

The Alleghany County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, September 3, 2013, 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-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.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve the agenda for this September 3, 2013, meeting. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

AGENDA  
Tuesday, September 3, 2013  
6:30 PM

- 6:30 Meeting Called To Order, Pledge of Allegiance and Silent Prayer  
Motion on Agenda for September 3, 2013, Meeting  
Motion on Minutes for July 29, 2013, Joint Meeting and August 19, 2013, Meeting
- 6:35 A. General Business
1. Wellness Program  
Discussion about wellness program incentives presented at the last meeting.  
Action Requested – Vote on the wellness program incentives.
  2. Northwestern Regional Library Board Appointment  
Pat Polley's term on the Northwestern Regional Library has expired. She is eligible to be reappointed for another six-year term. Action Requested – Vote on reappointing Pat Polley to the Northwestern Regional Library Board.
  3. Retired Law Enforcement Officer—Separation Allowance  
\$7,825 is needed to be transferred into part-time salary from full-time salary in order to pay for separation allowance to be distributed to a retired law enforcement officer as mandated by State law. Action Requested – Vote on Salary Line Item Transfer.
- B. Commissioner Comments  
C. Public Comments—30 minutes  
D. Closed Session—NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (6)—personnel  
E. Adjourn

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve the minutes from the July 29, 2013, joint meeting and the August 19, 2013, meeting. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams talked about the wellness program incentives. He explained that the wellness incentives are \$1,000 rather than \$2,000 that he mentioned at the last meeting. He talked about previous concerns about the incentives being income. He referred to IRS publication 525 and read a portion of the publication about something that can easily be converted to cash then it is considered income. He explained that the chamber gift certificates cannot be redeemed for cash. He talked about the gas cards and turning them into chamber gift certificates. He reviewed the proposed incentives for the wellness program. He talked about associating the incentives to being extra holiday bonuses. He reiterated that the gift certificates are not easily exchanged for cash.

County Attorney Donna Shumate said she feels comfortable with the Subway/lunch cards. She talked about the chamber certificates cannot be easily converted to cash so she is comfortable with that.

Commissioner Leys and County Manager Don Adams talked about these are Alleghany County Chamber of Commerce gift certificates and can only be spent locally.

County Manager Don Adams announced that the County picnic isn't going to occur this year and the money set aside for that will cover the majority of the incentives.

Commissioner Smith made a motion to accept the County Manager's recommendation. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams stated that 35 employees have already met the 125 points goal. He talked about 41 employees are participating in the get active challenge with 29 already completed it. He talked about he thinks there will be a lot of employees that gets into the 200-300 point range.

County Manager Don Adams presented a letter regarding Pat Polley's appointment to the Northwestern Regional Library board. He read the letter from John Hedrick stating that Ms. Polley is eligible to serve another six-year term and is willing to do so.

Chair Cox asked if there are any other nominations.

Commissioner Goudreau talked about he spoke to someone over the weekend that is interested in serving on this committee; Dennis Smith.

County Manager Don Adams talked about ways to proceed.

Chair Cox asked what the pleasure of the Board is.

Commissioner Smith talked about Ms. Polley is currently the chairperson.

Commissioner Leys and County Manager Don Adams talked about the recommendation from the Director and having an open slot on the WCC Board.

Chair Cox asked how many are in favor of Dennis Smith. Commissioner Goudreau stated he was.

Chair Cox asked how many are in favor of Pat Polley. Commissioner Leys, Commissioner Smith, Commissioner Davis and Chair Cox stated they were.

Commissioner Smith made a motion to reappoint Pat Polley to serve on the Northwestern Regional Library. Commissioner Leys seconded the motion. Vote 4:1 (John Goudreau).

County Manager Don Adams talked about items in the Commissioners' packets regarding the separation allowance for Carlton Edwards. He reviewed the North Carolina General Statutes (NCGS) 143-166.42 about special separation allowances for local officers. He further reviewed the benefit calculation. He talked about the line item transfer is to move the money to the correct line item. He stated that this is a partial year and next year will be the full amount. He explained the money is already in the full-time salary line item. He reiterated that it is required by State law.

Commissioner Leys and the County Manager talked about the qualifying events for the separation allowance.

Commissioner Goudreau made a motion to approve the County Manager's request for approving the separation allowance for Carlton Edwards. Commissioner Leys seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Commissioner Leys said that she enjoyed the statewide County Commissioners' conference and will report back to the Board.

Chair Cox talked about he went and picked up information about the Affordable Care Act

Chair Cox talked about information from Smoky Mountain Center's (SMC) meeting. He talked about North Carolina General Statutes (NCGS) 122C-118.1, structure of the area boards. He reviewed the NCGS regarding the composition of the LME board requiring certain professions be represented. He said this doesn't allow much representation for local elected leaders. He explained that SMC is in the process of merging with Western Highlands, which will create more local elected leaders. He talked about people who worked on getting this bill changed to maintain elected leadership on this board. He reviewed the current legislative changes; SB 208 includes creating the new County Commissioner Advisory Board. He explained the highlights of the Advisory Board according to SB 208. He further explained that the existing board will remain as it is until 30 days after the merger is completed. He said that Ashe, Alleghany, Macon, Jackson are the only County Commissioners that will be stay on the board. He talked about other counties in the northwestern part of state. He talked about the merger is mandated by the State, and they are working on it. He explained that if 1,250,000 in population are obtained in the catchment area then SMC wouldn't have to follow this 21-member board requirement. He said that it appears that it is the goal to reduce the numbers of LME's. He talked about the possibility of more mergers occurring then the 21-member board will be moot. He pointed out that the good point is Alleghany is still represented. He said that this is what he learned last Thursday at the SMC's board meeting. He explained the materials that he provided to the Commissioners. He stated that this seems to be the way mental health is going.

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

Brandon Hawks talked about public sector and private sector employees. He further talked about people who don't pay their taxes being treated differently, and he isn't talking about the elderly or people

who have had a hard time. He explained if government got out of the way then the private sector could come in. He talked about ways government has extorted money from the public. He said we cannot continue to raise taxes on the people. He talked about the need for economic growth. He further talked about education. He referred to comments made in 2008 or 2009 by a former chairman about the economy will go up. He provided examples regarding the economy. He challenged everyone to go out to find full-time employment to meet your standard of living. He talked about you can make five-year plans but the real plan is let people do what they need to do and get out of the way.

Dennis Smith referred to comments he made during the September 10 meeting about BREMCO's rate increases, and they are increasing rates again. He explained that the Board of Directors makes the decision to raise the rates, and assumes that the CEO is telling the Board of Directors what to do. He continued discussing the CEO's salary, and the CEO is the highest paid CEO in the country as far as he can tell. He talked about compensation for the Board of Directors also. He explained that in May of this year they were making a big deal about the return of capital credits. He stated that the timing of the return is interesting because it is right before their election and then they announce that the rates are going up. He read a prayer from September 7, 1774.

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

Commissioner Leys made a motion to enter into closed session under NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (6)—personnel at 7:24pm. Commissioner Goudreau seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to adjourn closed session at 8:00pm and reconvened the regular meeting. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Chair Cox stated that no actions were taken in closed session.

Being no further business, Commissioner Goudreau made a motion to adjourn at 8:02pm. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Respectfully submitted,

Attest:

Karen Evans  
Clerk to the Board

Larry Cox  
Chairman