

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF AVERY**

The Avery County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Monday, December 3, 2007 at 3:00 p.m. in their offices, Avery County Administrative Complex, Newland, NC.

Members Present: Kenny Poteat, Chairman; Susan Pittman, Vice-Chair; Phyllis Forbes and Scott Heath

Members Absent: Dan South

Call to Order

Chairman Poteat called the meeting to order at 3:09 p.m.
Scott Heath offered prayer.

Organizational Meeting

Election of Officers

Chairman Poteat turned the meeting over to the County Manager for the purpose of election of officers.

Election of Chairman

Robert Wiseman, County Manager, asked for nominations for Chairman of the Board.

Motion by Phyllis Forbes and second by Scott Heath to nominate Kenny Poteat as Chairman of the Board. There were no further nominations.

Vote: Motion unanimously approved with 4 members in attendance.

Chairman Poteat then assumed the Chair. He also thanked the Board for the confidence and support which they have shown him in electing him as their Chairman.

Amend Agenda

The County Manager advised that the Tax Assessor should have been appointed as of July 1, 2007 per the General Statutes. He asked that the Board make that appointment today as part of their meeting. The Board agreed by consensus to amend the Agenda in order to make this appointment.

Election of Vice-Chair

Motion by Phyllis Forbes to nominate Susan Pittman as Vice-Chair. Second by Scott Heath and unanimously approved with 4 members in attendance. There were no further nominations.

Vote: Motion unanimously approved with 4 members in attendance.

Appointment of Officers

County Manager

Motion by Susan Pittman and second by Scott Heath to appoint Robert Wiseman as County Manager. Motion unanimously approved with 4 members in attendance.

Finance Officer

Motion by Phyllis Forbes to reappoint Tim Greene as Finance Officer. Motion seconded by Susan Pittman and unanimously approved with 4 members in attendance.

County Attorney

Motion by Susan Pittman to reappoint Michaelle Poore as County Attorney. Motion seconded by Scott Heath and unanimously approved with 4 members in attendance.

Clerk to the Board

Motion by Susan Pittman to reappoint Nancy Cook as Clerk to the Board. Motion seconded by Phyllis Forbes and unanimously approved with 4 members in attendance.

Chairman Poteat advised that Nancy will be retiring as of December 31, 2007 with over 26 years of service. Scott Heath commented that this position is not just a secretarial position. It is a position with a lot of responsibilities and for someone who knows how to handle a lot of information and knows how to deal with the public. The Board expressed their appreciation for the job Nancy has done for the County. The Clerk also expressed her appreciation to the Board for their support over the past 26 years.

Tax Assessor Reappointment

Motion by Phyllis Forbes and second by Scott Heath to reappoint Phillip Barrier as Tax Assessor for Avery County for a 4 year term. Motion unanimously approved with 4 members in attendance.

Board Appointments:

Village of Sugar Mountain

Chairman Poteat advised that the Village of Sugar Mountain has requested that the Board make various appointments to their Planning Board and Board of Adjustments; however, those are not the normal appointments we usually do and they need to be handled differently. This is something which has stemmed from the extra-territorial jurisdiction zoning of the Village of Sugar Mountain and will require a public hearing, notifications, applications, etc. Until we receive further information from our attorney, County Manager or from Sugar Mountain, I recommend that we put this matter on hold, Poteat said. Michaelle Poore agreed. She said she felt it was not right for the Board to consider these appointments since there has not been a public hearing and that nothing else can be done by the County on this until a public hearing has been held. She added that if 90 days passes and nothing has been done by the County, then Sugar Mountain can make their own appointments.

Economic Development Commission Appointments

The Board considered a request from the EDC to reappoint John Greene, Rachel Deal and Bill Close to the EDC for a term of 3 years each.

Motion by Susan Pittman to reappoint John Greene, Rachel Deal and Bill Close to serve a 3 year term on the EDC for Avery County. Motion seconded by Scott Heath and unanimously approved with 4 members in attendance.

Tax Collector Report

Phillip Barrier presented the Tax Collector Report in the absence of Mary Daniels, Tax Collector. Mrs. Daniels has advised that the Deputy Collector is out due to family illness and that she needs to remain in the office today.

Phillip Barrier stated that collections for the month of November 2007 until present are \$2,400,384.15. Most of this number is from the 2007 tax bills which are due January 5.

Motion by Phyllis Forbes and second by Scott Heath to approve the Tax Collection Report as presented. Motion unanimously approved with 4 members in attendance.

