

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF AVERY**

The Avery County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Monday, October 17, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in the Commissioners Board Room, Avery County Administrative Complex, 175 Linville Street, Newland, NC.

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 6:00 p.m.

Blake Vance led prayer.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Chair Hicks stated that the agenda would be rearranged to allow the Board to go into Closed Session at the beginning of the meeting.

Chair Hicks read the statement as follows:

The time limit for any comment to the Board is three minutes. Board members are not expected to comment or take any action on matters during public comment. Any individual speaking during public comment shall address the entire Board. Any person who willfully interrupts, disturbs, or disrupts the session will be asked to leave the meeting. If you would like to speak to an agenda item, you must sign up on the sheet with the clerk. Time limit to speak to an agenda item is also three minutes. Please silence all cell phones or electronic devices.

There were no public comments.

Closed Session

Motion by Maxine Laws and second by Blake Vance to go into Closed Session at 6:04 p.m. regarding N.C.G.S. 143-318.11 (a)(4) Location or Expansion of Industry. Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0). Invitees are Board, County Manager, Clerk and County Attorney and any others from the audience that we may need.

Chair Hicks declared the meeting to be back in Regular Session after a time of Closed Session at 6:25 p.m.

During Closed Session, no vote was taken.

Chair Hicks announced that any citizen that wanted to comment about the agricultural building project would need to sign up on a sheet with the clerk.

Board Appointments

There are two applications for two positions on the Agricultural Advisory Board to review. These are for two year terms; Brandon Townsend, Jim Phillips.

Fair Housing Complaint Procedure

At the September 6, 2016 Regular meeting, the Board adopted a procedure for the Fair Housing Complaint and there needed to be some more language added to the document which says that the document will be posted in the County Administration Building and Courthouse and published in the local newspaper.

Motion by Blake Vance and second by Maxine Laws to adopt the Fair Housing Complaint Procedure with the new language added. Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).

Public Hearing—Community Transportation Program- Avery Transportation – Debbie Smith

Motion by Faith Lacey and second by Maxine Laws to go into a time of Public Hearing at 6:30 p.m. regarding the Community Transportation Program for Avery Transportation. Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).

Debbie Smith, Avery County Transportation Director, explained that she was here to discuss the 5311 Community Transportation Grant. This is a grant that is funded by the Federal Transit Administration and by the state with a matching portion from the county. This is the grant that we use the money for our transportation department for administrative expenses. This year they are allowing us to use a portion of the money for some operating expenses. This is also the grant that we get capital funds from. We go by the capital schedule from the state. When items are outdated we are able to request new but it is not a guarantee that we will receive these from the state. The state addresses each issue to make sure that it is an allowable expense. The grant funds are used for people in non-urbanized areas to help with health care, shopping, education, employment, public services and recreation. This is a public hearing to hear public comment from any of the public. We are looking at trying to replace some of our radio equipment, probably trying to get some resurfacing done on the parking lot. We have an issue with the front door to the building. We have a very small increase from the state this year on this grant around \$3,000 from what it was last year. We do have some public comment forms and we ask that the audience fill out one of these forms. I am requesting approval of two resolutions with this grant. The total amount of the grant without changes being made would be \$295,820. The local portion total is \$55,487 dollars. These are subject to change as the application process goes along.

Tommy Burleson stated that Avery County Transportation is a wonderful asset to the county.

Motion by Blake Vance and second by Maxine Laws to go out of the Public Hearing for the Community Transportation Program at 6:37 p.m. Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).

Motion by Maxine Laws and second by Blake Vance to adopt the Community Transportation Program Resolution FY 2018. Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).

Motion by Maxine Laws and second by Blake Vance to adopt the 5311 Designee Certification Resolution. Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).

Interlocal Agreement Between Mitchell County Central Communications and Avery County

Mr. Greene stated that at a Special Meeting on May 16, 2016 the Board of Commissioners adopted a resolution in support of a grant application for Mitchell County's E911 Center that could also be used as a backup for surrounding counties. As part of that grant, each county would need to sign an interlocal agreement. This interlocal agreement will establish an understanding between the participating agencies for the continuity of public safety communication services. Mr. Greene read a statement from the interlocal agreement; "this interlocal agreement shall serve to meet grant requirements as defined by the NC 911 Board along with defining the responsibility of any claw back provisions attached to the grant as the responsibility of Mitchell County solely." Basically, we need to have a motion to adopt the interlocal agreement and sign with Mitchell County as a condition for them getting the grant.

Motion by Blake Vance and second by Maxine Laws to adopt the Interlocal Agreement between Mitchell County Central Communications and Avery County. Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).

N.C. Department of Commerce Building Reuse Grant Program – Kelly Coffey; Bill Slagle

Kelly Coffey, High Country Council of Government, reported that this is a program from the NC Department of Commerce called the Building Reuse Grant Program. A company has requested the county apply for funds for this program in order to fund renovations of the building that they intend to occupy. The grant amount is determined by the number of jobs created. The company proposes to create five jobs with a total grant of \$50,000. The grant does require a match equal to the grant amount and does require that the local government applicant provide at least 5% of that match. The grant program does have a claw back provision; if the jobs are not created, the company must repay \$10,000 for each job. If you decide to apply it will be necessary to pass a resolution authorizing the application and committing to 5% grant match.

