

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF AVERY**

The Avery County Board of Commissioners met in a Budget Workshop on Wednesday, June 15, 2011 at 3:00 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 3:02 p.m.

Fiscal Year Budget 2011/2012

Chairman Poteat stated that he had been in office for 17 years and this budget had been quite a challenge. The three key issues to be discussed are the Sheriff's Office, Fire Commission and Linville Depot.

Linville Depot – Cindy Peters

Cindy Peters, Linville Depot Committee Member, stated that the request for the Linville Depot is \$15,000. Ms. Peters said the committee was hoping to have the project completed by mid September when the railroad convention comes to tour the depot and this money would help considerably. There have been numerous volunteer hours that have gone into this project. Joel Shipley and Jerry Turbyfill commented on how much material had been donated for this project. Mr. Shipley informed the Board that the committee had applied for a grant through Lowe's Hardware. He said that a handicapped ramp needed to be completed outside and then the interior needed to be finished. Chairman Poteat thanked the members of the committee for being at this meeting and informed them that a public hearing on June 20, 2011 at 4:30 p.m. will be held in the Commissioners Board Room regarding the 2011/2012 budget. Chairman Poteat stated that the Linville Depot would be discussed later in the meeting.

Avery Sheriff's Office – Kevin Frye

Sheriff Kevin Frye explained to the Board that in the past in the budget there had been money left over in the insurance line item and other items that covered the overtime. There was also a \$10,000 overtime grant and drug task force money but all of these had gone away. Kevin Frye stated that he was willing to do his part to try to minimize the overtime but that he had a duty and obligation to the citizens of his county to cover and provide for the safety and security of this county. He stated that in the current budget the officers are budgeted at 160 hours instead of 168 hours and there was no money budgeted for the reserve officers. Tim Greene, Finance Officer, explained that he had budgeted \$67,000 for the shift relief, overtime, sick, vacation, etc. and that the \$70,000 was in addition to this and that is why there needs to be a budget amendment of \$70,000. Chairman Poteat stated that he trusted the sheriff's integrity and believed he would do his best as an elected official to save his department money. There are not unlimited monies. Tim and the Sheriff will work on this issue. Chairman Poteat stated that this issue would be discussed later in the meeting.

Recess

Chairman Poteat called for a 3 minute recess.

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

Avery Fire Commission

Chairman Poteat stated that the Board had met with the Fire Commission on June 8, 2011 to discuss the Fire Commission budget. He said that he had asked Sondra Austin to be at this meeting to answer any questions the Board might have about the Fire Commission Budget. There was discussion regarding the salaries of the paid firemen. There was discussion regarding the entire Fire Commission budget. Chairman Poteat stated that his opinion was to leave the tax rates the same; ad valorem and fire. The Fire Commission would receive \$1.768 million dollars plus \$100,000 out of general fund; all debt is to be paid off. Glenn Johnson stated that we can't keep on saying we are not going to raise the fire tax and keep taking out of general fund. He said that if the fire tax was raised ¼ cent this year it would not require \$100,000 to come out of general fund. Chairman Poteat stated that he was not afraid to raise taxes but this was not the year to do so even if it would require a little more next year. The fire tax should support the true need of the fire commission.

Consensus by the Board to give the Fire Commission \$100,000 out of general fund above the 4 cents fire tax; do not buy a new truck; pay off the entire debt; do not increase salaries above 4 ½%.

Avery County Sheriff's Office

Chairman Poteat stated that there is a problem with the overtime in the Sheriff's office and that something needed to be done to get the Sheriff's attention. He said that there had been discussion about taking at least half of the approximately \$70,000 out of next year's budget. Martha Hicks requested that the Sheriff give the Board of Commissioners a report about his department every month. Scott Heath stated that there has been a 60% increase in

the sheriff's budget in the past four years. Also, there have been mid-year budget requests from the sheriff. After all of that the sheriff's budget is \$70,000 over. Mr. Heath said his recommendation was for the sheriff to come up with the \$70,000 in next year's budget out of either operational or capital. Chairman Poteat advocated that \$35,000 come out of the 2011/2012 budget. Glenn Johnson advocated \$35,000. Martha Hicks advocated \$35,000. Phyllis Forbes advocated \$35,000 coming out of the 2011/2012 budget.

Chairman Poteat stated that there is a balanced budget with \$465,000 from fund balance to make it balance with \$35,000 coming out of the Sheriff's budget.

Linville Depot

Linville Depot will receive \$8,000 that will be absorbed in the budget. The Board agreed that the outside of the Linville Depot should be completed with the \$8,000.

Chairman Poteat reiterated that there is still a balanced budget by taking \$465,000 from fund balance.

Adjourn

Motion by Scott Heath and second by Martha Hicks to adjourn this meeting at 6:50 p.m. Motion unanimously approved.

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

ATTEST: _____
Cindy Turbyfill, Clerk