

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF AVERY**

The Avery County Board of Commissioners met in a Special Meeting on Thursday, March 24, 2016 at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioners Board Room, Avery County Administrative Complex, 175 Linville Street, Newland, NC. The purpose of the meeting was to :

1. Receive information and discuss options regarding repair/renovation/new construction for the Avery County Agricultural Extension Building.
2. Discuss swimming pool options.

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

Members Absent: Reo Griffith

Call To Order

Chair Hicks called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.
Chair Hicks read aloud the Special Meeting Notice.

Chair Hicks stated that since Mr. Walker was running a little late that we would proceed with discussing the swimming pool options.

Discussion of Swimming Pool Options – Robbie Willis

Chair Hicks questioned if Robbie had gotten someone to remove the house on the Recreation Property. Mr. Willis stated that he and the County Manager had gone through the house yesterday and made a list of items that was still in the house that will be advertised in the paper for bids. Anything that does not sell we will donate to a local agency. Then we will let people bid out for removal of the house. We have spoken with the State Trail System and they have given their recommendation for the walking trail and we will be letting that out to bid. Tim Greene, County Manager, stated that we looked at the initial bid on the walking trail and went down to Green Valley and looked at that walking trail and then Robbie got with the state to get some of their specs. This will be a nicer trail and longer lasting trail than what we were originally talking about and it may cost more money. There will be enough in the recreation account to cover it. It will probably cost more than what the initial estimate was. Mr. Greene said this bid advertisement should be in next week's paper. We will get three quotes on removal of the house.

Mr. Willis stated that the state of North Carolina, specifically Allen Hughes from the Toe River Health District, had gotten audited in October and Avery County's pool was one of the ten places that had gotten pulled for audit. This year Mr. Hughes gave us a list of what we need to do to open the pool. The amount is \$7500 which would have to be added to the Parks and Recreation budget through a budget amendment. Mr. Willis

explained the items that needed to be taken care of before the pool could be opened for 2016. We usually put in around \$3000 every year.

On the new pool, it is still the same. This would be an L shaped pool. The design to renovate the old pool would be to start with just the hole and that estimate would be around \$850,000. If you want to move the pool over to the Recreation Property, it would be \$1,650,000 and a timeframe of around 26 months.

Maxine Laws stated “you said previously if you had money you could start working on grants and things to help with this, is that still true.” Mr. Willis stated yes it is. There is a new scoring system from the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund and it is detailed word for word what we need to do.

Faith Lacey stated “I think as a board we have agreed that we need privacy around the pool.” Mr. Willis said that was included in the new pool. Ms. Lacey asked what about this summer at the pool? Mr. Willis said that they could get wind screen to go around it. We priced it last year. It would be a 6 foot roll that would start where the top barbed wire is and it will come down to within a foot of the bottom. A roll of that is about \$5000.

Maxine Laws asked how much money would need to be in a fund for Mr. Willis to start applying for grants. Mr. Willis stated that \$500,000 is the most that they would match. That would be a great amount to put in and write grants. The average for a project is around \$300,000. Ms. Laws said so if we put some money into a project fund you can start writing some grants. Mr. Willis said yes.

Blake Vance questioned if we needed to have a direction before grants are written. Mr. Willis answered that yes the first thing would be to decide where you are going to put it. Mr. Vance said that it is going to be more expensive to put it over at the Recreation Property because of infrastructure but the infrastructure is going to have to be done anyway. I think the new board coming on is committed to developing that property.

Mr. Willis gave some examples of new playground equipment.

Chair Hicks stated that her main reason for wanting to move the pool to the recreation property is that it was dangerous at the current location. We have had trouble with parking at the Little League fields. Blake Vance said he was fully in support of moving the pool to the recreation property and doing something else with the current pool location.

Ms. Laws stated so our next step is to allocate some money to this project. Mr. Willis said the board needs to decide where they want to locate the new pool.

Mr. Greene stated that step one would be the board formally voting to do a pool. The second step would be to decide on the location and then the third step would be to allocate money.

Chair Hicks asked Faith Lacey “what is your opinion on putting it on the April meeting to be brought up. We are just saying now to have a consensus to put it on the April agenda.” Ms. Lacey said “so this is not a vote?” Chair Hicks said no. Ms. Lacey said “you already have a consensus.” Chair Hicks stated “well I just want your opinion because you are part of this board.” Ms. Lacey agreed to have it on the April agenda.

Unanimous consensus of the board members present to place the swimming pool options on the April agenda.

Mr. Greene said there are three ways to do the money. If you don't set aside money you pay for it out of the general fund whenever the time comes. The second thing would be to do a capital reserve fund and the third thing would be to do a capital project fund. The capital project fund would not be until you get ready to do it, the capital reserve would be if you see you are going to do this in the next year or so and put money aside in a capital reserve fund and then when it got time to do the project you would take it out of a capital reserve and put it in a capital project fund.

