

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF AVERY**

The Avery County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Monday, October 1, 2018 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; Faith Lacey; Wood Hall Young, Jr.

Members Absent: Tim Phillips (family illness)

Call To Order

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

Wood Hall Young, Jr. led prayer.

Blake Vance led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Proclamations and Awards

Kevin Leonard, Executive Director of the NCACC, presented Phillip Barrier, Jr., County Manager, with the Edwin M. Gill Award for excellent performance in completing the county administration program. The award was first given in 1965 and is a memorial of Edwin M. Gill. The winner is selected by the students and the course work. This is a year-long process and it takes a lot of dedication to do that.

Celebrate County Government

Beth Hughes was recognized for 15 years of service in the Soil and Water Conservation Department. Georgia Henry was recognized for 15 years of service in the Veterans Service Office. Renee Dellinger was recognized for 15 years of service in the Register of Deeds office.

Phillip Barrier announced that he had two certificates from the Second Marines Training Group to the County of Avery and the Avery County Sheriff's Office in recognition of the support for the training exercise that had been scheduled in Avery County.

Public Comment

Dr. Bryan Taylor, Superintendent of Avery County Schools, stated that he had not heard anything from the 10 million dollar grant. We were hoping to hear from that by now. I have reached out to my colleagues in Raleigh and they have not heard anything either. Hopefully, no news is good news.

Jerry Moody, County Extension Director, updated the Board regarding the fundraising for the community center. We went to a lunch with the High Country Charitable Foundation on Friday and they awarded a \$25,000 grant for the community center. We were happy to get that amount of money. We have applied for three more grants from other organizations, hopefully if that comes through I will be back with good news.

Wood Hall Young, Jr. asked that the agenda be amended to include discussion on a new community center at Heritage Park.

Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Blake Vance to amend the agenda to include discussion of a new community center at Heritage Park. Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).

Rachel Deal announced that she would be attending the Senior Tarheel Legislature in Raleigh this week and that she had been Avery County's representative for the past 25 years. She also commented that Avery County Transportation was one of the best transportation departments in the region, that it was a needed service and complimented them on the job that they do.

Board Appointments

Avery Fire Commission

House Bill 673 established the Avery County Fire Commission. The Fire Commission consists of a five member board; two of the board members shall be consumers appointed by the Avery County Board of Commissioners; two of the board members shall be firemen approved by the Avery County Fire Association and appointed by the Avery County Board of Commissioners; the other four sitting members of the Commission shall choose the remaining member.

There are three applicants for one vacancy on the Fire Commission. This is a commissioner appointment.

Chair Hicks explained that the Board would be voting by ballot. Ballots were handed out to each Commissioner. Each Commissioner will vote with their top choice being given a 1 and the lowest choice a 3. 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.

Chair Hicks announced that Matt McClellan was the top choice for the Fire Commission.

Matt McClellan received 5 votes: (3 first place, 1 second place)

Mark Taylor received 9 votes: (1 first place, 1 second place, 2 third place)

Eron Thiele received 10 votes (2 second place, 2 third place)

Martha Hicks voted as follows: (Matt McClellan 1, Mark Taylor 2, Eron Thiele 3)

Blake Vance voted as follows: (Matt McClellan 1, Mark Taylor 3, Eron Thiele 2)

Faith Lacey voted as follows: (Matt McClellan 2, Mark Taylor 1, Eron Thiele 3)

Wood Hall Young, Jr. voted as follows: (Matt McClellan 1, Mark Taylor 3, Eron Thiele 2)

Review of Avery County Economic Development Advisory Committee Appointment

There are five applications for review. This position will be considered at the next meeting.

Public Hearing—Avery County Transportation Fare Increase and Schedule Change

Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Blake Vance to go into a time of public hearing at 4:00 p.m. regarding the Avery County Transportation Fare Increase and Schedule Change. Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).

Debbie Smith, Avery County Transportation Director, advised that the public hearing was to receive public comment on a proposed fare increase and schedule change for Avery County Transportation Authority. Fare rates have not increased in the past ten years while fuel and the costs to operate continue to increase. The Avery County Transportation Passenger vehicles include 4 mini vans, 3 conversion vans, 4 ADA lift vans and one ADA ramp van. We are trying to consolidate rides and make sure there are at least three or more passengers scheduled for out of county trips over 45 miles. Medical trips take priority. We have had some other public meetings in the county. We have not had any negative feedback. The Avery County Transportation Board has approved the fare increase and schedule change.

Chair Hicks stated that she had been a member of the Avery County Transportation Board ever since she had been a county commissioner. I have talked to a lot of people and they are ok with the fare increase and schedule change. You cannot beat the rates.

Faith Lacey questioned if someone was unable to pay is there a program to cover them? Debbie Smith answered that there was a program and that there was a small application to be filled out.

Wood Hall Young, Jr. asked what would happen if there was a trip over 120 miles. Debbie Smith stated that transportation would rather not go any farther than the Raleigh/Durham area.

Dick Crews stated that he had quite a few senior friends that used Avery Transportation and that they were very satisfied with the services they provided.

There were no further comments.

Motion by Blake Vance and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to go out of the Public Hearing at 4:14 p.m. Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).

Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Blake Vance to approve the rate and schedule changes as presented. Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).

Mr. Vance asked the County Attorney if there needed to be a motion to appoint Matt McClellan to the Fire Commission to which she answered yes.

Motion by Blake Vance and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to appoint Matt McClellan to the Avery County Fire Commission. Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).

Tax Administrator Report – Bruce Daniels

Total Tax Collections

The Total Tax Collections for the month of September 2018 are \$1,457,811.95.

Motion by Blake Vance and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to approve the Total Tax Collections for the month of September 2018 as presented. Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).

