

The Alleghany County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, July 20, 2015, at 10:00am 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 that a request to fill an open deputy position and open jailer position needs to be added to the agenda.

Commissioner Irwin made a motion to approve the amended agenda for this July 20, 2015, meeting. Commissioner Leys seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

AGENDA  
Monday, July 20, 2015  
10:00 AM

- 10:00 Meeting Called To Order, Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation  
Motion on Agenda for July 20, 2015, Meeting  
Motion on Minutes for Motion on Minutes for June 2, 2015, Morning Budget Meeting; June 2, 2015, Afternoon Budget Meeting; June 15, 2015, Regular Meeting; June 15, 2015, Budget Meeting; June 17, 2015, Budget Meeting; June 18, 2015, Emergency Meeting; June 18, 2015, Budget Meeting; June 19, 2015, Budget Meeting; June 23, 2015, Budget Meeting; June 24, 2015, Budget Public Hearing; June 24, 2015, Budget Meeting; June 25, 2015, Budget Meeting
- 10:05 A. Rita Miller, Tax Administrator  
1. June Releases and Refunds - Standard release and refund of both automobile and real property taxes due to reasons listed on the report. Actions Requested – Vote on releases and refunds.  
2. June Collections Report - Monthly 2015 collection rates through June as compared to 2014 monthly collection rates. No action requested.  
3. Enforced Collections Report – Summarizes enforced collections for the month of June 2015. No action requested.  
4. Payment Agreement Report - List of people with payment agreements who did not make payments. No action requested.  
5. Settlement of FY 2014/15 Taxes – Settlement (detailed statement of levy vs. collections) is required by law to be presented to the Commissioners prior to the current year tax bills being generated. No action requested.
- 10:15 B. Manah Wyatt, Chamber of Commerce Administrative Assistant  
RE: Chamber is requesting funds for assistance with a part-time person. Action Requested – Vote on the request.
- 10:25 C. Pat Polley, Chair of Alleghany County Library  
RE: Golden Leaf Grant/Library Expansion. Presentation on awarded Golden Leaf Grant, funds presently fund raised and the additional funds needed to complete proposed expansion project. No action requested.
- 10:40 D. General Business  
1. August 31 Joint Meeting with Sparta Town Council Meeting Location Change  
The joint meeting location on August 31 is requested to be changed to be held in the Sparta Town Council's chambers. Action Requested – Vote on the change.  
2. North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) Conference  
The NCACC annual conference will be held in Pitt County on August 20-23, 2015. A voting delegate representing Alleghany County will need to be appointed at the next meeting. No action requested.  
3. Sparta-Alleghany Volunteer Fire Department Contract  
The Sparta-Alleghany Volunteer Fire Department has requested an updated contract for their performances of fire protection services. Action Requested – Vote on the contract.

4. Surplus Property  
Surplus the 2000 Tye No-Till Drill that was purchased by the County for the Soil and Water Department. Action Requested – Vote to surplus and dispose the property.
  5. General Fund Budget Amendment #1  
General Fund budget amendment #1 in the amount of \$271,883 to budget for the capital loan as discussed during the budget meetings. Action Requested – Vote on the budget amendment.
  6. Skyline Tower Lease  
Proposed lease to rent tower space from Skyline on a tower located on Catherine's Knob. Action Requested – Vote on the lease.
  7. Property Rights Protection Ordinance Proposed Change  
Wording changes to the appeal section in the Property Rights Protection Ordinance has been recommended by the Planning Board. A public hearing must be held prior to the Commissioners taking action on the request. Action Requested – Schedule a public hearing on Monday, August 3 at 6:30pm.
  8. Virginia/Carolina Water Authority Board Reappointment  
Request is to reappoint Don Adams to serve a four-year term on the Water Authority. Action Requested – Vote on the reappointment.
  9. Agricultural Advisory Board Appointments  
Request is to reappoint Dustin Phipps and Marshall Hash for a three-year term. Also, request is to appoint Jimmy Joines and Virginia Van Hampton to fill two vacated seats for three-year terms. Action Requested – Vote on the appointments.
  10. Open Deputy Position and Open Jailer Position (added)
- E. Commissioner Business
1. Bridge Naming Resolution—Commissioner Karen Leys is requesting the Board to approve a resolution requesting that the NC Department of Transportation name the newly constructed Farmers Fish Camp Road Bridge “Martin Gambill Bridge”. Action Requested – Vote on the resolution.
- F. Public Comments—30 minutes  
G. Commissioners Comments  
H. Adjourn

Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 2, 2015, morning budget meeting; June 2, 2015, afternoon budget meeting; June 15, 2015, regular meeting; June 15, 2015, budget meeting; June 17, 2015, budget meeting; June 18, 2015, emergency meeting; June 18, 2015, budget meeting; June 19, 2015, budget meeting; June 23, 2015, budget meeting; June 24, 2015, budget public hearing; June 24, 2015, budget meeting; June 25, 2015, budget meeting. Commissioner Evans seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Rita Miller, Tax Administrator, presented the June auto releases.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve the June auto releases. Commissioner Evans seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Rita Miller presented the June auto refunds under the vehicle tax system (VTS).

Commissioner Leys and Rita Miller talked about this is the vehicle taxes that the State collects then forwards the money to the County. They discussed reasons for the refunds.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve the June VTS auto refunds. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Rita Miller presented the June real property releases.

Commissioner Leys and Rita Miller talked about the foreclosure fee release.

Commissioner Evans made a motion to approve the June real property releases. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Rita Miller presented the June real property refunds.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve the June real property refunds. Commissioner Evans seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Rita Miller presented the June 2015 reports; collection rate report

Commissioner Leys, Chair Smith and Rita Miller talked about the collection rate.

Rita Miller presented June's enforced collection report.

Commissioner Irwin and Rita Miller talked about the bankruptcy report.

Commissioner Leys mentioned the good job being done on the enforced collections.

Rita Miller presented June's payment agreement report.

Rita Miller presented the annual settlement for fiscal year 2014/15. She reviewed the breakdown for real property in the amount of \$252,701.61. She explained there is no action required on the annual settlement.

Commissioner Irwin and Rita Miller talked about she is not requesting the release of any of taxes. She explained they have 10 years to collect these outstanding bills. They discussed the interest amount is set by the State, and there are no additional fees other than what is in the Statutes. He talked about this is an unfair process for the people who pay their taxes. They discussed this is all public record with the exception of the bankruptcy report. The County Manager explained that the agenda packet including this settlement is online.

Rita Miller continued to present the annual settlement for 2014/15. She explained that the order to collect has been signed and the bills have been printed and are ready to go in to the mail on July 31.

Manah Wyatt, Chamber of Commerce Administration Assistant, explained they want to reduce their budget request to \$6,760. She provided copies of their part-time worker's duties. She explained that the grant will no longer provide funding for this part-time person starting in October. She reviewed the part-time employee's qualifications and duties that she performs. She further reviewed reasons why they need to employ this person including the increase in tourism.

Chair Smith and Manah Wyatt talked about the amount of the request is \$6,760, which is for a computer and the part-time salary from October until the end of the budget year.

Commissioner Leys and Manah Wyatt talked about \$8 an hour is a bargain to get this person. Commissioner Leys explained her opinion of the importance of the Chamber, and stated that she is in favor of this.

Chair Smith talked about the Chamber is involved in several areas of the Economic Development Plan.

Chair Smith and Manah Wyatt talked about the Chamber currently has 2 interns.

Commissioner Irwin and Manah Wyatt talked about there are 275 Chamber members and their dues. They discussed there are a few businesses who haven't joined the Chamber, and they are recruiting new members. They further discussed this part-time person will work 20 hours per week. They talked about their main revenues including fundraisers. They further talked about the interns this summer are because the Director is on maternity leave. They discussed the ability of businesses to pay dues, if the dues are raised. She said that she will make the Director aware of today's conversation.

Commissioner Irwin and the County Manager talked about the County hadn't provided monies to the Chamber for several years.

Commissioner Irwin said he might be in favor of helping with the computer but not the salary.

Commissioner Leys said she is a member of several non-profits, and they pay the \$80 membership fee. She talked about the weekly briefing that is prepared each week is done by this part-time person.

Commissioner Irwin said \$8 an hour is a bargain but the Chamber hasn't raised their dues in 10 years, and the Chamber should be at a point to be self-sufficient.

Commissioner Evans and Manah Wyatt talked about Sue McMullen has been there for 2 years and the increase in the tourism statistics are from the NC Commerce's website. He asked her to explain more about the weekly briefing. She explained that is an email blast about what is happening in Alleghany County that week. They talked about it can also be viewed on their website, [www.sparta-nc.com](http://www.sparta-nc.com).

