

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF AVERY**

The Avery County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Monday, February 6, 2017 in the Commissioners Board Room, Avery County Administrative Complex, 175 Linville Street, Newland, NC.

Members Present: Martha Hicks, Chair; Blake Vance, Vice-Chair; Faith Lacey; Tim Phillips; Wood Hall Young, Jr.

Members Absent: None

Call To Order

Chair Hicks called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

Wood Hall Young, Jr. led prayer.

Faith Lacey led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comments

John Millan thanked the Board for the efforts to update the sign at the Heaton Bridge. He also commended the Sheriff's office for the type of vehicles that the Sheriff's office had purchased recently.

Board Appointments

Avery Fire Commission

The Fire Commission consists of a five member board; two of the board members shall be consumers appointed by the Avery County Board of Commissioners; two of the board members shall be firemen approved by the Avery County Fire Association and appointed by the Avery County Board of Commissioners; the other four sitting members of the Commission shall choose the remaining member.

The Avery County Firefighter's Association has recommended Johnny Mathes for a two year term on the Avery County Fire Commission. This term will date back to August 2016 as they are just getting the request to us.

Motion by Blake Vance and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to appoint Johnny Mathes to the Avery Fire Commission for a two year term. This term will expire August 2018. Motion unanimously approved.

Senior Tar Heel Legislature Delegate & Alternate

The Senior Tar Heel Legislature was established to provide information to senior citizens on the legislative process and matters being considered by the North Carolina General Assembly; to promote citizen involvement and advocacy concerning aging issues before the assembly; and to assess the legislative needs of older citizens by convening a forum modeled after the assembly.

There is one delegate and one alternate to the Senior Tar Heel Legislature from each 100 counties. Rachel Deal has been Senior Tar Heel Legislature Delegate for 24 years and she is willing to be reappointed. Ina Winters is willing to serve as the alternate.

Motion by Faith Lacey and second by Tim Phillips to appoint Rachel Deal as the Senior Tar Heel Legislature Delegate. Motion unanimously approved.

Motion by Tim Phillips and second by Blake Vance to appoint Ina Winters as the alternate to the Senior Tar Heel Legislature. Motion unanimously approved.

Morrison Library Board

There is an application for Mr. Josh Smith for review for the Morrison Library Board. He has been a previous board member but has not served since 2015. This will be placed on next month's agenda for approval.

Avery County Recreation Advisory Board

There are 13 applications for the Recreation Advisory Board. Two of the applications did not qualify due to one being a county employee and the other one not being a county resident. These are for review and will be appointed at next month's meeting.

High Country United Way – Dr. Gary Childers; Nancy Reigel

Dr. Gary Childers and Nancy Reigel presented a power point presentation to the Board. High Country United Way's Mission is uniting people and resources to improve lives in the High Country. The United Way's Campaign for the Common Good is a social action campaign designed to engage more individuals and institutions in our education, income and health work. We envision a community where everyone has the opportunity for educational, social and emotional growth throughout their lives. We envision an engaged, thriving community where the easy choice is the healthy choice, health is a cornerstone for community decisions and health needs are met locally and affordably. We envision a thriving community working together, fulfilling basic needs and creating economic opportunity for all.

Chair Hicks thanked the presenters of High Country United Way for their service to the counties.

Avery County Historical Society and Museum – Michael Hardy

Michael Hardy, Avery County Museum Board Chair, stated that 41 years ago the Board of Commissioners agreed to allow the Avery County Historical Society to use the old jail as a museum. Last year the museum celebrated 40 years of being a local historical museum. We are the second oldest local museum in Western North Carolina. Thanks to the addition of the Linville Depot and the East Tennessee/Western North Carolina Railroad Caboose 505 we are not just a local history museum, we are a regional destination. Heritage tourism in Western North Carolina is a 2.4 billion dollar industry. We need some help. Our old jail is 105 years old. The central staircase leading to the upstairs has started to sag and the supporting beam structure underneath the museum needs to be jacked up and re-braced and at the same time we could use some

insulation under the building. We could also use a new bathroom, one with hot water. That is just a few of the repairs that we need to make in the upcoming months. We are going to need to replace some soffit and gutters and paint in the near future. We continue to work on the restoration of Caboose 505. This is the only one left. We have been seeking grants for restoration at the museum but money for actual restoration work is hard to come by. Any assistance that the Board of Commissioners could budget for the upcoming year would be greatly appreciated. We want to preserve the history of Avery County for the future generation.

