



The Alleghany County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, February 15th, 2021 at 10:00 am in the Board Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, 348 South Main Street, Sparta, North Carolina.

Present: Chair Bill Osborne, Commissioner Mark Evans, Commissioner Bobby Irwin, Commissioner Mechelle Luffman, Commissioner John Irwin, County Attorney, Heather Klein and Clerk to the Board Drew Temple.

Commissioner Mechelle Luffman made a motion to approve the agenda.  
Commissioner John Irwin seconded. Vote 5:0.

## AGENDA

Monday February 15, 2021

10:00 am

- 10:00 Meeting called to order  
Pledge of Allegiance and invocation  
Approval of agenda  
Motion on minutes from 1/19, 1/25, 1/28, 2/1 work session, 2/1  
(pages 1-14)
- A. 10:05 **Public Comments:** Citizens are encouraged to comment at this time on any item(s) requiring the attention of the Commissioners. Guidelines for public comment are posted in the meeting room; please use the sign-up sheet provided.
- B. 10:20 **Presentations to the Board**
- i. Earthquake update – Daniel Roten, Dr. Kenneth Taylor
  - ii. Sheriff’s Department end of year update – Nick Hawks
  - iii. Financial update – April Hamm, Finance Officer
  - iv. Facilities update – David Spicer, Public Works Director
  - v. Ricky Brown, Bryan Edwards, Zack Barricklow – new Chamber organization
- C. 10:40 **General Business**
- a. Golden Leaf grant application Resolution of Support (page 15)
  - b. Line-item transfer request for funds for salaries and OT – Alleghany County EMS, Linda Edwards (page 16)
  - c. Line-item transfer request for funds for EMS equipment – Alleghany County EMS, Linda Edwards (page 17)
  - d. Line-item transfer request for funds over \$5,000 – Alleghany County Sheriff’s Department (page 18)
  - e. General Fund budget amendment #7 in the amount of \$13,000 for COVID funds from GCC grant (page 19)
  - f. VFD Contract (pages 20-24)
  - g. Town tax collection contract (page 25-27)
  - h. High Country Council of Governments Charter amendment – Commissioner Mark Evans (pages 28-34)
  - i. Telephone/internet consultant proposal (page 35)

- j. Northwest Regional Library board appointments – Susan Nilo and Lauren Barricklow (page 36)
- k. Rescue tax – Commissioner John Irwin (pages 37-39)
- l. Streetscape Agreement – Commissioner John Irwin (pages 40-45)

**D. 11:00 Consent Agenda (Board action requested)**

- i. Rita Miller, Tax Administrator (pages 46-58)
  - a. License Plate Agency month end report
  - b. January auto refunds
  - c. January real and personal property refunds
  - d. Real and personal property releases
  - e. Collections monthly totals report
  - f. Delinquent taxpayer contracts
  - g. Request for refund

**E. 11:10 County Manager Comments**

January building inspection report (page 59)

**F. 11:30 County Commissioner Comments**

**G. Adjourn**

Commissioner Mark Evans made a motion to accept minutes as presented. Commissioner John Irwin seconded. Vote 5:0.

**Public Comments**

No comment

**Presentations to the Board**

Earthquake update – Daniel Roten

Daniel Roten gave a local earthquake update. Dr. Kenneth Taylor gave a presentation on the Western North Carolina Earthquake of August 9, 2020.

Sheriff's Department end of year update – Nick Hawks

Chief Deputy, Nick Hawks gave the Sheriff's Department end of year update presentation.

Financial update – April Hamm

April Hamm, Finance Officer gave a financial update. She said there will be a revised audit agreement for consideration.

Facilities update – David Spicer

David Spicer, Public Works Director gave a full facilities update. He said the issue with the Historical Preservation group has been cleared up and the product decided on for that portion of the Courthouse roof. He said things are on track for the secondary courtroom. He said he is waiting on a second estimate for Daymark. He said his team is going to patch the roof at the Health Department. He said the LP tanks pad caved in behind the Law Enforcement Center and that it needs a new roof.

New Chamber Organization

Ricky Brown explained contrary to the original proposal, there will be two organizations instead of one. He explained the makeup of the Board and legal structures and introduced Bryan Edwards as the President.

**General Business**

Golden Leaf grant opportunity Resolution of support

Bryan Edwards explained the Regional Tech Hub grant application from Wilkes Community College through Alleghany County. He asked that the Board pass the Resolution in support of the Golden Leaf grant opportunity WCC is pursuing. He said they would be coming on a regular basis to update the Board on the economic development effort in Alleghany county.

#### Line item transfers and budget amendment

Commissioner Bobby Irwin made a motion to approve the Resolution in Support of the Golden Leaf grant application. Commissioner John Irwin seconded. Vote 5:0.

Linda Edwards explained the transfer from FT salaries into PT and OT.

Commissioner John Irwin made a motion to approve the transfer. Chair Bill Osborne seconded. Vote 5:0.

Linda Edwards explained the transfer for PAPRS and Lucas devices.

Commissioner John Irwin made a motion to approve the transfer. Chair Bill Osborne seconded. Vote 5:0.

Nick Hawks explained his 3 line item transfer requests.

Commissioner Bobby Irwin made a motion to accept the 3 line item transfers. Commissioner John Irwin seconded. Vote 5:0.

Nick Hawks explained the General Fund budget amendment.

Commissioner John Irwin made a motion to approve the budget amendment. Commissioner Mark Evans seconded. Vote 5:0.

#### VFD Contract

Assistant County Manager, Drew Temple explained the presented contract has the suggested changes from the Fire Commission in yellow.

Commissioner John Irwin said the Fire Commission may be happy with the contract but the fire chiefs are not. He suggested taking the contingency/reserve fund out of the Fire Tax. He said under Chapter 5, a department can't build a substation as the contract is written.

Chair Bill Osborne explained the Fire Commission was made well aware of the contingency fund and that the departments had to come before the Board to access it.

Commissioner Mark Evans said it would be a dereliction of duty to allow the departments free reign to the contingency money. He said departments should submit a plan to reduce the fire rating then things such as substations could be considered.

Commissioner Bobby Irwin said he doesn't want the substation part to be forgotten about because the departments received a significant increase and there are "gray areas" of the county.

Commissioner John Irwin made a motion to accept the VFD contract with the proposed changes. Commissioner Mark Evans seconded. Vote 5:0.

Commissioner Mark Evans encouraged the Volunteer Fire Departments to come discuss the contract or any other issues.

#### Town Tax Collection contract

Assistant County Manager, Drew Temple explained the group who met to discuss the revised Town Tax Collection agreement. I explained the main difference was the time spent in the Finance office compiling reports and reconciling the town tax collection. I explained 1% was approximately \$9,000 and that 4% would generate approximately \$24,000.

Commissioner Mark Evans asked if the Tax office could reduce staff or budget by \$24,000 if we stopped collecting Town taxes.

Rita Miller, Tax Administrator explained the extra work is not in her office but in the Tax office.

I explained the difference is the time the Finance office is spending at the end of the month.

County Attorney, Heather Klein said the agreement was created by the County Manager's office with the Town Manager's office. She said the highlighted portion in yellow is what she added. She said it is her understanding that the amount in this contract is comparable with other counties.

Commissioner Mark Evans made a motion to table the Town Tax collection agreement until the next meeting. Commissioner John Irwin seconded. Vote 5:0.

#### High Country Council of Government charter amendment

Commissioner Mark Evans and Julie Wiggins explained the reason for the charter amendments was that it is the way the COG has been operating already and to correct the outdated charter.

Julie Wiggins explained the reason for the weighted vote. She said she had been involved in one meeting where there was not a majority vote. She explained a quorum is 14. She said it had been 23 years since they adjusted their pay rate. She explained amendments had been made to the charter but the document had not been updated.

Commissioner Bobby Irwin made a motion to table the HCCOG charter amendment until the finance, quorum and legal questions can be answered. Commissioner John Irwin seconded. Vote 4:1 (aye: Commissioner Bobby Irwin, Commissioner Mark Evans, Commissioner Mechelle Luffman, Commissioner John Irwin nay: Commissioner Mark Evans)

#### Recess

#### Telephone/internet consultant

Assistant County Manager, Drew Temple said she and County Manager, Michael Carter met with Danny Vaughn about assessing the County's actual telephone and internet needs and helping put together a proper RFP. I said he proposed \$40/hr.

Commissioner John Irwin made a motion to accept the proposal with the caveat that the expenditure is limited to \$4,000 unless approved by the Board. Commissioner Mechelle Luffman seconded. Vote 5:0.

Commissioner Mark Evans asked for Danny Vaughn's biographical sketch to be included in the minutes.

#### NWRL board appointments

Commissioner John Irwin made a motion to approve Susan Nilo and Lauren Barricklow. Commissioner Mark Evans seconded. Vote 5:0.

#### Rescue Tax

Commissioner John Irwin said the Rescue Squad is facing financial difficulties but it was not identified when he was Fire Commission Chair. He said the Board should consider a Rescue Tax.

County Attorney, Heather Klein explained why a Rescue Tax making the entire County the district excluding the Town of Sparta is not legal. She said we cannot have an entire district for the Rescue Squad be the entire County. She said it could be a line item in the budget.

Commissioner Mark Evans said the General Fund route is of lower cost to the County because we do not have to distinguish districts.

Commissioner Bobby Irwin said the Rescue Squad has made it on contributions. He said the Town needs to look at upping their contribution to the Rescue Squad. He said he didn't know how often the ¼ cent sales tax could be brought up but that it could be earmarked for the Rescue Squad.

#### Streetscape Agreement

There was discussion about fundraising and reduction in the County's contribution to Streetscape.

Commissioner Mark Evans made a motion to ask the Town for the evidence to bear out the details of the fund sources for Streetscape. Commissioner John Irwin seconded. Vote 5:0.

#### Consent Agenda

Rita Miller, Tax Administrator explained the consent agenda.

Commissioner John Irwin made a motion to accept the consent agenda. Chair Bill Osborne seconded. Vote 5:0.

#### County Manager comments

Assistant County Manager, Drew Temple said to look at the January building inspection report. I said the new Recreation Director starts next week and that we have been approached by Grayson County and spoke with the Tarheel League about rec participation. I said budget submittal is this Friday at 5 pm. I said County Manager, Michael Carter suggested scheduling a special meeting prior to the March 1<sup>st</sup> meeting for the 911 discussion.

#### County Commissioner comments

Commissioner Mechelle Luffman highlighted DSS and the different programs they administer.

Commissioner John Irwin shared his concerns with the ACEDC and the BDC.

Commissioner Mark Evans said he would like for the Board to consider having a joint meeting with the School Board. He said there is opportunity that revaluations may not translate dollar for dollar. He said the Board has limits and 501(c)(3)s pick up the slack.

Commissioner Bobby Irwin said we get so many unfunded mandates that we have no control over and we have to fulfill those obligations. He said that puts a burden on the Commissioners and the taxpayers of the county. He said the Health Department is working 24/7 trying to keep people vaccinated in Alleghany County. He said the Fairgrounds has worked out great for the vaccine clinic. He said we simply need more vaccine.

Chair Bill Osborne said he's proud of our county and that the sales tax report is an indicator of good things going on.

Commissioner Mark Evans made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner John Irwin seconded. Vote 5:0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Drew Temple  
Clerk to the Board

Bill Osborne  
Chairman