

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF AVERY**

The Avery County Board of Commissioners met in a Budget Workshop on Thursday, May 19, 2011 at 5:00 p.m. in the Commissioners Board Room, Avery County Administrative Complex, 175 Linville Street, Newland, NC 28657. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Fiscal Year Budget 2011/2012 with the Avery County Fire Commission, Avery County Sheriff, and Avery County Board of Education.

Members Present: Kenny Poteat, Chairman; Phyllis Forbes, Vice-Chair; Scott Heath; Martha Hicks; Glenn Johnson

Members Absent: None

Call To Order

Chairman Poteat called this meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.
Chairman Poteat led prayer.

Avery County Fire Commission

Avery Fire Commission Members Present: Daryl Smith; Shane Garland; Jake Owens; Joe Perry; Paul Buchanan

Linville Central Rescue Squad

Larry Cuthbertson, Linville Central Rescue Squad, updated the Board regarding the Avery County Rescue Squad. Mr. Cuthbertson stated that all the paperwork for Avery County Rescue Squad had been brought to Linville Central. The one thing that was not absorbed by Linville Central was a bank account at Wachovia Bank. There are no outstanding debts on the building or equipment. Linville Central now has the deed to the Avery Rescue building. The station in Elk Park will be Station II of Linville Central Rescue Squad. The Board for Linville Central Rescue handles all the finances; the chief only is involved with the operations of the rescue squad. Mr. Cuthbertson stated that Jim Taylor was the current President of the Linville Central Board. He said that Linville Central is requesting an additional \$155,000 for a crash truck. The crash truck at the former Avery County Rescue Squad was repossessed. The new truck would be stationed at Linville Central and the crash truck that is currently housed at Linville Central would be moved to Station II in Elk Park.

Daryl Smith stated that the Fire Commission recommendation for the budget for Linville Central would be \$299,084.00. Tim Greene advised that the projection at this time for Linville Central was \$130,000 with nothing allowed for Avery Rescue.

Chairman Poteat stated that he would assure Linville Central Rescue squad members that this request would be taken very seriously with the possibility of a combination of extra monies and financing.

Mr. Smith advised there was a Memorandum of Understanding between the Fire Commission and the Board of Commissioners that stated no money can be used for rescue but that this statement was not included in the state statute. He said that this MOU would not be hard to change and a ½ cent tax for the rescue squad would generate \$220,000. If this is not a consideration now, it does need to be looked at on down the road. Robert Wiseman, County Manager, commented that this issue has been "kicked" around for a long time but that it might be necessary to reword the local legislation to include rescue. Jake Owens stated that this was talked about last year and it needed to be addressed immediately.

Avery Fire Commission

Daryl Smith advised that four years ago that the Fire Commission began working on debt reduction for the fire departments; the fire departments were in debt \$3,000,000 at that time. If the proposed budget is approved, the fire departments will have no debt. After this year, the fire departments will be able to buy two pieces of equipment a year which is what needs to be done to keep the equipment at the age that the state recommends. The fire departments have gotten a little behind the last couple years with replacing equipment. The departments have worked very hard to keep down their costs and work within their budgets. In the proposed budget, there is one truck for Newland Fire Department to replace a tanker. Mr. Smith stated that the \$2,000,000 dollar proposed budget is a big budget but the fire departments are saving the taxpayers approximately \$7,000,000 a year in insurance premiums. Last year the Fire Commission cut the fire departments budget a little hard and had to come back and ask for money for heating costs. Mr. Smith advised that 5 ½ cents is what it would take to cover the requests from the fire departments. Mr. Smith also advised that the Fire Commission is asking for an additional ½ cent to be used for rescue. Shane Garland stated that every year the commissioners had promised a tax increase the next year and it has come to that point that the fire departments needed more money just to be able to operate and keep the fire district ratings down. There was considerable discussion regarding the fire departments needs and the fire tax.

Recess

Chairman Poteat called for a 5 minute recess.
Chairman Poteat declared the meeting to be back in session after a brief recess.

Avery County Sheriff's Office – Sheriff Kevin Frye

Sheriff Kevin Frye presented his proposed budget to the Board. Sheriff Frye stated that there were three major needs that he wanted to address. The first major need is salaries. Sheriff Frye stated that at present he had several employees that were actively seeking other positions due to the salary. Sheriff Frye stated that the county had hired the MAPPS group to do a salary survey of county employees and he asked that this be implemented either in full or in part over the next two years. Sheriff Frye advised that the second major need for his office was vehicles. This year there are 9 vehicles over 100,000 miles. We need to make progress in catching up and finally get a reasonable fleet rotation. The third major need for the sheriff's office is personnel. The new jail will need extra personnel but this does not include the needed personnel for the Sheriff's Office patrol, detective, civil and court sections. Another clerical person is needed that will work primarily with the detective division. There was discussion regarding the Criminal Justice Reinvestment Act.

Sheriff Frye introduced some volunteers of the Avery County Sheriff's Office and each one commented on the fine work that the Sheriff's Office does and the needs of the Sheriff's Office.

Recess

Chairman Poteat called for a brief recess.

Chairman Poteat declared the meeting to be back in session after a brief recess.

Avery County Board of Education

Board of Education Members Present: John Greene, Chairman; Steve Smith; Keith Tutterow; Dr. Robert Clark; Interim Superintendent Sherron Crawford

Motion by Keith Tutterow and second by Steve Smith to call the Board of Education into order.

Motion unanimous.

Jeff Jaynes, Finance Officer for Avery County Board of Education, presented the Board of Education proposed budget for FY 2011/2012 to the Board of Commissioners. Mr. Jaynes stated that the total full operating budget for the 2011/2012 year is 5.5 million dollars; not all of this comes via county funds. The request for county funds is \$4,265,391 in operating. This is a 6% increase from the 2010/2011 year. There is \$909,561 that comes from grant funds and \$364,477 from other sources such as tuition from Burke County, receipts from Pisgah National Forest, interest, etc. There are currently 35.08 positions currently funded by the local budget in four categories; administrative, instructional, support and grant fund positions. The majority of the positions are funded by state and federal monies. The capital budget funds that the Board of Education is requesting are \$510,000. The total operational and capital budget funds requested are \$4,775,391.

There was discussion regarding the county funded positions.

There was discussion regarding the capital needs of the school system.

Mr. Jaynes stated that at the last joint meeting there was discussion on the one-on-one initiative which is where every student is provided an electronic device. The Board of Education has compiled what a one-on-one initiative should look like in the Avery County Schools and what the financial obligation would be to implement this program. Dennis Brown, Computer Technology Director, explained the one-on-one initiative program.

Chairman Poteat stated that it is hard times now but that the Board of Commissioners would do their best with the requests from the Board of Education.

Adjourn

Motion by Robert Clark and second by Steve Smith to adjourn the Board of Education.

Motion by Scott Heath and second by Phyllis Forbes to adjourn this meeting at 8:52 p.m. Motion unanimously approved.

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

ATTEST: _____
Cindy Turbyfill, Clerk