Chair Hicks stated that this will be considered in the upcoming budget process.

Innovapad System – Bill Beuttell

Bill Beuttell, Chairman of the Avery County Fire Commission, stated that the Fire Commission had been looking at ways to increase the revenue and there is a program that is popular in South Carolina called Innovapad. This does not cost anything to get set up. In multi-vehicle accidents and tractor trailer accidents, it is a system that allows the fire department to file against the insurance of the ones involved in the accident for payment of supplies used. The Fire Association last month recommended to the Fire Commission that we ask the commissioners to search their authorities to find out if we could be empowered to engage in that system. The Fire Commission voted by majority to come to you and ask you for that. Since then we understand as a county in North Carolina we do not have the statutory authority to implement that system so it is really a moot point. Tim Greene, County Manager, stated that he had sent from Innovapad website to Ms. Kara Millonzi, UNC School of Government and her response was that there was no authority for counties to do this in North Carolina at this time. Blake Vance stated that counties and municipal governments operate under the authority of the general assembly and we have to have explicit authority to do anything. It is not find a statute that keeps you from doing something it is find a statute that allows you to do something and there is not statute that allows us to do this.

Ad Hoc Board to Recognize “Fallen Heroes”---John Millan

Mr. Millan stated that basically he wanted to bring up a point about the hard times that the police officers go through and the recognition that I feel they deserve not just everyday but in the unusual cases where they greatly exceed the standard or lay down their life for their fellow citizen. This is not just law enforcement officers but think about all of the public safety officers that protect their community. We have had not just our friend Glenn Hicks but we have had 9 public safety officers killed or murdered in the line of duty in Avery County since 1912. My suggestion was that since we have had Glenn appropriately recognized I think that we should look into the possibility of recognizing all of the fallen public safety officers. There are enough nice scenic highways in Avery County and bridges most of which are near the locations where we have had a responder killed that the board could petition the Department of Transportation to put up a sign dedicating the bridge or highway in the name of the responder. I came up with an idea of the way that you could come up with a committee that could research and approve these people. If there is going to be a committee I suggest that it be ad hoc committee because there are eight additional responders to add to that list. Law

Enforcement officers and public safety personnel that have been killed in this county since 1912:

1. Newland Fire Department member Danny Owens
2. Constable Zebulon Winters
3. Deputy Sheriff Kenneth Burleson
4. Deputy Sheriff Hardy Coffey
5. Deputy Sheriff Alvin Jones
6. Chief Deputy Sheriff Max Daniels
7. Deputy Glenn Hicks
8. Patrolman JW Wallen
9. Correctional Officer William Lee Wright

Mr. Millan stated that he hoped that the county would consider this.

Tax Administrator Report – Phillip Barrier

Tax Collections Report

The Total Tax Collections for the month of January 2017 is \$2,303,789.07.

Motion by Blake Vance and second by Tim Phillips to approve the total Tax Collection Report as presented. Motion unanimously approved.

Regular Releases

The Regular Releases for the month of January 2017 is \$849.92.

Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Blake Vance to approve the Regular Releases for the month of January 2017 as presented. Motion unanimously approved.

Refund

The Total Refunds for the month of January 2017 is \$178.80.

Motion by Tim Phillips and second by Blake Vance to approve the refunds for January 2017 as presented. Motion unanimously approved.

Advertising Tax Liens for Foreclosure

Mr. Barrier advised that per NCGS 105-369 in the month of February the Tax Collector must report to the governing body the total amount of unpaid taxes for the current fiscal year that are liens on real property. For 2016, we have a balance due of \$1,136,960.67. The Board needs to give approval to be able to advertise these as tax liens.

Motion by Blake Vance and second by Tim Phillips to allow the Tax Collector to advertise tax liens for 2016. Motion unanimously approved.

