

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF AVERY**

The Avery County Board of Commissioners met in a Budget Workshop on Thursday, May 10, 2012 at 4:00 p.m. in the Commissioners Board Room, Avery County Administrative Complex, 175 Linville Street, Newland, NC.

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

Members Absent: None

Call To Order

Chairman Poteat called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.
Chairman Poteat led prayer.

**Avery Fire Commission
Linville Central Rescue**

Fire Commission Members Present: Daryl Smith, Chairman; Shane Garland; Jake Owens; Wayne Miller; Joe Perry

Daryl Smith, Chairman of the Avery Fire Commission, stated that the new rescue truck should be delivered soon. We are requesting \$117,000 to pay for the new rescue truck or another option would be to pay \$43,000 per year for three years. This is the only big thing in the rescue budget. We are requesting \$25,000 per year for the next three years to put in a rescue contingency fund so there will be a back up fund of \$75,000. The Avery Fire Commission has opened an account at United Community Bank as a separate account for the rescue department. The new rescue truck will be placed at Linville and the one that is presently at Linville will be sent to the rescue building in Elk Park.

There is a copy of an email from the Institute of Government which plainly states that the Board of Commissioners has the authority to set the fire tax and that revenue may be used to provide fire protection services which would include emergency medical, rescue and ambulance. The money must be kept separately and the fire commission would request that the fire tax and rescue be kept separately.

Fire Departments Budgets

Mr. Smith said the fire department budget was pretty well self-explanatory but there were some highlights that the Fire Commission wanted to talk about. The vehicles that are needed are a tanker at Newland, pumper at Fall Creek, pickup truck for the Fire Coordinator and an equipment truck at Newland for the Fire Association. Mr. Smith stated that, in his opinion, that all the trucks should be titled to the Avery Fire Commission and leased back to the fire departments.

Mr. Smith advised that another concern with the fire departments were lack of volunteers. He said Fall Creek does not have enough members and they have put forth an effort to recruit volunteers without a lot of success. Linville also has a volunteer problem.

Mr. Smith stated another thing he would like to discuss is fuel reimbursement for fire response. The fire responders had responded to 153 structure fires with 1100 responders and 203 fire alarms with 907 responders. This would equate to \$12,042.00 with the rate being \$6.00 per call for fuel reimbursement. We are requesting to put a cap on this for \$599 per year per responder and request that this be budgeted at \$15,000 for the 2012-2013. We feel strongly that this would help the volunteers.

There was discussion regarding the different grants that the fire departments can apply for.

Mr. Smith explained that the "I Am Responding" program which is a program that documents who is responding to a call. The state furnishes Communications the equipment that they need. The Fire Departments have to provide their own equipment which is included in the budget. The cost is \$8,000 for the departments countywide. This is a recurring expense. Each station would have a receiver and basically each person with their cell phone has a code to put in and logs each member on the machine and prints off at the end of the call and documents the responders.

Mr. Smith stated that at Frank Fire Department there is a septic tank problem and nowhere to put a drain line or septic tank. At the present time, Frank Fire Department is using port-a-johns. Frank has been unable to find any property for sale except for a piece of property about a mile up the road which will make part of Roaring Creek to be uninsurable. There was discussion about property for sale in the Green Valley Fire District also.

There was discussion regarding the parking at Banner Elk Fire Department. Chairman Poteat stated that the Board wants to work something out to give or lease to Banner Elk Fire Department more parking for the Banner Elk Fire Department from the Old Banner Elk School property.

Mr. Smith stated that the request from the budget of the fire departments was \$2,216,936. This does include \$256,000 for a 10 year program to build Frank Fire Department and Green Valley Fire Department.

Tim Greene, Finance Officer, said that the current fire tax rate at 4 cents would generate \$1,760,000. The budget request would require 1.1 cent increase to meet this budget.

Chairman Poteat stated that whether the Board can honor all of this request or just part of the request, the Board is not here to tell the Fire Commission how to spend the monies that they get.

