

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF AVERY**

The Avery County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Monday, May 6, 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.

Tim Phillips led prayer.

Wood Hall Young, Jr. led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Marilyn Phillips introduced her Business Class students from Avery Middle School.

**Celebrate County Government**

Phillip Barrier, County Manager, recognized the Avery County Planning Board for their commitment to the Avery County citizens. The Avery County Planning Board members are: Cheryl Buchanan; Mike Lacey; Daryl Smith; Amy Vaughan; Geana Welter; Bradley Calhoun; Rachel Deal.

**Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

**Board Appointments**

**Avery County Transportation Advisory Board**

Ashley McKinney is an applicant for a vacancy on the Avery County Transportation Advisory Board. This application has been reviewed.

**Motion by Blake Vance and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to appoint Ashley McKinney to the Avery County Transportation Advisory Board. Motion unanimous with those in attendance (5-0).**

**NC Senior Tarheel Legislature Delegates**

Rachel Deal and Ina Winters have applied for the Delegate and Alternate Delegate for the NC Senior Tarheel Legislature. These applications have been reviewed.

**Motion by Tim Phillips and second by Dennis Aldridge to appoint Rachel Deal as Delegate and Ina Winters as Alternate Delegate to the NC Senior Tarheel Legislature. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).**

### **Review of Applications for the Avery County Planning Board and Avery County Economic Development Committee**

There is an application for review for Daryl Smith to be considered for the Avery County Planning Board and one application for review for David Smith to be considered for the Avery County Economic Development Advisory Committee.

### **Mayland Community College Budget Request—Dr. John Boyd**

Dr. John Boyd presented a budget request to the Board for Mayland Community College. Dr. Boyd explained that the request to the three counties this year was to get all three counties at the same allocation as the highest county last year. The increase will bring Avery County up to Mitchell County's allocation. This year's Operations and Maintenance request increase consists of arming two of the security officers at the main campus at a cost of approximately \$12,000; adding a new maintenance position to perform in-house repairs and renovations at a cost of approximately \$15,280 and a small inflation increase of approximately \$24,000. Dr. Boyd asked if the full funding is not received if the reduction could be taken from the capital request.

Chair Hicks thanked Dr. Boyd for presenting this to the Board. This request will be considered in the upcoming budget.

### **Mountain Alliance Presentation—Zack Green**

Zack Green, Executive Director for Mountain Alliance, spoke to the Board regarding Mountain Alliance. This organization was co-founded in Watauga County in 1990. Mountain Alliance provides transformative experiences and support for all high school aged students. Mountain Alliance launched its programming in Avery County in February 2018. It is based out of Avery High School. This location reduces the transportation barrier and allows school faculty to refer students to the program easily. The after-school program is available every week during the school year. The program provides tutoring, snacks and enrichment programs such as ACT prep classes and college awareness programs. Weekly experiential outings include community service, challenging outdoor adventures and cultural experiences.

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

#### **Tax Collections Report**

The Total Tax Collections for the month of April 2019 is \$182,320.76.

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

### **Releases**

The Releases for the month of April 2019 is \$262.01.

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

## **Sales Statistics**

The total sales for the month of April 2019 are 55 sales compared to 51 sales in April 2018.

## **Community Center—Agricultural Building**

Commissioner Wood Hall Young, Jr. stated that initially when the plans were drawn up for the Agricultural Building the community room was included. At that time it was not financially feasible for the county but things have a way of turning around and changing. I have for a year and a half been a strong advocate of the community room. I have mentioned it in almost each commissioner meeting that we have had. I know that we have a large expense coming with the high school that we are going to have to borrow some money to pay for the school which is very much needed. There is a long term process that would be spread out over possibly a 15 year period. We have drawings for the community room which can be converted into construction drawings. We can build this onto the agricultural building and have it completed shortly after we begin with the school. The time frame could let us complete the community room this year if we can get the drawings and go to bid.

**Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to authorize the County Manager and Finance Officer to obtain information regarding cost estimates for the proposed community room addition to the Agricultural Building based on the existing architectural drawings and to proceed with completing drawings with needed changes; and proceed to bid paid out of fund balance. Seconded by Blake Vance.**

Benny Vance spoke to the Board regarding the community room addition to the Agricultural Building. This county really needs somewhere to be able to have things. We just got through with our Bear Club banquet with about 275 people attending at the Newland Fire Department. There is the potential for a lot of things to happen in the county but there are not a lot of places to have them. The location at Heritage Park is a good location because there is quite a bit of parking. This is a lot of money but I think this is something that has been needed for a long time. This would be something for the people of the county.

Jerry Moody thanked the Board for the Agricultural Building. We have the infrastructure in place for this community room. This is an opportunity to grow our youth.

David Webb stated that he represented High Country Sportsman Coalition and that they have had to rely on churches and fire departments to have any functions. This community room would help with this and could also be used as an emergency facility. This would be for our community and would add something to this county.