Tax Assessor Report – Phillip Barrier

The Board congratulated Phillip Barrier on his recent re-appointment as Tax Assessor. Phillip thanked the Board and stated that it is a pleasure for him to serve this Board and the taxpayers of Avery County. I just got back from the Assessor's Conference and from what I have seen and in comparison to other counties, I think the employees here do a great job for Avery County, Barrier said.

Motor Vehicle Releases

Phillip Barrier presented Motor Vehicle releases in amount of \$148.92 County tax, \$16.24 Fire Tax, and \$11.62 city tax.

Motion by Susan Pittman and second by Scott Heath to approve the list of Motor Vehicle Releases as presented. Motion unanimously approved with 4 members in attendance.

Real Property Appraiser

Phillip Barrier advised that Dustin Potter from Crossnore was recently hired as a Real Property Appraiser for the Assessor's Department. He will begin work on December 10, 2007.

Elderly/Disabled Exclusions

Phillip Barrier reported on the recent changes from the General Assembly with regard to Elderly & Disabled Exclusions. The exclusion went from an income of \$20,500 to \$25,000. This will open the door for a lot of elderly citizens in the County. If you are 65 years or older and make less than \$25,000 and are a permanent resident, you need to fill out an application for this exclusion, or if you are a disabled person who makes less than \$25,000 per year, Barrier said. Applications will be accepted from now until June 1, 2008. This information will be printed on the Tax Notices we send out at the end of this month and will also be included in the Listing Form, Barrier said. Persons already in the system do not need to reapply if their income stays within the guidelines. Mobile homes have to be listed each year as they are considered personal property. However, stick-built homes do not have to be listed each year if no changes are made to them such as new additions or something requiring a permit.

Farmland Preservation Program & Agricultural Board – Jerry Moody

Jerry Moody, County Extension Director, asked the Board to appoint the Agricultural Advisory Board that will run the Farmland Preservation Program, which was passed in Avery County in 1992. That program has been in limbo since it was approved, and we are trying to resurrect it for a couple of reasons, one of which is that N.C. is one of the top 5 states in loss of farmland in the United States. In 2005, N.C. lost 100 farms, which equated to about 30,000 acres. The loss of the family farm is pretty important and this program is a notification program which helps in recognizing that fact and keeping everyone's attention on farming, Moody said. We have come up with a list of 9 persons willing to serve on the Avery County Agricultural Board as follows: Harry Smith – 2 year term; Rob Johnson – 1 yr. term; Gary Edwards – 2 yr. term; Jack Wiseman, Jr. – 3 yr. term; Anne Coleman – 1 yr. term; Ellis Aycock – 3 yr. term; Waightstill Avery – 2 yr. term; Gerald Arthur – 1 yr. term; and Larry Smith – 3 yr. term.

My other request is about matching funds to help fund the program, Moody said. \$8 million dollars was funded to the Agricultural Trust Fund this year to help with programs like this one. I spoke with them about it and because we don't have a County Farmland Protection Program in place, we have to do a 30% match. The most that we would ask for would be \$30,000, but realistically we are probably looking at \$10,000, which means that a 30% match would be \$3,000. If we get a grant for \$30,000, the County will be responsible for \$9,000, or 30% of the total. I have not applied for the grant yet since I have not received approval from this Board, Moody said.

Discussion on the recommended list of 9 persons to serve on the Agricultural Board. There are 5 agricultural districts in the County and each district has representation on this Agricultural Board as well as some at-large members. Each district would have at least 1 representative on this new board. Discussion held on request for matching funds of up to \$9,000 if this grant is awarded. Jerry Moody also explained how this program will help the farmer. North Carolina has two farm laws that protect farmers to help them stay in business so they don't get run out by nuisance lawsuits. This helps farmers by letting them know that people will be buying land in a farm area. This is more of a notification program than anything else, Moody said. Scott Heath said he feels we need to preserve our farmland and that he hopes this will protect the farmland from ourselves or future boards so the land won't be taken. Jerry advised that the Farmland Protection Ordinance is not a strong ordinance, but it will help us to get the ball rolling. This ordinance was passed by the Commissioners in 1992, but never implemented as far as I can tell, Moody said. As to matching funds, the grant will be awarded in March 2008, so we would need funding after that date. Chris Vance explained about public notification regarding this program. Moody added that this information will be on the Tax Assessor and Register of Deeds websites as it is in other counties with this program. Scott Heath said we have very restrictive development regulations in this County and we also need to protect our agriculture side. The Finance Officer advised that the Board could make the commitment now for the \$9,000 in matching funds and if the grant comes through, they could then approve a Budget Amendment.

