

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF AVERY**

The Avery County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Monday, March 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.

Dennis Aldridge led prayer.

Blake Vance led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Hicks called for a motion to amend the agenda to add the Board of Adjustment appointment for Banner Elk to 3.2C3 and to add a Resolution to Authorize the Finance Officer to begin the process for RFPS for financing for the Avery High School under the County Attorney's Report.

**Public Comment**

Tom McAuliffe spoke to the Board regarding Wildcat Lake. Mr. McAuliffe stated that there was a nonprofit organization that was aligned with Grandfather Home for Children and the purpose was to maintain Wildcat Lake. The dam was condemned two years ago. The state condemned the dam and the entire endowment was used to redo the dam. Along with that came state regulations for one lifeguard per 25 visitors. Now we are in a \$30,000 deficit. We have been charged to bring this back to a zero balance. We are going to work all summer raising money. We have a pledge from Grandfather Home to help with the deficit. We will be applying for grants and raising funds. We may need the County in the future and we wanted to let you know what was going on.

Brenda Lyerly, President of the Kiwanis Club, stated that the Kiwanis club had a project that the Swinkolas had been working hard on for a while regarding the "faces of addiction". Ann Swinkola has written a book about this and they are hoping that this will assist other people that are in addiction. Ms. Lyerly handed out the book to the commissioners.

Bill Beuttell, resident of Avery County, stated "every morning when I watch the news it hurts me more and more about the youth wanting to go to socialism instead of capitalism." I am here to appeal to you to ask the Board of Education if there is any civics taught in the schools and if not could they provide education to the young students so they could learn the difference between socialism, communism and capitalism. I would like for us to push toward a movement to educate the youngsters so

they will know the different forms of government. I am asking you to speak to the Board of Education to see what we are doing and if we are not doing anything to begin doing something.

### **Board Appointments**

#### **Agricultural Advisory Board**

Bonita Smith has applied for the Agricultural Advisory Board. This application has been reviewed.

**Motion by Tim Phillips and second by Dennis Aldridge to appoint Bonita Smith to the Agricultural Advisory Board. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).**

#### **Board of Adjustment Appointment for Extraterritorial Jurisdiction—Town of Banner Elk**

Morgan Beck-Herdklotz has applied for the ETJ representative for the Board of Adjustment for the Town of Banner Elk.

**Motion by Blake Vance and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to appoint Morgan Beck-Herdklotz to the Board of Adjustment for Town of Banner Elk. Motion unanimously approved.**

#### **Review of Morrison Library and AMY Regional Library Board applicants**

Review of the Morrison Library and AMY Regional Library Board applicants. These will be considered for appointment at the next Regular Meeting.

#### **Avery Morrison Library Report – Amber Westall-Briggs**

Amber Westall-Briggs, AMY Regional Director, presented the annual report for the Avery Morrison Library to the Board. Ms. Westall-Briggs spoke about the different services that were free at the Avery Morrison Library such as book borrowing, Wi-Fi, access to state of the art computer lab, access to meeting rooms and tutor rooms, access to State Library online resources, etc. Ms. Westall-Briggs spoke about the partnerships with Blue Ridge Partnership for Children, Avery High School and Carolina Mountain Literary Festival. There has been diverse staff development including VAYA Healthcare Mental Health 101. AMY Regional Library has received a Lois Lenski Bookmobile Grant to purchase children's easy readers.

Ms. Westall-Briggs also reported that the Morrison Trust had been dissolved and that subsequently a Morrison Committee was being formed and a commissioner would be requested to serve on that committee.

Dennis Aldridge questioned if digital books were affecting the bound books? Ms. Westall-Briggs answered that rurally we are not seeing that yet. Statistics are showing that patrons are still checking out books.

Blake Vance stated that over the last five years he was amazed at how much traffic came through our library. Thank you for all you do.

### **Avery County Emergency Medical Services---Mike Edmisten**

Mike Edmisten, new Director for Avery County Emergency Medical Services was introduced. Mr. Edmisten stated that he was originally from Avery County and lived on the back side of Beech Mountain. He had worked as a paramedic for 11 years. He had been at Avery County EMS since May of last year.

