

MINUTES
WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
May 3, 2016

The Wilkes County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, May 3, 2016 at 10:05 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 Sarah Call, Clerk to the Board.

Chairman Eddie Settle welcomed everyone to the meeting. Chairman Settle stated item G. would be removed from the agenda the presenter had a medical issue and cannot attend the meeting today.

INVOCATION – Commissioner David Gambill led the Invocation.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Motion was made by Commissioner Keith Elmore, seconded by Vice Chairman Greg Minton and unanimously adopted to approve the Minutes of the Board meeting held on April 19, 2016.

BUDGET AMENDMENTS/TRANSFERS – Motion was made by Commissioner David Gambill to approve Budget Amendment No. 25 (Environmental Health – The Health Department has been awarded three FDA/AFDO grants and one NACCHO mentor/mentee grant. The total grant awards are \$34,400.00. These funds were awarded to the Environmental Health Food and Lodging Program through their participation of the FDA Program Standards. These funds will be used to purchase supplies and training to enhance compliance with the 9 FDA Program). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins and passed unanimously.

PROJECT ON AGING MATTERS – SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM – Chairman Settle welcomed and recognized Julie Wiggins, Director, High Country Agency on Aging. Ms. Wiggins stated she wanted to talk with the Board about a program they have been interested in for over a year, which is the Senior Community Service Employment Program. She said they had the opportunity to bid on the funding from a sub-grantee of the US Department of Labor and have been successful in being included thus far. Ms. Wiggins said this program began in 1968 and the High Country would get to administer the program for the 7 counties.

Ms. Wiggins stated this program is geared toward those 55 and older. She added it is focused on those individuals at 125% of the poverty level or below and currently unemployed. The intent is

they are placed into a subsidized position with government or non-profit and gain new job retraining or job skills and move to unsubsidized employment, she noted. Ms. Wiggins said the total funding for the region is \$345,000 and the match is \$45,000. She said she is talking with all the counties to see who is interested and her goal is to make sure this is a good fit for the Region and HCOG. Ms. Wiggins added she has received a lot of positive feedback. She said Wilkes County would get the most participants with 16. Ms. Wiggins said the goal is for workers to come and go and get them to unsubsidized employment. She added there could be more or less than 16 at times. She said that County Government is a large employer in the region and they explained this to the granting agency that it is likely that these workers could be placed in these agencies, at no cost to the host agency, for the training. Ms. Wiggins said her request is for the matching funds that corresponds with the number of participants in Wilkes for a total of \$17,472 per year for 4-years.

Chairman Settle asked the total amount for the Region in matching funds. Ms. Wiggins replied it is \$45,000 for the 7 counties and DOL sets the number or participants based on censuses. She added Wilkes was given the highest number of participants. Chairman Settle stated this is a reoccurring match. Ms. Wiggins replied yes. Commissioner Elmore asked who administers the program and pays the participants. Ms. Wiggins replied High Country would administer the program, handle payroll, and cut the checks. She added the priority of the program is to make sure that key stakeholders are involved with the employments needs, and then they will recruit participants. Commissioner Elmore asked if the County has a need for these participants, if they would be sent to the County Manager and he would place them within the County. Mr. Yates replied if they can be placed at the Department of Social Services they always have a need for additional help. Commissioner Elmore asked could they be placed as jailers, the Sheriff is asking for additional help in this area. Ms. Wiggins replied yes they can, and she is very interested to find out where the counties could use participants and how they can recruit what is needed. Commissioner Elmore asked if these positions provide benefits. Ms. Wiggins replied they pay the workers comp insurance and required taxes which are covered by the grant.

Commissioner Blevins asked of the \$344,965 total grant if Wilkes participated fully how much they would receive. Ms. Wiggins replied roughly 1/3 because there are 41 total participants and Wilkes gets 16. Commissioner Blevins asked if this is full time or part time employment. Ms. Wiggins replied part time at 20 hours per week. Commissioner Blevins added it is similar to the folks going to the College and getting a pale grant. This is a way to get some of the federal dollars back to Wilkes and take advantage of programs for a small match that can provide workers to some organizations that can use the help, he noted.

