

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF AVERY**

The Avery County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Tuesday, July 5, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in the Commissioners Board Room, Avery County Administrative Complex, 175 Linville Street, Newland, NC. The meeting was rescheduled due to the Independence Holiday.

Members Present: Martha Hicks, Chair; Maxine Laws, Vice-Chair; Reo Griffith; Faith Lacey

Members Absent: Blake Vance

Call To Order

Chair Hicks called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Chair Hicks read the following statement:

The time limit for any comment to the Board is three minutes. Board members are not expected to comment or take any action on matters during public comment. Any individual speaking during public comment shall address the entire Board. Any person who willfully interrupts, disturbs, or disrupts the session will be asked to leave the meeting. If you would like to speak to an agenda item, you must sign up on the sheet with the clerk. Time limit to speak to an agenda item is also three minutes. Please silence all cell phones or electronic devices.

Reo Griffith led prayer.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Comments

John Millan spoke to the Board about having a voluntary committee formed to come up with a formal list of names of firefighters, deputies, state troopers and constables who have lost their life in the line of duty in Avery County and possibly naming bridges and stretches of highways in memory of them. The placement of the sign is done by the state with no cost to the county. The board would need to submit a formal resolution to North Carolina Department of Transportation.

There were no further public comments.

Board Appointments

Morrison Library Board

Clayton Harpold has been a substitute for Ms. Wanda Pritchard on the Morrison Library Board. Ms. Pritchard is unable to return due to health reasons. Mr. Harpold is willing to finish out her term.

Motion by Maxine Laws and second by Faith Lacey to appoint Clayton Harpold to the Morrison Library Board and to the AMY Regional Board to finish out Wanda Pritchard's term. Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).

Avery County Ranger Report – Joe Shoupe

Joe Shoupe, Avery County Ranger, reported that the staff consisted of a Smoke Chaser who worked eight months out of the year and himself. The Strike Team of local firefighters has been maintained. This consists of 25 active members.

The citizens of Avery County continue to benefit from the NC Forest Service BRIDGE Crew Program which consists of non-violent youthful offenders that perform community service work resulting in a tremendous savings to the taxpayers of the county.

There were 18 fires in 2015-2016 that burned approximately 46.3 acres. There were 2600 burn permits issued.

Approximately 42 landowners received on the ground assistance directly related to forest management. Management reports were written for 11 of those landowners on 282 acres.

We are maintaining a strong information program for public relations. Some of the accomplishments are:

Eight articles on various forestry topics placed in the local newspapers; exhibit at Avery Fair; forestry tours; programs for Boy Scouts and day campers at Linville Ridge; environmental talks to 8th graders; forestry talks to 5th graders; Forestry Day with all 2nd graders; appearances by Smokey Bear in various parades; meetings with different agencies in the county.

Mr. Shoupe summed up by saying that he appreciated the continued support of the Avery County Board of Commissioners.

Request for School Resource Officer at Mayland Community College – John Millan

John Millan stated that after I spoke about this initially in the fall and again a few weeks ago, I have since talked with Rita Earley and Dr. John Boyd, President of Mayland Community College and I think we are probably too early to come up with a formal plan for this issue because the funding for this position would have to come jointly with the three counties and we have the Mayland Board involved. Ms. Earley, Dr. Boyd and I are going to meet tomorrow morning and try to come up with a plan. Generally if you look at the trend in public education, every member institution of the UNC system has a law enforcement agency or presence on its campus. This is not something that is unique. I think it is important that all of us work together to try to get this accomplished to have some type of law enforcement presence on the campus. I would like for the Board to consider a resolution that is supportive in moving this direction.

Tim Greene, County Manager, stated that there were multiple boards that would have to be involved in this issue which includes three counties; this would have to originate from the college. I think everyone is supportive of any kind of security measures that could reasonably be accomplished.

Reo Griffith stated if you protect the main campus and a critical incident happens at the Newland campus or Yancey campus and these campuses are not protected it could be trouble.

John Millan said that he talked to the Institute of Government and they did say that a Memorandum of Understanding could be obtained with law enforcement that has primary territorial jurisdiction.