Hall Young stated that as a business owner in the county there are several small farms that individually do not have funds to have things such as a certified kitchen or walk-in freezer. The certified kitchen could be rented out to the small farmers.

Commissioner Dennis Aldridge stated that he was totally supportive of this project and that we have talked about the need for it. Jerry Moody has made presentations concerning the usage and the need for the building. I think it is something worthwhile going forward. My only concern is from a fiscal standpoint. I would like to examine it in light of our proposed budget for the coming year to see how it fits into that budget process and how it might affect our fund balance. The motion on the floor mentions looking for estimates and amending the drawings that we have into working drawings and going to bid. I do think the building is needed but I am just a little more judicious with the process.

Tim Phillips commented that he was all for the building but would like to see how this worked in the budget process. I think we have the money there to do it.

Blake Vance stated that he was not looking at this as part of the 2019/2020 budget. This is something we can afford to do so we need to do it. Previously we did not have a good enough picture financially but now I believe we do. I think it is past time to get this done.

Chair Hicks stated that she was a little skiddish about this before because she wanted to see the figures with the high school. Now that the bids have come in less, I think we need to move on and get this behind us. I think the taxpayers will be glad that we did it.

Chair Hicks called for a vote.

**VOTE: Motion was unanimous (5-0).**

### **Recess**

**Chair Hicks called for a brief recess.**

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

### **Avery High School Renovation and Addition- Dr. Bryan Taylor**

Dr. Bryan Taylor referred to information that was sent from Rob Johnson, Boomerang Architect, a cover letter; bid sheet; and an updated cost analysis for the Avery High School Renovation and Addition. On April 23, 2019 we opened bids and received two outstanding bids. We are prepared to tell you today that we have accepted the bid and we would like to ask your permission to enter into a contract with Branch Builds as soon as possible. We are prepared to go with a base bid of \$15,770,000 and there are two alternates along with that. The third sheet shows the updated cost analysis. The base bid is included on that sheet along with the two alternates which totals \$17,225,279. There is a contingency line of \$660,000; there is an additional \$200,000 in the base bid for contingency for soil, etc. That contingency line actually equates to almost \$900,000. There is an asbestos removal allowance of \$300,000. There are some non-construction costs and some of those have been spent down. The central plant work and electrical

work is in the base bid so the total is \$20,246,039. Those numbers worked out extremely well for us.

There was a power point presentation that included the existing school plan and the updated school plan.

Included in the updated school plan is **24** new classrooms meeting NC Department of Instruction standards, **4** of which to be State-of-the-Art Science Labs, 9 office spaces; rectangular-shaped classrooms for maximum flexibility; security vestibule at front door for secure control access to school; new admin and guidance suites front and center of campus / building; new elevator for ADA access to all levels of the school and new lobby area to serve existing gym with new restrooms and concessions area; Terrazzo floors in new corridors and commons for long-term durability; repurposed old library in 300 pod for Art Room and Business Lab; repurposed old admin in 300 pod for state-of-the-art Media Center.

From a safety point of view this work is going to eliminate a lot of exterior doors and that is good for us because on a school campus the more exterior doors you have to manage and more places that people can get into the building the harder it is to manage. If you can limit the number of places that they can access your building it is safer for everyone. This is going to improve the line of sight.

## **Recess**

**Chair Hicks called for a brief recess.**

A budget meeting was scheduled to begin at 5:00 p.m. so the Regular meeting was recessed and Chair Hicks called the Budget Meeting into order and recessed the Budget Meeting.

**Chair Hicks called the Regular Meeting back to order after a brief recess.**

Tim Phillips stated that he was ready to make a motion.

**Motion by Tim Phillips to authorize the School Board to proceed with acceptance of bid for construction on high school in the bid amount of \$20,246,039 subject to board approval of financing options. Seconded by Wood Hall Young, Jr.**

Dennis Aldridge stated that the figure came in substantially less than the estimator had given us. I would like to voice and have on record is that in your professional opinion do you believe this bid covers all of the contingencies that we spoke of and includes all of the areas that we brought into this. I know it lists the alternates out in detail but the amount of discrepancy causes me to pause and I want to make sure in your professional opinion that this included all of the areas that we had previously discussed. Mr. Johnson stated that he did have similar pause. The first number was almost too

good to be true but we found comfort in the second number. We were initially within 3 ½ percent. We find comfort in that the prequalification process worked as it should have as Branch Builds has built similar projects as this one.

Mr. Aldridge said his concern was where we finish not necessarily where we start.

Blake Vance questioned if this design was going to meet the needs that we have. Dr. Taylor answered that eight years ago the project was larger than what it is now. For various reasons, it was value engineered and we believe at this point that this focuses on improving safety at the high school, improving teaching and learning at the high school. Is it everything that we need or would love to have, no? At this point we feel this project is worthwhile and beneficial to the students of Avery County.