Commissioner Elmore asked where the 16 participants would be placed. County Manager John Yates replied this has not been worked out yet. If they money is received they could be placed at non-profits, with the Sheriff, and DSS, he added. Vice Chairman Minton asked if there is an application procedure for anyone interested. Ms. Wiggins replied yes. Vice Chairman Minton asked how long a participate can stay in this program. Ms. Wiggins replied there is an application but she would want the Director to be involved as well, to make sure it is a good fit. She added there is an average of 27 months each participate would stay in the program, but it will depend on the individual and their ability to find unsubsidized employment. Ms. Wiggins

said there is no expectation or obligation of the host agency to retain the individual. Vice Chairman Minton asked if a small business could be a host agency. Ms. Wiggins replied it has to be governmental or nonprofit, but they did ask about the private section being involved. It would have to be a very specific 6 to 8 week training process and they would be expected to retain the employee, she added. They can do this under these terms, she said

Commissioner Blevins asked what the poverty level is for someone over 55. Ms. Wiggins replied 125% is \$14,000 per year. Commissioner Blevins said these folks are living on \$14,000 per year and do not get Social Security, this is a small amount for someone to live on. Ms. Wiggins said they plan to track what the secondary impact of their extra income is to the county.

Commissioner Elmore stated the unemployment rate last published was about 5% for Wilkes and he passes multiple signs each day with jobs available and people needed. He said this sounds like another governmental program to supplement income. Commissioner Elmore asked if this is the first year they will have this program. Ms. Wiggins said yes this will be the first opportunity for the HCOG to run the program. Chairman Settle stated the participants in this program would not be on any other subsidized programs and living off the \$14,000 per year with no other help. Ms. Wiggins replied this is correct. Commissioner Blevins added this is a small amount to live on and there are lots of poverty in Wilkes in this age group. He noted this is an opportunity to invest a small amount of money and receive a much larger grant and have people working in areas that need it. Commissioner Blevins said this is very similar to what happens at DSS with the County matching for most of their programs and this will help the older folks that need it. Commissioner Elmore agreed and added this sounds similar to the Work First program at DSS that is declining and going away and he is not sure of the usefulness of this program. He said this age group does need help and there is a lot of poverty, but he is not sure this is the answer. Ms. Wiggins stated she had the same questions at the beginning. She added the training needs will occur in certain settings and these workers will be placed with a host employer. She added they would make contacts, gain job skills, and become much more competitive in the private market. This will be the long term benefits of the program, she noted.

Chairman Settle asked if the re-occurring match could change or increase. Ms. Wiggins replied it should be stable for the first four years, unless the region received a much larger grant and the expectation is it will stay the same. Chairman Settle said this is another unbudgeted request that has come in and will include an annual match and cost to the County. Vice Chairman Minton asked if this is a four-year commitment or can the data be reviewed after the first year, and then decide if they want to continue. Ms. Wiggins replied yes the Board could review it after one year and they do not have to commit to the four years. Commissioner Gambill stated he is concerned how the County will let 16 people go after four-years. Commissioner Blevins said they should be cycling out continuously. He asked if this request has been taken to the other 6 counties. Ms. Wiggins replied yes she has firm commitments from four, she expects the next two soon and Wilkes is the last presentation. Chairman Settle asked did any of the others table it or did they all vote on it at the time of presentation. Ms. Wiggins replied Avery County is going to work it into their budget discussion. County Manager, John Yates stated this is something Wilkes could do as well and work it into the budget discussions coming up.

Ms. Wiggins said if the Board has any further questions or any particular data they want before a decision is made or at the end of the first year to please let them know. She added they do not want this to be another governmental program, they are committed to making it a success and a value. Vice Chairman Minton stated the program has been around for a long time so there should be data that they could look at while they are discussing this request. Ms. Wiggins asked what specifically the Board would like to see. Vice Chairman Minton replied the employment data, retention, ROI, if the grant is stable, and if the placements were beneficial for the host agencies. Commissioner Blevins ask the deadline for a response. Ms. Wiggins replied before June 30, but they may not be operating the program until October so the match would be prorated to a lesser amount for the first year. Chairman Settle said the Board will discuss this during the budget discussions coming up. Ms. Wiggins stated she is committed and if it is not productive they are not interested in proceeding. She added she will have the data they requested in a few days.