Dr. John Boyd, Mayland Community College, stated that Mayland Community College has been working on many issues regarding this over the past few years. He said that he agreed with Commissioner Griffith in that we would need to protect all three campuses. We are working closely with the Sheriff's office. As we look at county funds, we will see what we can do. We have a tabletop exercise coming up and an active shooter exercise coming up. There has been a lot of work on this over the past couple of years. We will meet tomorrow with Mr. Millan. It would probably take at least four officers because of the day and night component involved. This is not something that is new but something that has been ongoing.

Glenn Hicks Bridge Sign – John Millan

Motion by Reo Griffith and second by Faith Lacey to amend the agenda to add Glenn Hick's Bridge Sign. Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).

Mr. Millan stated that it was his understanding at the budget hearing that the matter with the sign at the Glenn Hick's bridge would need to be brought up after the budget was passed. He said that he was now requesting that the county spend up to \$1600 to provide the new strip sign.

Motion by Reo Griffith and second by Faith Lacey to empower the County Manager to investigate this and to find the funds not to exceed \$1600.00 to have the signs corrected.

Maxine Laws stated that she thought that the family members should be involved in this decision. Tim Greene said so it is my understanding that you want the county manager to check with the family and if they want it done then a budget amendment could be done at the next meeting.

Motion by Reo Griffith and second by Faith Lacey to amend the previous motion to include the family's decision about this issue. Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).

Tax Administrator Report – Phillip Barrier
Tax Collections Report

The Total Tax Collections for the month of June 2016 is \$71,698.20.

Motion by Maxine Laws and second by Reo Griffith to approve the Tax Collections for the month of June 2016 as presented. Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).

Regular Releases

The total Regular Releases for the month of June 2016 is \$618.92.

Motion by Reo Griffith and second by Maxine Laws to approve the Regular Releases for the month of June 2016 as presented. Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).

Refund

The total refunds for the month of June 2016 are \$143.20.

Motion by Maxine Laws and second by Faith Lacey to approve the total refunds for the month of June 2016 as presented. Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (3-0). Reo Griffith had been excused from the board room during this vote.

Avery County Tax Collection Report FY 2015/2016

Mr. Barrier stated that June 30, 2016 was the end of the fiscal year and at the end of the fiscal year I am to report to the commissioners about the collection rate and collections. The Total tax levy for 2015 was \$15,567,518.56; total collected was \$15,209,302.73; the collection rate is 97.70%. Ten year comparison collection rate is 99.33%. The total due for ten years is \$1,205,650.72.

Elderly Exemption and Disabled Veteran Exemption

After we sent these two individuals a final letter regarding their exemptions, their family came in with the paperwork. These are not new applications, just a few days late. With your approval, I will accept their paperwork so their exemptions can continue.

County Manager Updates – Tim Greene

Mr. Greene advised that the minimum requirements of the PARTF grant from 2008 have been fulfilled. The recreation property is available for any future development. There is a letter from Mr. Pete Armstrong stating that the grant is completed.

Finance Officer Report – Nancy Johnson

The Avery County Sheriff's Office requests a budget amendment for body cameras that were budgeted and ordered in the 2015/2016 budget year but will not arrive until August 2016. Grant funds will be used for this purchase.

Motion by Maxine Laws and second by Reo Griffith to adopt the Budget Amendment for the Avery County Sheriff's office in the amount of \$15,000 with a debit of \$15,000 to Crime Prevention Expense (10.5100.5710) and a credit of \$15,000 to Governor's Crime Commission Grant (10.3615.0000). Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).

County Attorney Report – Gerald McKinney

Mr. McKinney had no report.

Agenda Consent Items

Adopted by Consensus of the Board.

Upcoming Meetings

The next Regular meeting is Monday, July 18, 2016 at 6:00 p.m.

Commissioner Griffith stated that it was the consensus of the board to ask the Board of Education for another DPI report for the Avery County High School. Tim Greene stated that he had spoken with Dr. Burleson and he is checking in on this.

Chair Hicks questioned if the issue with the man that come before the board a few meetings ago had been settled with the well permits. Mr. Greene explained that he had spoken with Lee Clark who does the well permits for the Toe River Health District and that Mr. Clark had went out to that location four different times. Mr. Clark did refund some money to the gentleman. Mr. Clark had said that he had gone by the policy for Toe River Health District's refunds.

Adjourn

Motion by Maxine Laws and second by Reo Griffith to adjourn this meeting at 6:53 p.m. Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance.

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

ATTEST: _____
Cindy Turbyfill, Clerk

