

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF AVERY**

The Avery County Board of Commissioners met in a Budget Workshop on Thursday, May 17, 2012 at 4:00 p.m. in the Commissioners Board Room, Avery County Administrative Complex, 175 Linville St, 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 4:10 p.m.  
Martha Hicks led prayer.

**Avery Sheriff's Office FY 2012/2013 Budget**

Sheriff Kevin Frye requested \$2,202,938 for the FY 2012/2013 Budget; Finance Officer has budgeted \$2,034,530 for the 2012/2013 FY Budget. Scott Heath stated that in the past that it was discussed that when the grant for the Highway Safety Officer had ran out that this position would transfer over to the courtroom security officer and that would save \$30,000. Tim Greene stated that both of these positions are included in the budget at this point. Martha Hicks said that she had the understanding that the Highway Safety Officer would not be budgeted for. Sheriff Frye stated that the likelihood of the sheriff's office every getting another grant from the Governor's Highway Safety if that position is not fully funded by the county for at least one year is greatly reduced. Mr. Heath stated if the sheriff wanted to eliminate another position and leave the Highway Safety Officer he could do that.

There was discussion regarding capital items, i.e., vehicles for the Sheriff's Office. Sheriff Frye stated that he has handed out a revised budget for the 2012/2013 FY Budget and in that budget he had cut out one of the vehicles at \$30,000 but added back \$20,000 for laptops in the cars for a net decrease in his overall budget of \$10,000. There was further discussion about different line items in the Sheriff's budget. Chairman Poteat stated that we are not here to tell the Sheriff how to spend his money but it is the Board's job to figure out how much money to come up with for him to spend. The other board members agreed with Chairman Poteat's statement. No conclusion on the sheriff's budget was made.

**Avery County Recreation Department Budget**

Scott Heath said that during the joint meeting with the Board of Education he had addressed some of the issues with the recreation in the county. In looking at the recreation facility that is very much needed but not understanding why, I went to Cranberry and realized that Cranberry has no external facilities at all. We should have included those external facilities when we built the school but we didn't. That is a primary and major responsibility of the Board and the Board fell short on that. There is one regulation size little league field in the county and one regulation football field in the county and you have all of these teams vying for the fields. This is a bigger issue after I got into it. We need to combine athletic department from the school and recreation department from the county and try to achieve the responsibilities together for the recreation of the county. Our job is not to have the winning team and not to hire the coaches, our job through the school facility is to provide the facilities and they don't have it. All I am asking is that this commission fulfills the responsibility mandated by the state for facilities. We see the income potential with this.

Mr. Wiseman stated that there was about \$35,000 left in the current year recreation budget and to keep the "ball rolling" on this project we are going to contract now so the design phase will continue in the 2012/2013 year; no monies are budgeted in the 2012/2013 for this.

Phyllis Forbes stated that she agreed to a certain point with Mr. Heath but she felt that Avery County needed to diversify with respect to recreation. We need to do some other things like skating rinks not just a gym. We need to get creative.

**Recess**

Chairman Poteat called for a brief recess at 5:50 p.m.  
Chairman Poteat declared the meeting back in session after a brief recess.  
Scott Heath left the meeting to attend another meeting.

**Avery Fire Commission**

Chairman Poteat stated that this budget stands alone and is funded by the fire tax. The current fire tax is 4 cents and that generates \$1.768 million. Apparently the request from the fire commission is

\$2,216,936 total which includes work toward new buildings and land acquisition. If this were to be honored in its entirety it could come from fund balance or come out of fire tax. This budget would take 5.1 cents in fire tax to honor it. Glenn Johnson questioned where are we at with the scenario of fire and rescue combined? Mr. Wiseman stated there was nothing that we are aware of that would prohibit renaming the Avery County Fire and Rescue Commission. Mr. Johnson stated it was his opinion that this would be a good time to get the Linville Central Rescue out of the general budget and put in with the Avery County Fire Commission. Martha Hicks questioned if the rescue money would be kept separate from the fire tax money. Daryl Smith stated that this money would have to be kept separate. Tim Greene, Finance Officer, said that 0.39 of 1 cent would equate to approximately \$171,000 from the fire tax for Linville Central Rescue.

Chairman Poteat stated that the fire commission and fire departments have proved to him that the fire departments save the taxpayers of Avery County considerable dollars on their insurance and for most the savings equates to as much or more than the fire tax itself would. He said he personally would advocate ½ cent increase to the fire tax. This would not accomplish the \$2,216,000 requested by the fire commission but 4 ½ cents would equate to \$1,964,000 which is every penny requested except for the buildings and land. The 1.7 million in the “hole” has nothing to do with the fire tax. This is one man’s opinion but the fire departments have proved to me that they do pay for themselves. Chairman Poteat stated if the Board did decide to increase the fire tax by ½ cent that the Board would not tell the fire commission how to spend the \$1,964,000.

Glenn Johnson suggested putting the Linville Central Rescue in with the Avery Fire Commission and give an increase in the fire tax of 1 cent to include the \$171,000 for Linville Central Rescue.

Phyllis Forbes stated that the Board of Commissioners had been better to the fire departments than any other department.

Martha Hicks and Phyllis Forbes agreed with Mr. Johnson that they would prefer Linville Central Rescue be “rolled over” into the Avery Fire Commission.

Daryl Smith commented that something had to be done sooner than later about the buildings and land because the problem at Frank was not going to go away and the fire commission felt that the plan to put \$265,000 back over 10 years would help with the buildings and land.

### **Recess**

Chairman Poteat called for a brief recess.

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

### **Economic Development Budget**

Tim Greene stated that \$153,942 is budgeted for Economic Development. He said that \$237,000 had been cut from the budget for refurbishing of the old Banner Elk School. The Economic Development Director had requested \$60,000 for advertising which was cut to \$30,000 and the incentive fund was set at \$30,000. There was discussion about renovating of the old Banner Elk School. It was suggested that the repair of the roof for the old Banner Elk School be included in this budget but it was agreed to hold the repair of the roof for another year unless during the upcoming year there was signs of leaking and then there could be a decision to repair the roof out of the general fund. It was agreed that if the money in the incentive fund is not used that these monies could be transferred to the advertising line item. The Board agreed to put \$75,000 in capital back in the Economic Development budget to keep the A.C. Pride project going. These monies will be used for the sprinkler system, to make the bathrooms ADA compliant and build a ramp.

### **FY 2012/2013 Budget**

There was discussion about a possible 5% cut in each department’s budget. Mr. Greene said that would not be easy and perhaps the cuts would have to come out of positions and benefits. Chairman Poteat told Mr. Greene to look into an 80/20 insurance plan or change the deductibles.

The next budget meeting will be Tuesday, May 22, 2012 at 4:00 p.m.

**Adjourn**

**Motion by Phyllis Forbes and second by Glenn Johnson to adjourn this meeting at 8:40 p.m.  
Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).**

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

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Cindy Turbyfill, Clerk