

The Alleghany County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, January 19, 2016, 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 Mark Evans, Commissioner Bobby Irwin, County Manager Don Adams, and Clerk to the Board Karen Evans. County Attorney Donna Shumate was present but arrived late.

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

Chair Smith stated that closed session needs to be added to the agenda; NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (3)—legal, (a) (4)—economic development and (a) (6)—personnel.

Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve the amended agenda for this January 19, 2016, meeting. Commissioner Irwin seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

AGENDA

Tuesday, January 19, 2016

10:00 AM

- 10:00 Meeting Called To Order, Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation
Motion on Agenda for January 19, 2016, Meeting
- 10:05 A. Sheriff Bryan Maines and Lt. Nick Hawks
1. Governors Crime Commission Grant Applications. Action Requested – Vote to approve the grant applications.
2. Law Enforcement’s Annual Report
- 10:25 B. Rita Miller, Tax Administrator
1. December 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. December Collections Report - Monthly 2015 collection rates through November as compared to 2014 monthly collection rates. No action requested.
3. Enforced Collections Report – Summarizes enforced collections for the month of December 2015. No action requested.
4. Payment Agreement Report - List of people with payment agreements who did not make payments. No action requested.
5. Late Applications – Two late applications will be presented. Action Requested – Vote on the late applications.
6. Tax Office Budget Amendment – Budget Amendment General Fund #9 in the amount of \$7,500 to budget for additional attorney foreclosure fees. Action Requested – Vote on the General Fund Budget Amendment #9 in the amount of \$7,500.
- 10:40 C. Aaron Ray Tompkins
RE: Local Foods Promotion Program Grant in the amount of \$40,500. Action Requested – Vote on General Fund Budget Amendment # 10 in the amount of \$40,500.
- 10:50 D. Ginger Collins, Arts Guild of Alleghany Board Member
Gary Medley, Chair of Grassroots Arts Project
RE: Grassroots Art Project
- 11:00 E. Lindsay Middlesworth, Connect NC Field Director
RE: Connect NC. Ms. Middlesworth will be providing information in regards to the upcoming bond referendum.
- 11:10 F. Dare Stromer / Megan Wagoner – Blue Ridge Opportunity Commission
RE: Blue Ridge Opportunity Commissioner’s Community Services Block Grant for FY 2016-2017. Information will be presented on the Block Grant. Action Requested – Vote on the forms 210, forms 212 and their budget for the grant.
- 11:20 G. General Business
1. 2016 Joint Meeting Schedule
Joint Meeting Schedule for the County Commissioners and Sparta Town Council to hold meetings in 2016. Action Requested – Vote on the 2016 Meeting Schedule.
2. Offer to Purchase

A \$1,000 offer to purchase for three vehicles at the Transfer Facility has been made. These vehicles are a 2 ½ ton vehicle and two army pickups. Requesting the Board to declare these vehicles surplus, requesting the Board to accept the offer to purchase and requesting permission to sell the vehicles through an upset bid process. Actions Requested – Vote on the requests.

3. Hiring Policy

Request to change the current hiring policy to allow positions to be advertised in house prior to publicly advertising and for open budgeted positions to be filled without coming before the Commissioners. Action Requested – Vote on the two requests.

4. Open Deputy Position

Request to fill an open deputy position, Grade 62, \$25,622.61. Action Requested – Vote on the request.

5. Open Dispatcher Position

Request to fill an open dispatcher position, Grade 61, \$24,401.85. Action Requested – Vote on the request.

H. Public Comments—30 minutes

I. Commissioners Comments

I. 1. Closed Session—NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (3)—legal, (a) (4)—economic development and (a) (6)—personnel (added)

J. Adjourn

Lt. Nick Hawks discussed several grants that the Sheriff's Office can apply for. He listed out each grant along with their amounts and the matches for each grant; 5 radios \$15,000 with no match, technology/body armor \$24,500 with no match, 10 dual-band radios \$36,000 with no match, narcotics officers salary/equipment \$103,000 with no match and domestic violence/part-time victim advocate positions \$195,000 with an in-kind match of an existing officer's salary/benefits.

Chair Smith mentioned we currently have the last grant.

Commissioner Leys asked who the grant writer is. Lt. Hawks said he was. She said thank you. He explained that Lee Cornett helps after the grant is received.

Commissioner Davis and Lt. Hawks discussed what happens when the grant period is over including that the personnel would be a conversation for the Sheriff to have.

County Attorney Donna Shumate arrived at 10:08am.

