

**State of North Carolina
County of Avery**

The Avery County Board of Commissioners met in a Board Workshop on Tuesday, January 5, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in the Commissioners Board Room, Avery County Administrative Complex, 175 Linville Street, Newland, NC. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and take any action necessary regarding capital projects for Avery County and the Avery Cares Building.

Members Present: Martha Hicks, Chair; Maxine Laws, Vice-Chair; Reo Griffith; Faith Lacey; Blake Vance

Members Absent: None

Also Present: Gerald McKinney, County Attorney

Call To Order

Chair Martha Hicks called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
Reo Griffith led prayer.

Agricultural Extension Building

Chair Hicks turned the meeting over to Tim Greene, County Manager, and stated that these items were for discussion and there would be no action taken at this meeting.

Tim Greene, County Manager, explained that the Board approved Glenn Walker to go out and look at the building and give us an evaluation of it. He did this and then we engaged him to actually draw up some plans to fix the structural problems and also to look at renovating the downstairs to make that usable space and also to do something with the upstairs. He is in the midst of drawing up some plans and when we get the plans drawn up we will get some prices on it to see what it would take to fix up the Ag. Building. We have three options. We can do nothing if that is what you want, we can fix the structural problems or we can do the structural and renovate the downstairs and upstairs. The building has several issues. On the Ag. Building we have briefly talked about what would it be instead of fixing the ag building, to put up something out at Heritage Park. Heritage Park was intended for recreational purposes but for several reasons that property cannot be used for that. If we don't use the land for recreational, the Ag department would be the logical folks to move out there. It is a little bit out of the way compared to where we are now. When Glenn Walker gets the plans, then the Board can get back together and decide what route they want to go.

Mr. Greene stated in looking at a new building you would probably need about 5000 square feet. Mr. Greene gave some examples of pricing. The Ag. Building tax value now is \$373,000. Mr. Walker will be getting us some estimates and we can discuss all of this at a later date.

Chair Hicks stated that anything we do we have to fix the water problems out there.

Reo Griffith questioned if this could be done in the budget process? Mr. Greene said however the board wants to handle it. There are no drop dead dates on any of this.

Avery Cares Building

Mr. Greene stated at one of the workshops in July it was mentioned about the Avery Cares Building. Until we figure out what we are going to do with the Ag. Building, we probably don't need to spend a lot of time talking about the Avery Cares Building. We will probably know before June 30, 2016 what we want to do with the Ag. Building which will in turn help us know what we need to do with the Avery Cares Building.

Recreation Property

Mr. Greene stated that we received the grant to purchase the Recreation Property and we closed on it July 1, 2008 and we were supposed to do something by July 1, 2013. During that time the economy tanked and the state graciously worked with us. The state is now saying it is time to use it for what we purchased it for. Robbie and I sat down with Lou Ann Bryant and Pete Armstrong and of course that conversation was about what our plans were for this property. We informed them that we do have a community garden out there but that is not recreational. We talked with them and we threw out some ideas. Robbie and I had decided to come up with some options and run them by the state to see if it would satisfy the grant, some options that would not preclude any future board from doing whatever they wanted to do about that. Robbie came up with some options. When we sat down with Lou Ann Bryant and Pete Armstrong, they both agreed that any of the options that we presented them would satisfy the grant. There are some inexpensive options that would satisfy the grant and close out the grant. Robbie Willis stated that satisfying the grant even with the least amount of requirement will allow us to write future grants for this property. Until we finish this grant, we can't see any more funding.

Mr. Greene handed out a packet to the Board that included drawings of all the options that had been approved by Lou Ann Bryant and Peter Armstrong.

Robbie Willis stated that the white house on the property was vacated as of January 1, 2016. The recreation folks said that was another thing that the state wanted us to do was to quit renting but the good part of the renting was that in the last seven years we have accrued over \$56,000 in an account for the recreation property. There is \$56,000 that you can use toward any of these options. The only way the state would let us rent those houses was as long as we saved the money up to use for further recreation purposes.

Mr. Willis spoke about each option. Mr. Willis explained that he did not make the Walking Path and Area Cleanup as an option because this needed to be done no matter what was put on the property. This would be approximately \$25,000 to do but would satisfy the grant.

The options are:

Option 1---Outdoor Pool

Option 2---Playground, Picnic Shelter, Playing Field, Parking

Option 3---Playing and Practice Fields

Option 4---Playground, Spray Pad, Parking Area

Option 5---Multipurpose Indoor Turf Facility

Each Option was explained by Mr. Willis to the Board and Mr. Willis said that each option could be modified in any way.

Chair Hicks stated that the Town of Newland says that they own so much of this property for the town runoff of water. Mr. Willis stated that the Town of Newland had no rights whatsoever on this property. Reo Griffith questioned if there had been a title search on this property? Mr. Willis stated that he thought when the grant was applied for all of this was done. There was an aquatic engineer that came and looked at the property and he said there was no way that we could hurt it because we would just be making it better for the runoff.

The Board instructed Gerald McKinney, County Attorney, to investigate this matter further.

Mr. Greene stated that from the \$56,000 of the recreation money we could do just one or two things of an option without taking money out of the general fund and be able to close this grant out. We have run all of these options by the state and they said all of these would work. We could actually get this grant closed out by June 30, 2016.

Maxine Laws said she thought a good way to start would be to do the cleanup and walking trail and get the grant closed out so that we could apply for future grants.

Mr. Willis commented about the existing pool. He said that unless we wanted to spend about \$20,000 this year I don't see how we are going to open that pool this summer because we have a massive leak to the tune of about 20,000 gallons per week. We can do it the same way we did it this past summer and pay huge water bills or get it sealed out. We have faced this almost every season; we have to do concrete work and have to paint it every year. Mr. Greene said we have been patching for a number of years and limping along. At some point we will have to face whether we are going to fix this pool up, build a new pool at the recreation property or go completely out of the pool business.

Maxine Laws said "so the plan is Gerald is going to check on the drainage deal and we need to decide on what we want to talk about doing." Mr. Greene said there are some inexpensive options that with money on hand we could close this grant out. Mr. Willis said for \$25,000 we could do this. We have \$56,000 in that account.

Blake Vance said he thought that this should be put on the next agenda of the regular board meeting and get this grant closed out. Then we can make a decision with a clean start.

Reo Griffith said "So what you are saying we can close the grant out for the \$25,000 plan and in a special account that the property has made through rent there is \$56,600 that can go to pay that to get this grant satisfied with Raleigh." Mr. Greene stated yes.

Consensus by the Board to put this issue on the next board meeting agenda in February.

Adjourn

Motion by Reo Griffith and second by Blake Vance to adjourn this meeting at 7:30 p.m. Motion unanimously approved.

Martha Hicks, Chair

ATTEST: _____
Cindy Turbyfill, Clerk