Maxine Laws said so if we go with a capital project fund then he knows that money is there. Mr. Greene said to do a capital project fund we might have to be a little further into the project but we will have Nancy Johnson, Finance Director, research that. Blake Vance said I bet we will have to do capital reserve and then go to a capital project fund.

Blake Vance said he would like to talk about a facility that would be 12 months such as an indoor pool or hybrid. Mr. Willis said that for about \$500,000 we can get it completely covered but also opens on both sides. This would be 12 months usage versus a 2 ½ months usage. Chair Hicks said she thought that was a good idea because it would cut down on repairs. Mr. Willis said the longest that the current pool had ever been in operation in one year was 83 days. The average is about 75 days. Mr. Willis said the cost to operate is less year round than it is seasonal because of the opening and closing costs.

Faith Lacy asked “How much would you have to raise the taxes to build this pool? Would you have to raise the taxes or is there money here?” Mr. Greene stated “there would be money here currently. Ms. Lacey asked “about how many cents would you have to raise the taxes.” Mr. Greene stated that you would have to look at the overall budget and the overall projects that were going on. Blake Vance said there is no reason to raise taxes, the money is there. Ms. Lacey stated that we have committed to fix the school. Maxine Laws said if we put in what Robbie says he needs we should be able to do that without a problem. Mr. Willis said we will need to have a date of commitment when we are going to start breaking ground and all of that in place when the grant goes out. Blake Vance said we have money to do the things that we need to do. We have money to do this. We have money do what we need to do to the ag. building. If we raid the fund balance like we did last year to balance the budget, that will become a problem. Chair Hicks said if you cut taxes you will have more come out of it.

Mr. Willis said that he would need a budget amendment to fix the current pool for this year. Chair Hicks said that could be put on the April agenda.

Recess

Chair Hicks called for a brief recess.

Chair Hicks declared the meeting to be back in session after a brief recess.

Agricultural Extension Building

Mr. Greene introduced Glen Walker who is the structural engineer who looked at the Agricultural Extension Building. At a subsequent meeting we talked about engaging him to go out there and actually draw some plans to renovate. Of course there are several options. One option is doing nothing. The second option is to just address the structural issues. The third option is to do a full blown renovation and then the final option would be to relocate and construct a new building. That is what we are here to discuss.

Glen Walker explained that he was a registered engineer in North Carolina and Virginia and had his license since 1965. He stated that he worked on a lot of large buildings. Most of the engineering work has been on are renovations and small jobs.

Mr. Walker said he has basically gone into the building to see how it can be used in the future. In talking to the personnel in there and in my judgements, we have come up with this plan. We have a site plan and a plan of the ground floor and plan of the upper floor. Part of the ground floor has a parking area on top. That is going to be complicated to waterproof. The best option would be to dig out all around the building and waterproof the outside but that is impossible because on the front side when they renovated the building they back filled with concrete and it would be almost impossible to take that out and re-pour another wall. I thought about using a sophisticated interior waterproofing and then framing over it on the inside and there would need to be extra shoring to shore up that wall that was built on the front. We have added an elevator because of the grade in the back it is almost impossible to get handicapped people in the lower level which is projected to be used a good deal more than it is now at periods of time. The bathrooms upstairs will need to comply with code. In talking with Mr. Tommy Burleson he informs me that he is going through the county and tagging all of the facilities for compliance of handicapped in accordance with some state regulations and I am sure when he gets to this building the existing facility will not pass. There is not a way to get a wheelchair in the bathroom or turn a wheelchair around in a unit. The fixtures are not wheelchair accessible. We will need enough facilities to handle the meeting rooms. On the bottom floor we wind up with 5265 square feet, on the upper floor 3790 square feet that totals about 9000 square feet. When I compared this with a new building I assumed you would build a little extra. I assumed you would build 10,000 feet. If we take the old building it is going to cost somewhere around \$450,000 to do what I have projected here. You will notice on the lower level plan is that we have spaces that are not used because we have the bracing up the wall and they have to stay there and I put a petition at the bracing. I was informed that they needed space to store inventory in a locked area. That and the configuration of the building makes the

building some inefficient. We are paying top dollar for storage area. This would make it more inefficient than a new building.

