

The Alleghany County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, September 10, 2012, at 6:30pm in the Board Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, 348 South Main Street, Sparta, North Carolina.

Present: Chair Ken Richardson, Vice-Chair Tom Smith, Commissioner Larry Cox, Commissioner John Goudreau, Commissioner Steve Roten, County Attorney Donna Shumate, County Manager Don Adams, and Clerk to the Board Karen Evans.

Chair Richardson called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone, led the Pledge of Allegiance and a silent prayer.

Chair Richardson stated that Item F. needs to be removed from the agenda.

Commissioner Cox made a motion to approve the amended agenda for this September 10, 2012, meeting. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

AGENDA
Monday, September 10, 2012
6:30 PM

- 6:30 Meeting Called To Order, Pledge of Allegiance and Silent Prayer
Motion on Agenda for September 10, 2012, meeting
Motion on Minutes for August 20, 2012, meeting
- 6:35 A. Public Comments—30 minutes
B. Janet Hampton Presentation
C. Public Hearing
RE: Property Rights Protection Ordinance Amendment
D. Public Hearing
RE: High Impact/Polluting Industries Ordinance Amendment
E. Linda Hash
RE: Farmland Preservation Grant Update and Budget Amendments
F. Laurel Springs Volunteer Fire Department Annual Report (removed)
G. Linda Edwards
RE: Ambulance Bids
H. Dennis Smith
RE: Blue Ridge Electric and the County
I. General Business
1. NCACC Legislative Goals
2. Propane Bids
3. Social Services Budget Amendment
4. Craven County Request
5. JCPC Board Appointments
6. Alleghany County Library Board Appointments
7. Tourism Development Board Appointment
J. Closed Session—NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (3)—legal
K. Adjourn

Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve the minutes for the August 20, 2012, meeting. Commissioner Cox seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Chair Richardson opened the public comments' portion of the meeting and asked for public comments. No one spoke. He closed the public comments' portion of the meeting.

Chair Richardson, on behalf of the Board, made a presentation to Janet Hampton for her dedication and years of service as an employee of Alleghany County.

Chair Richardson opened the public hearing regarding the Property Rights Protection Ordinance Amendment at 6:32pm and asked for public comments. None were received. He closed the public hearing at 6:33pm and reconvened the regular meeting.

Chair Richardson opened the public hearing regarding the High Impact/Polluting Industries Ordinance Amendment at 6:33pm and asked for public comments. None were received. He closed the public hearing at 6:34pm and reconvened the regular meeting.

County Manager Don Adams talked about the proposed change to the Property Rights Protection Ordinance of adding a use-by-right. He read the proposed text addition. He talked about the intent of the Planning Board and the current requirements of the Ordinance include if a structure isn't occupied for 6 months then the use is non-confirming. He explained the process a business goes through to open. He talked about the changes in the High Impact/Polluting Industries Ordinance. He read both proposed

changes to the Ordinance. He asked the Planner to explain why the Planning Board is looking to reduce the racetrack requirements 1,000 feet but not anything else.

Travis Dalton, Planner, talked about the racetrack isn't used everyday because it is an occasional event but a business is an impact everyday.

Chair Richardson and Travis Dalton talked about having a farmer wanting to do a racetrack but in this county it is impossible to meet the 2,000 feet requirement.

Commissioner Cox and Travis Dalton talked about it is for a mudsling instead of a racetrack and the Fairgrounds is available for them to use.

Commissioner Smith and Travis Dalton talked about this individual is going to try to hold their event at the Fairgrounds.

Chair Richardson asked for direction from the Board.

Commissioner Cox said that the change on the first ordinance is a good idea.

County Attorney Donna Shumate explained that part of the thought process of the Planning Board was if someone wants to go into business then they have to follow the Ordinance and has to wait on the public hearing before they can open their business. She used an example of old country store that hasn't been occupied for a long period of time and someone wanting to open a new country store in the same location.

Commissioner Cox said he would like to see that drawn up.

Commissioner Smith agreed that the Board needs to consider this. He said that he wouldn't be interested in making a decision right now.

Chair Richardson asked him if he was ok with Commissioner Cox's discussions. Commissioner Smith answered yes.

Chair Richardson asked if everyone else is.

Commissioner Goudreau said it's ok.

Chair Richardson talked about preparing it for the next meeting.

Chair Richardson talked about on the next one the Board would like a little more time to research.

Linda Hash said that she is happy to announce that Soil & Water has been awarded a grant in the amount of \$15,000 from the NC Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund. She explained that this grant will be used to develop a comprehensive farmland protection plan. She talked about the commitments for the local contributions making the grant's total value of \$25,826. She further talked about forming a committee of people who have a vested interest in agriculture. She explained that the committee will guide us through the plan, first meeting went well, looking to get community input for the plan. She further explained that this plan will contain a description of the existing agricultural activities, existing challenges, opportunities for maintaining farms, plans to maintain a viable agricultural community and schedule for implementing the plan with identification of possible funding for the long-term support of the plan. She explained that they hope to have the plan's final draft completed in a year. She further explained that they will be bringing draft plans to the Commissioners during the year. She talked about once this plan is in place, they can apply for additional monies without any required match. She asked the Board to approve the amendments in the packets.