Appointments – Agricultural Advisory Board

Motion by Susan Pittman to approve the list of nominees to serve on the Agricultural Advisory Board for the recommended terms as follows: Harry Smith – 2 yr. term; Rob Johnson – 1 yr. term; Gary Edwards – 2 yr. term; Jack Wiseman, Jr. – 3 yr. term; Anne Coleman – 1 yr. term; Ellis Aycock – 3 yr. term; Waightstill Avery – 2 yr. term; Gerald Arthur -1 yr. term; and Larry Smith – 3 yr. term. Motion seconded by Scott Heath and unanimously approved with 4 members in attendance.

Commitment for Grant Funds for Farmland Preservation Program

Motion by Phyllis Forbes and second by Susan Pittman to monetarily support the Farmland Preservation Agricultural Board with a commitment of up to \$9,000. When the grant goes through, we will then make a budget amendment to honor that commitment. Motion unanimously approved with 4 members in attendance.

Robert Wiseman discussed with the Board the Memo of Understanding which the County has executed in the past with A&T University and which states what the County, the State and A&T University would be responsible for in regard to our Agriculture Extension Service. There would only be some minor changes necessary in the wording of this document and a signature required by either the Chairman or his designee. Wiseman said that since the document needs to be turned in before Christmas, that if the Board would allow him to serve as designee, that he would work with Jerry Moody and Tim Greene on this matter and report back to this Board at the next meeting if any changes are required. The Board approved this request by consensus.

County Manager Report – Robert Wiseman

Day Care Facility in Banner Elk

Robert Wiseman advised that he has discussed this matter with the County Attorney and provided her with a copy of the Resolution adopted by the Banner Elk Town Council regarding the Day Care facility. We are now at the point of accepting transfer of title to the property from Banner Elk to Avery County. He advised that there is some wording in there that we might want to look at before we prepare a deed transferring the property from Banner Elk to Avery County that would make it clear that it is a transfer of title in Fee Simple. After that, if everything is straight with the High Country Child Development for a 6 month lease which our attorney will draw up, that will allow us time between now and the start of the next fiscal year for preliminary planning to take place to decide if we want to incorporate a child care facility in the scope of the Banner Elk School project, Wiseman said. We need to know that before we start making plans to proceed from this point. I am asking that the County Attorney and the Manager's Office be given authority to prepare the documents and present them to Banner Elk, Wiseman said. Michaelle Poore added that we could prepare the deed and forward it to the Town of Banner Elk for execution. We need to do this before January 1, Wiseman said, per request from Banner Elk.

The Chairman explained that Banner Elk doesn't really want to be in the day care business and support of a building and the associated expenses, but they want day care services to continue in their area, whether in that building or elsewhere. We are talking about taking ownership of that Day Care building and continuing Day Care services in that same building for an unspecified amount of time until we make a decision on how to best handle Day Care for that area, Wiseman said. The great concern has been continuity and continuation of the services that have been provided in that area. I think the current situation as it exists does not give that security. We are putting our neck on the line for the citizens of Banner Elk, not for the town itself, Wiseman said. He added that he felt that this project can be a self-supporting operation. If we can provide continuity for those services by being the lessor in a break-even situation, we can provide that security for those folks, Wiseman said. Scott Heath said he has never felt that what we are doing here is getting into the day care business. I think we are continuing to provide a facility and leasing to Region D, who is the one in the day care business. Wiseman said that he needs a consensus from the Board on this matter today. The Board then approved his request by consensus and instructed Wiseman to continue working on this project.

Automatic Payroll Deposit

Robert Wiseman advised that in an effort to streamline our operation and get more efficient and effective in the administrative area, we feel we can enhance our productivity by cutting staff and administrative time when it comes to the payroll. In order to do this, we would like to start an automatic deposit system for payroll. We are doing pretty good right now, but we are falling behind the times in this area and in the future I think we need to consider this as the pros outweigh the cons. This would have to be an all or nothing situation; everybody would have to participate in order to do it. Most of the surrounding counties don't do payroll the way we do. The Board briefly discussed this issue. The Chairman asked if the Manager could do a survey of the County employees to see how they feel about automatic deposit of their paychecks before we make a decision. Wiseman advised that we can also get some input from our County Audit Firm about this issue as to whether it is good/bad, etc. and then consider it in the future.

