

**MINUTES  
WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
September 20, 2016**

**PUBLIC CONCERNS – CAROL BRACEWELL** – Ms. Bracewell spoke very briefly on the need for more services in her area.

The Wilkes County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, September 20, 2016 at 7:00 P.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 and stated that after the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance if everyone will remain standing for the National Anthem, which will be played in honor of 9/11.

**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 September 6, 2016.

**BUDGET AMENDMENTS/TRANSFERS** – Motion was made by Commissioner David Gambill to approve Budget Amendment No. 4 (Health Programs – Ebola & Prescription Drug Overdose – The Health Department has received additional State funds for the Ebola and Drug Prescription Overdose programs for Fiscal Year 2017. No County money involved); and Budget Amendment No. 5 (General Fund – Internet Crimes Against Children Grant – The Internet Crimes Against Children grant was awarded to the Sheriff’s Department last fiscal year. This grant was not expended by June 30 and therefore the remaining funds need to be budgeted in this current fiscal year so they can be expended. This grant is 100% funded by the NC Governor’s Crime Commission in effort to combat internet crimes against children. No County funds involved.) The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins and unanimously approved.

**CARTER FALLS – DISCUSSION** – Chairman Eddie Settle recognized and welcomed Bob Hillyer with the Elkin Valley Trails Association. Mr. Hillyer thanked the Board for the opportunity and asked for their help to extend the Mountains-To-Sea Trail past Carter Falls in eastern Wilkes County. He stated they would like to do this by bringing together four entities. Land owner, Dan Park; N.C. State, Carol Tingley; Elkin Valley Trails Association (EVTA); and

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Wilkes County, he added. Mr. Hillyer asked Joe Mickey to come forward and show a power point presentation to the Board. Mr. Mickey stated this is a 65 foot cascading waterfall which includes two falls, lower and upper. He provided a map to the Board and said the red area is completed sections of trail and the black area highlights the roads, but they hope to get the trail off the roads as much as possible. The red at the bottom is the trail coming out of Elkin, he added. Mr. Mickey said they are slowly piecing the Mountains-To-Sea Trail together.

Mr. Hillyer stated he would like to explain what the four entities need to do to make this come together and a willing land owner is needed, which they have. He noted Dan Park told them he would like to do something good for the community as well as preserve this natural wonder. Mr. Hillyer said the second step involved the State of North Carolina and Carol who will come up and talk about the fact they have money to buy certain properties like this, at no cost to Wilkes County. He added the other two parties' one being Wilkes County would have to oversee or administer if they bought the land. Next is EVTA who is willing to construct and maintain the trail through the property, he noted. Mr. Hillyer said this would be a rustic foot travel path down to the falls and back up with no amenities unless the County wants to add this to the trail themselves. He then asked for Carol to come up and provide her perspective on how this might work.

Carol Tingley, Division Deputy Director, N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources came forward. She thanked the Board and stated, in the spring the citizens of N.C. passed the Connect NC Bond, which was \$2 Billion in total. Ms. Tingley said out of this total \$75 million is allocated for the State Park system, and \$4.5 million of this is allocated to the Mountains-To-Sea State Trail as well as four other state trails, which are all part of the park system, and eligible for the Bond money. She added a trail is not the same as a State Park like Stone Mountain. A trail is a partnership where communities, counties, and towns across N.C. each do their individual sections, she added. Ms. Tingley stated together they will be connected to form a trail across the state for 1,000 miles. She added they hope to use this Bond money to work with counties and communities to advance their sections of the trail.