Avery Sheriff's Office – Sheriff Kevin Frye

Sheriff Kevin Frye stated that in this year's budget his office was going to be over in fuel by approximately \$17,000 and he would have to come before the Board a little later for a budget amendment. He said he would be a little over on the salaries but not like it was last year. Robert Wiseman, County Manager, stated the problem was the overtime but he was not sure how to handle this.

Sheriff Kevin Frye advised that priority one in his budget was to implement the rest of the MAPS study. The second priority is vehicles. An analysis of the sheriff's vehicles through 2015 was given to the Commissioners. The third priority is technology and compatibility. He said he would like to get the laptop computers with mobile dispatch. When dispatch gives the call to the deputies, the address of the call would come up on the computer. The other thing this would do is provide GIS locator system in every vehicle which will pinpoint where any officers are or their speed, etc. Also, another system is the VIPER system; this provides a way to talk to any county anywhere in the state.

Sheriff Frye stated that the Southern Health Partners was working well. This is saving money on the emergency room visits for inmates because the nurses have done things at the jail that in the past we would have had to take the inmate to the emergency room. Sheriff Frye stated that a \$10 copay was being collected from the inmates when they wanted to see the nurse.

Sheriff Frye said that the Sheriff's Office needed a transportation van to transport inmates. The Sheriff's Office must transport the inmates either to Marion or Salisbury to meet the Department of Corrections van when the inmates are sentenced to prison.

There was discussion regarding adding a kitchen to the new jail facility in the future.

Sheriff Frye requested \$585,589 not including salaries for the 2012/2013 budget; this is operational and capital. The Detention Center budget for 2012/2013 is \$552,842 not including salaries.

Discussion regarding the 220 square foot expansion at the new jail facility. It was agreed that the costs was too great for the 220 square foot expansion. There was discussion regarding moving the Board of Elections and giving the Sheriff the Board of Elections space. Chairman Poteat said that the Board would not promise the Sheriff more space but that the Board would work to try to alleviate the space problem for the Sheriff.

Avery County Board of Education

Board of Education Members Present: John Greene, Chairman; Kathey Aldridge; Robert Clark; Keith Tutterow; Steve Smith

David Burlison, Avery County School Superintendent, stated that the Avery County Schools had tremendous needs but that the Board of Education was not asking for any increase in any items in the budget for 2012/2013. He said that we are in this together and that we are all Avery County and the Board of Commissioners has been very gracious in funding the One-to-One Initiative. Mr. Burlison stated that the Board of Education was committed to making sure that they provide every child in this county the best education but they won't get to that tomorrow but will get there eventually and get there together. Our goal is to be a model for education in general.

Mr. Burlison stated that the needs are basically related to three areas; making sure there is a healthy, safe environment; making sure we provide an equal and quality education for each child that walks in the door and making sure the facilities are maintained. The current local budget proposal reflects no

increase. We have made cuts to compensate for additional needs. We took the capital budget and we included our share of the One-To-One and we are asking for \$510,000 which is actually what we got last year.

Mr. Burlison explained some of the safety issues at different schools and some of the improvements that need to be made at the different schools.

Discussion regarding the traffic problem at Avery High and Avery Middle Schools. Mr. Burlison stated that in the next school year that the starting time for these schools would be staggered to try to alleviate some of the traffic problems. There has been discussion with NC Department of Transportation and their suggestion was to take the exit of Avery Middle and move it over to come in directly across from the old tennis courts and use that as parent entrance and leave student entrance as it is now.

Scott Heath stated that he saw the need for an additional recreation center which has been on the long range goals ever since the recreation grant was received. This has come under scrutiny because of the economic times. He said he sees the need for a recreation center and wanted to justify to his fellow Commissioners the need for this. At several different school facilities from a recreational point of view, there are not adequate recreational facilities. There are only three regulation size gyms in Avery County. We have not provided facilities at our schools for recreation. We need to fulfill our obligations.

Adjourn

Motion by Scott Heath and second by Martha Hicks to adjourn this meeting at 7:35 p.m. Motion unanimously approved.

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

ATTEST: _____
Cindy Turbyfill, Clerk