The Board thanked Ms. Wiggins for her presentation.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT:

1. OVERMOUNTAIN NATIONAL HISTORIC VICTORY TRAIL PRESENTATION – Chairman Eddie Settle welcomed and recognized John Slaughter, with the National Park Service, R. G. Absher, and Planning Director Eddie Barnes. Mr. Barnes stated that Wilkes County has two national parks and many residents may not realize this. He added one is the Blue Ridge Parkway and the second is the Overmountain Victory Trail. There are 59 national parks in the US and very few communities have one and Wilkes has two, he noted. Mr. Barnes said the Overmountain Victory Trail was commissioned in 1980 as a linear motorized trail. He added the park service is trying to get this trail to become more popular and used more. They hope to implement a walking trail to the Battle of Kings Mountain, he added. Mr. Barnes stated the Southern campaign of the Revolutionary War has been overlook throughout history. He said an emphasis will be put on this and the importance it had in bringing victory to America.

Mr. Slaughter said his goal is to help communities leverage the trail because many of them do not know they have a linear national park running through their community. He added this is the peoples land and there is no better example of this than the trail system. This land is owned by private parties, municipalities, and partnerships, they are not owned by the Federal Government, he noted. Mr. Slaughter said they help facilitate telling the story, building the preservation to help the communities leverage this and develop programs. He added there are many tourism benefits of having national parks. When you have history, trails, and Greenways combined they are very popular and this will multiply the tourism benefits. Mr. Slaughter said in order to help communities understand what they have and leverage it they are doing a master planning process along the 330 miles. This trail goes from Abingdon Virginia to Morganton, then from Elkin to Morganton, and from Morganton through Rutherfordton to Cowpens, South Carolina and then over to Kings Mountain, where the Battle was fought, he said.

At this time Mr. Slaughter shared a video with the Board.

Mr. Slaughter said they show the video to land owners they talk to and ask them what they want to do. It is their land, this is what those men fought and died for 235 years ago, was this right, he noted. He said his goal is to educate the land owners along the trail of the history in their backyard, it's not being told in the history books and classrooms and it is where the American Revolution was won. Mr. Slaughter stated this is a multi-community plan and it has to be this way, it is very beneficial for those areas to get grants and funding for building the infrastructure for the trails.

Mr. Slaughter said this plan is broken up into eight segments and the Elkin to W. Kerr Scott Dam is being developed at this time. Chairman Settle asked if the plan from Elkin to W. Kerr Scott along the river is in process. Mr. Slaughter replied yes. Chairman Settle stated the Elkin Valley Trail Association is working now along the creek from Elkin to Stone Mountain. Mr. Absher said earlier this year when he was in Washington talking to the congressional representative there was a lot of support for the trails and Greenway systems all across the trail corridor. Mr. Slaughter said they want to overlay the history with the trails and Greenways that are growing in popularity, to give it some relevancy. They just consolidated three national park sites in the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail and renamed it the Southern Campaign of the American Revolutionary Parks Group, he added. Mr. Slaughter mentioned some efforts that are being made to get out in front of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and a PBS special that is in process as well.

Commissioner Elmore asked what that Board can do to expedite the trail from Elkin to W. Kerr Scott. Mr. Absher replied the Greenway is the physical agent for the master plan process from Elkin to W. Kerr Scott and this is one of the eight segments that was referred to earlier. He added they will be working with the County and the park service and others to assist as needed. Mr. Slaughter said as leaders in the community the Board can help develop support and the same patriot spirit that was happening 235 years ago. He added they can help the community own this story. Mr. Slaughter said if the Board can do this it will help with the buy-in from the property owners to secure easements, or pick up properties that make sense to pick up to secure the trail on the ground. He added they are working in the Roaring River area now and this is going well with the land and business owners. Mr. Slaughter said the first step it to talk to the land owners which is what they are doing. This could help the land owners to apply for grants or environmental funds for improvements the owners want and need, he added. Mr. Slaughter stated this brings some of the federal dollars back to the community and brings a recreational aspects to the trails.