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve the request of \$6,760 for the computer and part-time salary. Chair Smith seconded the motion. Vote 3:2 (Mark Evans, Bobby Irwin).

Pat Polley, Chair of the Alleghany County Library, introduced people in the audience representing the Library. She provided the history of the Library. She reviewed the size of the Library is 5,034 square feet, and technology that is available in the Library today. She explained the need for more space and provided examples of the need. She talked about the library study that was completed. She reviewed the Golden Leaf application, which included NC Works and Library space. She reviewed the NC Works' portion of the application. She explained the proposal is for over 11,000 square feet, including 30 computers and uses for the expanded location. She talked about the funding for the proposal is \$330,000 from Golden Leaf and the Library currently has \$237,600, which leaves a shortfall of \$310,000. She explained the language for the release of the Golden Leaf monies and the signed document must be received by Golden Leaf by September 4. She said they need help. She explained the County owns the two buildings. She asked can the County help provide the shortfall funds.

Commissioner Irwin clarified that the Library needs a guarantee of the \$310,000 by September. Pat Polley agreed. He talked about if this deal isn't done now, it won't be done, and he can't see a downside of backing this \$310,000 but they are really short another \$100,000 for technology. Pat Polley said that is correct, and they are going to ask people to assist with those expenses. He talked about the Commissioners' meeting schedule and the deadline is early September. He said if we are looking at moving the Library the need to have a sign on 18 showing the location of Library. Pat Polley stated that it is their intent to have signage. He said with the Library moving, it will open up other options for the County. He talked about this is a win-win for everyone, and he is willing to do whatever he can to find the monies. Pat Polley said they already have a meeting set up to discuss funding opportunities.

Commissioner Irwin asked if they come up with a grant and how is that worked out of the \$310,000. County Manager Don Adams explained the construction budget is short \$306,000, which was rounded up to \$310,000, and the \$42,000 grant can be for the technology. The County Manager explained their fundraising is for furniture and technology, and stated that the Library board is committed to fundraising for the furniture and technology, which still leaves the project \$310,000 short.

Chair Smith and Pat Polley talked about the amount of money the Library has for this project. They talked about the purchase of the annex space was done by the library people.

Chair Smith asked if the project is short \$310,000, what avenues does the Board has.

County Manager Don Adams said that there is no action requested today, and the information provided today is for future conversations.

The County Manager talked about assets on Main Street. He provided papers to the Commissioners about the assets including the amount the County has them insured for and their tax cards. He reviewed information on the annex property including a value of \$207,400 with 2,500 square feet. He talked about the joint use of the property besides the building and the

property was purchased with fundraised money by the Library. He reviewed information on the second property with 5,000 square feet and a tax value of \$664,600. He explained that if the County could get \$600,000 for the library property it would be a conversation but if only \$200,000, then can the County replace that amount of space for \$200,000. He said another route could be a conversation about debt. He provided the Board information about debt service and explained the handout. He explained that the BDC/WCC facility has two payments left. He further explained if the Commissioners proceed with this, there will be additional operating expenses. He said that this is where the County could get the operational costs and the costs if a loan is extended. He explained that moving at lightning speed it would be in next fiscal year, and the loan would impact 2016/17. He gave examples if the County borrowed the money for 10 years or 15 years. He stated that this may qualify for a 10-year no interest loan with the first year deferred but we won't know about that until October. He reiterated that if the Commissioners are going the debt route there is potential for a no-interest loan.

Commissioner Irwin asked is this for the amount for a loan. The County Manager said yes.

The County Manager said this is two avenues. He explained that the County doesn't have to close on the loan until the bids are coming in. He reviewed the timeline including contractors on site early summer, which is when the finances would be settled.

Commissioner Irwin clarified that would be the 2016/17 budget, which would leave one payment. The County Manager agreed. The County Manager explained traditional financing, and the State won't let us extend the principal payment amounts.

Commissioner Evans and County Manager Don Adams talked about the amount of the no-interest payment is half of the current payment. The County Manager explained the operations' capacity in the budget.

Commissioner Evans asked about the loss of revenues impacting the BDC. The County Manager said yes it will impact the BDC. Commissioner Evans asked would the County have to provide them more money. The County Manager explained it would depend upon the level of services provided, and this is the reason why they haven't hired a full-time director. They discussed how the BDC is currently operating including they should be able to maintain but they are at full capacity at this time, and if they lose half of the renters then they will have to deal with it.

Commissioner Evans mentioned NC Works is housed there, and asked if there are any revenue exchange there. The County Manager explained he is always getting pressure about them not having to pay, and explained their move would free up prime rental space for the BDC. They talked about rental space for the BDC and their operations.

Commissioner Irwin asked looking down the road and looking at making some movement changes of local government facilities and how does this affect that. The County Manager said he would recommend before the Board uses these assets to have a conversation about the needs of the County for mandatory services before selling the assets.

Commissioner Irwin asked does the Board have enough time between now and September 4. The County Manager said that depends on what is needed to say yes or no, and this needs to go on our next agenda. The County Manager explained all of the requirements for Golden Leaf, and the only thing that needs to come from the County is if the Commissioners are supporting the \$310,000.

Chair Smith suggested that this be on the next agenda. Commissioner Irwin and Chair Smith talked about when the vote on the matter would occur.

Commissioner Irwin and the County Manager talked about a letter is all that is required from the County regarding the grant.

Commissioner Evans asked for information about the numbers and the operating costs. The County Manager said he will get that information to him.

Pat Polley stated her appreciation for all of the Board's efforts.

Commissioner Leys thanked Commissioner Irwin for his words and comments. She talked about this is a win-win situation.

Chair Smith declared a brief recess at 11:26am.

County Manager Don Adams requested that the next joint meeting on August 31 be moved to Sparta Town Chambers.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to move the joint meeting on August 31 to Sparta Town Chambers, Commissioner Irwin seconded the motion.

Commissioner Evans asked why move the meeting. County Manager Don Adams said that he has a personal issue occurring at that time.

The Board voted on the motion on the floor. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams talked about the NCACC's Annual Conference in Pitt County on August 20-23 and the need for a voting delegate at the Conference.

Commissioner Irwin said he can't attend.

Commissioner Evans said he plans to go.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to appoint Commissioner Evans as the voting delegate. Commissioner Irwin seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams presented the Sparta-Alleghany Volunteer Fire Department's contract. He explained the reason for an updated contract including the upcoming inspections.

Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve the contract. Commissioner Evans seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams talked about the quote from John Deere is for a Haybuster no-till drill. He explained that the request is to surplus the 2000 Tye no-till drill that was purchased by the County for the Soil and Water Department. He said the new equipment has been ordered. He reviewed the amounts of the trade-ins including the highest is the John Deere trade-in amount is \$5,000. He talked about County staff agrees that the Haybuster is a good piece of equipment. He explained the need to surplus the equipment, and the possibility of running an upset bid ad next week to see if the County can get more than \$5,000 for the Tye no-till drill.

Chair Smith mentioned that the upset bid process would not affect the price.

Commissioner Davis and the County Manager talked about the amount of interest shown in the equipment.

County Manager Don Adams explained that he doesn't think the County will get that amount. He further explained that one reason to run the upset bid ad is so if anyone comes back to say they would have bought it if they had the opportunity.

Commissioner Irwin and the County Manager talked about we can't mess up the trade in value. Commissioner Irwin said he didn't think we will get \$5,300 for it.

Commissioner Davis made a motion to surplus the Tye no-till drill and trade it in. Commissioner Irwin seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams reminded everyone that there are no parts for this drill, and he would hate to see a person get something they can't fix.

County Manager Don Adams presented budget amendment General Fund #1 in the amount of \$271,883 for FY 2015/16 capital loan, which is \$5,000 less than discussed during the budget because of the trade-in conversation that just occurred. He explained this budget amendment will get the amount of the capital in the budget.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve budget amendment General Fund #1 in the amount of \$271,883. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams presented the proposed Skyline tower lease for renting tower space on Catherine's Knob for emergency communications. He reviewed the highlights of the contract.

The County Manager and Commissioner Evans talked about the current market rate including the Town is getting around \$30,000 for antenna space.

The County Manager talked about our rate is \$1,400 a month, and the market rate is determined by the height on the tower. He explained his visit to the site.

Chair Smith and the County Manager talked about this is a budgeted item.

Chair Smith asked the County Attorney about the contract. County Attorney Donna Shumate said she has reviewed it and found nothing alarming.

Commissioner Evans made a motion to approve the tower lease agreement. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams presented proposed changes regarding appeals in the Property Rights Protection Ordinance. He read the current language and the new proposed language. He reviewed the need for the Commissioners to remain the Board of Adjustments, and appeals the Commissioners would hear would be decisions made by Travis Dalton, Planner. He gave an example. County Attorney Donna Shumate agreed.

Chair Smith and the County Attorney talked about this is to be in line with State Statutes.

Commissioner Irwin and County Attorney Donna Shumate discussed the language in the appeals section regarding the timing and where the action is taken.

Commissioner Leys explained that she has had residents in Alleghany County state that they didn't like the Planning Board making the decisions. She talked about State Statutes dictate that is what must be done. County Manager Don Adams explained that this Board has control over the Planning Board. Commissioner Leys talked about complaints go to the Planning Board, not this Board.

Commissioner Evans made a motion to schedule the public hearing on August 3 at 6:30pm. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams talked about his appointment on the Water Authority has expired and requested to be reappointed to serve a 4-year term on the Authority. He reviewed the makeup of the Board.

Commissioner Irwin made a motion to approve the reappointment of the County Manager to the Water Authority board. Commissioner Evans seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams presented a request to reappoint Dustin Phipps and Marshall Hash for three-year terms and to appoint Jimmy Joines and Virginia Van Hampton to fill two vacated seats for three-year terms on the Agricultural Advisory Board.

Commissioner Irwin said he was at the meeting last week, the board discussed these and voted on these appointments.

Commissioner Evans made a motion to approve the appointments of Dustin Phipps, Marshall Hash, Jimmy Joines and Virginia Van Hampton on the Agricultural Advisory Board. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams presented a letter from the Sheriff requesting to fill two vacant positions; Deputy Grade 62 \$25,622.61 and Jailer Grade 60 \$23,240.55. He explained that David Bare is retiring at the end of this month.

Commissioner Irwin and the County Manager talked about this requires no budget increase.

Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve the requests. Commissioner Evans seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Commissioner Leys talked about the previous bridge naming resolution as the Gambill Family Bridge on Farmers Fish Camp Road. She reminded everyone of the history of the previous resolution request, and explained that NCDOT denied the request because they have never named a bridge for a family.

Commissioner Irwin made a motion to approve the resolution change.

Commissioner Leys read the resolution.

Commissioner Leys said she would like to recuse herself on the vote because this is a family matter.

Chair Smith and Commissioner Leys talked about the bridge ribbon cutting ceremony is on July 30 at 10am.

Commissioner Leys stated that the fee has been paid.

Commissioner Evans seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

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

Commissioner Evans said he enjoyed the first of July off due to all of the meetings in June. He thanked the Clerk for all of the minutes and the County Manager for all of the work in June. He suggested moving the budget public hearing closer to the middle of the month to try to have more public interest.

Commissioner Leys mentioned several events that are occurring soon; Blue Ridge Mountain Fair is Saturday, Road Market this weekend, Blue Ridge Read has an event on July 28, the Hospital is having an open house on August 20 with the physicians present, the Hospital's Fashion Show fundraiser on August 15 at Olde Beau. She explained that she recently had her father's birthday party at the Veterans Memorial Park, and how she is very appreciative of the Park and for all of work completed there.

Commissioner Irwin urged the Board to not lose track of the ¼¢ sales tax, and after hearing the Library's presentation today we need to consider this. He talked about our surrounding counties has it, and sales tax is a fair tax to everyone. He said he wants to make sure the Board doesn't lose sight of that. He mentioned the Martin Gambill Bridge, and Ashe County had a play then Alleghany County should also be able to do so. He talked about the Friends of the Auditorium's current challenge on the seating. He explained that the State wants to take the driver's education program away from the high school and put it in the community college system. He said that the House/Senate is committing \$200,000 for a feasibility study about the drivers' education program. He explained that he doesn't know where to offer the training, a lot of details haven't been finalized, nothing good will come out of it, impact to rural areas, and doesn't know why they are messing with it. He talked about the current language regarding the drivers' education program for 2015/16. He said that at some point the Commissioners will need to meet with the Board of Education and Wilkes Community College



whether this is a good thing for Alleghany County then communicate that to those who are making the decisions.

Being no further business, Commissioner Davis made a motion to adjourn at 12:28pm. Commissioner Evans seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Respectfully submitted,

Attest:

Karen Evans, Clerk to the Board

Tom Smith, Chair