Releases

The Total Releases for the month of September 2018 is \$1,525.28.

Motion by Blake Vance and second by Wood Hall Young to approve the Releases for the month of September 2018 as presented. Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).

Sales

The total sales for the month of September are 58 sales. Last year at the same time there were 59 sales.

Community Center at Heritage Park

Wood Hall Young, Jr. stated that every commissioner including Tim Phillips had voice their concerns about a community building at Heritage Park. Jerry Moody is working hard on this project and we appreciate his efforts. We have just received \$25,000 toward the building. I have been contacted by several members of the community that are very concerned. This is something that is very much needed. The county is in good financial shape. We have some preliminary plans drawn. I would like to set aside \$500,000 out of the general fund and put into a project fund for this building.

Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to set aside \$500,000 to put in a project fund for a community center building.

Mr. Young said that this Board since December 2016 has probably invested more in Avery County than any other Board in that short period of time in the history of the county. We bought the Kelly Johnson building, bought a van for 4H, built a playground, renovated the senior center, renovated the EMS building, built the agricultural building

and paid for it. We are now in the process of building a swimming pool and it will be paid for. I consider myself a progressive conservative. We can fight for progress in a conservative way to spend the money the best way we can to see that we provide for the citizens what they need. This is close to my heart because of the people that are interested in it.

Blake Vance stated that to be conservative is to promote growth. I agree 100%. I would ask we have further discussion on this after the public hearing.

Public Hearing FY 2020 Community Transportation Program Application
Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Blake Vance to go into a time of Public Hearing Regarding the Community Transportation Program Application at 4:31 p.m. Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).

Debbie Smith, Avery County Transportation Director, explained that this public hearing was to receive public comment on the proposed FY 2020 Community Transportation Program Application. The Community Transportation Program provides assistance to coordinate existing transportation programs operating in Avery County as well as provides transportation options and services for the communities within the service area. These services are currently provided using 4 mini vans, 3 conversion vans, 4 lift vans, and one ramp van. The total estimated amount requested for the period is \$186,953 with the total local match of \$28,043.

Ms. Smith advised the Board that after the public hearing a resolution would need to be approved. The grant application is due to the state by November 3. Ms. Smith directed the audience to the community involvement forms and asked for each person to fill one out.

There were no public comments.

Motion by Blake Vance and second by Faith Lacey to go out of the Public Hearing at 4:40 p.m. Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).

Motion by Blake Vance and second by Faith Lacey to adopt the FY 2020 Resolution for the Community Transportation Program. Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).

Motion by Blake Vance and second by Faith Lacey to approve the \$28,043 local share for the FY2020 Community Transportation Program. Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).

Toe River Health District – Diane Creek

Diane Creek, Toe River Health District, explained that the Toe River Health District had changed the way that the budgeting was being done. Historically, since the early 1980's we had all the money and expenses in one pot. We sold Home Health in 2015. I started as director in 2016. I was used to being able to pull out revenue and expenses

for specific programs. The finance committee was not happy with the way that this was done so we decided to have the finance officer have Yancey, Mitchell and Avery County budgets all separate. We don't have enough data now but by June 30 of next year Avery County will know what their revenue and expenses are.

When Home Health was sold in 2015 we had a reserve from the sale of Home Health. The reserves are based on a state formula. Avery County has supported us most over that period of time. Avery County will get 34.11% of the reserves. Internally, we will keep that amount of money \$751,211 separate only for Avery County. Next year when I come for a request for support you will know how much it costs to have the health department in Avery County and then you can decide if you want to support us or take money out of the reserve.

Mr. Young stated that he served on the Toe River Health District Board and also on the finance committee. I would like to thank Diane Creek and the Toe River Health District employees for what they do.

Mr. Vance said that he had been told there was a rumor going around that he was against the health department. He said that for the record he did not know where that came from and that he truly appreciated the work that the health department does and is fully behind the health department.

Mr. Barrier advised that the Toe River Health Board would have to meet and decide on all of this.

Community Center at Heritage Park Continued

Faith Lacey stated that a new community center would be super but that there was already a commitment to the school and that needed to be a priority now.

Chair Hicks said Jerry Moody has worked very hard. She said she was not against trying to move on but that it should wait until the next budget. I don't feel like I can vote on this right now.

Mr. Vance commented that it sounded like Chair Hicks and Ms. Lacey was not ready to vote on it.

Mr. Vance stated that he did support the idea and that he would second the motion.

Blake Vance seconded the motion from the previous discussion regarding the Community Center at Heritage Park.

VOTE: 2 to 2

FOR—Blake Vance; Wood Hall Young, Jr.

AGAINST—Martha Hicks; Faith Lacey

The vote was a tie and will need to be brought up at another meeting.

County Manager Updates – Phillip Barrier

Swimming Pool

Mr. Barrier reported that the construction company did not get to pour the pool last week as expected but is slated to happen this week along with the slab for the building.

USDA Loan

We are working on the application. We have found several things that we need to fix on the report. Environmental report is finished.

Sales Tax

The ¼ cent sales tax will be on the November ballot.

Economic Development Committee

The next meeting will be the 29th of October. Dr. King from Lees McRae College will be speaking.

County Attorney Report – Michaelle Poore

Nothing further to report

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Blake Vance and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to approve the May 17, 2018 Budget Workshop; May 21, 2018 Budget Workshop; September 17, 2018 Regular Meeting. Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).

Agenda Consent Items

Adopted by Consensus of the Board.

Consensus by the Board to have the County Manager place a letter or article in the newspaper regarding the ¼ cent sales tax.

Adjourn

Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Blake Vance to adjourn this meeting at 5:27 p.m. Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).

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

ATTEST: _____
Cindy Turbyfill, Clerk