Mr. Absher said they are working with the Elkin Valley Trail Association and they would like to see the connection happen in Wilkes. Mr. Slaughter said the Board can help to influence the community and open the dialog with owners. Commissioner Settle asked what would be included in the master plan. Mr. Slaughter replied the engineering will not be included, it will have the impairments, the natural environment, the built environment, who the land owners are, and what are the opportunities for success. It will include an estimates of cost for that particular section, he added. Mr. Slaughter said for example the plan will have suggestions for an overpass of what it looks like now and what it could look like and the cost to make it happen. He added it is a community engagement plan and not an engineering plan. It is meant to be used as a

building block for the community to do bigger and better things with the trails, he noted. Mr. Slaughter stated they have held several meetings in the area already to reach out to land owners, but not all come, so then they contact them one by one. He said they meet with them just so they know what it is, and if they get a no upfront it is OK because they do not waste time and move on. The goal is not to make enemies it is so the owners understand what they have that runs through their back yard, he added.

Mr. Absher stated the original master plan for the Greenway had a goal to bring the trail from Elkin to W. Kerr Scott Dam. Chairman Settled added the County helped to construct the Greenway trails in place currently. Mr. Absher agreed and said they have the expertise in place to develop more trails and Greenways. He added the Overmountain Victory Trail is an important partner in getting the Greenway extensions and filling the gaps they currently have, it can also help with obtaining grants. Mr. Slaughter said trails are the hottest commodity in America at this time. He noted if a community can invest in trails this is an investment in economic development, tourism, and quality of life.

Commissioner Blevins asked how many land owners are in the Elkin to W. Kerr Scott segment. Mr. Slaughter replied 119. Commissioner Blevins asked the cost. Mr. Absher replied trail building cost very a great deal. Mr. Slaughter said the master plan will have cost estimates by section that will be plus or minus about 30%. Commissioner Blevins said getting the owners of 330 acres on board can take lots of time as they have found with the Greenway. He added as more owners get on board momentum builds. Mr. Slaughter agreed. Mr. Absher said the awareness of the Kings Mountain Battle will help to build the momentum.

Mr. Slaughter said this project is about land owner rights and what the citizens want to do with their property. It is not about the Federal Government or the communities telling them what they should do, he added. Chairman Settle agreed, and said this is what they fought for 235 years ago, is the right to say no, but once they think about it they could change their mind.

Mr. Slaughter said the park service is not asking for money they are asking for buy in from the Board and to leverage their influence in the community that this trail is good for everyone. He said he is asking the Board to own the history. Mr. Slaughter thanked the Board and said the Greenway Board is outstanding and they wished they had them in every community. Mr. Absher added the Greenway did ask for \$3,500 to help with the cost of the master plan in their budget request. Mr. Slaughter said the master plan will have the land owners listed and the Board talking to them about this project will help a great deal. He said if the leadership owns it, the community will own it and the land owners will follow.

The Board thanked Mr. Slaughter and Mr. Absher for their presentation.

2. ROAD NAME REQUEST – MEADOW GATE DRIVE – Planning Director Eddie Barnes asked the Board of Commissioners to set a Public Hearing on a Road Name Request received by petition to the Planning Department. He stated the Road Name Request is for Meadow Gate Drive, Edwards Township; the request meets the requirements of the Wilkes

County Road Naming Ordinance and as required by the Wilkes County Road Naming Ordinance a Public Hearing and a ten day (10) notification period is required.

Commissioner Gary D. Blevins made a motion to set a Public Hearing on Tuesday, May 17, 2016 at 6:50 P.M. regarding the Road Name Request as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner David Gambill and unanimously approved.

3. REQUEST TO SET PUBLIC HEARING – REZONING REQUEST – Planning Director Eddie Barnes said during a regular meeting on Monday, April 25, 2016 the Wilkes Joint Planning Board reviewed and recommended for approval a rezoning request from Bobby Patel for property located at 6626 W. US Hwy 421, Reddies River Township. The request is to rezone property from R-20 (Single Family Residential) to H-B (Highway Business), he added. The property has been used as commercial property for many years and the rezoning is consistent with the present use and the surrounding use of property, he said. Mr. Barnes thanked the Board for their consideration of this matter.

Commissioner Gary D. Blevins made a motion to set a Public Hearing on Tuesday, May 17, 2016, at 6:50 P.M. regarding the Rezoning Request as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner David Gambill and unanimously approved.

TAX DEPARTMENT:

1. TAX RELEASES – COLLECTIONS – Tax Administrator Alex Hamilton asked the Board to approve tax releases for collections in the amounts of \$3,396.96.

Commissioner Gary D. Blevins made a motion to approve tax releases in the amount of \$3,396.96 as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Keith Elmore and unanimously approved.