Mr. Walker went over the plans with the Board. I estimate the cost of this renovation to be around \$450,000 and that is without the windows. Mr. Walker said he considered the building being two levels and with the spaces down there not being accessible except by elevator to be 80% efficient versus a building that is all on one floor. The building is a little too narrow to get the office sizes the right size and the hallways are too narrow. This was not built for a hallway and offices of today's requirements. There is approximately 7200 square feet and if we say the out of pocket money is \$500,000, a new building at 10,000 square feet would cost around \$740,000 including some architect fees. This would be an economical building. This would be a metal frame structure with brick and metal roof. If we had to buy land at \$150,000 we would end up with about \$900,000 out of pocket cost for this new building and we were at \$500,000 on the old building and it is only 80% efficient. The old building could probably be sold for \$250,000. That is going to put us at \$750,000 the value of the old building if we renovate.

Mr. Walker said what I have designed works but it doesn't lay out well because of the shape of the building and the width of the building and so forth.

Maxine Laws said it was her recollection that previously she had asked Mr. Walker if we renovate this building when would we expect to spend more money and if memory serves me right he said in a couple of years you are going to have to have new paving and you will need to have a paving company on hand because that would have to be addressed every couple of years. One of my thoughts was in this building you can count how many parking spots are on the top level which means everybody else would have to park somewhere downstairs to enter the building. I think we counted 13 spaces on the upstairs level and none on the bottom. Mr. Walker explained to get an exit that is required we would have to build an extra walk around the perimeter of the building and this walk is going to be elevated because the grade goes off pretty quickly and we will have to have stairs to go around.

Tami Hagie said that they currently have no meeting room that would hold more than 13 people and that they must use other facilities for any workshops or meetings.

Blake Vance said maybe I am oversimplifying this but the building is worth \$372,000. It is going to cost \$500,000 to renovate it. Is the building going to be worth \$800,000 when we finish renovating it? It is going to cost 2/3 to renovate what it would cost to get a bigger, better, nicer building. Maybe I am oversimplifying that but I think you would have to be stupid to put 1/2 million dollars into a \$300,000 dollar building. Martha Hicks said and then every two years have to come back and have the paving done. Faith Lacey stated that this should have been taken care of years ago. Blake Vance said we can't do anything about what should have been done years ago we have to deal with what we have now.

Maxine Laws asked in the front where the posts are downstairs did you not say that underneath the paving could be a hazard too because of the water seeping in. Mr. Walker stated the question was asked of him if he could warranty the waterproofing that I am going to put on the interior and I said no because it is a good waterproofing but once the water gets through the masonry it is hard to keep it out of the building. The reason we can't replace that front wall is that it is so thick because they backfilled with concrete. It would be thousands of dollars to take that wall out and redo it.

Maxine Laws said she thought our next step is to get this on our April agenda.

Mr. Greene said that there would be options like would you want to do anything with the ag building, do you want to do renovation at the old, or do you want to build new.

Martha Hicks asked if there was a consensus to put the Agricultural Building on the April agenda. Maxine Laws and Blake Vance agreed.

Faith Lacey was leaving the meeting and Ms. Hicks asked her as she was leaving if she consented for it to be on the April meeting agenda and she said yes.

Faith Lacey left the meeting at 10:25 a.m.

Consensus by the board members present to put the Agricultural Extension Building on the April agenda.

Maxine Laws asked if the board was going to discuss what option we wanted at the April meeting and then discuss if we want to set aside some money on this project. Tim Greene said yes.

Tim Greene said we will have a capital reserve resolution drawn up or you could say draw us up one after the April meeting. Chair Hicks said she thought that it needed to be drawn up before the meeting and move along. Tim and Nancy can decide on the capital project or resolution. Mr. Greene said that on a capital reserve fund when money goes into that fund it can only be spent for capital. You can change the project to whatever you want to. When you get ready to do a project you can switch that out of the capital reserve fund into a capital project fund.

Martha Hicks said that it has been talked that this ag. building could be built at the fairgrounds. Mr. Walker said there is a nice place at the end for a building but you would have to play with it to get the parking all around the building.

Maxine Laws said she thought that it would be nice to have something big enough to have functions.

Mr.. Greene said to do a resolution for the capital reserve initially we need an amount. We need an amount and also approximate time. Based upon what Robbie was saying if the board decides to do that we were talking 1.5 million for the pool plus ½ million for

the building over the pool; we are talking one million dollars for the ag. building. The approximate times would be two years for both projects.

Tim Greene questioned Mr. Walker if we do nothing to the ag. building is there some safety concerns. Mr. Walker said that the floor loading does not meet present code. If you have a catastrophe, a court would consider that you would be liable. I certainly think that you have some liability. If you don't plan to do anything in the next year, we need to do something to the floor and shore it up. Mr. Walker said it is almost going to be impossible to renovate the building and have anyone working in the building. You would have to vacate the building to renovate. Ms. Laws said we will have to tack on to the cost with moving them and finding them somewhere else while renovating.

Chair Hicks adjourned this meeting at 10:40 am.

Martha Hicks, Chair
Avery County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST: _____
Cindy Turbyfill, Clerk