

**MINUTES
WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
March 1, 2016**

PUBLIC HEARINGS – ROAD NAME REQUEST – ELLER FARM DRIVE, MORAVIAN FALLS TOWNSHIP – ROAD NAME REQUEST – LAMARR RIDGE LANE, LEWIS FORK TOWNSHIP – ROAD NAME REQUEST – ARIYEL’S LANE, EDWARDS TOWNSHIP – Chairman Eddie Settle declared the Public Hearings open regarding the Road Name Requests for Eller Farm Drive, Lamarr Ridge Lane, and Ariyel’s Lane at 9:54 A.M. on Tuesday, March 1, 2016 with the following members present: Chairman Eddie Settle, Vice Chairman Greg Minton, Commissioner Keith Elmore, Commissioner Gary D. Blevins, and Commissioner David Gambill.

Also present were Tony Triplett, County Attorney; John Yates, County Manager; and Jerry Shepherd, Acting Clerk to the Board.

Chairman Settle asked if anyone would like to speak regarding the proposed Road Name Requests. Hearing no comments on the proposed Road Name Requests for Eller Farm Drive, Lamarr Ridge Lane, and Ariyel’s Lane Chairman Eddie Settle declared the Public Hearing closed at 9:56 A.M.

The Wilkes County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, March 1, 2016 at 10:00 A.M. with the following members present: Chairman Eddie Settle, Vice Chairman Greg Minton, Commissioner Keith Elmore, Commissioner Gary D. Blevins, and Commissioner David Gambill.

Also present for the meeting were Tony Triplett, County Attorney; John Yates, County Manager; and Jerry Shepherd Acting Clerk to the Board.

Chairman Eddie Settle welcomed everyone to the meeting.

INVOCATION – Commissioner David Gambill led the Invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Chairman Eddie Settle led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPONTMENT OF ACTING CLERK – Chairman Settle stated Sarah Call is out of town this week attending Clerk Certification School and the Board needs to appoint an acting Clerk.

Commissioner Gary D. Blevins made a motion to appoint Jerry Shepherd as acting Clerk as presented. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Greg Minton and unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Motion was made by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins, seconded by Commissioner Keith Elmore and unanimously adopted to approve the Minutes of the Board meeting held on February 16, 2016.

BUDGET AMENDMENTS AND TRANSFERS – Chairman Settle recognized Major David Carson. Major Carson stated budget amendment 18 is a grant from the State to assist with internet crimes against children. Federal funds are sent to the State and they divide out to counties, he added. Major Carson said there are \$40,000 in the grant, \$20,000 is allocated for training and equipment, and \$20,000 for overtime pay for the Detectives working on child victim cases, sexual cases, or child pornography. He added the training is for them to become more familiar with the techniques to identify child pornography transfers within the County. There are 5 to 8 child pornography transfers in Wilkes County via computer at any given time, he noted. Major Carson stated these funds will allow the Sheriff's office to have officers trained to work these cases and assist the State with the investigations.

Commissioner Elmore said this is not adding a position, it is for training. Major Carson replied that is correct it is for training current officers. Commissioner Elmore asked if the overtime being paid is for this budget year. Major Carson replied yes this grant will cover the overtime until July 1, 2016 and as he understands it is renewable next year. He added next year the grant will allow them to buy more equipment and they will not use all the overtime funds for two officers in this budget year. Chairman Settle asked if this is also to cover training cost. Major Carson replied yes and the training is expensive, it cost \$3,000 each to send 2 officers for a one-week school and \$3,000 each for the software they get during the school. The grant will cover all of this, he added. Commissioner Elmore said this would be highly technical. Chairman Settle stated it is a problem everyone reads about around the Country. Commissioner Elmore asks who writes the grants. Major Carson replied Logan Kerr who works part-time for the Sheriff's Department wrote this grant.

Motion was made by Commissioner David Gambill to approve Budget Amendment No. 17 (General Fund – Emergency Management; Budgeting grant funds awarded by the N.C. Dept. of Public Safety for Emergency Management. These funds are to be used to enhance our emergency management program. No County money involved); Budget Amendment No. 18 (General Fund; Budgeting grant funds as awarded by the N.C. Governor's Crime Commission for the effort to combat internet crimes against children (ICAC). This grant will allow law enforcement to investigate children sexual offences in a proactive manner and track investigations. These funds will provide training and a computer to meet these goals. No County funds are needed for this grant); and Budget Amendment No. 19 (General Fund – Health Department/Smart Strat; Received State funds for fiscal year to reduce Infant Mortality Rates. Increase Pharmaceuticals to cover a number of vaccines requested by the community and covered by insurance. Reallocating unused funds from local grant to purchase Smart Start supplies. No County money involved). The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Greg Minton and unanimously approved.

