

The Alleghany County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, September 21, 2015, at 10:00am 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 Bobby Irwin, County Attorney Donna Shumate, County Manager Don Adams, and Clerk to the Board Karen Evans. Commissioner Mark Evans was absent.

Chair Smith called the meeting to order, led the Pledge of Allegiance and offered the Invocation.

Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve the agenda for this September 21, 2015, meeting. Commissioner Leys seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

AGENDA
Monday, September 21, 2015
10:00 AM

- 10:00 Meeting Called To Order, Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation
Motion on Agenda for September 21, 2015, Meeting
Motion on Minutes for September 8, 2015, Meeting
- 10:05 A. Rita Miller, Tax Administrator
1. August Releases and Refunds - Standard release and refund of both automobile and real property taxes due to reasons listed on the report. Actions Requested – Vote on releases and refunds.
 2. August Collections Report - Monthly 2015 collection rates through August as compared to 2014 monthly collection rates. No action requested.
 3. Enforced Collections Report – Summarizes enforced collections for the month of August 2015. No action requested.
 4. Payment Agreement Report - List of people with payment agreements who did not make payments. No action requested.
 5. Solid Waste Fee Refund Request
Action Requested – Vote on the request.
 6. Tax Office Budget Amendment – Budget Amendment General Fund #4 in the amount of \$7,500 to budget for additional attorney foreclosure fees. Action Requested – Vote on the budget amendment.
 7. Tax Administrative Assistant Open Position – Request to fill the vacant position of Tax Administrative Assistant, Grade 60, \$23,240.55. Action Requested – Vote on the request.
- 10:15 B. Rescue Squad Annual Report. No action requested.
- 10:30 C. Wilkes Community College Annual Report. No action requested.
- 10:45 D. General Business
1. Voluntary Farmland Preservation Advisory Board Reappointments
Request is to reappoint David Gambill and Yancy Sparks for three-year terms on the Voluntary Farmland Preservation Advisory Board. Action Requested – Vote on the request.
 2. Open Deputy Position
Request to fill an open deputy position, Grade 62, \$25,622.61. Action Requested – Vote on the request.
 3. Alleghany County Project Ordinance Library Project Fund
Library Project Ordinance in the amount of \$874,125 for the renovations of the library at 115 Atwood Street. Action Requested – Vote on the ordinance.
 4. Sample Architect Agreement
Enclosed is a sample agreement with Hemphill-Randel Associates for architect services for the library renovations. Action will be requested at the next meeting.
- E. Commissioner Business
1. Current Leave and Closing Policies – Commissioner Irwin wants to have discussions about the current leave and closing policies. No action requested.
 2. Land-Use Policies – Commissioner Irwin wants to have discussions in regards to junk and dilapidated buildings. No action requested.

- F. Public Comments—30 minutes
- G. Commissioners Comments
- H. Closed Session – NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (3)—legal and (a) (6)—personnel
- I. Adjourn

Commissioner Irwin made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 8, 2015, meeting. Commissioner Leys seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

Rita Miller, Tax Administrator, presented the August auto refunds under the vehicle tax system (VTS).

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve the August VTS auto refunds. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

Rita Miller presented the August real property releases. She explained several of the releases including an exemption release for Camp Cheerio.

Commissioner Leys said that Camp Cheerio's amount is \$27,508 out of the total releases of \$31,834.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve the August real property releases. Commissioner Irwin seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

Rita Miller presented the August real property refunds explaining the reasons for the refunds.

Commissioner Irwin made a motion to approve the August real property refunds. Commissioner Leys seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

Rita Miller presented the August 2015 reports; collection rate report, enforced collection report, payment agreement report.

Rita Miller presented a request for a solid waste fee refund for a house that has been torn down. She said the property owner is requesting the refund of the 2015 fee. She verified that the house is not pictured on the latest aerials.

Commissioner Leys and Rita Miller talked about the amount of the request is \$70.

Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve the request. Commissioner Irwin seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

Rita Miller presented a request for budget amendment General Fund #4 in the amount of \$7,500 for foreclosure fees. She explained the County will collect these fees through the foreclosure process.

The County Manager explained the amount already received in this fiscal year.

County Attorney Donna Shumate explained what these monies are spent on.

Commissioner Leys and Rita Miller talked about the enforced collection report regarding foreclosures.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve budget amendment General Fund #4 in the amount of \$7,500. Commissioner Irwin seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

Rita Miller requested to fill a vacant position of Tax Administrative Assistant, which has been vacant since September 15. She stated that it is a Grade 60, \$23,240.55.

Commissioner Irwin made a motion to fill the vacant position of Tax Administrative Assistant. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

Carroll Royal, Captain of Alleghany County Rescue Squad, presented their annual report including the number of members, types of certifications, amount of trainings, types of trainings, number of calls/hours.

Chair Smith and Carroll Royal talked about over the years the trainings have increased, and Carroll Royal said the State is changing the training as of December 31, and they will have to go back and do more training. They discussed they have a junior program but no one is involved at this time.

Commissioner Leys and Carroll Royal talked about they receive monies from the County, letter drives, fundraisers. They talked about the minimum requirements for someone to join the Squad according to certifications needed.

Chair Smith, Carroll Royal and the County Manager talked about the First Responders program and the Squad responds to calls as Rescue Squad members not as First Responders.

Commissioner Irwin and Carroll Royal talked about the Squad has different specialties for each member.

Commissioner Leys said she is thankful the Squad is here and hopes no one needs the services.

County Manager Don Adams talked about the hands-only CPR training.

Carroll Royal explained all of the areas that the hands-only CPR training has been provided. He said so far they have trained 25 people.

The County Manager said that the Squad operates at a Paramedic level, serves as backup to the County's EMS service and operates under Dr. Bryant's licenses.

Chair Smith thanked Carroll Royal.

Dr. Jeff Cox, President of Wilkes Community College (WCC), thanked the Board for their support. He said they are excited about changes that are coming. He mentioned they worked with the County and the BDC to have someone at the front desk at the WCC/BDC building. He explained they have invested in a new position for Alleghany County and added new a cyber classroom here, which allows for expansion. He further explained changes in personnel including John Hauser is providing oversight here, things that John Hauser has already started doing at the Campus, Jayne Phipps-Boger will continue to serve as a Director and will continue to teach. He said they are looking forward to see numbers grow here and actions will speak louder than words about growing. He talked about an economic impact study and the results about the impact of WCC. He explained they are working on a pilot program in Alleghany County in partnership with the Alleghany Education Foundation and Alleghany County Schools for students to follow their program to have a 2-year associate's degree tuition free. He further explained what is involved. He reiterated that he is excited, wants to see the Campus grow and thanked the Board for the opportunity to be here. He introduced John Hauser.

John Hauser reviewed the College's annual report including their initiatives, enrollment, continuing education, students by program, Alleghany Center priorities, and seamless pathway model.

Jayne-Phipps Boger said she is honored to be here to say that they are moving towards the next step of collaboration. She thanked the Board for the continued support for the Campus.

Chair Smith talked about this excitement, glad to see everyone working together and looks forward to see what comes out of this.

Commissioner Irwin talked about the move for the position at the High Schools to help with the counselors, and the public is overlooking that. He said that is the most positive thing that he has seen because the position at the High School will make a positive impact. He talked about the Community College system enrollments. He asked how WCC retains instructors at the level of funding provided. He said that at some point people will have to step up to pay the instructors.

He talked about if the bond gets passed then community colleges will get a small portion. He said that he appreciates what WCC can do to address the pay. He stated that drivers' education was almost passed along to community colleges, which will be a continual fight. He asked how it is handled when a student applies for a class and there is a class limit, which is full.

Jayne Phipps-Boger explained limited admission programs and how they are handled. She said that she is not aware of any others. She stated if someone is not admitted into the program, then they have to start again to compete with other students the following year.

