



The Alleghany County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, September 20th, 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 Bobby Irwin, Commissioner Mechelle Luffman, Commissioner John Irwin, County Attorney, Heather Klein and Clerk to the Board Drew Todd.

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

### Alleghany County Board of Commissioners

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*County Commissioners*  
Bill Osborne  
Bobby Irwin  
Mark Evans  
Mechelle Luffman  
John U. Irwin, Jr.

*County Manager*  
Michael L. Carter

*Clerk to the Board*  
Drew Todd

*County Attorney*  
Heather R. Klein

#### AGENDA

Monday September 20th, 2021

10:00 am

10:00 Meeting called to order  
Pledge of Allegiance and invocation  
Approval of agenda

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. NCDOT – Wayne Atkins and Daniel Adams
- ii. Heath Department Update on Covid Situation and Septic Permitting Process – Jennifer Greene and Andy Blethen
- iii. Financial update – April Hamm, Finance Officer
- iv. Department of Treasury Update on Reporting Requirements for ARPA Funds – April Hamm
- v. Facilities update – David Spicer, Public Works Director
- vi. 911 Grant Award – Daniel Roten
- vii. Earthquake repairs and Damages Update – Daniel Roten
- viii. Update on Veterans Park Track Repairs – Cole Edwards
- ix. Courthouse Roof Update – Michael Carter
- x. 90 South Main Facility Study Update – Michael Carter
- xi. Courthouse Committee Update – Commissioner Bobby Irwin, Chair (**Pages 3-4**)

C. 11:45 **General Business**

- i. Fairgrounds Revised Application Packet – Cole Edwards **(Pages 5-8)**
- ii. Request from Iade Creek Fire Department for use of Fire Tax Reserve Funds – David Higgins
- iii. Performance and Evaluation Criteria and Reporting Form Review – April Hamm **(Pages 9-16)**
- iv. Phone and Internet Discussion and Steps Moving Forward – Michael Carter
- v. Budget Transfer Request from the Sheriff’s Department – April Hamm **(Page 17)**
- vi. Discussion of the recent Notification of Three (3) Properties to be considered for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places **(Pages 18-28)**
- vii. Rita Miller **(Pages 29-38)**

**D. 12:45 Consent Agenda (Board action requested) (Pages 39-103)**

- i. Rita Miller, Tax Administrator (pages 46-63)
  - a. NCVTS Report
  - b. August 2021 Refund Report
  - c. August 2021 Release Report
  - d. Delinquent Taxpayer Contract Status Report
  - e. Collection monthly totals report

**Board Recess for 1 hour**

**E. 1:45 County Manager Comments**

- a. August building inspection report **(Page 104)**
- b. Copies of Planning Board Minutes for meetings held February 8<sup>th</sup> and June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021 **(Pages 105-111)**
- c. Recognition of the Tax Office for the collections work in August of 2021.
- d. Appreciation of Staff throughout the pandemic

**F. 1:50 County Commissioner Comments**

**G. 2:00 Request for Closed Session Pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11. (a)-6 Personnel and G.S. 143-318.11 (a)-3 Potential Litigation**

**Public Comments**

Al Clifton with Saddle Ridge HOA asked if the Board would consider cutting the Solid Waste Disposal Fee in half for their residents.

Carolyn Monahan said the Saddle Ridge residents are only asking for consideration because the fee is exorbitant. She said they are only there for six months out of the year.

**Presentations to the Board**

**NCDOT**

Wayne Adkins spoke about the process used to decide to lower the speed limit on US221 and NC-93. He said 45 is the safest speed someone unfamiliar with the road should be able to safely drive the road. He said NCDOT is trying to address all of their unposted roads. He suggested going through the RPO to start the process of widening roads. He said NCDOT could re-review and that NCDOT is not trying to punish anyone. He said no one refused to have a night meeting and as far as he knew, today was an acceptable time.

Commissioner Mechelle Luffman said there is accident after accident on the Sparta Parkway at the intersection at Grandview.

Wayne Adkins said there are only 2 reported accidents at Grandview/Sparta Parkway. He said since that intersection is within municipal limits, the accidents may not be reported properly.

#### COVID and Septic permitting update

Jen Greene gave a COVID update.

Andy Blethen gave an update on septic permitting and went over the reasons they are backlogged. He explained the permitting process and alternatives to waiting on the Health Department to permit.

#### Financial update

April Hamm, Finance Officer gave a financial update.

#### ARPA Report

April Hamm said there were some technical issues with submitting the first ARPA report but as of today, ours is in.

#### Facilities update

David Spicer, Public Works Director said there are some delays with the courthouse roof. He said there have been some delays with the Daymark building but the carpet is going in and the project should be complete in the next week and a half. He said 90 S Main is a work in progress. He said the work on the Admin building will start tomorrow or Wednesday to finish up the earthquake damage beginning with the stairwell. He said the displays at Vet Park are underway. He said the new recycling compactor is scheduled to be here the last week of the month. He said it will be up and running as quickly as possible. He said he is working on the roll-off truck. He said the transfer facility is getting a lot of volume right now. He said the a/c compressor on the loader is down but they are still using it right now.

#### Recess

##### 911 Grant award

Daniel Roten, Emergency Management Coordinator explained the next steps after the county was awarded the 911 grant. He said he was told the grant committee would probably approve our funding reconsideration as well. He said the generator grant he applied for would probably not come through.

##### Earthquake damage and repairs

Daniel Roten said there are 116 projects open from the earthquake. He said they have totally completed 114 projects. He said there is another round of tear-downs coming.

There was some discussion about the Estep property that is now county property.

##### Update on Veterans Park track repairs

Cole Edwards, Recreation Director said the track should be finished this week. He said it is a huge improvement. He said soccer started this past weekend and had nothing but good comments about it.

##### Courthouse roof repairs

County Manager, Michael Carter said the heat has been turned up on REI over the past two weeks. He said there was a conference call with Tecta and REI and there was a difficulty finding the materials for the roof. He said miraculously the materials were located in the past week and this Thursday there is a pre-construction meeting. He said at most this should be a two week project.

#### 90 S Main update

Michael Carter shared the summary of RND Architects' assessment of 90 S Main. He said there are considerations on the addition. He said he has asked RND to present three ideas for the future of the addition: bring the addition up to current code, remove the addition or remove and rebuild the addition. He said there is no concern over the facility falling or collapsing.

#### Courthouse Committee update

Commissioner Bobby Irwin identified the Courthouse Committee and said the grand opening is scheduled for October 22<sup>nd</sup> at 2 pm.

### **General Business**

#### Revised Fairgrounds application

Cole Edwards presented the revised Fairgrounds application. He said it is what was discussed by the Commissioners and by the steering committee. He said the requested changes were made and approved by legal. He clarified the fee for the tractor was removed because the tractor is no longer available for renters to use; if they want to use it for an event, then it would be operated by someone on the Fairgrounds Committee.

Commissioner Bobby Irwin said he thinks there should be a clause saying if a party violates part of the contract, they would be responsible for all attorney fees in all of our contracts.

There was discussion about who is allowed to use the Fairgrounds and who pays such as education, Health Department, etc.

Cole Edwards said even if a group isn't paying, they are still responsible for cleaning up after themselves just like paying renters.

Commissioner John Irwin made a motion to approve the revised Fairgrounds application subject to inclusion of the legal clause discussed. Chair Bill Osborne seconded. Vote 4:0.

#### Performance and Evaluation Criteria

April Hamm went over the evaluation form and process. She said we have 1% budgeted for first of December and another percent budgeted for first of May.

Commissioner John Irwin made a motion to approve performance evaluation criteria with reconsideration of the verbal skills section. Commissioner Mechelle Luffman seconded. Vote 4:0

#### Phone and Internet next steps

Michael Carter said he would like to wait on the successful IT candidate to come on board and review the telephone/internet proposals before the board makes a decision. He suggested tabling the bids until at least the October day meeting.

Commissioner John Irwin made a motion to table the telephone/internet RFP until mid-month October. Chair Bill Osborne seconded. Vote 4:0.

#### Budget transfer request Sheriff's Dept.

April Hamm explained the request to pay for maintenance of computer equipment at the Sheriff's Department.

Commissioner John Irwin made a motion to approve law enforcement line-item transfers. Chair Bill Osborne seconded. Vote 4:0.

#### National Register of Historic Places discussion

Michael Carter identified the three county buildings being considered for the National Register of Historic Places. He suggested inviting the Chamber to the next meeting to provide some feeling for this.

Commissioner John Irwin made a motion to table the request until the October first meeting. Commissioner Mechelle Luffman seconded. Vote 4:0.

Commissioner Bobby Irwin said he thought the old Courthouse was already a historical landmark.

Rita Miller

Commissioner John Irwin made a motion to release Snow Drift Lane solid waste fee. Commissioner Mechelle Luffman seconded. Vote 3:1 (aye: Chair Bill Osborne, Commissioner Mechelle Luffman, Commissioner John Irwin nay: Commissioner Bobby Irwin)

Commissioner John Irwin made a motion to release Saddle Ridge Drive solid waste fee. Commissioner Mechelle Luffman seconded. Vote 3:1 (aye: Chair Bill Osborne, Commissioner Mechelle Luffman, Commissioner John Irwin nay: Commissioner Bobby Irwin)

There was discussion about the logistics of solid waste fees and dumpster services.

Commissioner Mechelle Luffman made a motion to deny release for Michael and Patricia Crouse. Commissioner John Irwin seconded. Vote 4:0.

Commissioner John Irwin made a motion to approve release of 225 Saddle Ridge Drive solid waste fee. Commissioner Mechelle Luffman seconded. Vote 3:1 (aye: Chair Bill Osborne, Commissioner Mechelle Luffman, Commissioner John Irwin nay: Commissioner Bobby Irwin)

Commissioner John Irwin made a motion to approve release of 181 Moxley Hollow Rd solid waste fee. Commissioner Mechelle Luffman seconded. Vote 4:0.

Commissioner John Irwin made a motion to approve release of 28 Prathers Lane solid waste fee. Commissioner Mechelle Luffman seconded. Vote 4:0.

### **Consent Agenda**

Commissioner John Irwin made a motion to accept the consent agenda as presented. Commissioner Mechelle Luffman seconded. Vote 4:0.

Chair Bill Osborne recessed the meeting until 2:00.

### **County Manager comments**

County Manager, Michael Carter said to look over the building inspection report and planning board minutes.

County Manager, Michael Carter recognized the Tax office for their hard work. He said every department has been touched by the COVID situation. He said there may be an opportunity for a Rec Committee or a steering committee of some type to see what kind of benefits could be utilized from the Estep property.

### **County Commissioner comments**

Commissioner Bobby Irwin said the man who is mowing and weed-eating Twin Oaks mountain is doing a great job. He said the Mountain Heritage Festival was a big success.

Commissioner Mechelle Luffman said the Run for a Clause was very successful this past weekend. She said all the activity this year has been very successful. She said the Town has voted to put in a splash pad at the park and said she hoped we could raise funds to get something for the kids.

Commissioner John Irwin read a Facebook post about an Animal Control issue and part of the Animal Control Ordinance. He said he let the County Manager know on Friday there is an active volcano on the island of Le Palma. He said if a section of the island had fallen into the ocean, in 8 hours there would have been a 66 foot tidal wave striking North America on the East coast wiping out New York, Manhattan, Charleston,

Savannah, Norfolk, 100M American lives would have been in jeopardy. He said the landslide would have been 700 times the landmass from St. Helena and there was nothing on the National news about it. He listed the sicknesses identified on the border. He said there are 14,000 Haitians sitting down there. He said since first of the year, over 1.5M illegals have been captured and let loose in the nation. He said we received a letter that we had been taken off the “watch list” for the state of NC for our financial situation. He commended the County Manager and staff for the outstanding work bringing us more into compliance and making hard decisions.

Chair Bill Osborne said we will get to our goal with the County Manager, department heads and everyone who works here. He said the fair is coming up 9/30-10/3 and encouraged everyone to come out and take part in it. He said the Sheriff sent the deputies out to make residents aware of the bicycle ride so they could put their dogs up. He said Music on Main has been good all summer long as well as Crouse park that ends in October.

**Closed Session**

Commissioner John Irwin made a motion to go in to closed session to include David Spicer and April Hamm. Commissioner Mechelle Luffman seconded. Vote 5:0

Chair Bill Osborne said no action was taken during closed session.

There was a motion and a second to adjourn. Vote 4:0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Drew Todd  
Clerk to the Board

Bill Osborne  
Chairman