BLUE RIDGE OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION (BROC) – MARCH FOR MEALS CAMPAIGN PROCLAMATION – Jamie Wyatt stated that Jennifer Cooper, Director BROC Elderly Nutrition Program could not make it so he is filling in. Mr. Wyatt stated each year at this time BROC asks the Commissioners for a Proclamation supporting the National March for Meals Program. He stated for the past several years the Commissioners have been kind enough to support this declaration and he would like to ask for the Board’s continued support this year.

Chairman Settle said President Nixon signed this in to law in 1972. Commissioner Elmore said the program has two programs one takes meals to the elderly shut-ins, and the other is also very important, which is to make contact with these folks. He added this is a good program. Chairman Settle agreed and said the contact is good in some cases this is the only people that visit these folks. Mr. Wyatt agreed. Chairman Settle stated some of these folks are very lonely. Mr. Wyatt said some of them have family members that might come to see them on a weekend, but they have no-one the rest of the week except the volunteers that go and check on them.

Commissioner Keith Elmore made a motion to approve the Proclamation March for Meals as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins and unanimously approved

PROCLAMATION

A PROCLAMATION PROCLAIMING MARCH 2016 AS MARCH FOR MEALS MONTH

WHEREAS, on March 22, 1972, President Richard Nixon signed into law a measure that amended the Older Americans Act of 1965 and established a national nutrition program for seniors 60 years and older; and

WHEREAS, Meals on Wheels America established the March for Meals campaign in March 2002 to recognize the historic month, the importance of the Older Americans Act Nutrition Programs, both congregate and home-delivered, and raise awareness about the escalating problem of senior hunger in America; and

WHEREAS, the 2016 observance of March for Meals provides an opportunity to support Meals on Wheels programs that deliver vital and critical services by donating, volunteering and raising awareness about senior hunger and isolation; and

WHEREAS, Meals on Wheels programs – both congregate and home-delivered, in Wilkes County have served our communities admirably for more than 40 years; and

WHEREAS, volunteers for Meals on Wheels programs in Wilkes County are the backbone of the program and they not only deliver nutritious meals to seniors and individuals with disabilities who are at significant risk of hunger and isolation, but also caring concern and attention to their welfare; and

WHEREAS, Meals on Wheels programs in Wilkes County provide nutritious meals to seniors throughout the county that help them maintain their health and independence, thereby preventing unnecessary falls, hospitalizations and/or premature institutionalization; and

WHEREAS, Meals on Wheels programs in Wilkes County provide a powerful socialization opportunity for millions of seniors to help combat loneliness and isolation; and

WHEREAS, Meals on Wheels programs in Wilkes County deserve recognition for the contributions they have made and will continue to make to local communities, our State and our Nation.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners do hereby proclaim March 2016 as March for Meals Month and urge every citizen to take this month to honor our Meals on Wheels programs, the seniors they serve and the volunteers who care for them. Our recognition of, and involvement in, the national 2016 March for Meals can enrich our entire community and help combat senior hunger and isolation in America.

Dated this 1st day of March, 2016.

Eddie Settle, Chairman

PLANNING DEPARTMENT:

1. ROAD NAME REQUEST – ELLER FARM DRIVE – Chairman Eddie Settle recognized Planning Director Eddie Barnes. Mr. Barnes stated a Public Hearing was held earlier this morning to receive public input on a proposed Road Name Request for Eller Farm Drive in Moravian Falls Rock Township, with no opposition. He stated this request meets the requirements of the Wilkes County Road Naming Ordinance and a ten-day notification period has been met. He stated the Planning Department has not received any comments opposing the Road Name Request.

Commissioner David Gambill made a motion to approve the Road Name Request for Eller Farm Drive as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins and unanimously approved.

2. ROAD NAME REQUEST – LAMARR RIDGE LANE – Mr. Barnes stated a Public Hearing was held earlier this morning to receive public input on a proposed Road Name Request for Lamarr Ridge Lane in Lewis Fork Township, with no opposition. He stated this request meets the requirements of the Wilkes County Road Naming Ordinance and a ten-day notification period has been met. He stated the Planning Department has not received any comments opposing the Road Name Request.

