

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF AVERY**

The Avery County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Monday, February 4, 2019 at 3:30 p.m. in the Commissioners Board Room, Avery County Administrative Complex, 175 Linville Street, Newland, NC.

Members Present: Martha Hicks, Chair; Blake Vance, Vice-Chair; Dennis Aldridge; Tim Phillips, Wood Hall Young, Jr.

Members Absent: None

**Call To Order**

Chair Hicks called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

Blake Vance led prayer.

Tim Phillips led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Public Comment**

Reverend Kathy Campbell from Crossnore Presbyterian Church spoke to the Commissioners about the utility needs for the needy in Avery County. Ms. Campbell stated that with talking to RAM she had found out that in the fall DSS had money for utilities but in January DSS had run out of money. RAM and Volunteer Avery was able to help about 60 families but had to turn away around 23. These were primarily needy seniors that did not qualify. The crisis ministries do not have the money to help with this. A couple of years ago the commissioners at that time allotted \$63,000 for heating oil. Ms. Campbell said she was asking the commissioners to allot some money for heating oil again.

**Board Appointments**

**Avery County Economic Development Committee**

There are four applicants for two vacancies on the Avery County Economic Development Committee.

Each Commissioner will vote with their top choice a 1 and the lowest choice a 4. Each Commissioner will sign and date the ballots. The results will be available for public inspection and be included in the minutes. These applications have been reviewed.

**Recess**

Chair Hicks called for a brief recess to tally the votes.

Chair Hicks declared the meeting to be back in session after a brief recess.

Kate Gavenus received 5 votes (5 first place)

Keith Hoilman received 15 votes (2 second place; 1 third place; 2 fourth place)

Kirk Holdcroft received 17 votes (1 second place; 1 third place; 3 fourth place)

Mike Reese received 13 votes (2 second place; 3 third place)

**Martha Hicks** voted as follows: Kate Gavenus 1; Keith Hoilman 2; Mike Reese 3; Kirk Holdcroft 4

**Blake Vance** voted as follows: Kate Gavenus 1; Keith Hoilman 2; Mike Reese 3; Kirk Holdcroft 4

**Dennis Aldridge** voted as follows: Kate Gavenus 1; Mike Reese 2; Kirk Holdcroft 3; Keith Hoilman 4

**Tim Phillips** voted as follows: Kate Gavenus 1; Mike Reese 2; Keith Hoilman 3; Kirk Holdcroft 4

**Wood Hall Young, Jr.** voted as follows: Kate Gavenus 1; Kirk Holdcroft 2; Mike Reese 3; Keith Hoilman 4

**Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Dennis Aldridge to appoint Kate Gavenus and Mike Reese to the Avery County Economic Development Committee. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).**

#### **Review of Agriculture Advisory Board Applicant**

Bonita Smith has applied for the Agriculture Advisory Board. This application will be considered for appointment at the next meeting.

#### **Annual Audit Report- Sharon Gillespie**

Sharon Gillespie with Young, Miller and Gillespie presented the Annual Audit for the year ending June 30, 2019. Ms. Gillespie referred the Board to page 5 of the audit book which she said was one of the most important pages in the audit. This gives the opinion of the auditors which in essence says that the financial statements referred to present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities, the aggregate discretely presented component unit, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of Avery County, North Carolina. Ms. Gillespie went over the financial highlights of the audit.

- The assets of Avery County exceeded its liabilities at the close of the fiscal year by \$35,794,563.
- The government's total net position increased for the current year by a net of \$430,850 primarily due to an increase in property taxes.
- As of the close of the current fiscal year, Avery County's governmental funds reported combined ending fund balances of \$21,664,962 an increase of \$1,471,525 in comparison with the prior year. Approximately 70 percent of this total amount, or \$15,158,370 is available for spending at the government's discretion.
- At the end of the current fiscal year, unassigned fund balance for the General Fund was \$15,158,370 or 58 percent of total general fund expenditures and transfers to other funds for the fiscal year.
- Avery County's total long-term debt decreased by \$443,443 during the current fiscal year due to repayment of debt proceeds.

