

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF AVERY**

The Avery County Board of Commissioners met in a Board Workshop on Monday, March 28, 2011 at 8:30 a.m. in the Linville Board Room, Cannon Memorial Hospital, 434 Hospital Dr. Linville, NC.

Members Present: Kenny Poteat, Chairman; Phyllis Forbes, Vice Chair; Scott Heath; Martha Hicks; Glenn Johnson

Members Absent: None

Call To Order

Chairman Poteat called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m.

Martha Hicks led prayer.

NCACC District Meetings Questionnaire

A questionnaire was handed out to each commissioner regarding questions by the NCACC. These will be taken up at the next meeting on April 4, 2011. Chairman Poteat and the County Manager will be attending a meeting in Wilkes County on April 7, 2011 and these questionnaires will be presented at this meeting.

Banner Elk School Disposition

Chairman Poteat stated that this discussion on the Banner Elk School Disposition stems from a previous workshop. The main emphasis that the Board gave to the County Manager to speak with legal counsel about was to reserve the right to reject any and all bids and no minimum bid have to be stated. The County Manager stated there is a wide spread between the lowest appraisal and the highest appraisal. The County Manager stated that the quicker this can be offered for sale the higher the possibility that the county could dispose of that property before they assume the responsibility of maintenance and upkeep, insurance, etc. A date needs to be set and there needs to be consideration given to the timing and to the conditions of sale. The County can advertise the property for sale prior to gaining title of the property but in the advertisement there would need to be a statement stating that the property would become available when it seized to be used for public use. The County Manager advised at the May 16, 2011 meeting the Board could vote on the details of the sale and that would give from mid May to mid June to take bids. Mr. Heath stated that there needed to be a consensus on how long that we need to wait to sale the property. He said, in his opinion, that he felt that the County should go ahead and start advertising this property for sale. Mr. Wiseman stated that when the property is advertised for sale there will be a stipulation that the Woolly Worm Festival will be allowed to use the Banner Elk School property for the 2011 year only. The Board decided to sell the property on or by December 1, 2011 and begin advertising in mid May.

Consensus of the Board to allow the Woolly Worm Festival to be held at the Banner Elk School for the 2011 year only; this would be included in the advertisement contingent upon legal counsel's opinion.

Chairman Poteat reiterated that there were four mechanics that had been "ironed out". The Banner Elk School property would be for sale on or by December 2011; it could be advertised for sale by mid May; the Woolly Worm Festival would have a guarantee that the festival would be held at the Banner Elk School property for 2011 with this wording being included in the advertisement; and, the right of first refusal by Avery County and/or Banner Elk be a part of the condition contingent on further research by the County Attorney's office.

Chairman Poteat stated that at the last workshop it was decided the county would have the right to reject any and all bids and no minimum bids. The County Manager advised that in any of the options that the County Attorney had given the Board to sell this property had the right to reject any and all bids included in that option. The County Manager stated that the options to sell the property would need to be discussed at the May 16, 2011 meeting. He said that he felt like the County Attorney was going to recommend "sealed bid" with the right to reject any offer in the best interest of Avery County and to do this before July 1. Chairman Poteat stated that the Board needed to get with the County Attorney and get her legal opinion on which methodology is best.

Recess

Chairman Poteat called for a brief recess.

Chairman Poteat declared the workshop to be back in session after a brief recess.

Classification and Pay Plan

There was considerable discussion regarding the MAPS Pay Plan.

Amend Agenda

By Consensus of the Board, the agenda was amended to include Commissioner Items.

The County Attorney had suggested that the Tax Collector Report and Tax Assessor Report be included in the Agenda Consent Items to help with the flow of the meeting. By Consensus of the Board, the Tax Collector Report and Tax Assessor Report will be left as is. Martha Hicks suggested that the Inspections Department give a monthly report at the Commissioners Meeting. Glenn Johnson suggested that the Economic Development Director should give a report at least quarterly.

Motion by Martha Hicks and second by Scott Heath that the Avery County Planning and Inspections Department give a monthly report at the Commissioners Meetings beginning the first Monday in July and

**also that the Economic Development Director make a quarterly report beginning the month of July.
Motion unanimously approved.**

Technology—Avery County Schools

Discussion regarding technology in Avery County Schools. Mr. Heath stated that he would like to forewarn the Board of Education to prioritize their capital to include technology; this was a consensus of the Board.

Recess

Chairman Poteat recessed this meeting at 11:45 a.m.

The Board will reconvene in the Commissioners Board Room at 1:00 p.m. for a Webinar regarding Broadband.

Reconvene

Chairman Poteat declared this meeting to be back in order at 1:00 p.m.

Broadband

The Board was unable to view the Webinar regarding Broadband due to technical difficulties. Brian Rathbone, Technical Assistance Director for Western North Carolina with e-NC Authority, explained that e-NC Authority is trying to increase access in Broadband availability in rural areas. It is the intention to touch every county in the state in the next year to assist with Broadband planning. The e-NC Authority works with the NTIA and FCC to get coverage information from the providers and produce a Broadband map. A map was distributed to each board member. Mr. Rathbone explained that the pink areas on the map were wireless coverage, lime green are DSL and blue is cable and the red line is the proposed pass of the “middle mile”. There was considerable discussion regarding the “middle mile”. The “middle mile” does not connect to people’s houses. In order to take that leap, there would have to be a wire line provider or wireless provider to take the last mile to the residence. Mr. Rathbone stated that there is a new program provided by e-NC that allows him to go around to each county in his district to help inventory what assets already exists that can be useful. Also, he said he is working with the counties with planning efforts to get feasibility studies done to determine what would be the most cost effective technologies given the topography of the area.

Motion by Phyllis Forbes and second by Glenn Johnson to adjourn this meeting at 2:30 p.m. Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance. (4-0).

**Kenny Poteat, Chairman
Avery County Board of Commissioners**

Cindy Turbyfill, Clerk