Ms. Tingley said she would like to introduce Scott Crocker who is the head of their Trail Program, and Smith Raynor the State Trails Planner. She said Ms. Raynor works with the individual communities to help them progress their projects using the money from the Bond. At this time Ms. Raynor came forward and provided a brief slide show to the Board. Ms. Raynor said state trails are part of the state park systems and N.C. has five. She added the most notable one is the Mountains-To-Sea Trail, when it is done it will have over 1,000 miles, 612 miles are already completed off road. The French Broad River is 117 miles of paddle trail; the Yadkin River is 130 mile paddle trail; the Fonta Flora is a brand new state trail and will be around 75 miles stretching from Morganton to Asheville; and the Deep River is 90 miles long, it's a hybrid state trail which is both paddle and walking, she said. Ms. Raynor said they plan to purchase land to be used for the trail corridor and then work with local partners to identify land with willing sellers. She added the state will appraise and purchase the land and then lease each section back to the section manager, which would probably be Wilkes County in this case. Ms. Raynor said these are facilitated by using Memorandum of Understandings which would be

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between the State and the sponsor. She added they do not tell the sponsor what to do, they come in by invitation and work with the sponsor to develop the type of trail they want. Ms. Raynor said they provide guidance, coordination, technical, and other assistance for multiple section sponsors and in-turn these trails link together to make one continuous trail. Through the Bond they will help with land acquisition, but also have a grant program in which trails located within the corridor of a state trail will get preference for grant funding, she added. Ms. Raynor stated she is more than happy to come from Raleigh to Wilkes and offer her assistance any way she can.

Ms. Raynor said they have multiple sections within the Mountain-To-Sea trail and many of these sponsored sections have their own name. She added the sponsors also determine what kind of trail they want and whether it is a greenway, an 18-inch dirt foot path, or something in-between. Ms. Raynor stated they encourage their sponsors to showcase places that are naturally beautiful and also have historic or cultural significance. She added the end result when they finish this trail will be a completely unique way to experience N.C. from Clingman's Dome in the West to Jockey's Ridge in the East. She encouraged the Board to use their volunteers and added they are their most valuable resource, and the EVTA folks have unbelievable energy and commitment to this trail. Ms. Raynor noted they also have a statewide friends of the Mountains-To-Sea Trail organization and they help support the local organization.

Ms. Raynor said they are developing a N.C. trails website and Wilkes will be linked into this along with offering technical assistance they will help any way they can as the trail is developed. In closing she stated the benefits of state trails which included the following: properties near well-known trails have increased property value; regional trails promote healthy living; they promote better water quality; provide recreational opportunities; provide corridors for wildlife; they encourage economic development; contribute to a community's identity; and they provide alternative transportation opportunities. Ms. Raynor thanked the Board for partnering with the State in this effort.

Chairman Settle asked if there has been a study on the percentage of economic growth around a trail. Ms. Raynor replied yes and generally properties within ½ mile of a regional trail appraise \$5,000 more than homes 3-miles or further away. Chairman Settle asked about jobs or other economic development impact that she is aware of. Ms. Raynor replied in Clayton which is in Johnston County outside Raleigh they recently finished a segment of the trail and connected it to Raleigh. The folks in Clayton thought their folks could ride their bikes and go to Raleigh for the day to visit museums, eat lunch, and come back home, she added. Ms. Raynor said what they discovered is they have more folks from Raleigh riding to Clayton on the trail and now they have opened a brewery, bike shop, sandwich shop, and a new outfitter. Dr. Bill Blackley added EVTA uses local folks to help construct trails and work on equipment. He said the main reason EVTA was formed and their main mission is to promote the local economy for Wilkes and Surry County's. They wanted to improve the quality of care, quality of life, and bring new businesses to the community, he noted. Dr. Blackley said in their research they found that trails and outdoor activities are what bring in new businesses to a community.

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Chairman Settle stated he hoped the Over Mountain Victory Trail and the Mountains-To-Sea Trails will connect at some point. Dr. Blackley stated they overlap now. Commissioner Gambill asked if health insurance premiums are lower as they have heard generally folks in a trail area are healthier. Ms. Raynor replied research has showed for every \$1 spent on a trail \$3 are saved in health care costs. Mr. Hillyer stated the County has give thousands in incentives to businesses to come to Wilkes and they are asking for \$1 which is what the lease will cost from the state. He added EVTA will put in the trail, maintain the trail, and if something happens they will put up trail cameras which normally takes care of any issues.