Annual Audit Report – Young, Miller & Gillespie – Sharon Gillespie

Prior to giving the Annual Audit Report, Sharon Gillespie commented on the Manager's recommendation regarding automatic payroll deposit. She said that several of her firm's larger clients have gone to automatic deposit. It would help with staff time and efficiency she said. Once the bugs are worked out, no one seems to have any problem with handling payroll in this manner. She also advised that she feels that you should include either all or none of the employees if you go to automatic deposit; otherwise, you have to run two payrolls and you are not utilizing staff time effectively.

Ms. Gillespie thanked the Board for having her firm as our auditors again this year. She said that Avery County once again had a good audit and has received an unqualified opinion on their audit. She added that our good audit speaks highly of the financial information we are getting from our Finance Officer, Tim Greene. Gillespie reported that Avery County has \$36 million in net assets, debt of \$11 million and net assets of \$24.9 million. Avery had \$27.9 million coming in and total expenses of \$26.4 million for a \$3.5 million total profit. She added that the County has plans for most of those funds. Ms. Gillespie said that Avery County did a good job in budgeting and controlling expenditures this year.

Avery County had a 98.03% tax collection rate this year, which is higher than the statewide average, Gillespie said. We also had a 93% motor vehicle collection rate this year. Avery County is in the top 8%

or higher statewide in collections. Robert Wiseman said we need to recognize our Tax Collector and also our County Attorney for the fine work they are doing in collections.

Ms. Gillespie said that Avery had a great year financially and that her firm is pleased to be a part of this county that seems to be under very strong fiscal management over the past few years. We have seen a complete 180 degrees from when we first started auditing this County, Gillespie said.

Ms. Gillespie then pointed out one significant deficiency in internal controls—segregation of duties. She advised that this is pointed out each year and will probably always be pointed out since most businesses could not possibly afford to hire enough employees to make sure that this deficiency does not exist.

Ms. Gillespie just cautioned the Board to continue to stay on top of the financial matters of the County. Scott Heath spoke briefly about our internal controls and wanted everyone to understand that even though we only have a few people involved, we still have internal controls and we are a low risk auditee with checks and balances in our system. Robert Wiseman agreed, stating that we can never hire enough people to cover all the bases. We have just covered one big gap by hiring Terry Whelan, Wiseman said. He will serve as the backup for our Finance Officer and our Finance Officer will cover for me. Ms. Gillespie agreed that Avery County is segregated to the fullest extent possible.

Ms. Gillespie advised that Avery County has been designated as a Low Risk Auditee because we have had no major findings within the last two years in our audit.

Motion by Phyllis Forbes and second by Susan Pittman to approve the audit report as presented. Motion unanimously approved with 4 members in attendance.

EDC Report – Bill Close

Mr. Bill Close, EDC Director, presented an EDC Report to the Board. Chairman Poteat thanked Mr. Close and the EDC Board for all the work they are doing. Mr. Close introduced members of their Board as follows, Bill Close, Chair; John Greene, Vice-Chair; Rachel Deal, Treasurer; Dempsey Clark and John Angel in attendance today. The remaining members were unable to attend for various reasons -- Dennis Aldridge, Dr. Suzanne Owens, Myra Brinkley and David Rash. Mr. Close said that they are a very dedicated group of people and their group is now 2 years old. He advised that they have conducted 6 Town Hall meetings over the past year, did a survey which took over 1 year and also made recommendations which are included in the Board packet.

Mr. Close presented the Board with a list of EDC recommendations. Mr. Close advised that his group feels that a part-time Assistant EDC Director position has merit. Chairman Poteat recommended that Mr. Close work with the Manager on this matter for the upcoming budget year.

Increased lobbying efforts at the state and federal level for increased funding for our local highway system was also a recommendation. Close said that when his group was formed and started reaching out with regional and federal written communications, people started saying that it was good that we were working in this direction.

Also recommended was to promote methods to increase availability of “Blue Collar Worker” standard housing. Mr. Close said that his group has some suggestions on this issue. Our mission is to promote new businesses in the area. We are trying to provide a better atmosphere for the people in the County, Close said.

