

The Alleghany County Board of Commissioners and Sparta Town Council held a joint meeting on Monday, January 30, 2006, at 7:00pm in the Conference Room of the County Office Building, 90 South Main Street, Sparta, NC.

Present: Chair Eldon Edwards, Vice-Chair Warren Taylor, Commissioner Sandy Carter Herndon, Commissioner Ken Richardson, Mayor John Miller, Town Council Members Robert Andrews, John Brady, Agnes Joines, Mike Parlier, Lois Sheets, County Manager Don Adams, Town Manager Bryan Edwards and County Clerk to the Board Karen Evans.

Chair Eldon Edwards called the meeting to order for the County at 7:00pm.

Commissioner Warren Taylor made a motion to approve the agenda for this January 30, 2006, meeting. Commissioner Sandy Carter Herndon seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

Commissioner Sandy Carter Herndon made a motion to approve the minutes for the October 31, 2005, joint meeting. Commissioner Warren Taylor seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

Mayor John Miller called the meeting to order for the Town at 7:00pm.

Robert Andrews made a motion to approve the agenda for this January 30, 2006, meeting and the October 31, 2005, joint meeting minutes. John Brady seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Joint County/Town Meeting  
January 30, 2006  
Agenda

7:00pm      Meeting Called to Order  
              Motion on Agenda  
              Motion on Minutes  
              County/Town Business  
              1. Regional Tourism Initiative  
              2. Water Authority Update  
              3. Joint County/Town Property Tax Collections  
              4. Ferguson Group  
              5. General Discussions  
              6. Volunteer Recognition  
              7. Adjourn

County Manager Don Adams explained the new regional tourism initiative involving Alleghany, Stokes, Surry, Wilkes and Yadkin counties in North Carolina and Carroll, Grayson and Patrick counties in Virginia. He further explained the preliminary organizational goals, preliminary program goals and priority themes.

Chair Eldon Edwards and Mayor John Miller commented how this sounds like a good idea, fits in with the county activities and having more in common with the counties involved in the tourism initiative.

County Manager Don Adams stated that they are in the beginning stages with several details to be worked out. He further stated that presentations will be made to both boards at a later date and the need for start-up monies. He informed everyone that the next discussions will be on the organizational structure and the start-up monies.

County Manager Don Adams, Mayor John Miller and Commissioner Sandy Carter Herndon discussed this being similar to High Country Host.

Commissioner Warren Taylor stated that this is a valuable initiative and areas cannot be over marketed.

Commissioner Sandy Carter Herndon said she is delighted to see the ideas under priority themes, and everyone should express pride in the heritage of this area.

County Manager Don Adams stated that Alleghany County will host the next meeting on March 31 at the Blue Ridge BDC. He explained that Surry County started this initiative and is providing the financing so far. He further explained that the initiative is being facilitated by David Long.

County Manager Don Adams and Town Manager Bryan Edwards updated everyone on the Virginia/Carolina Water Authority hiring an engineering group and moving forward on the project.

Commissioner Ken Richardson asked about opposition to the project. Town Manager Bryan Edwards stated that comments have been more inquiring questions instead of complaints. He gave examples of some of the questions dealing with the project's location and visible aspects of the water plant.

Mayor John Miller stated that he is amazed with the progress.

Chair Eldon Edwards stated that this is a positive thing for the Town of Sparta and Alleghany County for the future.

Commissioner Sandy Carter Herndon and Town Manager Bryan Edwards discussed studies being completed concerning the impact the water plant will have on the river and the permitting process.

County Manager Don Adams updated everyone on the joint tax collections concept. He explained that the initial meeting has been held and the questions that came from that meeting. He further explained that this will be like a one-stop taxpaying service to town residents. He told them how town residents must go to the tax office and the town office to get all of their property taxes paid. He explained that there are a series of things that would have to be completed in order to put this in place. He talked about the County law that requires all taxes must be paid before a deed can be transferred, and the Town doesn't have that law but they could look into passing it.

Commissioner Sandy Carter Herndon and County Manager Don Adams discussed software changes that may be needed for the joint tax collections and refunds/releases being the most complicated part. He mentioned ideas for handling refunds/releases and other things that will need to be addressed including returned checks. He stated that the timing on combining collections is the billing for January 1, 2007.