Commissioner Evans and Lt. Hawks talked about the equipment for the 2 employees on the 4th grant, equipment for the officers, and salary for the 2 positions.

Commissioner Leys and Lt. Hawks talked about the domestic violence deputies and victim's advocate have been an asset, and they have seen improvements. She talked about the tremendous amount of work and said thank you.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve submitting these grant applications. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Sheriff Bryan Maines stated his appreciation to Nick Hawk for working on the grants. He presented the annual report for the Sheriff's Office including the number of total calls, total arrests, drug charges, civil papers served, involuntary commitments, domestic violence orders, business checks, school security checks, drug interdiction stops, assist to other departments, concealed carry permits, and concealed carry weapon funds collected.

Commissioner Irwin and Sheriff Maines talked about what occurs with business checks.

Sheriff Maines presented the information for detention including the number of inmates' booked, average daily population, average length of stay and revenues from the State Misdemeanor Program.

Commissioner Leys and Sheriff Maines talked about the total capacity at the jail.

Sheriff Maines presented the information for communications including the total calls received, daily average, and hourly average. He presented information regarding the courthouse for August through December including the numbers for foot traffic, verbal warnings issued, public assistance, calls for help, fights and security checks. He said his staff works hard.

Commissioner Irwin and Sheriff Maines talked about the employees go through the metal detectors too.

Sheriff Maines said that he was asked to be on a state-wide committee regarding church security. He stated that this will be a great tool for the churches.

Commissioner Irwin asked about the lower courtroom. Sheriff Maines said those people aren't counted in the numbers he presented.

Sheriff Maines talked about some issues that they are experiencing with staffing during court.

Commissioner Leys and Sheriff Maines talked about the locations of the deputies during courts in the courthouse.

Chair Smith and Sheriff Maines talked about there is a deputy at the front door at all times and the other one is rotated around. The County Manager clarified the reason why 2 deputies were put on staff is because it requires more hours than 1 person.

Commissioner Irwin asked where court costs goes. The County Manager explained that some of the revenues go to the County but it isn't anywhere near the costs to operate law enforcement. Commissioner Irwin and County Attorney Donna Shumate talked about the remainder of the costs go to the State for their court-related expenses.

Commissioner Leys and Sheriff Maines talked about the involuntary commitments are an unfunded mandate with mental health. They talked about the costs of concealed carry permits and permits to purchase. They further talked about around 50% of these monies stay in the County and the remainder goes to the SBI.

Sheriff Maines said the Are You OK program is up and running.

County Manager Don Adams clarified the revenue lines in the budget related to law enforcement is around \$30,000 to \$40,000.

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

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

Rita Miller presented the December real property releases.

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

Rita Miller presented the December real property refunds.

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

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

Rita Miller presented a late application for property tax exemption for religious purposes. She said the property does meet all of the requirements, and they are requesting to approve the exemption for 2016 and forward.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve the late application. Commissioner Evans seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Rita Miller clarified that the late application was received in December 2015.

Rita Miller presented a late application for present-use value for Greg Wright. She said if the application was presented in a timely manner it would have been approved because it does meet the requirements.

County Manager Don Adams discussed the letter from Louise Paglen requesting the Commissioners discuss the previous years' taxes at the next meeting on February 1.

Chair Smith and Rita Miller discussed the late application is for 2015.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve the late application. Commissioner Evans seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Rita Miller discussed the budget amendment for \$7,500 for foreclosure fees that are recouped when the properties are sold.

Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve budget amendment General Fund #9 in the amount of \$7,500. Commissioner Irwin seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Aaron Ray Tompkins talked about receiving the USDA Local Food Promotion Program grant. He explained this will allow the program coordinator to work 70-75 hours a month rather than 20-25 a month that he currently is. He explained this position will be hired by the BDC. He further explained what this person does and how it helps the local farms. He talked about the grant will allow the rental of a delivery truck and purchase of a walk-in cooler. He explained the importance of the grant. He talked about the person has been involved with expanding the markets for local farmers to sell their products. He further talked about developing the markets.

County Manager Don Adams explained the budget for this grant including \$24,500 for personnel that will be hired through the BDC, lease of a delivery truck and \$4,000 for a walk-in cooler, which will be owned by the County.

Commissioner Irwin and Aaron Ray Tompkins talked about they are working out the details on the cooler.

Commissioner Leys and Aaron Ray Tompkins talked about possible locations for the cooler. They talked about there was a match to the grant, that money was already in place.

