

The Alleghany County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, August 17, 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 Kay Luffman and F. 8. under General Business needs to be removed from the agenda.

Commissioner Irwin made a motion to approve the amended agenda for this August 17, 2015, meeting. Commissioner Leys seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

AGENDA
Monday, August 17, 2015
10:00 AM

- 10:00 Meeting Called To Order, Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation
Motion on Agenda for August 17, 2015, Meeting
Motion on Minutes for August 3, 2015, Meeting
- 10:05 A. Linda Killon, Assistant Tax Collector
1. July 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. July Collections Report - Monthly 2015 collection rates through July 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.
- 10:15 B. Rick Lanier
RE: The installation of the US Motto “In God We Trust” on County Buildings at no cost to the County. Action Requested – Vote on the request.
- 10:25 C. Suzanne Irwin, Friends of the Auditorium
RE: The Friends of the Auditorium is applying for a \$5,000 grant from Blue Ridge Electric and is asking for a letter of endorsement from the County for the grant. Action Requested – Vote on the request.
- 10:35 D. Jim Connor
RE: Tourism Development Authority Annual Report. No action requested.
- 10:45 E. Kay Luffman (deleted)
RE: Alleghany Connections Annual Report. No action requested.
Juvenile Crime Prevention Council Annual Report. No action requested.
- 11:00 F. General Business
1. Joint Meeting Reminder
The Commissioners and Sparta Town Council are scheduled to meet on Monday, August 31 at 7:00pm in the Sparta Town Hall Chambers. No action requested.
2. Jury Commission Reappointment
Request is to reappoint Virginia Van Hampton for a three-year term on the Jury Commission. 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. First Responder Program
Request to approve the Alleghany County First Responder Program Standards of Operation. Action Requested – Vote on the request.
5. Scrap Tire Contract

Current contract expires August 31, 2015. Received quotes from two companies; US Tire at \$71.50 per ton and New River Tire Recycling at \$65 per ton. Request is to enter into a three-year contract with New River Tire Recycling. Action Request – Vote on contract.

6. Town of Sparta Solid Waste Release Request

Request from the Town of Sparta to release the remaining solid waste fees resulting from the demolition of the old motel on Highway 18. Action Requested – Vote on the request.

7. School Funding from the State

Request to write support letters to NC Legislature in regards to maintaining funding for Teacher Assistants and to maintain funding for the Driver Education program. Action Requested – Vote on the request.

8. Fence It or Ticket Article (deleted)

General discussion regarding a recent Alleghany News article that addresses the Highway State Patrol's potential future actions regarding livestock running at large.

G. Public Comments—30 minutes

H. Commissioners Comments

I. Adjourn

Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 3, 2015, meeting. Commissioner Leys seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Linda Killon, Assistant Tax Collector, presented the July auto releases.

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

Linda Killon presented the July auto refunds.

Commissioner Evans made a motion to approve the July auto refunds. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Linda Killon presented the July auto refunds under the vehicle tax system (VTS).

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

Linda Killon presented the July real property releases.

Commissioner Leys and Linda Killon talked about one of the releases.

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

Linda Killon presented the July real property refunds.

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

Linda Killon presented the July 2015 reports; collection rate report, enforced collection report, payment agreement report.

Commissioner Leys stated her appreciation for the Tax Office's employees for their work on the collections.

Rick Lanier came before the Board to discuss the US Motto Action Committee. He said this is an invitation to join other cities and counties to display the US Motto on government buildings. He explained the history of the action committee and the history of the official US Motto; In God We Trust. He read the names of the counties and cities that have approved having the US Motto on their government buildings; 56 municipalities and 37 counties. He said the costs

are covered by private donations so it doesn't cost the taxpayers anything. He talked about the commitment that elected officials are showing for this action.

Chair Smith thanked Rick Lanier for his presentation. He referred to pictures that the Board has, which are very impressive.

Rick Lanier explained how he works with a sign company in Lexington and the materials to be used for the sign displays. He talked about the Commissioners can decide the placement of the letters. He reviewed the proposed placement and sizes of the letters on the buildings.