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

2. TAX RELEASES – LISTINGS – Tax Administrator Alex Hamilton asked the Board to approve tax releases for listings in the amounts of \$15,093.23.

Commissioner David Gambill made a motion to approve tax releases in the amount of \$15,093.23 as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins and unanimously approved.

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

WATER IN-TAKE AT W.KERR SCOTT DAM:

1. APPROVE SELECTION OF GARNEY COMPANIES AS CMAR – County Attorney Tony Triplett stated several months ago the three local bodies appointed a joint committee for the purpose of selecting the CMAR and making a recommendation to their

Boards. He said the committee has finished that process and is recommending Garner Construction Company as the CMAR. The Board of Commissioners' has to officially approve the recommendation if this is what they want to do, he added. Chairman Settle stated he and Commissioner Elmore was a part of the Committee and Commissioner Blevins attended most of the CMAR meetings as well. He said Garner was approved by a points system and were impressive. Mr. Triplett agreed, and noted they finished on top with an objective set of criteria that treated everyone the same. He said this is what the statute requires and what the Committee did in this selection process.

Commissioner Keith Elmore made a motion to approve the selection of Garney Companies as CMAR, as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins and unanimously approved.

2. APPROVE CMAR CONTRACT WITH GARNEY COMPANIES – County Attorney Tony Triplett said the contract is before the Board. He stated the contract was negotiated to facilitate the process as quickly as possible, it does not carry through to the end of the project. The contract only addresses pre-construction and gets to a guarantee maximum price, he added. Mr. Triplett said this allows Garney to work with the local governing bodies to try to reduce the earlier bids and come up with a proposed guaranteed maximum price for this project that is agreeable to everybody. He stated this process will take a number of months, but the LGC approval deadline for the project is June 30, 2016. For this reason a step process was built in the contract, he added. Mr. Triplett said step one is the most critical which gets them a preliminary estimate of a new amount for the project and the number they will present to the LGC and DENR (now known as the Department of Environmental Quality), which is the loan agency. He added this amount has to be submitted to the three local Boards by May 27, 2016 and then it will go to the LGC. Mr. Triplett stated another very important point is the contract can be terminated at any time by paying Garney what they are owed through the date of termination. He said if the County or the Town of North Wilkesboro, which are the two parties to the contract, reaches a point where they cannot go any further this contract can be terminated with 7- days' notice. Mr. Triplett noted the price is listed on Exhibit A, which is \$438,505 for this portion of the contract.

Commissioner Blevins asked if this cost would be included in the final zero percent loan, because the County is responsible for paying all of it at this time. County Manager, John Yates replied the agreement is that the County fronts this amount and it will be paid back in full from the loan proceeds. Mr. Yates stated there will also be engineering fees in the estimated amount of \$116,000 to Municipal Engineering that will be paid by the County upfront and this will also be paid back in full from the loan proceeds. Commissioner Blevins asked if this would be a budget amendment. Mr. Yates replied it will be an amendment to the Project Ordinance.

Vice Chairman Greg Minton made a motion to approve the CMAR Contract with Garney Companies as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Keith Elmore and unanimously approved.

RECESS – Chairman Eddie Settle declared the meeting of the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners recessed at 11:25 A.M. He stated the meeting will reconvene in five minutes.

RECONVENE – Chairman Eddie Settle reconvened the meeting of the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners at 11:30 A.M. on Tuesday, May 3, 2016.

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES UPDATE – Chairman Eddie Settle recognized Department of Social Services Director John Blevins. Mr. Blevins said he wanted to provide a short update on some things. He started with the child care/day care known as project P3, and it will move to NC Fast by the end of the year, the energy programs known as LIEAP/CIP will be added to NC Fast in the spring of 2017. He added there is no firm date on the Child Welfare Division moving to NC Fast, the Counties have been telling the State they do not want a repeat of the Food Nutrition and Medicaid issues with the Child Welfare. They can't have this it has to work before they move them to NC Fast, he noted. Mr. Blevins stated Medicaid reports similar to the Food Nutrition reports now being sent, will also be sent to the Managers so the Counties can see the timeliness of the processing. He added Wilkes is still doing well with both of these and was 100% again this week, which he is very proud of. Mr. Blevins said in September six counties will pilot a non-emergency medical transportation change. He added this change will mean WTA will bill directly for their services and it will not run through the DSS budget. He said the rest of the counties will not come on board until January, 2017. Mr. Blevins said in the budget he submitted it is budgeted for the full year. He told the Board he would ask for it to be left in the DSS budget for the full year because the target is January, but that could change and if removed this would cause a large shortfall.

Mr. Blevins provided the Commissioners handouts for March. 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 March.

The Board thanked Mr. Blevins for his update.

TO: Wilkes County Board of Commissioners
FROM: John C. Yates, County Manager
SUBJECT: Recommended Fiscal Year 2016-2017 Annual Budget
DATE: May 3, 2016

The recommended budget for fiscal year 2016-2017 is respectfully submitted with a proposed tax rate of 69 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation. The total recommended budget including all funds: General, 911, Grants, Airport, Landfill, and Volunteer Fire Districts is \$86,171,159.

GENERAL FUND

The recommended General Fund budget for fiscal year 2016-2017 is \$75,501,397. This is a decrease of \$768,037 in the current year's revised budget.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

This year's recommended appropriation for the Wilkes County School System is \$14,839,043. This appropriation includes \$11,728,330 for current expense/operations and \$650,000 for capital outlay/improvements. This appropriation reflects a 3% increase in the operation funding of \$341,602 and an increase of 8% in capital funding of \$50,000. The total appropriation also includes lottery and sales tax funds forwarded to the school system.

Also in this budget is a one-time special appropriation of \$500,000 to help with the roof replacements at Mulberry & Wilkesboro Elementary Schools. I would like to commend the Commissioners on school funding. Over the last 4-years the school system has requested \$48,939,527 for current expenses and capital outlay. The Commissioners have appropriated to the school system \$48,815,962 for current expenses, capital outlay, and special request. We appreciate the relationship we have with our school system.

WILKES COMMUNITY COLLEGE

This year's recommended appropriation for the Wilkes Community College is \$3,850,495. The recommended budget for current expense is \$3,334,495, \$150,000 for capital outlay and \$366,000 for salary supplements. This year's appropriation reflects a 3% increase in operation funding of \$97,122.

PERSONNEL

In the proposed budget for 2016-2017, we have the following new full-time positions: 2 Jail, 1 Communications, 2 DSS, and 1 Finance Department.

PAY INCREASES

A 2% salary increase has been recommended for all full-time employees. This pay raise is an increase of \$375,000 including benefits.

HEALTH INSURANCE FOR EMPLOYEES

Our self-insured Blue Cross Blue Shield employee health insurance premiums will remain the same as 2015-2016. This was only accomplished by making changes to our plan. We raised the co-pays and deductibles.

HUMAN SERVICES

The Social Services General Administrative budget is recommended at \$6,405,258 or a \$221,016 increase than the prior year. The total Department of Social Services budget is \$15,859,418. The County portion of the total Department of Social Services budget is \$5,694,178 or 35.9%.

The General Health budget is recommended at \$2,291,724. The County's portion of the total Health Department budget of \$6,598,385 is \$2,098,628 or 31.8%.

The Smoky Mountain Center budget is recommended an appropriation of \$254,200 which is the same as last year's budget.

PUBLIC SAFETY

The Sheriff's Department recommended appropriation is \$5,086,359. The Jail recommended appropriation is \$3,286,926.

The Emergency Communications recommended budget is \$1,221,944.

The Emergency Medical Services budget is recommended \$4,306,245.

SPECIAL PROJECTS/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Again this year, \$275,000 has been appropriated for the Wilkes Economic Development Corporation. This will enable them to continue to work on job growth and existing business retention in Wilkes County.

REVENUES

Ad valorem taxes for the recommended budget are estimated at \$36,634,157.

The current year's value for real property and business personal property were used. Due to the current economic conditions we are projecting no growth. We did see an increase in actual collections and we used those numbers for budgeting. We did include a 2% growth in motor vehicles.

Sales Tax revenue is budgeted at \$14,324,317 which reflects a 6.8% increase over last year's projected collections. This increase is projected because of the new sales tax laws and a small amount of projected growth.

General Fund Balance appropriation of \$1,592,938 is required to balance this year's recommended budget. The reason for the appropriation is for a one-time projects. These include Wilkesboro Elementary and Mulberry Elementary roof project, updates at the Wilkes County Courthouse, Library, Health Department, Communication Center move to Sheriff's Office, and

10% Airport Grant match. This also includes monies for the fire district mapping project. If we use the total of \$1,592,938 our fund balance would be an estimated \$22,700,000 or 30%.