Dr. Cox explained admission into nursing, for example.

John Hauser explained for other classes, they just raise the cap for the number of students.

Jayne Phipps-Boger explained the State assign slots to WCC especially in the healthcare field so they are limited to class size in certain areas.

Commissioner Irwin mentioned people are staying longer in jobs because of the economy. He said that the number one employer is in the medical field and then engineering. He talked about having someone on a waiting list, having to have somewhere for the person to train, and the system puts a damper on someone wanting to go into a certain field.

Dr. Cox mentioned the new health science facility at the main campus. He said that they have invested money for someone teaching in the health industry at the High School and the Campus.

Commissioner Irwin said the Education Foundation has been able to help a lot of students.

Jayne Phipps-Boger talked about the counselors at the High School work hard, and they are supplementing them.

Commissioner Irwin talked about the money saved for people by going to community colleges.

Dr. Cox said they need to do a better job educating parents on what is available at the community college level.

Commissioner Leys said she is so proud of everyone and thanked them for what is done. She asked how text books are funded for High School/WCC students. Dr. Cox explained the students have a fee, and the Education Foundation covers a portion of it. Dr. Cox, Jayne Phipps-Boger and John Hauser explained every student pays the \$20 fee. Dr. Cox talked about the NC IRIS grant and what it covers but the grant funds will run out.

Commissioner Leys asked if they are planning internships and how often. John Hauser said he will meet with the County Manager, Dale Caveny and others to see what is available, that is part of the pathway model, and they prefer apprenticeships.

Commissioner Leys said she hears from parents that they didn't know they had to complete the forms. She asked what work Ms. Coleman is doing. John Hauser said Ms. Coleman just started, provided examples of recent success stories, and the important thing is she is going to be on campus. Dr. Cox talked about working on marketing materials for each campus. Commissioner Leys reiterated this is one of the worst criticisms they get. Dr. Cox talked about conversations regarding students completing the packets. Commissioner Leys said the communication problem is getting the information to the parents.

Commissioner Irwin asked if they are going to have tracking in place to see how many students Ms. Coleman will assist. Dr. Cox said the report before the Commissioners will show those numbers at next year's report.

Commissioner Irwin talked about the Foundation is where it is because there are so many people that care and donate their money. He said they need to be recognized. Jayne Phipps-

Boger said John Woodruff does too for the vision. Commissioner Leys added that the community does also.

Chair Smith asked how often a class is offered and the minimum number sign up. Dr. Cox said WCC has been flexible in Alleghany County, even to the point they knew they would suffer a loss offering the class. John Hauser talked about the meeting Friday, they are training students, WCC will offer the classes, and classes are controlled by growth of the students. Jayne Phipps-Boger said she had to cancel two curriculum classes because of one or two students in class but continuing education is different, and explained the difference. Dr. Cox said WCC needs to fill the classes and need to see the classes grow.

Commissioner Irwin mentioned if there was a sign on Highway 18 saying what classes are being offered people would know. Dr. Cox talked about the challenge is the location. Commissioner Irwin talked about having an advertising campaign to get the word out. Dr. Cox said a digital sign there would be a dream come true.

Chair Smith declared a brief recess at 11:25am.

County Manager Don Adams presented a letter from the Voluntary Farmland Preservation Program Board to reappoint David Gambill and Yancy Sparks to each serve another term on the Board. He reminded everyone that this is the volunteer board not the economic development board.

Commissioner Irwin made a motion to approve the reappointment of David Gambill and Yancy Sparks on the Farmland Preservation Program. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

County Manager Don Adams presented a request from the Sheriff to fill an open deputy slot, Grade 62, \$25,622.61.

Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve the request. Commissioner Leys seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

County Manager Don Adams presented the Alleghany County Project Ordinance, Library Project Fund in the amount of \$874,125. He read the proposed ordinance. He explained the decision making steps will be after the bids are received. He said that he is going to request that the library fundraising group go ahead and submit their monies. He reviewed the timing for the loan. He stated that he is requesting that the Board adopt this. He explained from a cash-flow standpoint, Golden Leaf monies will be the last monies drew down.