Commissioner Evans talked about the wording in the Board Meeting Room. He asked if the letters could be placed on a plaque in order to be easier painted around. Rick Lanier said that could be accomplished. Commissioner Evans mentioned the placement of the words in the Board Meeting Room. The County Manager talked about the placement behind the Commissioners' table.

Chair Smith and Rick Lanier talked about the sign company can work to the needs of the facilities.

Commissioner Leys said she agrees about painting around the words.

Commissioner Leys, County Manager and Rick Lanier talked about colors for the wording in the Board Meeting Room.

Chair Smith asked Rick Lanier to leave some information about the sign company.

Commissioner Irwin made a motion to accept Rick Lanier's invitation. Commissioner Leys seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams explained he will get a couple of examples of this room, making sure the letters are in the same font and colors on the County Administration Building and not having the letters bright white but rather off-white to match the existing lettering/font on the Courthouse.

Chair Smith talked about looking at the examples for the room.

Suzanne Irwin came before the Board on behalf of the Friends of the Auditorium (FOA) to present information about the formation of the FOA. She explained the purpose of FOA and their relationship with the schools. She reviewed some items that they have accomplished since 2006 including the sound center. She talked about there are 896 seats in the auditorium. She further talked about the historical significances of the auditorium. She explained the restoration of the auditorium including having a portion of the seats upholstered. She further explained they are working on a matching grant and at the end there will be 141 more seats left to upholster. She talked about the costs of upholstering the seats are just the material because inmates perform the labor. She explained their future goals in the auditorium. She said that plans are available to see what the auditorium could look like. She talked about how the Allegheny Community Theatre could become like Barter Theatre.

Commissioner Leys and Suzanne Irwin discussed when the building was built, and roof was reconstructed. Suzanne Irwin mentioned that air-conditioning is needed. They talked about the building structure is sound.

Suzanne Irwin talked about the need to have a manager for the auditorium in the future.

Commissioner Irwin and Suzanne Irwin talked about Blue Ridge Electric and Skyline previously held their annual meetings in the auditorium. He asked about how the building would be air-conditioned. Commissioner Evans mentioned that the windows are a big deal and currently have window A/C units, and they hope to address the A/C when doing the windows.

Chair Smith and Suzanne Irwin talked about the grant goes through December. She explained that she would like to have a letter of endorsement for the grant. They discussed the grant is for the upholstery for the seats.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve the request of the letter of endorsement. Commissioner Evans seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Jim Connor presented the annual report for the Tourism Development Authority (TDA). He reviewed their meeting schedule, and members. He reviewed the occupancy tax revenues, which is up 9% over the previous year. He further reviewed the 2013 Tourism Economic Fact Sheet including the yearly tourist activity. He explained how the tourism activity money is calculated and is the standard in the industry. He reviewed the 5-year trend of tourist spending including 2014 was a 5.52 % increase. He reviewed the 2013 tourism tax relief on county households as a result of tourist spending. He named several of their activities that they have supported during the past year including having the Chamber perform their administrative functions. He talked about ways they are working to bring in visitors to the county. He further talked about workshops they have attended. He said that the TDA has been busy this year.

Commissioner Leys talked about she has attended their meetings, and they do great things. She asked about state-wide promotions. Jim Connor explained they are still working on the big item for that, and gave examples of their conversations. She talked about having a billboard on 77 showing the upcoming activities in the county. He said that has been a topic of conversation. She thanked him for the hard work.

Commissioner Irwin and Jim Connor talked about the amount of money generated in direct tourist spending in 2013 and the amount per day.

County Manager Don Adams and Jim Connor talked about this money includes everything that tourism supports, not just what is spent here.

Commissioner Irwin said it would be interesting to see the breakdown of the numbers. Jim Connor explained Western Carolina put the information together but the information came from the State.

County Manager Don Adams said he will provide information from Jim Connor to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Leys and Jim Connor talked about the members of the TDA are volunteers.

County Manager Don Adams explained that this is a legal authority. He reviewed that there is a separate audit done for the TDA. He talked about other areas have a separate Finance Officer. He reviewed this is the only way the funds can be expended and received.

