

The Alleghany County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, October 21, 2013, 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 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 talked about the need to delete the Red Cross Annual Report from the agenda.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve the amended agenda for this October 21, 2013, meeting. Commissioner Goudreau seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

AGENDA  
Monday, October 21, 2013  
10:00 AM

- 10:00 Meeting Called To Order, Pledge of Allegiance and Silent Prayer  
Motion on Agenda for October 21, 2013, Meeting  
Motion on Minutes for September 30, 2013, Joint Meeting and October 7, 2013, Meeting
- 10:05 A. Rita Miller - Tax Administrator
1. September 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. September Collections Report - Monthly 2013 collection rates through September as compared to 2012 monthly collection rates. No action requested.
  3. Enforced Collections Report – Summarizes enforced collections for the month of September 2013. 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 Appeals – Three requests to release residential solid waste fees. Action Requested – Vote on the requests.
  6. Two motor vehicle value appeals. Action Requested – Vote on the appeals.
- 10:20 B. Alleghany County Dispatch  
RE: E-911 Budget Amendment. Enclosed in your packets are two invoices in the amounts of \$432.50 for dispatch console repair and \$1,130.69 for computer purchase/setup. These are allowable E911 expenses. The proposed budget amendment is for \$3,075. \$2,000 for the enclosed and future service repairs and \$1,075 for the computer purchase. Action Requested—Vote on E911 Fund Budget Amendment #2 in the amount of \$3,075.
- 10:30 C. Clark Hunter – Blue Ridge Development Center Manager / Alleghany County Economic Development Corporation Director  
RE: Mr. Hunter will be appearing before the Board to discuss recent economic development activities and to update the Board on the economic development planning process. No action requested.
- 10:45 D. Travis Dalton – County Planning Director  
RE: Information regarding procedures for placing cell towers in the County. The information presented is to prepare the Board for upcoming applications to place cell towers within the County. No action requested.
- 10:55 E. Soil and Water Annual Report
- 11:10 F. Health Advisory Council Annual Report
- 11:20 G. Red Cross Annual Report (deleted)
- 11:30 H. General Business
1. Community Development Block Grant Monthly Performance Status Report. Required status report on housing program. No action requested.
  2. Farmland Preservation Plan. Continued discussions regarding the Farmland Preservation Plan. Action Requested – Vote on the Plan.
  3. Potential Federal Budget Impact Discussions
- I. Commissioner Business
1. Wilkes Community College Board of Trustees Appointment—Chair Cox
  2. Smoky Mountain Center Resolution
- J. Commissioner Comments
- K. Public Comments—30 minutes
- L. Adjourn

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 30, 2013, joint meeting and the October 7, 2013, meeting. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

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

Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve the September auto releases. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Rita Miller presented the September auto refunds.

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

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

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

Rita Miller presented the September real property releases.

Commissioner Leys and Rita Miller talked about deferred taxes.

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

Rita Miller presented the September real property refunds.

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

Rita Miller presented the September 2013 collections' report, the enforced collection report and the payment agreement report.

Rita Miller presented a request for the release of solid waste fees. She explained that the property is located on Big Oak Road, appeared to be livable but the electricity was disconnected in February 2013.

County Manager Don Adams and Rita Miller talked about they get permits from the inspections department to pick up the properties where the electricity has been turned back on.

Chair Cox and Rita Miller talked about she didn't have pictures regarding this appeal.

Rita Miller explained the process that the Tax Office follows when fees are released.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to accept the Tax Administrator's recommendation of releasing the solid waste fees. Commissioner Goudreau seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Rita Miller presented information regarding another release of solid waste fees for property located at 545 Brown Rd. She explained that the property isn't being lived in and the electricity/water was turned off in 2005.

Commissioner Goudreau made a motion to approve the release. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Rita Miller presented another release of solid waste fees for property located at 2004 Bledsoe Creek Road. She said that the electricity was turned off in September of 2012, the property is rundown, lawn is grown-up and the property owner has stated that the health department has condemned the property.

Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve the release. Commissioner Leys seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Rita Miller presented a motor-vehicle appeal for a Trip trailer, purchased for \$600, appraised for \$800 and assessed value of \$10,880 by DMV. She explained her recommendation is \$800.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve the recommendation. Commissioner Goudreau seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Rita Miller presented a motor-vehicle appeal for a 1992 Chevrolet Cavalier with an assessed value of \$1,875 and an appraised value of \$500. She said her recommendation is \$500.