Mr. Close advised that his group is also recommending increasing public perception and opinion of the County government through a program to better inform the public. Close advised that his group wants to bring to the Board’s attention that a lot of the respondents on the EDC Survey question how government works. We don’t think there is a question as to trustworthiness, but there is a lack of education as to the information that is given out, Close said. People don’t know how hard you work in making decisions, Close added. Fifty-nine percent of the respondents rate government in the bottom of the 5 categories and 88% put their opinion of government in the lower two categories. We feel that you work very hard and are very responsible. The budget report was very good and was favorable again this year as it was last year.

We feel that the Board needs to be pro-active rather than reactive when it comes to protecting the heritage and culture of our county while balancing the new growth as it affects our citizens and long term residents. We are encouraging you to be even more pro-active to protect that, Close said.

We feel that the citizens and EDC have spoken. We have 28-30 subjects that came up during our Town Hall Meetings, and all of these items were brought up by our citizens to bring to you. Our job a year ago

was to tell you what the citizens were saying, Close said. We have a list of 31 suggestions for you; they are not in priority order. Dr. Owens at Mayland and her staff offered to take this survey and computerize it. All of these statistics were created electronically for us. We have 156 surveys and 75-80% have written comments on them. These surveys are available for this Board to read, Close said. We feel that a lot of things we are touching on can be improved by marketing. If we can go out and market Avery County, it will be a tremendous step. We have fallen off the edge of the world when it comes to marketing our County, Close said. He then referred to lack of information about Avery County in publications such as Golf Guide, Blue Ridge Parkway Map and the High Country Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Plan for 2000. We are not listed in most of these publications. Close also discussed the need for better highways in the County as concerns listed in the survey.

We can do better than what is in this survey if you give our EDC Board the tools to do it with and allow us to hire someone to help Tommy Burlison, Close said. We can put money into the community and help answer these concerns we have in these surveys. If you give us the help in our future planning and give the citizens what they are asking for, it is all attainable, Close said.

Chairman Poteat thanked Mr. Close for his report. He suggested holding a joint meeting with the EDC and Planning Board on some of these issues and that we take some action on some of these things rather than just talking about it. The Chairman recommended holding such meetings after the upcoming holidays.

(156 Surveys were received as of this date. The County population is approximately 19,000 persons).

Finance Office Report – Tim Greene

Budget Amendment #

Tim Greene advised that the Board has made a policy that under Fund Balance we maintain 20% of last year's expenditures and transfers to other funds. At the end of June 30, 2007 Fiscal Year we have \$4,432,587.00 that we can move over to our Capital Reserve Fund. He explained the factors which contributed to that balance. Last year we dipped into our budget because of the floods and we had a lot of flood money flowing in, so our 20% balance was higher last year by \$1 million than our Fund Balance was this year. Next year it may go up by \$1 million just because of this year's expenditures. Also some Sales Tax revenue turned out to be a lot more than was budgeted for the year. As to the County being fiscally responsible as the auditors have said, that is basically due to the policy that this Board has set which has enabled us to do this and the departments also do a good job of managing their expenses, Greene said.

Tim Greene requested a Budget Amendment in amount of \$4,432,587.00 to transfer the Undesignated Fund Balance in excess of 20% of the total General Fund Expenditures and Transfers to Other Funds at the end of FY 2006-07 be appropriated to the Capital Reserve Fund.

Motion by Susan Pittman and second by Scott Heath to transfer \$4,432,587.00 to the Capital Reserve Fund as requested.

Tim Greene advised that the County could still do a budget amendment out of these funds if necessary. Discussion was held on the County's "pay as you go" policy which they use to pay for capital projects rather than borrowing money and paying high rates of interest for construction of new schools, Courthouse renovation, etc. Robert Wiseman advised that the County has been very successful in the past few years in being able to put money into this fund for our Capital Reserve Projects. We have accomplished more than any County our size for capital projects in the State of N.C., Wiseman said.

Vote: Motion unanimously approved with 4 members in attendance.

New Telephone System Project

Tim Greene explained that if our County buildings were connected with cable that we could get rid of individual phone lines, get a new phone system and be able to save money. We now have this new phone system installed in our Senior Center and Administrative Building. We will be able to save \$556/month or \$6,682.00 per year by getting this new system. Sandy Long worked on this project and was able to identify 17 lines as part of the phone upgrade that were not being used at all. We will have a savings of almost \$10,000 per year by elimination of these unused lines and the savings from installing a new, less expensive phone system. In the future, we plan to put the Courthouse and Jail on this same phone system so all of our offices can be connected. We will also have computer cable between here and the Courthouse in the future, Tim said.