Sales Statistics

Mr. Barrier presented the sales statistics for the month. There were 18 more sales this January than last January. This year we had 38 sales.

Special Board of Equalization and Review

There are 8 applications for 5 positions and an alternate for review to serve on the Special Board of Equalization and Review. These will be voted on at the March meeting.

Avery County Economic Development Advisory Committee

Blake Vance stated that two years ago economic development was a bad word in Avery County. It is the only way that anything is going to come to Avery County. We have got to do something to get jobs in this community. A big part of our job is to promote economic development in this area. I suggested two years ago when I ran for commissioner that we have a volunteer economic advisory committee to cast a vision to really look into what we need to do to bring people in. We have the Chamber of Commerce and I thank them for what they do but the county as a whole is doing nothing for economic development. I don't think we need a full time economic developer. Tim Phillips stated that an upgrade to the school and the one to one initiative is a step in that right direction. Wood Hall Young, Jr. said he agreed with both Tim and Blake but that there also needed to be an emphasis on what small businesses we do have in the county. This committee should be diversified from all aspects of the county from professional people to farmers. Tim Phillips stated this is a necessity.

Consensus by the Board to advertise for the positions on the Avery County Economic Development Advisory Committee for one month.

Tim Greene, County Manager, read aloud the following Resolution:

WHEREAS, The County of Avery is authorized to establish local government citizen advisory committees; and

WHEREAS, The County of Avery desires to establish a citizens advisory committee to provide input regarding matters pertaining to economic development to better serve the citizens of Avery County; and

WHEREAS, such citizen advisory committee should have a policy;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Avery County Board of Commissioners meeting in regular session on the ___ day of _____, 2017, hereby establishes the Avery County Economic Development Advisory Committee and adopts that policy for the same attached hereto.

The Board of Commissioners further authorizes the Chair to sign this resolution.

Motion by Blake Vance and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr to adopt the Resolution to Establish the Avery County Economic Development Advisory Committee. Motion unanimously approved.

County Manager Updates – Tim Greene

Strategic Planning Meeting

Mr. Greene stated that the Strategic Planning Meeting is going to be held on Thursday, February 9, 2017. The topics to be discussed are upcoming budget; capital projects; county facilities.

Agricultural Building

Boomerang Designs has come up with another schematic and it is simply incorporating showers and making sure the receptionist area will be able to see people coming in. He said he would be available February 23rd or February 24th and we can meet again on the design. I recommend that he engages a professional estimator which would cost approximately \$1500 to \$2000. The question was asked if that needed to be a budget amendment. The County Attorney stated that that was included in the project fund and would not need an amendment. This will be taken out of the project fund. Jerry Moody is working on grant funds at this time.

Swimming Pool Project Update

Robbie Willis is sending in a Clean Water Trust Fund grant and that will be for storm water management on that property. It would help the runoff and controlling all the water on that property. It may not help us greatly as far as the budget part goes but it will help with paying for that. He is working on the PARTF grant. He is exploring all of the options right now. He had NC State helping him on the Clean Water Trust Fund. We sent the application to Chuck Vines who is on that board. Tammy Ellis is working on the designs for the pool.

Webinars

The NC Department of Commerce grant includes some on demand webinars and we can watch them as a group as an educational webinar. There are also webinars that would be suitable for the employees. Think about how the Board would like to do that. I think these would be very beneficial for all of us.

Joint Meeting with the Board of Education

The Board of Education is in the process of coming up with an architect so when they do that we will have a joint meeting with them.

Gazebo

Lighting is being installed. The benches have been ordered.

NC Wireless

Mr. Greene stated that he had met with Bill Shillito with NC Wireless, Doug Gragg, Radio Shack and Keith Conover from the Office of Digital Infrastructure. We talked about NC Wireless applying for an ARC grant. Keith Conover is going to help with that

and hopefully that will get more internet in here. NC Wireless has been doing a lot. Skyline/Skybest is applying for a grant. We are seeing some progress with this.

Economic Development Advisory Committee

Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr and second by Blake Vance to place the Avery County Economic Development Advisory Committee in the board policy. Motion unanimously approved.