Mayor John Miller said that this will be a great service to the Town. He asked if other towns/counties have combined collections.

County Manager Don Adams stated that they have copies of other towns/counties agreements and are using them as guidelines. He explained the reasons to put this in place January 1, 2007.

Commissioner Ken Richardson asked how combining collections will affect the Board of Equalization and Review (E&R).

County Manager Don Adams stated that it will not affect the Board of E&R. Town Manager Bryan Edwards stated that they have no basis to go against the Board of E&R or the County Commissioners values. He stated their appreciation to Don Adams and the Tax Office for working on this project.

Town Manager Bryan Edwards and Robert Andrews discussed how property is billed if part of the land is in the town limits and part is not.

County Manager Don Adams reminded everyone of things that town citizens are accustomed to now

that will change. He gave an example of when the delinquent taxes are listed in the newspaper.

Debbie Bryant and Leslie Mazingo with the Ferguson Group came before the group to discuss their activities during 2005. They explained that our congressional delegation deserves all of the credit because of how hard they worked for Alleghany County. Debbie Bryant explained a handout describing the five projects that they worked on and the accomplishments on those projects being \$500,000 for the Sparta Teapot Museum and \$1,000,000 for the Virginia/Carolina Water Authority. She further explained why other projects didn't receive funding.

Chair Eldon Edwards and Debbie Bryant discussed two projects that didn't receive funding and whether those projects would be eligible for funding this year. Debbie Bryant explained that they will be working with the county representatives to see what projects will be considered this year. County Manager Don Adams talked about the Courthouse is ineligible because construction has begun. He further talked about two areas of consideration for this funding year; water authority and roads.

Commissioner Sandy Carter Herndon stated her appreciation for the efforts and time spent on Alleghany County's behalf.

Mayor John Miller talked about the need to keep this relationship going.

Mayor John Miller stated that Charity Gambill called him about a new group buying the pipe factory, and she told him that the Town and County could call the new company to welcome them to Alleghany County. He suggested that the County Manager, Town Manager and he go visit them later this week.

Mayor John Miller talked about the relationship between the Board of Commissioners and Town Council. He stated he is very proud of the relationship and everyone should be also. Chair Eldon Edwards agreed.

Robert Andrews talked about this was a good meeting with good information provided.

Mike Parlier and Agnes Joines agreed.

Lois Sheets stated that she would like to reiterate the Mayor's comments about the relationship between the two boards.

John Brady talked about working together pays off, and he is excited that good things are happening.

Commissioner Ken Richardson talked about Alleghany County is retaining the Tier 1 status and the meaning of the status for employers. He asked if the tax credits could apply to travel and tourism jobs created.

County Manager Don Adams explained that it is strictly for manufacturing jobs.

Commissioner Ken Richardson talked being the only state that requires counties to pay a portion of the Medicaid expenses. He explained that the State is considering asking the counties to give up Article 39 sales tax in place of the Medicaid costs. He further explained how that could impact us. He said that the State will allow the counties to decide to add another 1¢ sales tax. He informed everyone that Medicaid is the most expensive budget item in 50 counties.

Commissioner Sandy Carter Herndon thanked the Town Council for meeting with the Commissioners. She stated that this is a prime example of why people come to Alleghany County.

Commissioner Warren Taylor stated that we are fortunate to have local people who work so hard for Alleghany County; Don Adams, Bryan Edwards, Patrick Woodie, Bob Bamberg, Jonathan Halsey. He thanked them for their work.

Chair Eldon Edwards reiterated the Medicaid concerns. He talked about the roads situation in Alleghany County. He thanked the Mayor and Town Council for attending this meeting. He also thanked Bryan Edwards and Don Adams for the tremendous jobs they do for the town and county.

Bob Bamberg gave everyone an update on volunteer recognition for the North Carolina Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service. He recognized the following individuals who has received this award; Mary Ruth Sezter, Tom Burleson, Stellena Caudill, Pat Polley and Tom Dorsett.

Being no further county business, Commissioner Warren Taylor made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:15pm. Commissioner Sandy Carter Herndon seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

Being no further town business, John Brady made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:15pm. Robert Andrews seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Evans  
Clerk to the Board

ATTEST:

Eldon Edwards  
Chairman