Commissioner Elmore asked if the EVTA is going to maintain this section of the trail. Mr. Hillyer replied they have a trail maintenance program and they have a group of trail maintainers that will go out if something is happening on the trail. He added they also have a brand new program, located on new trail signs will be a QR code with instructions explaining you can take a photo if a tree is down and send it with the QR code, the EVTA will immediately know this needs attention. Chairman Settle asked about deer hunters in Wilkes County and said the hunters are concerned about the impact of the trail. Mr. Hillyer replied it is something they are struggling with. He added for this particular section he does not think Mr. Dan Park allows hunting on his land so it is a moot point on this section. Mr. Park said no he does not. Mr. Hillyer noted if an owner wants to allow hunting on their section they will put up a sign that says trail closed because of hunting season, they can also ask the hikers to wear blaze orange on the trail. He added they will work with the hunters. Chairman Settle stated this will be a challenge, there is a lot of deer hunting in Wilkes. Mr. Hillyer said they have some trails now that are closed for hunting and they will have to find a way to work this out. Ms. Raynor added they have existing trails that go through natural forest and game lands that are hunted currently and they have not had any incidents. She added it is important for the hunters to know where the trails are and for the trail users to know it is hunting season, it is a communication issue.

County Attorney Tony Triplett stated eventually it all comes down to documentation and at some point a lease will need to be completed as well as an agreement with Elkin Valley Trails Association and decide how to parcel out responsibilities. He added they will have to decide who is responsible for what aspect of the project, liability insurance and other issues. Mr. Triplett said there is always a process and documentation will be needed as with all projects.

Commissioner Elmore said the community decides what type of trail and the Board understands the section in Wilkes will be a walking, biking, and horse trail. Mr. Hillyer stated EVTA's vision has always called for a horse trail out of Stone Mountain because Stone Mountain already has horses in it, but doesn't have biking. He added they would like to put a horse trail down to Carter Falls going east and the remaining section will be just hiking. Mr. Hillyer said it comes down to what Wilkes County or the land owners on either side wants. EVTA is recommending a foot path only on this section, he added. Chairman Settle asked if they have met with the horse trail association. Mr. Hillyer replied yes they have many times. They have also worked together with them on some joint projects, he added. Mr. Mickey said the horse trail riders are excited about this coming to Wilkes and the opportunity they will have to ride closer to home, as well as the EVTA.

Mr. Triplett asked the time line and what the state is looking for the county to do next. Ms. Tingley replied they have similar arrangements already in a few places and have existing leases and she can send examples so they can customize it to work for both. She added a good next step is to have a lease that both parties can agree to and then use the Bond money for the land purchase. Mr. Triplett agreed.

Chairman Settle recognized Mr. Dan Park. Mr. Park stated his motives are selfish, he is 82 years old and he thinks this deserves to be used by other people other than himself and his family. The Board thanked Mr. Park, who received applause from everyone.

The Board thanked Ms. Tingley, the members of the Elkin Valley Trails Association, and Mr. Park.

**SET PUBLIC HEARING – TYSON FOODS, INC. INCENTIVE AGREEMENT** – County Attorney Tony Triplett said the Board has been discussing an incentive agreement for Tyson for the newly announced expansion in Wilkesboro. He said the hearing needs to be set at the next meeting on October 4<sup>th</sup> and by that time all the details will be put together. Mr. Triplett said all the details as discussed in closed session will be in the notice to be published in the newspaper later this week. He added the only action needed at this time by the Board is to set the public hearing.

Commissioner Gary D. Blevins made a motion to set a public hearing for Tuesday, October 4, 2016, at 10:00 a.m., in the Commissioners' Meeting Room at the County Office Building, pursuant to G.S. §158-7.1, for comment on a proposed Economic Investment Agreement between Wilkes County and Tyson Foods, with the regular meeting to immediately follow the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Keith Elmore and unanimously approved.

**RESOLUTION APPROVING SALE OF PROPERTY** – County Attorney, Tony Triplett said this is a continuation from the last meeting which is a typical sale of County property that was foreclosed upon for unpaid taxes. He said Mr. Thomas Perry expressed interest, submitted a bid, the Board authorized the bid be advertised and there were no upset bids. Mr. Triplett said if the Board approves the Resolution then that will approve the sale of the property, which is Lot #11 in Mulberry Fields subdivision, located in Mulberry Township and contains 0.95 acres.

