the building.

Jason Joyce said one previous question was about the amount of maintenance required, and his estimate is 4 hours a month. He explained that he would send his crew up in February/March to spray to keep the weeds down.

Commissioner Goudreau talked about taking this to the Fairgrounds Board; it was presented and approved to move forward. He further talked about it is good for the choice of plantings, and everyone was excited about it.

County Manager Don Adams explained that the chain-link fence will not go to waste because it will be used at the Veterans Park. He further explained that DOT is also putting plantings along the fence.

Jason Joyce explained their plans for the Park's fence line is to make a screen along the road.

County Manager Don Adams explained also included in the packets is an agreement with NCDOT, which has to be approved by the NCDOT board. He further explained that the timing of the project is planting this fall. He talked about Maintenance will roll the fence up and install it at the Park, which will also save a lot of money at the Park.

Commissioner Leys said she would like to recognize Stephen Whitlow who started this idea. She explained she called Mike Pettyjohn who got her in contact with Wayne Atkins, Jason Joyce and Mr. Kopestsky. She stated that Johnnie and Stephen Whitlow talked about these are all low maintenance plants. She thanked the County Manager for his work on these projects.

Commissioner Leys and Jason Joyce talked about he will find out what type of maple trees will be planted and let her know.

County Manager Don Adams explained that the original plans at the fairgrounds had the entrance larger but was scaled back due to parking. He said how the plans are now, one or two parking spots might be lost and going to lose 2 feet along the roadway. He talked about seeing low impact to the parking area.

Commissioner Leys asked what is the status of the corner at Bledsoe Creek Road.

Jason Joyce said that Mr. Kopestsky put the spilt-rail fence along with some planting, and another option was a retaining wall. He talked about this would need to be an additional agreement with the Fairgrounds Board.

County Manager Don Adams explained that portion must be approved by the Fairgrounds Board and the need for a separate agreement.

Jason Joyce agreed and said with the understanding that it will be County maintained.

Commissioner Smith and County Manager Don Adams talked about the necessary maintenance will go to the Recreation Department and Maintenance Department for maintaining the properties. Commissioner Smith asked why the chain-link fence was there to begin with. The County Manager explained it was before the Scout building and the safety training facility, and now the facility is open during the day. The County Manager explained security for the area and the spilt-rail fence can still be closed down for vehicles, someone could jump the fence but will still have to pay at the bridge to get in. County Manager Don Adams reiterated that the facility is open almost all of the time.

Commissioner Leys and Jason Joyce talked about the Park having white pines where the Park starts, some already there and adding a few more. County Manager Don Adams explained it is not down where people will be. Jason Joyce continued explaining the use of the white pines. They talked about the differences between blue spruce and white pines.

Chair Cox stated his appreciation to everyone working on this project.

County Manager Don Adams said as soon as this Board is ready to take action on the agreement he would recommend approval.

Commissioner Goudreau said he looked at the agreement, and the Fairgrounds Board is in favor. He stated that this is a good project.

Commissioner Goudreau made a motion to approve the agreement. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams presented a letter from Sheriff Edwards in regards to filling an open position of Deputy at grade 62, \$25,622.61.

Commissioner Goudreau made a motion to approve filling the open position. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams presented budget amendment General Fund #3 in the amount of \$705 for the additional feature on Social Services' vehicle that was approved at the last meeting.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve budget amendment General Fund #3 in the amount of \$705. Commissioner Goudreau seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams presented budget amendment General Fund #4 in the amount of \$1,850, which is for employing the retired Veteran Service Officer for 2 weeks to train the new Veterans Service Officer and also to pay out the annual leave for the retiring person.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve budget amendment General Fund #4 in the amount of \$1,850. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams explained that he was asked about the applicant/selection process via a letter so he is answering the request publicly so everyone will know. He explained the process, 25 applications received, 7 interviews, 15 applications were veterans, and all interviewed were veterans, can't answer the question about the number of disabled veterans and explained why because legally he can't inquire about disabilities. He further explained that he reached out to the VFW and the Marine League to have people on the interview committee, several people from the Marine League were invited to participate and for various reasons he couldn't get anyone and didn't get anyone from the American Legion because of having to limit to so many people on the committee. He stated that everyone on the interview committee were veterans. He said that in the next few days an announcement will be made on the selection.

County Manager Don Adams presented the morgue agreement with Alleghany Memorial Hospital, an email from Brent Lammers that they have reviewed the agreement and ready to proceed. He reviewed the changes to the agreement since the last meeting.

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

County Manager Don Adams explained he called about the question about an alarm if the cooling system fails and the costs is \$833.25. He further explained this is for the physical alarm and if the Hospital wants it to go upstairs there would have to more equipment purchased.

Commissioner Leys referred to Commissioner Davis on this. Commissioner Davis said he doesn't know if it is needed. Commissioner Leys explained that it is for the cooler if it goes down. Commissioner Davis talked about money well spent.

Chair Cox asked does the Board want to think about it. Commissioner Smith answered yes.

Commissioner Leys said she heard Commissioner Davis say it would be good. Commissioner Davis said it is always good to have a backup. Commissioner Leys asked do we need to talk to Richard Nichols.

County Manager Don Adams talked about it takes 90 days to get it after ordering, and he hasn't ordered it yet. He said that he is assuming he can alter the order September 8, if needed.

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

Chair Cox gave each Commissioner a copy of the Alleghany County's benefits of having a membership to the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC). He reviewed the pamphlet. He explained he did attend the NCACC annual conference. He talked about the highlights of the conference, which was 2 full days, and was the best conference he has attended. He said Amy Lucas was there through the Extension Service and Alex Wagoner was there through the Youth Summit program. He stated that he enjoyed it, and it was worthwhile.

Commissioner Davis made a motion to enter into closed session under NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (1)—confidential records at 11:32am. Commissioner Leys seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to adjourn closed session at 11:44am and reconvened the regular meeting. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Chair Cox stated no action was taken during closed session.

Being no further business, Commissioner Goudreau made a motion to adjourn at 11:45am. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Respectfully submitted,

Attest:

Karen Evans
Clerk to the Board

Larry Cox
Chairman