Jim Connor and County Manager Don Adams talked about the Town of Sparta is a member of the North Carolina League of Municipalities. Jim Connor explained he is writing a letter about proposed legislation that occupancy tax monies go to the municipalities rather than the counties. The County Manager talked about this would be for areas within the city limits, and he would be glad to speak to Jim Connor about this.

Commissioner Evans said when he is talking with local people they are challenged with learning what is going on and the need for a website showing that. Jim Connor explained the Ever-wonder calendar has all of the events listed here and for the region. They discussed how the website can be found online. The County Manager explained groups have the ability to submit information to the Chamber Director, who can submit it to Ever-wonder.

Commissioner Irwin asked if there has been any type of advertising done with the Blue Ridge Parkway. Jim Connor said that their largest area of advertising is through the Blue Ridge Parkway Association and types of advertising the TDA does. Jim Connor explained they have been working with the Parkway to place information at the Bluff's Lodge about area restaurants, which hasn't been able to occur yet.

Chair Smith declared a brief recess at 11:28am.

County Manager Don Adams reminded the Board of the joint meeting with the Town of Sparta on Monday, August 31, 2015, at 7:00pm at the Sparta Town Hall Chambers.

County Manager Don Adams presented a letter from Susie Gambill requesting that Virginia Van Hampton be re-appointed for another term on the Jury Commission ending June 30, 2017.

Chair Smith and the County Attorney talked about the functions of the Jury Commission.

Commissioner Leys and the County Manager talked about there are three members on the Jury Commission.

Commissioner Irwin explained he served on this before and the functions that they do.

Commissioner Evans made a motion to re-appoint Virginia Van Hampton to serve on the Jury Commission. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams presented a request from the Sheriff to fill an open deputy slot, \$25,622.

Commissioner Irwin and the County Manager talked about this is just filling an open position.

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

County Manager Don Adams presented information about the First Responder Program Standards of Operation. He said it is being requested to approve the Standards of Operation. He reviewed there are no State certifications for a first responder. He further reviewed that medical responder has replaced the term of first responder. He reviewed how calls are dispatched out. He talked about the amount of training required for a medical responder makes it harder for volunteer fire firefighters to continue the medical training. He explained that when a fire fighter shows up to calls they are working on their department's insurance. He further explained that people cannot obtain the training the time and automatically be a fire responder because they have to be associated with a fire department. He explained he talked to our insurance company and these people will be covered on our insurance. He reviewed the training requirements and training program. He reiterated that someone has to be a member of a recognized emergency responder department in order to be a first responder. He talked about the timeline, if the Board approves this, including Stephen Crouse would have to create the trainings, and how the protocols would be changed.

Chair Smith and the County Manager talked about this 11 or 12 hours is more than the hours required as a fire fighter. They talked about there are a lot of people interested in the first responder program. The County Manager explained that the hardest part is organizing the training. The County Manager further explained that this is not standard in other places and the need to have this in place.

Commissioner Leys asked if the County Attorney has reviewed this. County Attorney Donna Shumate said this isn't a contract so medical staff needs to approve it. County Manager Don Adams explained that Dr. Bryant wrote the document and the history of developing the program.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to approve the First Responder Program Standards of Operation. Commissioner Evans seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams presented a proposed scrap tire contract. He reviewed items in the packets; quote letter from US Tire, summary of qualifications for New River Tire Recycling, proposed contract with New River Tire Recycling at a costs of \$65 per ton. He explained ways he verified New River Tire Recycling. He reviewed highlights of the 3-year proposed contract with a locked-in rate of \$65. He talked about still working with the transportation but it is half of the distance to the current site.

Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve the contract with New River Tire Recycling. Commissioner Irwin seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

County Manager Don Adams presented a letter from Mayor John Miller in regards to the demolition of the old motel on 18. He summarized the request of relief in the amount of \$11,069 for the solid waste fees that occurred as a result of the demolition. He said that the County was paying \$47.34 per ton at the time and the additional \$12.66 was intended to cover the overhead. He explained if the Board releases anything, he would recommend leaving the overhead costs of \$12.66 per ton, leaving \$4,379 due. He reiterated that he would recommend to not go pass what the County had to pay to dispose of the garbage. He explained the County does work with the Town and provided several examples. He reminded everyone that this is an enterprise fund.