Finance Officer Report –Nancy Johnson

Budget Amendment

The Avery County Board of Commissioners needs a budget amendment for Ipads.

Motion by Blake Vance and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to adopt a Budget Amendment in the amount of \$5,775.00 with a debit of \$5,775.00 to Capital Outlay and a credit of \$5,775.00 to Available for Appropriation. Motion unanimously approved.

Budget Amendment

The Avery County Public Buildings and Grounds department requests a budget amendment for additional hours for the part-time maintenance helper due to increased electrical work at the senior center and Veteran's monument.

Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr and second by Tim Phillips to adopt a Budget Amendment in the amount of \$6,405.00 with a debit of \$6,000 to Salary-Maintenance Assistant (105000.0220) ; debit of \$405.00 to FICA (105000.0500) and a credit of \$6,405.00 to Appropriated Fund Balance (103990.0000). Motion unanimously approved.

Budget Amendment

The Avery County Department of Social Services requests a budget amendment for EBT charges due to increased costs this year.

Blake Vance stated that he would like to have more information on this budget amendment.

Motion by Blake Vance and second by Tim Phillips to table this item until the next board meeting. Motion unanimously approved.

Budget Amendment

The Avery County Veterans Department requests a budget amendment for additional engraving, lighting and benches for the Veteran's Monument and for training.

Motion by Blake Vance and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to adopt the Budget Amendment in the amount of \$6,000 with a debit of \$5,500 to Veteran's Monument (106070.7420); \$500.00 Travel (106070.1400) and a credit of \$6,000 to Available for Appropriation (107000.6000). Motion unanimously approved.

Budget Amendment

The Avery County Senior Services request a budget amendment for food supplies that were reimbursed by a donation.

Motion by Blake Vance and second by Tim Phillips to adopt a Budget Amendment in the amount of \$1,023.00 with a debit of \$1,023.00 to Food Supplies (105960.4700) and a credit of \$1,023.00 to Senior Services (103670.0000). Motion unanimously approved.

Budget Amendment

The Solid Waste department requests a budget amendment to recognize insurance proceeds received.

Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Blake Vance to adopt a Budget Amendment in the amount of \$4,170.00 with a debit of \$4,170.00 to Repairs/Maintenance (10.5800.1510) and a credit of \$4,170.00 to Insurance Reimbursements (10.3340.0000). Motion unanimously approved.

Budget Amendment

The Avery County Emergency Telephone System department requests a budget amendment for increased costs of equipment required for the backup center.

Motion by Blake Vance and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to adopt the Budget Amendment in the amount of \$25,000 with a debit of \$25,000 to Capital-Equipment (22.6600.7430) and a credit of \$25,000 to Appropriated Fund Balance (22.3990.0000). Motion unanimously approved.

County Attorney Report – Michaelle Poore

Ms. Poore stated that she did not have a written report but she had matters that required Closed Session involving Property Acquisition and Attorney/Client Privilege.

Closed Session

Motion by Blake Vance and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to go into Closed Session at 5:05 p.m. regarding Acquisition of Property (NCGS 143-318.11 (a)(5) and Attorney/Client Privilege (NCGS 143-318.11 (a)(3)). Motion unanimously approved. Invitees are the Board, County Manager, County Attorney and Clerk.

Chair Hicks declared the meeting to be back in Regular Session after a time of Closed Session. During Closed Session, no vote was taken.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Blake Vance and second by Tim Phillips to approve the November 29, 2016 Special Meeting and January 3, 2017 Regular Meeting. Motion unanimously approved.

Agenda Consent Items

Adopted by Consensus of the Board.

Upcoming Meetings

Mr. Greene stated that we have already scheduled four budget workshops and we know that we may have to change these. Three are scheduled at 3:30 p.m. and the other one with the Fire Commission, Sheriff and Board of Education will be at 5:00 p.m.

Pre-budget Workshop will be held on Thursday, February 9, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. at Cannon Memorial Hospital at the Linville Room.

Adjourn

Motion by Blake Vance and second by Tim Phillips to adjourn this meeting at 6:10 p.m. Motion unanimously approved.

Martha Hicks, Chair
Avery County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST: _____
Cindy Turbyfill, Clerk