County Manager Don Adams presented budget amendment General Fund #2 in the amount of \$1,000 and budget amendment Soil & Water #1 in the amount of \$17,500 and explained both amendments including the \$1,000 was previously committed by the Commissioners and the \$17,500 puts the grant in place.

Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve budget amendment General Fund #2 in the amount of \$1,000. Commissioner Roten seconded the motion.

Commissioner Goudreau and Linda Hash talked about easements and development conservations. She provided some examples. She talked about the need for input from everyone on the plan.

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

Commissioner Roten made a motion to approve budget amendment Soil & Water Fund #1 in the amount of \$17,500. Commissioner Cox seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Linda Edwards provided papers to the Board about 2012 ambulance bids. She explained their specs were for a 2012 Chevrolet 3500 4x4 diesel and gas. She talked about the bids received from Northwestern Emergency Vehicles and Southeastern Specialty Vehicles. She reviewed the conversion warranty from each company, body warranty, paint warranty and electrical warranty. She stated their recommendation is to go with Northwestern Emergency Vehicles because of the warranty differences. She talked about the possibilities of remounting the box later, which saves a lot of money.

County Manager Don Adams and Linda Edwards talked about the body and electrical warranties transfer over. He further talked about this pretty well commits to remounting if purchase from Northwestern especially since the body and electrical warranties transfers over.

Linda Edwards talked about they have had discussions about diesel versus gas. She explained their research.

Chair Richardson and Linda Edwards talked about we have remounted in the past and the average life on a box is 10-15 years.

Commissioner Smith and Linda Edwards talked about the County has done business with both companies.

Commissioner Goudreau and Linda Edwards talked about EMS specified Chevrolet, and their experience is Chevrolet last better for their line of work.

Commissioner Cox and Linda Edwards talked about how many miles a year ambulances travel. She used the example of the unit that is proposed to be replaced is 2006 and has 160,000 miles.

Commissioner Roten and Linda Edwards talked about the box is 10-15 years old since it is a remount.

Commissioner Roten and County Manager Don Adams talked about how to surplus this vehicle. The County Manager explained that it will take 90-120days to get the new truck so he can't ask people for a price on the vehicle right now because it will have more miles in that timeframe. They talked about getting local bids and a trade-in price.

Commissioner Cox and Linda Edwards talked about the current box isn't under warranty anymore.

Chair Richardson asked for direction from the Board.

Linda Edwards explained the reason for bidding both; diesel and gas.

County Manager Don Adams talked about the Shift Supervisors are torn between the two; one has better torque, and the fuel mileage differences. He explained that two of the Shift Supervisors are leaning towards diesel because of the amount of idle time and the amount of fuel used during idle time.

Chair Richardson asked the Board if there is any problem accepting the bid with Northwestern. No one spoke

Chair Richardson asked about gas versus diesel.

Commissioner Roten said personally he would go with diesel and provided reasons why.

Commissioner Smith and Linda Edwards talked about all of the ambulances are currently diesel.

Commissioner Roten made a motion to award the bid to Northwestern for a diesel ambulance. Commissioner Cox seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Dennis Smith came before the Board to talk about BREMCO and in October the power bills are increasing 2.5%. He quoted Doug Johnson's information about the rate increase. He talked about CEO Doug Johnson's salary of \$748,255. He continued talking about while people struggle to pay their bills the CEO saw his income increase by \$219,261. He quoted several other BREMCO salaries. He talked about the 20 electric cooperatives in the state and quoted some of their slogans. He further talked about things that Blue Ridge does for the public to show that they are a caring company. He used an example of the monthly publication that goes out. He described an incident where Blue Ridge tore down a single phase line to put a 3 phase line on this property, and he opposed the new line as a matter of principal. He explained that he asked Blue Ridge for several documents and as an owner of the coop he should be able to see the information but the CEO said no. He explained how they tried to destroy a person, and asked

what else is going on in Lenoir. He explained his research of capital credits. He continued talking about capital credits and ownership of the coops. He stated that another concern is the financial information that is released to the members. He talked about equity increase. He further talked about Blue Ridge's total net assets. He reminded everyone to remember that BREMCO is a not for profit company. He talked about the audit language about the assets have been pledged. He talked about monies that BREMCO has borrowed. He talked about the number of customers, employees and amount of CEO compensation. He compared BREMCO's statistics to other coops in the state and said as far as he can tell BREMCO is the highest paid. He talked about the BREMCO facilities and the condition of the buildings. He talked about the single phase that serves the house he grew up in which is in another state is still there and has been for over 70 years. He talked about BREMCO said they had to upgrade the line to provide reliable service. He referred to a report prepared about costs to build power lines and gave examples. He talked about in theory BREMCO is self regulating. He stated that he personally wrote to all 12 directors asking for help, and no one acknowledged his letters. He talked about the election of the BREMCO board and their elections from now to 2000 including 5 directors have retired since 2000, named them and their years of services, 3 directors died while in office and their years of service. He further talked about the amount the board of directors are paid. He talked about Blue Ridge has proven to be extravagant, and they will destroy any member that stands in their way. He said that \$494,692 is what the County and the schools paid for electricity last year and the Commissioners gave money to the Hospital for it to be applied to their electric. He asked the Commissioners to join with the other counties to oppose the rate increase. He talked about their press release didn't show any proof of the need for the increase. He talked about as our county representatives the Commissioners can ask for that information. He further talked about it would be nice if they cut out extravagates and refund the \$2,000,000. He asked the Commissioners to oppose Blue Ridge Electric's rate increase. He read a prayer offered before the US Senate.