Chair Smith asked if there are any updates on furniture / technology. The County Manager said he doesn't have anything official other than the \$10,000 donation that was in the newspaper. The County Manager reminded everyone that they already had \$42,000, and he knows they are talking to others. County Manager Don Adams explained what will occur between now and the beginning of the construction including going out to bid with construction completion estimated to be in December 2016 with moving around Christmas. They talked about the local Library Board would be involved in the conversations about the project. The County Manager explained alternatives that could be involved in the bidding process. The County Manager further explained the bid process would involve giving everyone choices. Commissioner Leys said that is a good way to make sure the project will occur.

Commissioner Leys and County Manager talked about Northwestern Regional Library is the fiscal agent because they applied for the grant. They discussed that he is asking the Library for the cash in order to pay for expenses between now and Spring; architect and advertising.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve the Alleghany County Project Ordinance, Library Project Fund in the amount of \$874,125. Commissioner Irwin seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

County Manager Don Adams presented the sample architect agreement for the Library project. He explained that he and the County Attorney will review this Agreement before the next meeting. He named a couple of changes to the Agreement. He explained that this is the

standard architect agreement. He said that he is asking the County Attorney to review it and it will be on the next agenda.

County Manager Don Adams said he made copies for the Commissioners of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners' summary of the State's budget and a spreadsheet regarding the additional sales tax. He said he has the sales tax topic on the agenda for the first of October and how to proceed with all of these conversations.

Commissioner Irwin asked for a general overview on how employees earn time off including snow days.

County Manager Don Adams referred everyone to the Alleghany County Personnel Policy, Article 6, Leaves of Absences. He provided an overview on employees' time off including holidays, annual leave, and sick leave. He mentioned that employees in departments that cannot close for holidays are paid a holiday check for those days. He reviewed how much time full-time employees earn annually in annual leave based upon years of service and hours over 240 are rolled over to sick leave at the end of the calendar year. He said that when an employee leaves they are paid out up to 240 hours. He explained that sick leave isn't earned according to years of service, full-time employees earn 2 weeks per year. He explained how overtime is paid for employees who by law must be paid cash overtime and comp time overtime for non-exempt personnel. He reviewed how employees take comp time off and how employees take vacation time off. He explained department heads report to him and employees report to the department heads. He stated that it is all tracked.

Commissioner Irwin and County Manager talked about the Policy isn't online. The County Manager said every department has a copy, and it is available for everyone to view it.

The County Manager talked about snow days and stated that a couple of departments that never close like EMS, Law Enforcement and Transfer Facility. He explained that Alleghany in Motion (AIM) vans follow the school's schedule, and AIM staff follows the administrative closing. He explained how he decides to cancel or delay work due to the weather but he said it doesn't happen often. He further explained the standing rule if someone doesn't feel safe on the roads to stay home and use vacation time. He said that he takes this seriously because it is a cost that employees aren't required to make up. He said that he tries to be reasonable to the employees but conserve money.

Commissioner Irwin said that is a good overview, and if anyone has any questions then they can come look at the policy.

Commissioner Leys asked the County Manager to define exempt and non-exempt positions. The County Manager explained that the current salary study will review every job to determine that but generally it is how many people someone supervises, and other elements in determining administrative versus non-administrative. He reiterated that all of the employees will be reviewed. She clarified exempt and non-exempt. He said he defers to the salary study people to provide that definition. He provided examples where people have changed duties, and we are paying someone to tell us this.

Commissioner Irwin said at some point in time, the County Manager or the Board of Commissioners need to start a discussion or working on ways regarding how some buildings look on the exterior of the buildings and the safety of the structures. He used a recent example of a death of a child in Texas. He said at some time the County needs to do what the Town is doing.

