

The Alleghany County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, March 2, 2015, at 6:30pm in the Board Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, 348 South Main Street, Sparta, North Carolina.

Present: Chair Tom Smith, Commissioner Larry Davis, Commissioner Mark Evans, Commissioner Bobby Irwin, County Attorney Donna Shumate, County Manager Don Adams, and Clerk to the Board Karen Evans. Vice-Chair Karen Leys was absent.

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

Chair Smith said that E and F needs to be deleted from the agenda.

Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve the amended agenda for this February 2, 2015, meeting. Commissioner Evans seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

AGENDA
Monday, March 2, 2015
6:30 PM

- 6:30 Meeting Called To Order, Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation
Motion on Agenda for March 2, 2015 Meeting
Motion on Minutes for February 16, 2015, Meeting
- 6:35 A. Travis Dalton – Planner
1. Present information regarding Property Rights Protection Ordinance wording change from 4/5 vote to 3/5 vote to match State law.
 2. Public Hearing – Chairman open public hearing to receive comments regarding the proposed Ordinance wording change. Chairman close public hearing after receiving comments.
 3. Action Requested – Vote on the proposed Ordinance wording change.
 4. Planning Board Appointments — 2 applicants to be considered for the Planning Board. Action Requested – Appoint 1 applicant as a Planning Board member for a 3-year term and appoint the 2nd applicant as an alternate on the Planning Board.
- 6:45 B. Rita Miller – Tax Administrator
RE: Reappointment of Tax Assessor. Action Requested – Reappoint Rita Miller as the Tax Assessor for 2 or 4 years.
- 6:55 C. Mark Browder – Mark III Brokerage
RE: 2015/16 Health Insurance Renewals. Action Requested – Vote on the 2015/16 Renewal.
- 7:10 D. Alleghany Community Television Annual Report
- 7:25 E. Alleghany Group Homes Annual Report (deleted)
- 7:40 F. Alleghany County Board of Education Annual Report (deleted)
- G. General Business
1. Joint Meeting with Board of Education
Joint Meeting with Board of Education will be on Wednesday, March 4, 2015, at 6:30pm beginning in the Sparta Elementary School's Cafeteria. No action requested.
 2. Budget Amendment for Public Assistance
Budget Amendment General Fund #14 in the amount of \$5,026 for public assistance for the low income energy assistance program. This is 100% federal monies.
Action Requested – Vote on the Budget Amendment General Fund #14.
 3. Veterans Memorial Park Memorial Design Committee Appointments
Names will be presented at the meeting to be considered. Action Requested – Vote on the committee members.
 4. Roaring Gap Deputies
Continue conversations about Roaring Gap Deputies. Action Requested – Provide guidance on how to proceed with current negotiations regarding reimbursements for Roaring Gap Deputies.

- H. Public Comments—30 minutes
- I. Commissioners Comments
- J. Adjourn

Commissioner Evans made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 16, 2015, meeting. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

Travis Dalton, Planner, came before the Board to present information about an amendment to the Property Rights Protection Ordinance. He read the proposed language change regarding the required vote.

Commissioner Irwin said this just brings us in with State law. Chair Smith agreed.

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

Commissioner Irwin made a motion to approve the Ordinance amendment. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

Travis Dalton presented two Planning Board applications for the vacant Cherry Lane slot; Casey Jones and Michael McCann.

County Manager Don Adams and Travis Dalton discussed David Isner is an alternate for the Planning Board currently and doesn't want to continue. The County Manager explained that the action requested is to appoint one person to fill the vacancy and appoint the other one as an alternate.

Chair Smith and Travis Dalton talked about conversations with both applicants that they are fine to be an alternate.

Chair Smith made a motion to accept Mike McCann as the Planning Board member and Casey Jones as the alternate. Commissioner Evans seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

Rita Miller, Tax Administrator, came before the Board to discuss her appointment as the Tax Assessor on March 7, 2011, and she must be reappointed for an additional two or four years.

Commissioner Irwin made a motion to reappoint Rita Miller for an additional four-year term as the Tax Assessor. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

Mark Browder presented a PowerPoint presentation regarding the County's 2015/16 medical plan renewal and future opportunities.

County Manager Don Adams explained the rates and the amount of savings annually.

The County Manager and Mark Browder discussed the actual initial renewal was -0.1%. The County Manager explained that the total renewal rate is -5.1% because of the excellent work of the employees for obtaining 100% on the Healthy Outcomes program and the wellness committee.

Mark Browder continued to present the PowerPoint presentation including a recommendation of ending post-65 retiree coverage for new hires.

Commissioner Irwin and the County Manager talked about the action regarding post-65 coverage ending would only be for new hires after it is approved.