County Attorney Report – Michaelle Poore

Michaelle Poore presented the Board with a Monthly Report regarding matters involving litigation. She reported that the matter of RC Avery County Landholdings, LLC v. Avery County has been dismissed by the Plaintiff before any hearings were necessary.

The Avery County Airport matter is still pending. Pleadings have been filed.

The Williams appeal before the Property Tax Commission was settled with the taxpayer.

All pending tax foreclosures are in the final stages of being completed.

Chairman Poteat added that these tax foreclosures are also due to a lot of Michaelle's hard work.

Secret Springs Subdivision Approval

The Manager advised that Garry Benfield has asked that the Board re-schedule this matter until the next Regular Meeting because more documentation is necessary in regard to this Subdivision before he can ask for Board approval.

Closed Session

Motion by Susan Pittman and second by Scott Heath for the Board to go into Closed Session under G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6) regarding personnel matters at 5:22 p.m. The Board, the Clerk and the County Attorney are invitees. Motion unanimously approved with 4 members in attendance.

The Board came out of Closed Session at 5:35 p.m. The Chairman advised that no vote was taken during Closed Session. The Chairman asked if any Board Member has anything to say regarding the County Manager's Evaluation.

County Manager Salary Increase & Increase for Elected Officials

Motion by Phyllis Forbes to approve a 5 percent salary increase for the County Manager retroactive to October 1, 2007. Motion seconded by Susan Pittman and unanimously approved with 4 members in attendance.

Chairman Poteat advised that he has a small bit of constructive criticism which he plans to share with the Manager. He added that the Board appreciates the overall outstanding job that Robert Wiseman is doing as County Manager. Robert thanked the Board for the reappointment today and for the salary increase.

Robert Wiseman advised that he wants to bring up the salaries of elected officials. He said that he is excluding the County Manager from this discussion. He stated that the elected officials and the County Manager do not receive the cost of living increase that the other employees receive each year at the first of December. The Sheriff, Tax Collector and Register of Deeds have not yet received their cost of living raise, so I think it is imperative that at least by consensus as you have done in the past, that the Finance Officer be given the authority to provide them with that increase. The Board indicated that they had no problem with providing this salary increase.

Wiseman added that the Board may wish to discuss the matter of how and when that increase is given during our upcoming budget session. He said that he didn't see or understand why our elected officials and County Manager should be 5 months behind everybody else. Chairman Poteat said that he felt the Board needs to re-address this issue. Tim Greene advised that the first budget period after he came to work for the County was July 2004 and that there was a cost of living across the board and it also included the Commissioners and the Elections Director who at that time was not under the salary schedule. At that time, the Board didn't want to go that route. They wanted to do the Board of Elections official, the Board of Commissioners and the elected officials separately. Times have changed and that may not be the feeling of the Board now, Greene said. Greene said that the Commissioners have not shared at all in the cost of living increase.

Vote on Motion: Motion unanimously approved with 4 members in attendance.

The Board instructed the Finance Officer to give the Register of Deeds, Tax Collector and Sheriff a 4 percent raise effective December 1, 2007, as has been done in the past.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Scott Heath and second by Susan Pittman to approve the Minutes of the following Board Meetings: 10/27/07 Workshop on High Impact Ordinance; 11/5/07 Regular Meeting & Public Hearing on High Impact Ordinance; Closed Session 11/5/07. Motion unanimously approved with 4 members in attendance.

Agenda Consent

Agenda Consent items were approved by a consensus of the Board.

Upcoming Meetings

The Chairman reminded the Board of the County Employee Christmas Dinner to be held on December 19, 2007 at 12:30 p.m. at the old Cranberry High School.

Clerk to the Board Position

Discussion was held regarding filling of the Clerk to the Board position due to the retirement of the current Clerk to the Board. Robert Wiseman advised that he has advertised the position with ESC and also in-house, with a deadline of December 14. He added that we are not obligated to go to the press with this position unless we do not receive qualified applicants. He said that he would communicate with the Board in regard to the list of applicants for the position. Some of the Board Members indicated that they would like to be included in the interview process. The Board also asked the Clerk to assist with interviewing for this position and asked that she continue working until such time as a replacement is found.

Adjourn

**Motion by Phyllis Forbes and second by Scott Heath to adjourn this meeting at 5:47 p.m.
Motion unanimously approved with 4 members in attendance.**

**Kenny R. Poteat, Chairman
Avery County Board of Commissioners**

**ATTEST: _____
Nancy H. Cook, Clerk to the Board**