Vice Chairman Greg Minton made a motion to approve the Road Name Request for Lamarr Ridge Lane as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins and unanimously approved.

3. ROAD NAME REQUEST – ARIYEL’S LANE – Mr. Barnes stated a Public Hearing was held earlier this morning to receive public input on a proposed Road Name Request for Ariyel’s Lane in Edwards Township, with no opposition. He stated this request meets the requirements of the Wilkes County Road Naming Ordinance and a ten-day notification period has been met. He stated the Planning Department has not received any comments opposing the Road Name Request.

Commissioner David Gambill made a motion to approve the Road Name Request for Ariyel's Lane as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Keith Elmore and unanimously approved.

WILKES COUNTY CHILD FATALITY PREVENTION TEAM – ANNUAL REPORT 2015 – Chairman Eddie Settle recognized and welcomed Health Director Ann Absher. Mrs. Absher provided the Commissioners with the 2015 Wilkes County Child Fatality Prevention Team Annual Report. She stated the General Statutes mandate Child Fatality Prevention Teams. N.C. Article 62 outlines the N.C. Child Fatality System and the membership of the team, she added. A summary of the report stated in 2015 the team met 3 times and reviewed 8 child fatalities, the number reviewed in 2014 was 9.

Mrs. Absher said there were no trends noted in the cases that were reviewed in 2015, nor were there any recommendations for policy or system process changes in Wilkes County. No systems problems were identified. They have enjoyed improved communication between agencies through team meetings. The death reviews that take place in the team meetings are confidential. The team is looking for trends or opportunities to improve systems to prevent child deaths as a community, thus the discussions that take place help to break down barriers between agencies that might otherwise limit open discussion. Mrs. Absher requested the Board accept the report and stated she will take any questions they may have.

Chairman Settle thanked Mrs. Absher for her report.

TAX DEPARTMENT – RELEASES – Alex Hamilton, Tax Administrators asked the Board to approve tax releases in the amount of \$4,456.99.

Commissioner Gary D. Blevins made a motion to approve tax releases in the amount of \$4,456.99 as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner David Gambill and unanimously approved.

A detailed listing of tax releases is maintained in the Wilkes County Tax Administrator's office.

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES:

1. SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCIES RECORDS RETENTION AND DISPOSITION SCHEDULE – APPROVAL – Chairman Eddie Settle recognized Department of Social Services Director John Blevins. Mr. Blevins stated each year the State updates this schedule and the list is maintained at their office which specifies for each record how long they keep it, when it can be destroyed, and how it must be destroyed. He added Wilkes DSS complies with the schedule and follows it.

Vice Chairman Greg Minton made a motion to approve the Social Services Records Retention and Disposition Schedule as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Keith Elmore and unanimously approved.

2. UPDATE – Mr. Blevins provided the Commissioners handouts for January. He briefly went over the monthly caseload report, Foster Care financial report, Adoption Services financial report, Child Development and Subsidized Child Care financial report. He also went through the CPS Foster Care monthly reports for January and the Foster/Adoptive Home Recruitment Plan.

Mr. Blevins said the next item is a letter that was sent to the County Managers and it is discussing factors that impacts Income Maintenance Services. The factors mentioned are NC Fast, Affordable Care Act, and the USDA determination that North Carolina is not processing the cases timely and accurately enough, he added. Mr. Blevins said the NC Fast system requires more data, but they also received daily reports and can see quickly if anyone is falling behind.

Commissioner Elmore asked if NC Fast was first implemented in 2012. Mr. Blevins replied it started about this time with food and nutrition and now it has gone to Medicaid and it was very bad when it started, it is a difficult process. Commissioner Elmore said it is 3-4 years old and this letter calls it a new system, and it should work better than it does. Mr. Blevins agreed and added when updates are received it is almost an entire new system, there are so many changes and it is chaos. He noted it is a moving target the workers try to hit.

Chairman Settle asked how much the Affordable Care Act added to the work load. Mr. Blevins replied quite a bite. He said in addition when they receive them they are not complete because now they send them electronically and they have to be excepted, even when missing a lot of the needed information. Mr. Blevins added the clock starts at the time they are received, several are not eligible, but it takes a lot of extra time to work through them. Chairman Settle noted it added a lot of extra work with no additional money from the Federal Government. Mr. Blevins agreed. Commissioner Gary D. Blevins asked about the 6% error rate mentioned in the letter and where Wilkes falls. Mr. Blevins replied Wilkes is close to 6% or slightly under and there is more work and information that they must have, but they have to also be very careful what they ask for. Chairman Settle stated it is almost an unfunded mandate.