Mark Browder continued to present the PowerPoint presentation including a recommendation of an opportunity to provide coverage that is equal to, or better than, the current medical plan for current post-65 retirees with a group Medicare advantage program.

Chair Smith and Mark Browder talked about the action being requested tonight is regarding the 2015/16 renewal plan. County Manager Don Adams explained that the action requested is to act on the renewal of the -5.1% medical plan for 2015/16, and the other items are to consider ending retiree coverage for new hires, which could come back soon for discussions. The County Manager further explained the second conversation about changing the current post-65 benefits requires more research, and he isn't sure when those discussions will occur, and today's presentation was just letting you know that Mark Browder is exploring it.

Commissioner Irwin and County Manager Don Adams talked about there have been success in other counties doing this. The County Manager said we are currently paying the full monthly insurance rate for an enhanced drug card for retirees. He explained that all retirees when they reach age 65, Medicare becomes primary then they get an enhanced drug card, and looking at purchasing a higher level supplement to offer better benefits. Commissioner Irwin asked about a timeframe for the second scenario. Mark Browder answered probably over the summer. Commissioner Irwin said that the first scenario is an easier one to accomplish. The County Manager talked about the need to research the second one and get a legal opinion on how to proceed forward.

Commissioner Irwin said it is strange to have a reduction in the costs.

County Manager Don Adams stated that the intention is not to hurt the retirees and their coverage. He said that this does not impact current employees. He explained the retiree insurance benefits.

Commissioner Evans said he looks forward to hearing back about these two areas.

Commissioner Evans made a motion to approve the 2015/16 medical insurance renewals. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

Chair Smith stated his appreciation for all of the County employees for their hard work on this.

Charlie Scott provided the annual report for Allegheny Community Television including a brief history of the being a PEG (public, education, government) channel. He explained how they are funded through State franchise fees. He further explained they are regional now by being in five counties. He talked about adding other County Commissioners' meetings on the channel, too. He explained the additional service they provide by chartering each County Commissioners' meeting through a contract with Allegheny County. He talked about he works with Allegheny High School and has interns working with him in the industry. He said that they are working on adding an additional channel to be regional; education.

Commissioner Irwin and Charlie Scott talked about the number of interns that he has during a year. They talked about all of this is done out of the studio at the BDC building.

Chair Smith and Charlie Scott talked about they get North Carolina Association of County Commissioners' programming to air, also. Charlie Scott further talked about working on getting information from the State government.

County Manager Don Adams reminded everyone of the joint meeting with the Board of Education on Wednesday, March 4 at 6:30pm beginning in the Sparta School cafeteria.

County Manager Don Adams presented budget amendment General Fund #14 in the amount of \$5,026 for additional public assistance monies. He stated that this does not involve any County monies.

Commissioner Irwin made a motion to approve budget amendment General Fund #14 in the amount of \$5,026. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

County Manager Don Adams presented information about forming a Veterans Memorial Park memorial design committee. He discussed letters he sent to the VFW, Marine Corp League, and American Legion inviting a representative from each of these groups to serve on this committee. He talked about the goals for the committee; design the memorials and the

layout on the property, have the design/layout approved by the Commissioners, initiate and execute fundraising efforts for the memorials. He explained he has received the recommended appointees; Lonnie Joines-VFW, Robert Overbay- Marine Corp League, Randy Miles- American League. He stated that Jeremiah Hampton would serve as staff for this group. He explained that he and Jeremiah Hampton talked about including veterans who aren't part of these groups and maybe having representatives from the more recent conflicts like Operation Enduring Freedom and the Gulf War. He said he has some names if the Board wants to go this way.

Chair Smith said he wouldn't have a problem including some from the recent conflicts.

Commissioner Evans said he agrees with the Chair and giving the younger ones an opportunity.

Commissioner Irwin said he would like to see people represented for all of the wars as far back as we can go, and asking for help designing.

County Manager Don Adams said this can be very grand and like Commissioner Irwin is describing. He talked about the other names are Heath Edwards, who served in the Marines during Operation Enduring Freedom, and Sam Nichols, who served in the Army during the Gulf War.

Chair Smith reiterated the action before the Commissioners tonight is to approve these five people along with Jeremiah Hampton as staff to the committee.

Commissioner Irwin and County Manager Don Adams talked about adding a few more people if they come forward. County Manager Don Adams explained that he would refer them to the committee for a recommendation.

Commissioner Evans made a motion to appoint Lonnie Joines, Robert Overbay, Randy Miles, Heath Edwards, Sam Nichols and Jeremiah Hampton to serve on this committee. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

County Manager Don Adams explained in regards to the Roaring Gap deputies' discussions he has provided a new spreadsheet that takes into consideration the actual health insurance rates for next year. He further explained the reduced overall health insurance costs for this employee. He said that he and the County Attorney are looking for guidance on how to proceed.

Chair Smith stated that conversations have been ongoing and the need to move on this in the near future. He said he is looking to vote on this at the next meeting, which is on the 16th.

Commissioner Irwin and County Manager Don Adams talked about the negotiations on the County Manager side is done and now the County Manager is just waiting on direction from the Board on how to proceed. Commissioner Irwin said he has a couple of questions if the Commissioners are in that big of a hurry. The County Manager explained the position won't be filled until this is done. Commissioner Evans asked if there is any pressure to fill it. The County Manager said they are asking when they can fill the position and explained his response to them after the last meeting including a contract would have to come back before the Board as the final vote on the matter.

Commissioner Evans asked what does it cost the County for a deputy for a year and what is the likelihood of us having to add another deputy because we have to serve that area. He said there is probably more to it than what we are seeing on paper. He talked about with them paying as much as they are, it will save the County money. County Manager Don Adams said it would be a question to the Sheriff what would be the long-term impacts without those two deputies. Commissioner Evans agreed and added what does a deputy cost including equipment, and the insurance presentation about the post-65 retirees' impact would be less for the County at that point. Commissioner Evans asked about checking with those counties because that action would reduce the costs. County Manager Don Adams explained the complicated part is the legal opinion in regards to what can and cannot be done. The County

Manager said that we can't really compare counties because it depends upon the language of when employees were hired and talked about directing the County Attorney to get the legal opinion. He reiterated that the intentions are to not hurt the employees. Commissioner Evans said he is not in favor of doing anything to reduce their benefits. He further said that he liked possibly increasing their benefits while saving money.

County Manager Don Adams said the questions to Sheriff's office are if the Roaring Gap deputies are removed what would the impact be to service that area and would the long term need be adding deputies.

Commissioner Evans said he personally wouldn't mind the Sheriff coming to talk to us.

County Attorney Donna Shumate said the Roaring Gap deputies' conversation is actually two separate questions; current retiree and current employee. She stated that it will need to be two separate contracts.

County Manager Don Adams talked about currently there is no written agreement and there is some long-term value of having something written. He reiterated there is some value of someone signing off on the long-term expense.

Commissioner Evans talked about this agreement goes to age 65, and the County has to cover insurance costs after 65, and how the after age 65 insurance conversation would impact the first agreement. He said that the proposed costs to the County is \$46,942 to age 65. He stated he would like to see what the projected costs are after age 65. County Manager Don Adams talked about the insurance conversation could impact long-term costs.

Commissioner Irwin and Chair Smith talked about when Chair Smith intends to call for a vote.

County Manager Don Adams explained that they have paid for one month of the retiree's costs and Roaring Gap may hold off reimbursements until these conversations are settled.

Commissioner Irwin asked is Sheriff Maines coming to answer all of the questions that may come up. County Manager Don Adams said he can invite the Sheriff and explained his previous conversations with the Sheriff. Commissioner Irwin said he would like to hear from Sheriff Maines in two weeks. Commissioner Davis said have him here and vote then. Commissioner Evans said he believes he could. Commissioner Irwin asked is this conversation going to create more deputies.

Chair Smith asked the County Manager to follow up with the Sheriff. County Manager reviewed questions for the Sheriff and begin the legal opinion process on the post 65 topic.

Commissioner Evans said he realizes that can take longer but just an estimate for the post-65 topic will help. County Manager Don Adams reviewed how he will add the additional information to the spreadsheet.

Commissioner Irwin and Chair Smith talked about when to vote on this matter.

County Manager Don Adams stated that the agenda packets are now online on the home page.

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

Commissioner Evans wished Commissioner Leys and her family luck, hopes everything goes well, and keeping them in our prayers.

Commissioner Irwin thanked NCDOT for their work on the roads, Town employees and County employees for their work on the sidewalks and parking lots during the bad weather. He explained he talked to the County Manager about getting in the technology age. He reminded everyone that he asked a few months ago about cleaning up the county, and read a portion in

the County Commissioners Handbook about the Commissioners can appoint a Community Appearance Board and would like to ask the County Manager to look in to this to see what can be done if it is alright with the Board. He said he is concerned about Karen's family and asked someone to let them know if news is received.

Being no further business, Commissioner Evans made a motion to adjourn at 7:53pm. Commissioner Irwin seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

Respectfully submitted,

Attest:

Karen Evans
Clerk to the Board

Tom Smith
Chair