County Manager Don Adams talked about the legislative goals for NCACC. He summarized previous conversations by the Board. He reviewed the goal title and goal description for the 5 goals. (See attached).

Chair Richardson asked for comments from the Board about the proposed goals. No one spoke.

County Manager Don Adams provided an update on the Medicaid issue. He explained that he is requesting to write a letter to the Department of Health and Human Service (DHHS), Department of Transportation (DOT) and our representatives. He said that his request is to put the letter on the next agenda. He read the last page of the letter. He reviewed the chart about coordination. He provided an example of what will happen without the monies in Alleghany County. He further provided an example of how this will impact Ashe County. He explained that this will have a significant impact on ROAP grant funds.

Chair Richardson talked about we may not be able to get the majority of the other counties to approve this but this letter will let the secretaries and legislators know how this impacts us.

County Manager Don Adams agreed and said that's the point. He talked about DHHS will not share information. He further talked about we have to charge what it costs us to provide services, and the impacts if we lose Medicaid.

Chair Richardson recommended that the Commissioners let the County Manager move on with this because the quicker we get it in their hands, the better.

County Manager Don Adams read the wording of the goal. He explained that basically it gives the option to do it if it is cheaper.

Chair Richardson asked if anyone has any problem with submitting goal #1. The Commissioners said no.

Chair Richardson asked the Board about holding the letter until next meeting or move on it now. Commissioner Goudreau said this is a 4-page letter so he would like time to review the letter, and we are only putting it off one week.

County Manager Don Adams passed out the propane contract. He explained that the County went out to bid for propane on a lock-in rate. He talked about Blue Ridge Energies agreed to extend the lock-in rate until August 31, 2013. He reviewed the bids; Ferrell Gas \$1.65, Independence Oil \$1.349, G&B Energy \$1.289, Blue Ridge Energies \$1.259. He explained that this locks in the rates through the winter months. He stated that his recommendation is to award the bid to Blue Ridge Energies.

Commissioner Roten made a motion to award to the low bidder; Blue Ridge Energies. Commissioner Cox seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams presented budget amendment General Fund #1 in the amount of \$90,111 for child daycare monies. He explained that this is pass-through monies from the State.

Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve budget amendment General Fund #1 in the amount of \$90,111. Commissioner Cox seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams explained that the next topic is a letter written to Chair Richardson about Craven County's 300th anniversary. He asked if the Chair wants him to read the letter.

Chair Richardson said that he just wanted to make every Commissioner aware of it. He further said that it is up to the Board to take action or not. He talked about they invited everyone to their events.

Commissioner Cox talked about sending them a letter. Chair Richardson agreed and said for all of the Commissioners to sign it.

County Manager Don Adams presented a letter from the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) requesting that Susie Gambill, Bob Lane and Ben Huysman be appointed to the Council. He stated that these are for a 2-year term.

Commissioner Goudreau made a motion to approve the recommendation of appointments to the JCPC. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams presented a letter from the Local Library Board requesting that Elaine Reales, Joyce Speas and Carolyn Sprinkle be appointed to the Library Board replacing Sandy Herndon, B.J. Edwards, and Bob Black.

Commissioner Goudreau made a motion to approve the recommendation of appointments to the Local Library Board. Commissioner Cox seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams submitted a letter from Commissioner Goudreau stating that he has to resign from the Tourism Development Authority (TDA) and recommends Amy Lucas to be appointed as his replacement.

Commissioner Goudreau talked about she was part of original names submitted for the TDA.

Chair Richardson stated that the recommendation is for her to fill Commissioner Goudreau's slot.

Commissioner Cox and Commissioner Goudreau talked about there is not a requirement that one member has to be a County Commissioner.

Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve the request. Commissioner Cox seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Commissioner Goudreau made a motion to enter into closed session at 8:05pm under NCGS 143.318.11 (a) (3)—legal. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Commissioner Goudreau made a motion to adjourn closed session at 8:06pm and reconvene the regular meeting. Commissioner Cox seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Chair Richardson stated that no decisions were made during closed session.

Being no further business, Commissioner Goudreau made a motion to adjourn at 8:06pm. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Evans
Clerk to the Board

Attest:

Ken Richardson
Chairman