AIRPORT FUND

The Airport operating budget is recommended at \$3,615,370. The Airport continues to be an important economic development tool.

LANDFILL FUND

The Landfill operating budget is recommended at \$2,608,274.

1. \$10,727 into capital reserve fund
2. \$4.1 million is available in a capital reserve fund for the closure and post-closure of cells # 1, #2, #3 and #4

FIRE DISTRICTS FUND

Austin has requested a 5 cents increase for equipment and facilities; Champion has requested a 3 cents increase to build a fire station for 2016-2017.

CONCLUSION

The budget is the single most important document approved by the Board of Commissioners each year. It is the County's basic plan of action for FY 2016-2017. We will continue to strive to keep the Fund Balance at appropriate levels. Wilkes County is very fortunate that we are able to budget a small amount of growth for 2016-2017. I continue to be concerned with State and Federal cuts and mandates that continue to be passed down to the local level. One concern is the continued growth rate of Public Safety, Education, and Human Services. Wilkes County's growth in revenue is not able to keep pace with the growth in these sectors. All counties in North Carolina continue to be very dependent on property tax and sales tax, both of which are dependent on the economy. The rural counties continue to have very slow growth as compared to urban counties. With your help, we will continue to keep our legislators informed of the impact of their actions. As in the past, this is the Manager's recommendation based on requests from Department Heads. This is now presented to the Board for your consideration. The staff and I stand ready to assist in any way possible.

Commissioner Gambill asked the current fire tax rate for Austin and Champion. Finance Director Jerry Shepherd replied Austin is at 7¢ and Champion is 8¢ currently. Chairman Settle asked the lowest fire tax rate in the County. Mr. Shepherd replied 5¢. Commissioner Blevins asked the expected date to approve the budget. Chairman Settle replied they will need a work session. He added in his opinion the budget was approved to early last year. Chairman Settle stated he would like to set a work session before the public hearing. Commissioner Blevins said they may need a work session before and another one after the public hearing. He asked if the

budget has been being approved the same night as the public hearing. Commissioner Elmore stated that has happen in the past and it could be if no comments are made at the public hearing. Commissioner Gambill added the public hearing can be set after the work session. Commissioner Blevins stated the notice of public hearing has to be set and published for 10-days before it can be held. Mr. Shepherd said the Board does not have to adopt the budget the same night as they hold the public hearing. Vice Chairman Minton added the budget could be adopted at the first or second meeting in June.

2. SET BUDGET WORK SESSION – Chairman Eddie Settle stated the Board needs to set a budget Work Session on the proposed 2016-2017 Wilkes County Budget.

Commissioner David Gambill made a motion to set a Work Session on the proposed 2016-2017 Wilkes County Budget for Tuesday, May 10, 2016 at 5:00 P.M. to be held in the Commissioners' Board Room located at 110 North Street, Wilkesboro, NC. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Keith Elmore and unanimously approved.

The work session is open to the public.

3. SET PUBLIC HEARING – Chairman Eddie Settle stated the Board needs to set a Public Hearing for the proposed 2016-2017 budget.

Commissioner Gary D. Blevins made a motion to set a Public Hearing on the proposed 2016-2017 Wilkes County Budget for Tuesday, May 17, 2016 at 6:30 P.M. with the Commissioners' regularly scheduling meeting to follow at 7:00 P.M. in the Commissioners' Board Room located at 110 North Street, Wilkesboro, NC. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Keith Elmore and unanimously approved.

CLOSED SESSION – Commissioner Gary D. Blevins made a motion to go into Closed Session under Section 143-318.11(a)(4) of the North Carolina General Statutes to discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of business in Wilkes County and under Section 143-318.11(a)(3) of the North Carolina General Statutes to consult with the County Attorney to consider and give instructions with respect to one or more potential judicial or administrative actions. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Keith Elmore and unanimously approved.

Motion was made by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins, seconded by Commissioner Keith Elmore and by unanimous vote adopted to adjourn back into regular session. No action was taken in the closed session.

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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 12:25 P. M.

Sarah D. Call, Clerk

Eddie Settle, Chairman

WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Approved: