

The Alleghany County Board of Commissioners held a special session on Friday, February 25, 2011, at 9:00am in the Conference Room of the Blue Ridge Business Development Center, 115 Atwood Street, Sparta, North Carolina. The purpose of this session was to hold a retreat.

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

The County Manager started the meeting and explained how he thinks this meeting could proceed including the topics of economic development, education and recreation/youth opportunities.

The Board started discussing the first topic of economic development including looking at the positive things occurring, doing something to keep the young people from leaving the county, small businesses are struggling and items that the BDC helps businesses with.

County Manager Don Adams explained a chart showing how tourism, workforce development, industrial development, quality of life, small business and education are all linked together for economic development. He asked the Commissioners what role does Alleghany County or the Board of Commissioners have and what role does the Board want.

The Board continued talking about looking at things that are currently working and aren't working. They discussed the natural beauty of the county, getting people to come to Alleghany County and the need to set the climate/environment to create economic development.

The County Manager talked about different types of tourists being people who are coming for a day and people who are coming for a weekend. He explained how occupancy tax works.

The Board talked about tourism and developing ideas/events to draw people to visit Alleghany County.

The County Manager provided sales tax charts for 2009/10.

The Commissioners discussed economic development, merchants group and looking at the current resources available. They further discussed a couple of major businesses that are expanding in Ashe and Wilkes counties.

County Manager Don Adams talked about industrial development and the types of things that industries look for in selecting a location for expansion.

A brief recess was held at 10:30am.

The Board talked about remembering the farming community and the other agriculture items rather than Christmas trees and cows. They discussed ways to try to assist.

County Manager Don Adams talked about small businesses and used an example of starting a small business. He further talked about this is the most difficult area of economic development because it covers such a wide variety of areas/topics. He updated the Board on the resources currently available to help small businesses.

The Board talked about the chart that the County Manager created, and the chart is a good footprint for economic development. They discussed about the need for more youth opportunities and how the youth are having problems with prescription drugs. They further discussed different ideas and the types of services/activities already available.

The County Manager talked about breaking it into different sections with one section being social issues and the different age brackets of children. He explained items that are currently available and items that are forthcoming to assist youth.

The County Manager summarized today's meeting and said he will get a list of things that he has heard in the event the Board chooses to proceed with more meetings. He said that the next meeting would be about education since there wasn't enough time at this meeting.

The Commissioners talked about it would be helpful for the Board to provide feedback to the County Manager. They discussed topics for different meetings; budget, education, other general topics. They talked about how to proceed and then continue with this process.

The meeting was concluded at noon.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Evans
Clerk to the Board

Attest:

Ken Richardson
Chairman