Mr. Vance asked if there was anything glaring that the Board sees that is missing in this design. Mr. John Greene stated that when we first started there was an auxiliary gym and cafeteria and also an auditorium.

Dr. Taylor said the renovation of the cafeteria is going to be on the horizon. Mr. Vance questioned since we are below the point of what we thought we were going to be could the cafeteria be considered in this process. Dr. Taylor said yes it could be. We would like to enter into a contract ASAP and during that process we can work with the architect to look at the cafeteria. We can be collecting some pricing and then come back to you with that. Mr. Vance stated that he spoke just as one commissioner.

Tim Phillips stated that he thought that might be a good idea at a later date.

Mr. Aldridge stated that there was a previous motion at this meeting today that may take some of the stress off the auditorium part of your dilemma with the community building being proposed.

Wood Hall Young, Jr. stated that the more that is saved now the more that can be done later.

Dr. Taylor stated that we will not do anything with the scope of work without coming back to you.

**VOTE: Motion unanimously approved (5-0).**

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

#### **Swimming Pool Update**

The water is up to the two foot mark. Hopefully we will be opening soon. We will post the opening date on the website.

#### **Avery Cares Update**

NA meetings started this past Saturday. Recovery in the High Country is on Thursday nights. Information can be obtained off the website.

### Economic Development Update

We have sent letters to Tractor Supply, Food Country, etc. just trying to find something that may come to the old Lowe's building.

### Broadband Update

93 new clients have been served. 72 were underserved or not served at all. Capacity to serve 600 more people.

There is a new grant from the USDA called Technical Assistance Reconnect Program. I have forwarded this information to High Country Cable, Skyline, AT&T and Charter.

There will be a Memorial Day Service hosted by the VFW on Monday, May 27<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m.

### Finance Officer Report – Tim Greene

#### Budget Amendment

The Senior Services Department has received an increase in the Home and Community Care Block Grant.

**Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Tim Phillips to adopt a budget amendment in the amount of \$1,085.00 with a debit of \$1,085.00 to Repairs/Maintenance (105960.1510) and a credit of \$1,085.00 to Senior Services (103670.0000). Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).**

Blake Vance had stepped out of the meeting at this time.

#### Budget Amendment

At the April 1, 2019 Board Meeting, a project ordinance was adopted for the CDBG Neighborhood Revitalization Program in the amount of \$610,000.

**Motion by Tim Phillips and second by Dennis Aldridge to adopt a budget amendment in the amount of \$610,000 with a debit of \$610,000 to Neighborhood Revitalization Program (417000.6930) and a credit of \$610,000 to Revenue-CDBG Funds (413100.0000). Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).**

#### Budget Amendment

The Sheriff's Department has received a Governor's Crime Commission Grant in the amount of \$24,483.00. The monies will be used to purchase "netmotion" for the car laptops and for viper radios.

**Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Tim Phillips to adopt the Budget Amendment in the amount of \$24,483.00 with a debit of \$24,483.00 to Capital Outlay-Equipment (105100.7410) and a credit of \$24,483.00 to Governor's Crime**

**Commission Grant (103615.0000). Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).**

**Budget Amendment**

The Sheriff's Department has received an insurance reimbursement for a 2015 Ford Sedan claim.

There was discussion regarding this budget amendment.

Commissioner Vance returned to the meeting.

**Motion by Dennis Aldridge and second by Tim Phillips to table Item #4 until the next meeting. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).**

**Budget Amendment**

The Transportation Department has received an insurance reimbursement for a 2018 Ford Transit Van claim.

**Motion by Tim Phillips and second by Dennis Aldridge to adopt the Budget Amendment in the amount of \$910.00 with a debit of \$910.00 to Auto Supplies (106300.3100) and a credit of \$910.00 to Insurance Reimbursements (103340.0000). Motion unanimously approved (5-0).**

**County Attorney Report – Michaelle Poore**

Michaelle Poore, County Attorney, advised that the Board needed to consider a Resolution authorizing a contract with Grandfather Mountain Highland Games.

**Motion by Blake Vance and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr to adopt the Resolution Authorizing a Contract with Grandfather Mountain Highland Games. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).**

**Approval of Minutes**

**Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Blake Vance to approve the April 1, 2019 Regular Session Minutes. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).**

**Agenda Consent Items**

**Adopted by Consensus of the Board.**

**Upcoming Meetings**

The next regular meeting will be June 3, 2019 at 3:30 p.m. There are several budget workshops scheduled for the month of May.

Commissioner Young stated that at the last meeting he had presented a resolution regarding gun sanctuary and that the County Attorney is in the process of looking at that.

Ms. Poore informed the Board that there would need to be a public hearing regarding the high school financing at the June 3 meeting.

**Adjourn**

**Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Tim Phillips to adjourn this meeting at 5:42 p.m. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).**

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

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