Mr. Blevins stated on page 3 under C.1. Timeliness Requirements, near the bottom this letter says if federal fund are disallowed or suspended counties will have to replace lost federal funds for continued administration of the FNS Program. He added if this is lost it will cost the County \$310,266 for one-year. Mr. Blevins said in the last Directors call they discussed they do not think the State will reach the 95%, and hope the Federal Government will see the effort and give the State extra time. Commissioner Blevins stated this is a problem, the Counties such as Wilkes that are in compliance and meeting this goal are punished and the tax payers have to bear this cost. He added this is not logical. Mr. Blevins agreed and added it is frustrating. Commissioner Elmore asked the accuracy/timeliness percent in Wilkes. Mr. Blevins replied between 96% and 98% and sometimes 100%.

Chairman Settle thanked Mr. Blevins for his report and update. Mr. Blevins stated he has a great group of employees that work hard and care a great deal about the work they do. Commissioner Blevins agreed.

NEW BUSINESS – Commissioner Blevins stated the Board receives updates with the number of inmates at the Detention Center and it is currently at 112, with 15 of them from Iredell County. He added this leaves Wilkes below 100 inmates, and the female numbers have also dropped, which is encouraging and positive news. Chairman Settle asked Major Carson if he had a reason for the decline. Major Carson replied there are several factors the female population is not growing near as fast as it was 2 years ago. Chairman Settle stated he has been told they do not like to stay in the Wilkes Jail. Vice Chairman Minton added this is the intent. Major Carson said it is not a pleasant place to stay. Commissioner Blevins added the capacity is 265 and the Board was concerned at the time of construction it would not be adequate and plans were made to add a section later if need be. He said it is encouraging that it is going down. Chairman Settle agreed. Major Carson said there are many more regulations at this current jail than before on the inmates and their actions.

Commissioner Elmore said the economy has not gotten that much better and folks do wonder why this has dropped and also the DSS Budget is up to almost \$160 million. He added in 2003 when he became a Commissioner the DSS Budget was approximately \$90 million, it has increased \$70 million in 12-years. Commissioner Elmore stated this is Federal and State money that comes into Wilkes County, where does it all go. This is an indication of how bad the economy still is, he added. Commissioner Elmore stated he does not think it has improved based on the levels in the jail.

Commissioner Blevins said the inmate numbers have always been a concern because of the cost to the County, especially with the old jail and having to house them outside the County. Vice Chairman Minton agreed. He added folks pay a lot of income tax and that money goes to Washington and a percentage comes back, but they keep a lot for other things too. Commissioner Elmore stated this money does come into the County. He added there are not enough jobs in Wilkes County and the direction of the Country as a whole, and the fact this money is needed to operate, is disturbing. Commissioner Elmore stated the rural counties are suffering. Vice Chairman Minton added unemployment is the lowest now it has been and yet the County is still well below the 2008 numbers and in some cases folks have given up. Chairman Settle stated some folks will always be entitled and kept up by the Federal government. Vice Chairman Minton said it seems that folks have just accepted this as the new normal.

Chairman Settle asked if sales tax were still \$3 million below the 2008 amount. Mr. Jerry Shepherd, Finance Director replied yes from the 2008-2009 fiscal year. Chairman Settle added it was down \$6 million, came back \$3 million, but the needs for the schools, sheriff's department, and everyone is greater. Vice Chairman Minton agreed and the only numbers from the conference they attended that was encouraging was the diminished unemployment rate. People are just not actively looking for jobs, he added. Chairman Settle thanked the Board for their comments.

CLOSED SESSION – Commissioner David Gambill made a motion to go into Closed Session under Section 143-318.11(a)(3) of the North Carolina General Statutes to consult with the County Attorney in order to protect the attorney-client privilege and to consider and give instructions with respect to one or more potential judicial or administrative actions. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins and unanimously approved.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman Greg Minton, seconded by Commissioner David Gambill and by unanimous vote adopted to adjourn back into regular session. No action was taken in the closed session.

ADJOURN – Motion was made by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins, seconded by Commissioner Keith Elmore and by unanimous vote adopted to adjourn the meeting of the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners at 12:50 P. M.

Jerry Shepherd, Acting Clerk

Eddie Settle, Chairman

WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Approved: