

The Alleghany County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, January 4, 2016, at 6:30pm in the Board Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, 348 South Main Street, Sparta, North Carolina.

Present: Chair Tom Smith, Vice-Chair Karen Leys, Commissioner Larry Davis, Commissioner Mark Evans, Commissioner Bobby Irwin, County Attorney Donna Shumate, County Manager Don Adams, and Clerk to the Board Karen Evans.

Chair Smith called the meeting to order, led the Pledge of Allegiance, and offered the Invocation.

Chair Smith stated the following additions need to be made to the agenda; 1. A. Rules of Procedures Discussions, 7. E-911 Communications Discussions, E. Closed Session NCGS 143-318.11 (a)(3)—legal.

Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve the amended agenda for this January 4, 2016, meeting. Commissioner Evans seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

AGENDA
Monday, January 4, 2016
6:30 PM

- 6:30 Meeting Called To Order, Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation
Motion on Agenda for January 4, 2016, Meeting
Motion on Minutes for November 16, 2015, Meeting
- 6:35 A. Lisa Osborne, Alleghany Social Services Director
RE: Request to fill an open Social Worker IAT Position, Grade 72, \$41,736.05. There is also a request to advertise the position in-house prior to publicly advertising. If the vacancy is filled from within, then Ms. Osborne wants permission to fill any vacancy created by promotion from within. Action Requested – Vote on the requests.
- 6:45 B. General Business
1. Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Commissioners' Meeting
Discuss rescheduling the January 18, 2016, meeting due to the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. Action Requested – Vote to reschedule January 18 meeting.
 1. A. Rules of Procedures Discussions (added)
 2. Open Dispatch Position
Request to fill an open dispatch position, Grade 61, \$24,401.85. Action Requested – Vote on the request.
 3. Open Deputy Position
Request to fill an open deputy position, Grade 62, \$25,622.61. Action Requested – Vote on the request.
 4. BB&T Resolution and Agreement for Deposit Account
Resolution to change the authorized people who have signature authority with BB&T due to the retirement of the Finance Officer and Assistant Finance Officer. Action Requested – Vote on the Resolution.
 5. Appreciation Letter to U.S. Motto Action Committee
The "IN GOD WE TRUST" signs have been installed. Action Requested – Vote on using Commissioner letterhead to write an appreciation / support letter.
 6. Article 46 Sales Tax Resolution
Resolution to support the passing of the quarter-cent sales tax referendum and declaring its use to be for emergency communications. Action Requested – Vote on the resolution.
 7. E-911 Communications Discussions (added)
- C. Public Comments—30 minutes
D. Commissioners Comments
E. Closed Session NCGS 143-318.11 (a)(3)—legal (added)
F. Adjourn

Commissioner Irwin made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 16, 2015, meeting. Commissioner Leys seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Lisa Osborne, Social Services Director, came before the Board to request permission to fill a vacancy, person's last day was December 31, and the position is a Social Worker IA&T. She explained that she has another employee in-house that has expressed interest in the position so she would like to request to fill that open position subsequently. She provided the Social Worker IA&T position's grade/salary and Social Worker III position's pay/salary.

Chair Smith said the requests are to approve hiring in-house and fill that position.

County Manager Don Adams restated the requests; advertise in house prior to advertising in the newspaper, fill the open position and then fill that next open position. He requested that if the Board decides to do that in house then he would recommend changing it to apply Countywide.

Commissioner Leys asked about the urgency of filing the position. Lisa Osborne explained that this is the highest level of child protective services, and the need for it to be filled as soon as possible. They talked about the recent increase in reports. They discussed in-house advertising takes 1 week and in the paper takes 2 weeks. The County Manager talked about when advertising in the newspaper it would add another month to the process, at least, if not 5-6 weeks.

Commissioner Irwin said he understands the urgency but asked about changing the advertising policy. County Manager Don Adams explained the requests and provided examples of part-time transportation drivers being considered for full-time positions. Commissioner Irwin talked about addressing Lisa Osborne's request and then look at the hiring policy.

Commissioner Evans asked if the in-house person is capable and qualified. Lisa Osborne answered yes. He asked what is the likelihood of that position being filled in-house. Lisa Osborne said none; it will be advertised.

Commissioner Evans made a motion to advertise the IA&T position in house. Commissioner Irwin seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Commissioner Evans made a motion to allow Lisa Osborne to advertise for the Social Worker III position. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Commissioner Leys asked Lisa Osborne to explain to why the Social Worker IAT is open. Lisa Osborne explained he is getting \$8,000 more with less responsibilities in Ashe County.

Commissioner Evans asked what is the training process. Lisa Osborne explained that it is one month of training, this person started in March, and training requires overnight stay. Commissioner Evans asked how much money for the training. Lisa Osborne said it is about \$1,000 per person for that travel.

Commissioner Leys asked how often does that occur. Lisa Osborne said she has replaced 3 or 4 social worker positions in about a year.

Commissioner Irwin said it seems like she is here often asking this, and asked is salary the reason. Lisa Osborne said yes, and Ashe County is the biggest competition. She explained that they go to more pay and less areas of responsibilities. Commissioner Irwin said this is one reason we are doing the salary study,

Commissioner Irwin asked about the County Manager's request. County Manager Don Adams said it is a policy change, and if it is OK with the Board he would like to put it on the next agenda. He said it would be nice to have the ability to look in house without adding 6 weeks to the process. Commissioner Evans pointed out that you already know the type of employee you get.

County Manager Don Adams talked about the next meeting is on a holiday, January 18, and asked about rescheduling the meeting.

Chair Smith talked about typically it is moved to the next day so his suggestion is to move it to Tuesday.

Commissioner Evans made a motion to move the monthly meeting to January 19, 2016. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Chair Smith said the next conversation about the Rules of Procedures is about the start time.

Commissioner Irwin asked about going back to the 10:00am start time at least through May because he is feeding his cattle first thing in the mornings.

Commissioner Irwin made a motion to move it back to 10:00am and readdress it in May. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams presented an open Dispatch position and open Deputy position. He said the request is to fill both positions as soon as possible.

Chair Smith said he has seen a lot of these come through over the last 5 years, which is 2 different Sheriffs. He further said that the salary study will show the reason and the need to take a look at that.

Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve the request to fill the open Dispatch position. Commissioner Evans seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve to fill the open Deputy position. Commissioner Irwin seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Commissioner Evans said that Ashe County is the competition here too.

Sheriff Bryan Maines said Ashe County is \$7,000-\$8,000 more and one has fewer responsibilities. He said there are 2 more coming in the upcoming meetings. He thanked the Board for the salary study, and he thinks it will help once the study comes in.

Commissioner Irwin asked why does the Sheriff have to come ask to fill the open positions. County Manager Don Adams explained it was a policy adopted by the Commissioners around 2008 because money was tight and the thought was that positions may not be filled, all of these positions have been approved and are in the budget. The County Manager further explained the Board felt it necessary to look at each open position at that time. The County Manager stated that no position has ever been denied. The County Manager said he would add looking at filling in house then the request to fill the open position, then the advertising part, and add it all together it takes 6-8 weeks. The County Manager explained that it is not a written policy, only a vote by the County Commissioners. Commissioner Irwin said when he looks at the office of the Sheriff, and the department heads, he does not see this and do not see why the Commissioners have to approve filling the open positions plus does not see the need to drag out paperwork. County Manager Don Adams talked about this is all the way through the County, and he agrees that the County has responsible department heads. The County Manager explained that the County has a Finance Officer, procedures that must be followed and there are controls in place that we are only filling the open positions that was approved at the beginning of the year. Commissioner Irwin said that new positions are different, and this is just about vacant positions.

Commissioner Evans talked about seeing the turnover numbers down the road and telling them yes every time they come in. Commissioner Leys said this is micromanaging.

Sheriff Maines said they are coming constantly, and it takes a while to fill the positions. He gave examples, and going to have rookies training rookies which isn't good, much cheaper to keep people than retrain them. Commissioner Irwin said he hates to see Alleghany County be a training ground. Sheriff Maines said this isn't new, he has worked for 3 different Sheriffs and it has been a problem the entire time.

Sheriff Maines stated his appreciation for the In God We Trust, it looks great and the appreciation for the 5-0 vote on that.

County Manager Don Adams presented the BB&T Resolution and Agreement for the County's deposit account due to the recent changes in personnel in the Finance Office. He named the people that will be on the signature card.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve the BB&T Resolution and Agreement. Commissioner Evans seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams said he is requesting to use the County Commissioners' letterhead for an appreciation letter for the US Motto Action Committee. He talked about they did local fundraising effort. He said it looks very professional. He reiterated that he is asking for permission to send that letter out in the next week or so.

Chair Smith said 67 counties have considered this or has the motto. County Manager Don Adams agreed and said it is several counties and towns.

Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve the request. Commissioner Leys seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams presented a resolution for the support for the ¼¢ sales tax and declaration of intent to fund emergency services communications. He reviewed changes made to the resolution since he provided it to the Board after the last meeting.

Commissioner Irwin and County Manager Don Adams talked about the newspaper has a copy of the agenda packet, which has the resolution.

Commissioner Leys added one word in the next to the last paragraph of "enthusiastically" encourages the voters.

County Manager Don Adams said he would ask the Clerk to make the change before closed session in order to get the signatures tonight.

Commissioner Leys and Chair Smith talked about the next steps will be discussed after this topic.

Commissioner Irwin made a motion to approve the resolution. Commissioner Leys seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Chair Smith said the next topic is the E-911 Communications/Study.

Commissioner Evans said regardless if the tax passes or not, the study is a need. He talked about moving forward rather than waiting until the vote because if we had the study done we would know where we need to be. He said it is hard to budget on a guess.

Commissioner Leys said she wonders about getting expertise here about the costs and projections not in a study manner; get the information to the public in order to be able to educate the public about it prior to the vote. Commissioner Leys and County Manager Don Adams talked about the costs of the study; \$69,592. The County Manager talked about the different levels of the plan, gave examples with towers and locations, which is going to have a larger cost to it rather than having them come to do the plan for the backup plan. Commissioner Leys and the County Manager talked about what the \$69,000 covers including looking at the sites in the entire county, engineering study not a plan which goes beyond a plan of action, and the dispatch assessment, if we make a decision on that it could impact the ability to get other monies, help obtain 911 monies, and try to get other grants. They talked about if the citizens approve the tax, the resolution gives the flexibility without communications being a taxpayer burden.

Commissioner Leys asked about it being a State mandate. County Manager Don Adams explained the State mandate affects the \$138,000 annually to fund personnel and equipment to operate the 911 system because the backup plan must be in place by June 30, current backup plan doesn't meet the requirements, plan must be in place by June with the understanding of completing it the following year. He said it is not just personnel; it is the annual maintenance on the equipment, and using this as an opportunity to look at communications in the entirety. He stated he needs professional help to develop the plan.

Commissioner Leys mentioned there was more money in the fund balance than was anticipated and asked can the County fund it and then get reimbursed. County Manager Don Adams said yes. Commissioner Irwin said he thought we had already hired the company. The

County Manager said no we haven't. Commissioner Irwin asked what do we need to do. Commissioner Evans added just for the backup part. The County Manager answered that is around \$15,000. Commissioner Leys talked about an advantage to look at the entire thing. The County Manager said he can call them and have this conversation with the individual and get the contract started and how to proceed in phases. Commissioner Leys said the sooner the better, the more information we know, the more we can support it. Commissioner Irwin and Commissioner Leys talked about when they can come. County Manager Don Adams said he will have to call to see when they can come.

Commissioner Evans said it may not cost as much. County Manager Don Adams explained the additional monies are to help with radios outside of these costs. Commissioner Evans asked about the tower system. The County Manager said that's a small portion, and it can allow us access to other monies.

County Manager Don Adams said he is attempting to start working on the educational materials. He reviewed the questions that he is aware of that is in the community. He asked people to bring the questions so the answers can be in a pamphlet. He reviewed the questions and answers up to this point.

Commissioner Leys said she is asked often on how does the State predict the sales tax. County Manager Don Adams said they are close in the estimates. He explained to take what we are getting right now and do the math, which is close to the estimates.

Commissioner Irwin asked about putting something in the newspaper where people have questions to call or email the County Manager.

Chair Smith and the County Manager said the newspaper is here at this meeting. Jennifer Swenk said sure about putting something in the paper.

Commissioner Irwin said the important thing to note is that this will benefit everyone in this county because there are so many dead spots. He stated that it is a win-win situation for the citizens.

County Manager Don Adams said there is some value to reading the resolution. He read the recent adopted resolution.

Commissioner Leys said she has been a Commissioner for 3 years and heard the County Manager talk about this issue the entire time, Commissioners haven't funded it, problems are getting worse, and hopes to have a solution.

County Manager Don Adams explained the importance of getting the signatures tonight and getting it to the fire chiefs to show the County's intent to spend the money on communications.

Commissioner Irwin asked about future boards and when we proceed, we will sign a contract and that contract is binding regardless of the number of boards. County Manager Don Adams said that is correct, the Commissioners can commit to a project, which can take 5-10 years of the money but can't commit the money 10 years from now.

Commissioner Leys said the Commissioners need to go to civic clubs to get the word out. She stated that she is willing to sit down to get a list together before the next meeting.

Commissioner Irwin and County Manager Don Adams talked about the special meeting on the 7th.

Chair Smith opened the public comments' portion of the meeting and asked for comments. None were received. He closed that portion of the meeting.

Commissioner Leys thanked the Board for the funding for the Christmas decorations. She said it made a big difference, and she appreciates it. She mentioned an upcoming event that BROCC is doing. She wished everyone a Happy New Year and looking forward to a good 2016.

Commissioner Evans talked about straightening up his Commissioners' office business, and asked about printing on both sides of the paper. He asked the Board if anyone has a problem with printing on both sides. No one spoke. He said he looks forward to a good year working together.

Commissioner Irwin said that Sheriff Maines talked about the motto, and we already have too. He said the Courthouse looks great, and is a big impact. He said they are still trying to get together for the veterans and Alleghany Memorial Hospital towards the end of February with Jeramiah Hampton and a couple of insurance companies to help getting the most services available at the Hospital.

Chair Smith said he looks forward to a productive year.

Commissioner Evans made a motion to enter closed session under NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (3)—legal at 8:02pm. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Commissioner Davis made a motion to adjourn closed session and reconvened the regular meeting at 8:40pm. Commissioner Irwin seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Chair Smith stated that no action was taken during closed session.

Being no further business, Commissioner Irwin made a motion to adjourn at 8:49pm. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Respectfully submitted,

Attest:

Karen Evans
Clerk to the Board

Tom Smith
Chair