County Manager Don Adams said the Board needs to start discussing this because staff needs direction from the Board in order to start these conversations.

Commissioner Irwin asked about direction from the Board regarding whether to approach this or let it go.

Chair Smith said there are several paths the Board could do. He said he wonders what has been done on public awareness. He said that there are some legal issues involved. He stated that he doesn't think there is one set method to clean up the county. He further stated that

a lot of discussions are needed. He asked does Inspections have any guidelines. Travis Dalton explained there are but it goes into minimum housing standards.

Commissioner Leys asked if there is anything on the books. Travis Dalton said no there isn't.

Chair Smith asked about spot zoning.

The County Manager asked is this a targeted approach like Highways 21/18 and is there a legal means to move forward. He said he knows it is more difficult and explained that zoning is about getting uses together but police powers are geared towards safety. He said that this is the type of debate that is needed. He stated that most ordinances he has seen are police powers not zoning. He provided an example. He said that he has information from Benchmark, and if the County is going down that path then we would need to research it. He said if we are jumping to ordinances quickly the need to have conversations about if County Government wants to address it and if so, how.

Commissioner Irwin said the Town has gone through this. The County Manager said yes they have.

Commissioner Irwin said this is something that isn't beyond the County doing. He further said he is just asking a question.

Chair Smith asked does he have any proposals.

Commissioner Irwin said his proposal is to let the County Manager look into safety and/or looks.

Chair Smith said he would be curious about the Town's success with Benchmark.

The County Manager said his private conversations haven't been negative towards Benchmark. He stated there are a lot of discussions that we could have.

Chair Smith said that he is not comfortable telling people what to do with their stuff. Commissioner Davis said he isn't either.

Chair Smith said it is worthy of discussions but he is not ready to vote on anything.

Commissioner Irwin said he is looking at the safety factor and how it looks to people coming into the county. He gave an example on top of 21 mountain and the amount of trash/refrigerators. He said that he is looking at public health first and then appearance.

Commissioner Leys said this is an expensive endeavor.

Commissioner Irwin said those questions could be answered if we direct the County Manager to proceed.

Chair Smith asked Travis Dalton has the Planning Board spent any time on this. Travis Dalton said he could get them to discuss it but they have had conversations about it prior to him, and it didn't go anywhere.

Chair Smith opened the public comments portion of the meeting and asked for comments. None were received. He closed that portion of the meeting.

Commissioner Leys talked about the recent open house for Allegheny Memorial Hospital that was focused on their services and was extremely successful.

Commissioner Irwin talked about the Mountain Heritage weekend as he understands it was a success. He said that the Veterans' Memorial is moving quickly. He explained that when people want to recognize certain people, the plan is to sell brick for the walking trail. He said that he is looking forward to seeing the memorials built in the near future.

Chair Smith mentioned the photography is up at the BDC facility. The County Manager agreed and said there is an organized event there on Saturday.

Commissioner Davis made a motion to enter into closed session under NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (3)—legal and (a) (6)—personnel at 12:31pm. Commissioner Irwin seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

Clerk Karen Evans left the closed session at 1:02pm.

Commissioner Irwin made a motion to adjourn closed session at 1:38pm and reconvened the regular meeting. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

Chair Smith stated no action was taken during closed session.

County Manager Don Adams explained that at the end of September both the Finance Officer and Assistant Finance Officer are retiring. He said he is requesting permission to fill both positions.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to fill both and advertise for both positions; Finance Officer and Assistant Finance Officer. Commissioner Irwin seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

County Manager Don Adams explained because of being short-handed he is requesting additional part-time assistance working 20 hours a week or less at a grade 54 or Grade 57 depending upon the qualifications of the person hired.

Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve hiring additional part-time work up to 20 hours per week. Commissioner Leys seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

Being no further business, Commissioner Irwin made a motion to adjourn at 1:40pm. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

Respectfully submitted,

Attest:

Karen Evans, Clerk to the Board

Tom Smith, Chair