Commissioner Irwin agreed with the Mayor that it was an eyesore. He said he can understand about the overhead amount.

Chair Smith talked about the amount remaining would be \$4,379 if the Board went that route, so it would be basically releasing \$6,690. The County Manager agreed.

Commissioner Evans talked about the overhead costs were something that was paid out somewhere, and the Board had to adjust rates during budget time because the Transfer Facility was losing money. The County Manager agreed and said sometimes the Town does loan us equipment.

County Manager Don Adams explained he recommends this to be a one-time release, and if this issue ever comes up again to have the conversation up front.

Commissioner Evans said the Town made the decision to do this without having a conversation with us.

Commissioner Leys asked is their partnership worth \$6,690 if the County has to rent this equipment. The County Manager said he doesn't know because it depends and provided examples.

Commissioner Davis said their equipment is always there when we needed it.

Commissioner Leys asked him about the value of services being \$6,690. Commissioner Davis said yes.

Commissioner Leys made a motion to discount \$6,690 to the Town on their solid waste bill. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion.

Chair Smith clarified that this is a one-time deal. Commissioner Leys agreed and said yes this is only for the old hotel on 18. Commissioner Davis agreed.

Commissioner Irwin said he doesn't like discounting the \$6,690 but the County/Town benefits from this. He stated it is vital to work together.

Commissioner Leys mentioned that a penny of their taxes is a lot less than a penny of ours. She talked about they took down two structures at that time, and it did improve the community. She said a lot of her telephone calls are about community eyesores.

The Board voted on the motion on the floor. Vote 4:1 (Mark Evans).

County Manager Don Adams presented information about a request to support writing a letter to state legislators regarding school funding. He talked about this is regarding the driver's education program and funding for Teacher Assistants. He stated that this is a request from Janice Linker, Interim Superintendent.

Commissioner Irwin explained he has talked about this before but it will be an impact to the citizens if it is put on the community colleges because of our size. He stated that the current system has been in place for a long time. He said without reading it, he doesn't see anything good in this from the state.

Commissioner Irwin made a motion to support the recommendation. Commissioner Evans seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Chair Smith opened the public comments portion of the meeting and asked for comments.

Ginger Collins provided information to the Board regarding the Sparta Street Party behind Ofelia's on Main Street. She explained the activities that will occur at the Street Party; unveiling the murals, announce recipients for 2015/16, tour Studio Redwood. She further explained their activities for the Street Party including food and music. She said that a group of them went to the Yadkin's cultural center and how helpful they were in offering assistance to Alleghany County.

Commissioner Leys said this is one more thing that is happening in Alleghany County. She thanked them.

Ginger Collins continued to talk about the Street Party activities and advertising for the event.

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

Commissioner Evans said it was an honor to attend the welcoming back of the teachers on Friday, and they are on the verge of naming a new superintendent along with having 17 new hires. He said they have a lot of good energy, ready to start, and he appreciates what they do and is thankful there are people who do that.

Chair Smith mentioned today is the first day of school.

Commissioner Irwin talked about the auditorium working with Elkin to share events back and forth. He provided a couple of examples. He said this brings money into the county.

Commissioner Irwin asked when the repaving of the Main Street will occur. County Manager Don Adams said he doesn't know and would have to ask the Town. Commissioner Irwin said he looks forward to having that completed and the Highway 21 project done.

Commissioner Leys stated her appreciation to the Economic Development committee appointees. She mentioned that they are working hard, and she is looking forward to seeing their work.

Being no further business, Commissioner Evans made a motion to adjourn at 12:25pm. Commissioner Leys seconded the motion. Vote 5:0.

Respectfully submitted,

Attest:

Karen Evans, Clerk to the Board

Tom Smith, Chair