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

Pat Irwin, Telecommunications Supervisor, came before the Board to talk about the dispatch console repair and computer purchase/repair.

County Manager Don Adams explained the items in the packets; invoice for \$432.50 for the repair, invoice for \$1,130.69 for the replacement computer, E-911 Fund Budget Amendment #2 in the amount of \$3,075. He stated that these are eligible 911 expenses.

Commissioner Leys and Pat Irwin talked about the computer hasn't been purchased at this time.

Chair Cox and County Manager Don Adams talked about how this impacts the 911 budget.

Commissioner Leys and County Manager Don Adams talked about the allowable expenses for E-911 monies.

Chair Cox and Pat Irwin talked about this is the first time in a while for problems with the console

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve E-911 Fund Budget Amendment #2 in the amount of \$3,075. Commissioner Goudreau seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams explained that the reason he asked Pat Irwin to come to this meeting is because the last time he presented a request from Dispatch there were questions he couldn't answer.

Pat Irwin provided an update on the paging/texting upgrade. She explained how this portion of the system will operate.

County Manager Don Adams and Commissioner Leys talked about the amount of the upgrade.

Chair Cox and Pat Irwin talked about the text will go out to all emergency personnel as needed.

County Manager Don Adams explained how the communication towers work and having problems with the radios that come/go and sometime in the future there will be discussions about additional towers, which is a significant cost. He said that he hopes, with the texting portion, that people will get text where the radios don't work well.

Commissioner Leys and Pat Irwin talked about a timeline to start and in order to get the 25% discount it has to be within this year.

Clark Hunter, Blue Ridge Development Center Manager / Alleghany County Economic Development Corporation Director, discussed with the Board the current occupancy at the BDC and their recent activities. He provided information about the recent two day event with the Division of Community Assistance and the High Country Council of Government working on the economic development plan. He talked about the areas discussed; youth, agriculture, vocational training, workforce training, access to capital. He talked about having a community-wide visioning process meeting on November 7 at Sparta Elementary School. He encouraged everyone to attend. He talked about he and Commissioner Leys went to Hickory to listen to Secretary Decker and Assistant Secretary Mitchell about the alignment the Department of Commerce is doing, which will be announced the end of the year or the beginning of next year.

Commissioner Leys talked about the listening tour. She asked about going into Piney and Glade.

Clark Hunter talked about they are working on this.

County Manager Don Adams and Clark Hunter talked about these meetings will be like the original ones and before November 7.

Travis Dalton, County Planner, explained information included in the Commissioners' packets about the Wireless Communication Tower Ordinance. He further explained that he is here today to provide information before the actual permit comes before the Board. He reviewed the highlights of the Wireless Communication Tower Ordinance.

Commissioner Leys and Travis Dalton talked about a public hearing is required for the Planning Board. County Manager Don Adams talked about a public hearing is required through the Property Rights Protection Ordinance. Travis Dalton explained the process for permits.

Commissioner Leys and Travis talked about these permits are for cell phone towers and he is talking with AT&T.

Linda Hash, Administrator Director/Conservationist II, presented the Alleghany Soil & Water Conservation District annual report including the projects funded through the North Carolina Cost Shared Programs, BMPs funded, EQIP statistics, educational summary, district activities summaries, voluntary farmland preservation program statistics, farmland preservation plan and the 2013 outstanding conservation farm family award.

Commissioner Leys talked about this was an impressive report and agriculture is a big economic factor in this county. She stated her appreciation for all of the work.

Jennifer Greene, Alleghany Health Advisory Council, presented their annual report including the 2012-2013 accomplishments, current and upcoming activities.

Commissioner Leys asked about the Project Lazarus and what the proposed \$7,500 would be spent on. Jennifer Greene stated that they are working on developing that right now and provided examples of things they had discussed; permanent drop box, lock boxes, proper education. They talked about the Triple P Positive Parenting Program will be for all parents, and Jennifer Greene explained the program. Commissioner Leys mentioned that for the State of Health in Alleghany County they might think about doing it prior to a Commissioners' meeting to get a broader audience.

Commissioner Smith and Jennifer Greene talked about it was 3 or 4 years ago that the Health Department completed the State of Health report, which is on the Health Department's website. She explained what they look at and this one will include merging issues. She talked about partnering will Alleghany Memorial Hospital for the Community Health Assessment.

County Manager Don Adams presented the September 2013 Monthly Performance Status Report for the Scattered Site Program. He said that the closeout public hearing will be in the next month or so then the grant will be closed out. He explained that this grant goes on 3-year cycles and this is the last one because of the State's restructuring. He further explained Michelle Ball will be before the Board to talk about the Single Family Rehab program, which the Council of Government is looking at perusing. He explained the difference between the programs.

County Manager Don Adams continued discussions about the Farmland Preservation Plan.

Chair Cox declared a brief recess at 11:21am.

County Manager Don Adams reminded everyone his recommendation on the Plan was to read the document and pay attention to the timeline.

Chair Cox said there is also the task of putting together a board.

Commissioner Smith talked about the advisory board and setting it up. He asked Bob Edwards if he would work with the advisory board. Bob Edwards said he will assist in getting it started but he thinks the groups involved needs to come up with the names. He explained that he recommends the members being on a strict rotation cycle and a board of 20 in order to get commodity and geography represented.

Commissioner Smith asked about the need for bylaws and terms. Bob Edwards agreed and said there are plenty of examples.

Commissioner Davis asked if this board will come up with ideas then the Commissioners approve them. Bob Edwards said that is what he has envisioned.

Commissioner Leys asked about the amount for back taxes and interest for farm use. County Manager Don Adams said it has been as high as \$100,000 before, but he doesn't have the numbers right now. She said those are General Fund monies. He agreed and explained that this isn't new money because it has already been budgeted.

County Manager Don Adams talked about the priority is to put the board together, focus on the recommendations then the advisory board come back to the Commissioners with funding requests and make it part of the normal budget process.

Commissioner Leys and Bob Edwards talked about possible programs and other things that could come out of this but will not be used to purchase conservation easements.

County Manager Don Adams talked about first you have to find volunteers for the board then ask the board to prioritize their recommendations.

Commissioner Leys and Bob Edwards talked about a reoccurring theme of training/education.

Commissioner Leys and Bob Edwards talked about one thing if the Plan is approved then we will quality for 0% match rather than the normal 35% required for grants. Bob Edwards talked about the Plan has received approval from the State.

Commissioner Leys said she didn't see anything threatening in this Plan. She asked about the timeline of establishing the advisory board. Bob Edwards said that it should move pretty quickly but he doesn't see a lot happening before the first of the year and hopes to have it going by April.

Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve the Farmland Preservation Plan as presented by Bob Edwards. Commissioner Goudreau seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams stated that the federal budget has been passed. He said that John Blevins has received written confirmation that all of the programs will continue and will be reimbursed for the expenses during the shutdown. He stated he hasn't heard about Transportation yet.

Chair Cox stated that he received a letter from Dr. Gordon Burns in July about Dr. Suzanne Irwin resignation on the Wilkes Community College (WCC) Board of Trustees. He explained that the Commissioners thought a name recommendation was coming from WCC and WCC thought a name recommendation was coming the Commissioners. He explained that Rita Woodruff said she would like to serve on this board.

Chair Cox made a motion to nominate Rita Woodruff. Commissioner Leys seconded the motion.

Chair Cox asked for additional recommendations. No one spoke.

The Board voted on the motion on the floor. Vote 5:0.

Commissioner Goudreau made a motion to appoint Rita Woodruff to the WCC Board of Trustees. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Chair Cox explained that the Smoky Mountain Center (SMC) board is struggling to fit into the 21-member board required by State law and, as of right now, Alleghany County is still on the board. He talked about the Governor's plan and the Department of Health and Human Services' plan is to get fewer and fewer LMEs in the state. He stated that more mergers are coming and provided an example of CenterPoint is publicly talking about merger. He explained that there is a request that all SMC's counties adopt a resolution asking for a delay on the requirements. He said that if this Board passes this resolution, it will be sent to the Governor, Secretary of Health and Human Services, the State House/Senate leadership and our local State delegation.

Commissioner Smith asked what happens in the future when more counties merge.

Chair Cox explained then it becomes a moot point. He talked about the requirement of 1,250,000 in the catchment area then the LME can create their own board.

County Manager Don Adams read the last paragraph of the proposed resolution.

Chair Cox and Commissioner Smith talked about right now every county has a County Commissioner representative on the SMC board. Chair Cox said he is recommending approval of this resolution.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve the resolution. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Commissioner Goudreau left the meeting at 12:05pm.

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

Being no further business, Commissioner Davis made a motion to adjourn at 12:07pm. Commissioner Leys seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

Respectfully submitted,

Attest:

Karen Evans  
Clerk to the Board

Larry Cox  
Chairman