Motion by Blake Vance and second by Maxine Laws to return to Closed Session at 6:44 p.m. regarding N.C. G.S. 143-318.11 (a)(4) Location or Expansion of Industry. Invitees are the Board, Clerk, County Manager, County Attorney, and Mr. Coffey, Mr. Slagle and Mr. Burleson and others as needed. Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).

Chair Hicks declared the meeting to be back in Regular Session after a time of Closed Session at 7:30 p.m. During closed session, no vote was taken.

Tim Greene, County Manager, stated that the Department of Commerce offers a Reuse Building Grant to local governments for the renovation of vacant buildings. The businesses must create new full time jobs as a result of the new renovation. The local government lends the grant funds to the property owner in the form of a deferred forgivable loan. A company has come to us and requested that Avery County apply for this grant to aid in his renovation of the building at the Addco site in Linville. Avery County would have to provide a 5% match and that match can go toward grant administration.

Gerald McKinney, County Attorney, stated “we would need a resolution to apply for the N.C. Department of Commerce Building Reuse Grant project known as Project Balloon.”

Motion by Blake Vance and second by Maxine Laws to adopt the Resolution to apply for the N.C. Department of Commerce Building Reuse Grant project known as Project Balloon. Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).

Community Input Concerning the Design of the New Agricultural Building—Jerry Moody

Chair Hicks announced that if anyone would like to speak that they must sign up on the sheet with the clerk.

Jerry Moody presented a power point presentation regarding the Agricultural Cooperative Extension and the design needs for the new building. The audience was polled on different aspects of the design needs.

Sheriff Kevin Frye commented that one of the things that I think we have not been taking care of in this county is an emergency shelter. I think it is something we should consider. We may not have long term disasters but when we have ice storms and severe snow storms and the power is out we have to shelter workers and families for two or three weeks. We need a place that we can house people. If you are going to do that it does need to have showers. If you are going to do it, do it right the first time.

Larry Cuthbertson stated that we have a problem findings shelter when we bring other emergency personnel into the county to help us. As far as the rescue squad or fire departments if we have anything during the middle of the night, we don't have anything to do with them. If we had a commercial kitchen to feed the people, that would be great.

Charisse Cuthbertson said that she worked with the Children's Council of Watauga and the Blue Ridge Partnership for Children and the one thing that I see this building being used for is board meetings, trainings for child care workers and also, trainings for rescue squads from multiple counties.

Tim Phillips stated that from a Mountain Electric standpoint if we have a widespread electrical outage we are going to bring in 15-20 crews from other co-ops and other states. The initial worker will work 24 hours and then as we go out to a week or so we will cut back to 16 hour days. To have a place to have a hot meal and maybe some cots to house those guys would be great. A generator for the building would be a fantastic idea. If you do build now and think about expanding you need conduits; you never have enough conduits.

Debbie Smith stated that my family property joins the property of Heritage Park. I have spoken with my brothers and they are asking that when work begins on the property that drainage from the rain is all done correctly and that is something Jerry is working on. We have a cemetery next to the property so make sure that the driveway is left open. There is a piece of property adjoining that property that is being leased to a cell phone company. I would also like to speak on the emergency training. I am one of the board members for the Toe River Emergency Management and they have a huge training every year that involves Avery, Mitchell and Yancey and we could utilize a meeting space. We also need a facility we can use for some of the Fair.

Bobbie Willard stated "I am a proponent for a demo kitchen and a stage."

Michelle South, Livestock Agent, stated that we need an area where we can have meetings for the livestock association. We need a commercial kitchen to allow producers to go in and package their meat and then have refrigeration and freezer next to that. We need plenty of storage space and we need a lab space. An arena for our livestock producers is much needed also.

Jennifer Greene, Executive Director of the Christmas Tree Association, stated that we have 260 members. The office is located in Boone but we hold two meetings every year and the winter meeting in February we have in Boone but due to space and restrictions and cost we have had to find another location. When it is in Avery County we struggle for an appropriate meeting space.

Amos Nidiffer, Trosler Farm in Elk Park, said the commercial kitchen is a great idea. At our farm we put in a commercial kitchen but had we had a kitchen available when we started four years ago we could have slowly built our business and had a little room to experiment and see if that is the direction we wanted to go. I know what it takes to have a commercial kitchen and a lot of folks are unable to meet the requirements. Something that is fee based works.

Doug Hundley commented that a meeting space with a stage is much needed. A commercial kitchen is also needed.

Elaine Ollis, livestock producer, requested a space for a freezer system for meat producers. A meeting space is needed desperately.

Maxine Laws stated that she was very excited about the building.

Blake Vance thanked everyone for coming out. The project is approved. We are negotiating with architects now to begin a design phase.

Martha Hicks stated that the visits to different agricultural facilities were very educational. We want Avery County to be as good as any other county. We have one million dollars set aside. We may have to do this project in phases. Thank you for coming out.

Recess

Chair Hicks called for a brief recess.

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

County Manager Updates – Tim Greene

The gazebo is finished. Tentative date for dedication is Wednesday, November 2, 2016 at 1:00 p.m.

Finance Officer Report

No report.

County Attorney Report

No report.

Upcoming Meetings

The next Regular Meeting will be November 7, 2016 and that meeting will begin at 3:30 p.m. instead of 6:00 p.m.

Adjourn

Motion by Maxine Laws and second by Blake Vance to adjourn this meeting at 9:00 p.m. Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).

Martha Hicks, Chair
Avery County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST: _____
Cindy Turbyfill, Clerk