Chair Smith, the County Manager and Aaron Ray Tompkins talked about the Food Closet conversations regarding their open cooler space and their hours of operations.

Commissioner Leys asked where people can purchase these items. Aaron Ray Tompkins explained where items can be purchased currently are at the Allegheny Meat Market and Becca's.

Chair Smith asked the County Manager to briefly describe the advantage of the BDC hiring the position. The County Manager talked about it would involve creating a job description, temporary position, continue how he has been handled of being employed through a non-profit.

Commissioner Irwin made a motion to approve budget amendment General Fund #10 in the amount of \$40,500. Commissioner Leys seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Ginger Collins said she is a member of the Arts Guild of Allegheny County and also a member of the Grassroots Arts Project. She talked about what the Grassroots Arts Project has accomplished and how many donations have been received. She talked about programs that they have been involved with and programs they are planning. She explained that the Arts Guild of Allegheny County is a local group, the Allegheny Arts Council is the State-recognized organization for Allegheny County. She continued to explain the Arts Guild cannot apply for grants/programs due to not being the recognized organizations. She said they had a meeting scheduled but cancelled due to weather, and they hope to resolve this issue soon.

County Manager Don Adams mentioned the numbers provided crosses two budget years.

Commissioner Leys and Ginger Collins discussed different ways to address this issue. The County Manager said he hopes both groups can work together and the County is supporting the Arts Guild through funding, and the Arts Guild can create a 501 (c) (3) to be the arts council for Alleghany County.

Ginger Collins explained the different areas that the State can assist in.

County Manager Don Adams explained that the Arts Guild was formed for other reasons, and has people who want to continue with the arts council functions.

Ginger Collins said that Gary Medley has done an excellent job contacting the other groups about having one group for the arts.

Chair Smith talked about working together.

Commissioner Leys said thank you for working on this.

Commissioner Irwin asked about the 2015 programming and asked what about each program was given. Ginger Collins said she can get those for him. He asked if all of these programs have been completed. She explained a couple of items that are ongoing. He asked about the supplement arts education for children for reduced or cancelled art programs. She gave examples of Libby Bagby, the shadow puppet program, and the work with the Trojans Playmakers.

Chair Smith declared a brief recess at 11:10am.

Lindsay Middlesworth, Field Director with Connect NC Committee, presented a PowerPoint presentation regarding the Connect NC Bond including information about the House Bill 943, State government infrastructure, impact on higher education, meeting a growing demand in healthcare, importance of a health science building, opportunities to educate and the 2016 calendar.

Commissioner Leys and Lindsay Middlesworth discussed how the bond is being funded by coming out of the State's general fund and debt relief. They further talked about indirectly benefiting from the monies for Appalachian State University and directly for water/sewer and Wilkes Community College. The County Manager mentioned the direct investment is Stone Mountain State Park, Wilkes Community College and Main Street's water/sewer portion.

Commissioner Leys asked about the required match. Lindsay Middlesworth explained they haven't seen the exact formula. They talked about the public safety element being the Wilkes National Guard Armory.

Commissioner Irwin said people want to know how it will benefit us. He stated that the bond benefits everyone in the State and provided examples. He mentioned at some point the Commissioners should consider a resolution of support. Lindsay Middlesworth said she will be glad to provide examples. Chair Smith said yes the Board has talked about it.

Commissioner Leys and Lindsay Middlesworth talked about the agriculture monies in the bond.

County Manager Don Adams said that he will put this on the next agenda.

Megan Wagoner, Community Service Block Grant Director, reviewed the Form 210 and Form 2012 for emergency assistance and for family self-sufficiency. She reviewed how many people they will assist with their emergency assistance and family self-sufficiency. She explained a portion of the monies provide the salaries and benefits for the staff member in Alleghany. She reviewed other areas they work with. She thanked the Commissioners for the support.

Commissioner Leys and Megan Wagoner talked about the location of the local BROCC office. They talked about Stacy Hawks and her work for BROCC. Commissioner Leys said that

childcare is becoming a problem and asked does BROC help with childcare. Megan Wagoner explained they help on occasion when it is needed and have been discussing how to deal with the decrease in childcare funding.

Chair Smith asked about the Blue Ridge Electric monies being the round-up program. Megan Wagoner said it is the round-up program. He asked is Alleghany the only one. Dare Stromer said yes because Ashe has someone else that does that. They talked about people are aware of the program.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve the community block grants applications for 2016/17. Commissioner Evans seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams presented the proposed 2016 Joint meeting schedule with the Sparta Town Council. He reviewed the dates and times.

Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve the 2016 schedule. Commissioner Evans seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams presented a handwritten letter from Kenneth Wilson about vehicles at the Transfer Facility. He said these vehicles don't have titles, opinion from the County Attorney is that the County can sell them as long as they are marked as having no titles. He said that his recommendation is to accept the offer and sell the vehicles by the upset-bid process. He explained the upset-bid process. He reiterated his recommendations.

Commissioner Irwin asked about getting a scrap metal price. County Manager Don Adams said he has not. Commissioner Evans said scrap metal is way down, and it would cost to have it hauled there.

Commissioner Evans made a motion accepting the offer to purchase and sell the vehicles through an upset bid process. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to declare these vehicles surplus. Commissioner Irwin seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams presented information about the hiring policy. He read proposed language for the Personnel Policy. He said that the County Attorney has reviewed this, and the School of Government's response was a lot of counties already do this.

County Attorney Donna Shumate said she is comfortable with this proposed change.

Commissioner Leys asked is it stated somewhere of how many weeks to advertise in house. County Manager Don Adams said no there isn't anything, intent here is allowing in house may occur, not must occur, if don't have anyone in house then go out to advertise. She talked about it is more standard to advertise in house one week. He explained when possible do it, one week is not an issue, don't make sense to open it up for people who don't have direct experience. He gave examples of how he thinks conversations will occur. She talked about the need to give at least a week because there may be more than one person interested. He said that he is asking the Board to allow him to talk to the department heads to determine how to advertise, and the current advertising policy isn't written. She said she is not saying to make it mandatory to advertise in house but if in house then advertise for a week. He talked about having flexibility to open it up or not. Commissioner Evans stated this is a more efficient way to fill the position. The County Manager said a week can be a policy outside of the written policy.

Commissioner Evans made a motion to approve making the option available to fill within by approving the proposed language for the Personnel Policy. Commissioner Irwin seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams said the second part is the filling of open budgeted positions, and today's conversation could impact the next 2 agenda items. He explained that the policy was enacted sometime around 2006 for all existing, budgeted positions must be approved by the Board prior to advertising but all new position would still come before the Board.

Commissioner Irwin made a motion to accept the Manager's request of open budgeted positions does not have to come before the Board before being filled. Commissioner Leys seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Commissioner Leys requested to have a list of the new employees to be submitted to the Commissioners.

County Manager Don Adams said he would like to start with full-time. Commissioner Leys agreed, just full-time. He explained that whenever there are personnel changes the Chair has the sign off on it too, it could be as simple as making copies of the personnel action form and putting them in the mailboxes. She said that will be great. Chair Smith said he doesn't sign anything without the signature of the Finance Officer and the County Manager.

County Manager Don Adams presented the request to fill an open deputy position at a grade 62, \$25,622.61.

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

County Manager Don Adams presented a request to fill an open dispatcher position at a grade 61, \$24,401.85.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve filling the open dispatcher position. Commissioner Evans seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams said the library project is going out to bid and will be due 2:00pm on February 16. He said he gave the Invitation to Bid to the Building Inspections office to send out to all contractors and all subcontractors. He further said that it is in the newspaper. He stated that the plans and specs are in plan rooms across the state.

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

Commissioner Irwin noted on the bond information that Jerry and Jennifer will get the information out and in the future if we could advertise it because it is important for the citizens and the state.

Commissioner Leys said she went with a group to talk to NCDOT including having conversations regarding funding for trails. She stated that she asked some questions; their obligation to replant the plants at the Higgins center, Sparta Bypass going out to bid in 2016 and Highway 21 is on target to be done by August 2016. She said she would like to invite Mike Pettyjohn and Jim Palmero to the joint meeting and stating the appreciation of the board. She further said that they have done a lot recently for Alleghany County and need to be recognized for it.

Commissioner Irwin made a motion to enter closed session under NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (3)—legal, (a) (4)—economic development and (a) (6)—personnel at 12:25pm. Commissioner Evans seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Commissioner Evans made a motion to adjourn closed session and reconvened the regular meeting at 1:17pm. Commissioner Irwin seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Chair Smith stated that no action was taken during closed session.

Being no further business, Commissioner Irwin made a motion to adjourn at 1:18pm. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Respectfully submitted,

Attest:

Karen Evans
Clerk to the Board

Tom Smith
Chair