Major capital asset transactions were parking improvements beside the Courthouse; vehicles and related equipment for use in various functions of government; construction in progress of the new agricultural building and new pool.

Wood Hall Young, Jr. stated that during the last election cycle there was a whole lot of attention drawn to the fire commission and accusations made that there was money missing. Mr. Young questioned Ms. Gillespie if she found any money missing. Ms. Gillespie answered that the fire commission is audited as a standalone entity and that there were no problems at all found with the fire commission audit. We do not issue a separate report on the fire commission.

**Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Blake Vance to approve the audit for the period ending June 30, 2019. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).**

**Avery County Chamber of Commerce Annual Report – Melynda Pepple**

Melynda Pepple, Executive Director of the Avery County Chamber of Commerce, presented the annual report for the Chamber. Ms. Pepple gave several examples of how the Chamber promotes economic development in Avery County which include free weekly E-Blasts to all chamber members; maintaining an active website; providing training programs for businesses; developing partnerships within the community to advance and promote business; creating, promoting and distributing 45,000 Avery County Visitor Guides; creating and printing 28,000 event rack cards. Ms. Pepple requested \$5,000 for the Avery County Chamber of Commerce.

**Tax Administrator Report – Bruce Daniels**

**Tax Collections Report**

The Tax Collections Report for the month of January 2019 is \$2,597,699.67.

**Motion by Blake Vance and second by Tim Phillips to approve the Tax Collections Report as presented. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).**

There were no releases for the month of January.

Mr. Daniels presented the 2018 outstanding taxes in the amount of \$1,454,227.23. This represents a collection percentage of 93% of a total levy of \$20,760,429.96. The total collected as of February 4, 2019 at 1:00 p.m. is \$19,306,202.73. Mr. Daniels requested permission to advertise the outstanding tax liens for the 2018 tax year in accordance with G.S. 105-369.

**Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Tim Phillips to advertise the outstanding taxes for 2018. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).**

**Refunds**

A clerical error has occurred requiring a refund of \$25,484.43 to Linville Land Harbor POA.

**Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Dennis Aldridge to approve the refund of \$25,484.43 to Linville Land Harbor POA. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).**

An error occurred that incorrectly applied interest requiring a refund of \$155.48.

**Motion by Blake Vance and second by Tim Phillips to approve the refund of \$155.48 to Paul Smith. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).**

### **County Manager Updates – Phillip Barrier**

#### **Swimming Pool Update**

Despite the weather, the pool is on schedule. We did a walkthrough on Friday. We are finalizing the furniture list. The target date to open is May 1<sup>st</sup>.

#### **Avery Cares Building Update**

Recovery in the High Country is meeting every Saturday and will start meeting on Thursday nights. We are working with AA and NA about the use of the building.

#### **Broadband**

There is an upgrade of the NC Wireless equipment which has increased the capacity from 260 customers to 590. This is in the Pineola community. They are also in the process of adding clients.

#### **Soil and Water**

Mr. Barrier recognized Mark Forbes for being named the Outstanding Technician Award by the NC Soil and Water Organization.

#### **Economic Development Committee**

The County Manager and two economic development committee members will be attending the Essentials of Economic Development on March 6, 2019.

### **Finance Officer Report – Tim Greene**

#### **Budget Amendment**

The June 18, 2018 budget amendment needs to be re-budgeted due to the money not being transferred until August 27, 2018.

**Motion by Tim Phillips and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to adopt the budget amendment re-budgeting money from a June 18, 2018 budget amendment with a debit of \$1,786,052.00 to Transfer to Pool Project Fund (107000.6249) and a credit of \$1,786,052.00 to Fund Balance Appropriation (103990.0000).**

**Vote passes 4 to 1.**

**FOR---Martha Hicks; Dennis Aldridge; Tim Phillips; Wood Hall Young, Jr.**

**AGAINST---Blake Vance**

### **Budget Amendment and Amended Pool Capital Project Ordinance**

Request the Board approve the following budget amendment and the Amended Pool Capital Project Ordinance. The \$25,824.00 will be taken out of the Available for Appropriations so the general fund budget will not increase. This is a transfer.

**Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Tim Phillips to adopt the budget amendment in the amount of \$25,824.00 with a debit of \$25,824.00 to Transfer to Pool Project Fund (107000.6249) and a credit of \$25,824.00 to Available for Appropriations (107000.6000).**

**Vote passes 4 to 1.**

**FOR—Martha Hicks; Dennis Aldridge; Tim Phillips; Wood Hall Young, Jr.  
AGAINST—Blake Vance**

**Motion by Tim Phillips and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to amend the Pool Project Ordinance.**

**Vote passes 4 to 1.**

**FOR—Martha Hicks; Dennis Aldridge; Tim Phillips; Wood Hall Young, Jr.  
AGAINST—Blake Vance**

Chair Hicks commented that the first budget amendment was not extra money but that this was found in the audit that a former employee did not move the money in a timely manner.

### **Budget Amendment**

The Department of Social Services allocation for the Low Income Energy Assistance Program exceeded the original budget estimate. Request an increase in the LIEAP line item. There will be no county match.

**Motion by Blake Vance and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to adopt the budget amendment to increase the LIEAP line item in the amount of \$14,218.00 with a debit of \$14,218.00 to LIEAP (106800.6095) and a credit of \$14,218.00 to County Welfare (103634.0000). Motion unanimously approved (5-0).**

### **Budget Amendment**

Governor Roy Cooper added an additional board member at the local level. The Elections Department will require an additional \$1750.00 in the Board Member Salary line item (\$350X5).

**Motion by Tim Phillips and second by Dennis Aldridge to adopt the budget amendment for \$1750.00 for the Elections Department with a debit of \$1750.00 to Salary-Board Members (104300.0210) and a credit of \$1750.00 to Supplies/Materials (104300.3300). Motion unanimously approved (5-0).**

### **Budget Amendment**

The Avery County Sheriff's Office has received a \$6,814.00 reimbursement from Carteret County for expenses incurred in support of emergency protective measures and response to Hurricane Florence.

**Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Blake Vance to adopt the budget amendment for \$6,814.00 with a debit of \$5,076.00 to Salary-Deputies (105100.0220); \$388.00 to FICA-Administration (105100.0500); \$431.00 to Retirement (105100.0600); \$254.00 to 401K Retirement (105100.0800); \$665.00 to Office/Other Supplies (105100.3300) and a credit of \$6,814.00 to Miscellaneous (103350.0000). Motion unanimously approved (5-0).**

### **Approval of Auditor**

Request the Board make a motion to approve Young, Miller, & Gillespie, P.A. to audit the financial statements of the County of Avery as of and for the year ending June 30, 2019. The audit will begin in July 2019 and their report will be issued no later than October 31, 2019 at a price not to exceed \$36,400.00. This represents no increase from the prior fiscal year. The price also includes the Fire Commission audit. This is a one year contract. If next year or future years we would want to do a three year contract, that is something we can look into.

**Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Tim Phillips to approve Young, Miller, and Gillespie, P.A. as the auditor for the County of Avery for the year ending June 30, 2019. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).**

### **Approval Of Minutes**

**Motion by Blake Vance and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to approve the January 7, 2019 Regular Session and January 15, 2019 Special Joint Meeting with the Board of Education. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).**

### **Agenda Consent Items**

**Adopted by Consensus of the Board.**

### **Upcoming Meetings**

There will be a board workshop at 9:00 a.m. February 5<sup>th</sup> at the Agricultural Building.

Wood Hall Young, Jr. asked the Board to be thinking about a community room at the new Agricultural Extension Building.

**Adjourn**

**Motion by Tim Phillips and second by Dennis Aldridge to adjourn this meeting at 4:48 p.m. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).**

---

**Martha Hicks, Chair  
Avery County Board of Commissioners**

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