



The Alleghany County Board of Commissioners met in a Special Board Retreat to discuss capital needs and address strategic planning, on Tuesday, November 14, 2017 at 9:00 am in the Conference room at Blue Ridge Energies, Sparta, North Carolina.

Present: Chair Mark Evans, Commissioner Bobby Irwin, Commissioner Tom Smith, Commissioner John Irwin, Commissioner Larry Prince, County Manager, Mike James, County Finance Officer, Karen Evans, Tax Administrator, Rita Miller, Social Services Director, Lisa Osborne and Clerk to the Board Lauren Linker.

Chair Mark Evans opened the meeting with an invocation.

The Board then discussed the purposed and agenda for the retreat.

Tax Administrator, Rita Miller went over the current 8-year revaluation and asked that the board consider changing it to every 6-years. She noted there would need to be a resolution completed in December of 2018. She explained the county would be using a hybrid system for the revaluation that will take place in 2021 so county staff will do the measuring and then contract out the commercial appraising. She also noted there would be a new appraiser on Board to help with the inhouse revaluation.

Chair Mark Evans asked if that was the new position.

Rita Miller stated yes it was the new position, but it was already covered under the current budget.

The Board moved on to discuss using as many different platforms to get the revaluation information out to the citizens when it gets closer to time.

Commissioner John Irwin asked how the new tax software was working. Rita Miller explained they were just now converting data, but there had be no problems so far.

Chair Mark Evans asked about the safety of the Tax Office.

Rita Miller said it was a concern that there was only one way in and out of the office.

Chair Mark Evans spoke about the role of county commissioners and the three major duties: fiscal policy, regulations, and administration. The Board the discussed some of their ideas of administration and county moral. They went over the process of feedback and the path of information and chain of command. Next the Board discussed the transparency and public relations of the county government.

County Manager, Mike James went over a scanning presentation for social services. He noted that some scanning will be mandatory to have electronic files.

Lisa Osborne, Director of Social Services said if the scanning could happen it would free up five more offices in their building.

Commissioner John Irwin went through the process of electronic filing to clarify.

Commissioner Tom Smith asked why the county needs to do electronic filing.

Lisa Osborne explained so that the State can have access to all files anytime. She explained that the company would scan in all current paper documents and staff would begin with all new documents.

Chair Mark Evans asked what the thought were for keeping social services where it currently is.

The Board discussed the maintenance of the current building and what would be involved in a new building. The discussed the rent increase and noted the state reimbursement.

Chair Mark Evans called a lunch recess at 11:47 am.

Chair Mark Evans called the meeting back at 1 pm. Representatives from Council on Aging, Partnership for Children, DSS, Appalachian Health Department, Alleghany Cares, Juvenile Crime Prevention Council and Our House of Wilkes. Chair Mark Evans explained the reason for the meeting was to help everyone understand what each group does and how the groups may compliment each other. He then asked each group to share their challenges and where things can be improved.

Karon Edwards gave a brief overview of what the Council on Aging does; from meals to in home aid.

Chair Mark Evans asked about funding for the center.

Karon Edwards explained it was mostly federal and state grants with some local grant matches.

Jennifer Greene went over the many service the Health Department provides and noted there is a nominal fee for some services while some funding comes from federal and state grants.

Maria Julian went over the community health programs potion of the Health Department along with the state and federal funding for them.

Jennifer Greene noted their biggest challenges are: opioids, tobacco, lack of money to support mandated programs and Medicaid reform.

Commissioner Larry Prince asked about the health department pairing with the pregnancy center and about the WIC program compared to what social services provides.

Jennifer Greene explained the WIC program is limited for women, infants and children up to a certain age after that is where social services will pick up also she explained that WIC can only be used for certain things for the health and betterment of women, infants and children.

Kathy Bobbitt gave a brief overview of their services. She noted they try to be certain there are no duplication in services in the county. She then explained then need and the want for a child advocacy center and supervised visitation.

Chair Mark Evans asked what the numbers would be for the center. Kathy Bobbitt explained about 28 children currently.

Lisa Osborne, Director of Social Services explained the need for a child advocacy cent and supervised visitation. She went over the types of visitation that social services can do and the types that would leave citizens with driving to another county. She explained the need for a child advocacy center and how important it is sometimes to help protect the children.

Lay Luffman explained the programs led by the juvenile crime prevention council. She went on to explain the programs through Alleghany connections and noted that the lack of volunteers was their biggest issue.

Representative from Our House of Wilkes explained their services and noted that their facility had been used by Alleghany County resident 34 times.

Karen Evans went over the programs that Alleghany Cares supports.

Chair Mark Evans thanked everyone for coming and being a part of the community discussion to help fill the gaps in services for the Alleghany County citizens. He then called a recess at 3:15 pm.

Chair Mark Evans called the meeting back at 3:15 pm.

The board discussed the different options for the courthouse, the county debt load and looking forward to the county needs for the next 5 years.

County Manager, Mike James said he felt there were two different conversations first, current safety issues, and then the bigger picture for the whole courthouse.

The Board then discussed options to fix the basement courtroom or if it needs to be fixed immediately.

County Manager, Mike James suggested a closed session under sale or acquisition of property.

Commissioner Bobby Irwin disagreed with going into closed session. He then had to leave at 3:55 pm.

Chair Mark Evans agreed the Board should not go into closed session at a retreat type meeting. He stated that needed to take place during a regularly scheduled meeting. (Closed session was placed at the next meeting which took place the very next Monday, November 20th, 2017)

The Board decided to do some research on court dockets with the clerk of courts office to see if it could schedule certain types of cases, on certain days, in certain places.

Chair Mark Evans called a recess at 4:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lauren Linker
Clerk to the Board

Attest:

Mark Evans
Chair