Mr. Edmisten announced that starting on Tuesday that a fully staffed ambulance would be at the Green Valley base Monday through Friday from 7:45 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The goal is to put a fully staffed ambulance at Green Valley 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

Mr. Edmisten talked about some different goals that he had for Avery County EMS one being extensive training of paramedics. We have begun shift training five days a week. We are doing monthly in-service training and taking more classes. We are providing free CPR to all of the citizens of Avery County once a month. We are doing an outreach to the schools, having kids program, going to sporting events and reaching out to the students so hopefully in the future they might want to work for EMS.

Mr. Edmisten stated that he appreciated everyone's support and confidence and wanted to move forward to improve the organization.

Chair Hicks welcomed Mr. Edmisten and thanked him for working toward getting an ambulance full time at the Green Valley base.

### **Tax Administrator Report – Bruce Daniels**

#### **Tax Collections Report**

The Total Tax Collections for the month of February 2019 is \$307,485.75.

**Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Blake Vance to approve the Total Tax Collections for the month of February 2019 as presented. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).**

There were 37 sales for the month of February 2019 as compared to 44 sales last year.

### **CDBG Neighborhood Revitalization Grant**

Avery County was awarded the CDBG Neighborhood Revitalization Grant in the amount of \$610,000. The Chairman will need to execute the Grant Agreement and Funding Approval form.

**Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Blake Vance to authorize the Chair to sign the grant agreement and funding approval for the CDBG Neighborhood Revitalization Grant. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).**

## **County Manager Updates – Phillip Barrier, Jr.**

### **Swimming Pool Update**

The rock work at the pool is looking great. There has been talk that the pool is leaking but the pool is not finished and needs plaster, waterproofing and more concrete.

There was a contest to name the pool by the children of the Avery County Schools. Twenty-four names were submitted for the pool. The names were narrowed down to five and then the Board of Commissioners chose the name out of the top five names. The group that had the winning name will get a pizza party and receive free pool passes. The name chosen is “The Dive In”.

### **Painting at the Administrative Building**

Mr. Barrier stated that most of the offices had been painted at the administrative building. He said that a couple of people had mentioned removing the wallpaper from the board room and painting it also which would require more money and a budget amendment.

**Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Blake Vance to approve a budget amendment of \$3800 to remove the wallpaper and paint the board room. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).**

## **Finance Officers Report – Tim Greene**

### **Budget Amendment**

The Department of Social Services has received an additional \$32,768 allocation for the Low Income Energy Assistance Program. There is no county match.

**Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Dennis Aldridge to approve the Budget Amendment of \$32,768 received from the Low Income Energy Assistance Program with a debit of \$32,768 to LIEAP (106800.6095) and a credit of \$32,768 to County Welfare (103634.0000). Motion unanimously approved (5-0).**

### **Budget Amendment**

The Department of Social Services had received an \$822.00 allocation from the Duke Energy Neighbor Fund. There is no county match.

**Motion by Blake Vance and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to approve the Budget Amendment of \$822.00 with a debit of \$822.00 to Duke Energy Neighbor Fund (106800.6091) and a credit of \$822.00 to County Welfare (103634.0000). Motion unanimously approved (5-0).**

## **County Attorney Report – Michaele Poore**

Ms. Poore stated that there is a resolution to authorize the finance officer to begin the process of getting RFP's for financing on the Avery High School.

Wood Hall Young, Jr. questioned if this resolution binds the Board in any way. Ms. Poore stated that it does not.

**Motion by Tim Phillips and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to adopt the Resolution to Authorize the Finance Officer to begin the process of getting RFP's for Financing on the Avery High School. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).**

**Approval of Minutes**

**Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Tim Phillips to approve the February 4, 2019 Regular Session Minutes and the February 5, 2019 Board Workshop Minutes. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).**

**Agenda Consent Items**

Adopted by Consensus of the Board.

**Upcoming Meetings**

There will be a Special Meeting on March 19, 2019 at 2:00 p.m. with VAYA Health regarding Medicaid Transformation.

Wood Hall Young, Jr. stated that the Board seriously needed to consider a community room at the Agricultural Building. I think it is something we need to do sooner than later.

**Adjourn**

**Motion by Tim Phillips and second by Blake Vance to adjourn this meeting at 4:36 p.m. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).**

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

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Cindy Turbyfill, Clerk