Commissioner Gary D. Blevins made a motion to approve the Resolution Authorizing Sale of Real Property by Wilkes County, as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Keith Elmore and unanimously approved.

*RESOLUTION  
AUTHORIZING SALE  
OF REAL PROPERTY*

*WHEREAS, the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners at its regular meeting of September 6, 2016, authorized advertisement for sale of a tract of land owned by Wilkes County (hereinafter "the County") located in Mulberry Township, Wilkes County, North Carolina, consisting of 0.95 acres and being Lot #11 in Mulberry Fields subdivision, the same having been acquired by the County under Commissioner's Deed dated March 10, 2016, as recorded at Book 1223, Page 152, Wilkes County Registry, pursuant to a tax foreclosure sale in the action captioned "Wilkes County vs. Rachel C. Roberts and husband, John Doe, et al.," File No. 15 CVD 692, Wilkes County Clerk of Superior Court's Office., and being identified on the records of the Wilkes County Tax Mapping office as PIN #3962-83-7916, Parcel ID No. 12-04386;*

*AND WHEREAS, said sale is by negotiated offer, advertisement, and upset bid pursuant to G.S. §160A-269;*

*AND WHEREAS, the County has received an offer from Thomas W. Perry of Ferguson, North Carolina, in the amount of \$3,750.00 plus the cost of publication for the required public notice, Deed preparation, and recording costs;*

*AND WHEREAS, said offer was advertised in the Wilkes Journal-Patriot on September 9, 2016, as required under G.S. §160A-269;*

*AND WHEREAS, no upset bids have been received, and the time has expired in which an additional upset bid may be submitted;*

*AND WHEREAS, the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners desires to accept said bid of \$3,750.00 plus the cost of publication for the required public notice, Deed preparation, and recording costs, and desires to authorize sale of the property pursuant to said bid;*

*NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, pursuant to G.S. §160A-269, that the bid of \$3,750.00 plus the cost of publication for the required public notice, Deed preparation, and recording costs received from Thomas W. Perry of Ferguson, North Carolina, is hereby approved, and upon payment of said purchase price, a Special Warranty Deed shall be executed by the County and conveyed to Thomas W. Perry for the above referenced property.*

*This the 20<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2016.*

*WILKES COUNTY*

*By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Eddie Settle, Chairman,  
Wilkes County Board of Commissioners*

*ATTEST:*

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*Sarah D. Call, Clerk*

**NEW BUSINESS – GEAR UP – WILKES COMMUNITY COLLEGE – PROCLAMATION** – Chairman Settle welcomed Rebekah Gardner with the Gear Up program at Wilkes Community College. Ms. Gardner thanked the Board and read the proclamation.

Commissioner David Gambill made a motion to approve the Gear Up – Wilkes Community College Proclamation, as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins and unanimously approved.

*Proclamation*

*WHEREAS, the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) is a federally funded, competitive grant program designed to increase the number of students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education; and*

*WHEREAS, GEAR UP has provided a seven-year grant to Appalachian State University as the GEAR UP N.C. Appalachian Partnership to deliver support and resources to students and their families, starting no later than middle school through high school and onward to fulfill their dreams of attaining a postsecondary education; and*

*WHEREAS, GEAR UP includes interventions such as tutoring, mentoring, rigorous academic preparation, financial education, and college scholarships to improve access to higher education for first-generation students and their families; and*

*WHEREAS, GEAR UP is built around public-private partnerships, enlisting the formidable resources of government, business, and community groups to support students as they prepare to enter and succeed in college; and*

*WHEREAS, Wilkes Community College is a partner of the N.C. Appalachian Partnership GEAR UP Grant, which also includes Wilkes, Ashe, and Alleghany school districts; and*

*WHEREAS, Wilkes Community College GEAR UP serves the cohort of 4,600 students currently in sixth through ninth grade, and within grant year 2015-2016, over 4,300 students have been served by Wilkes Community College; and*

*WHEREAS, the week of September 19, 2016, has been declared National GEAR UP Week; and*

*WHEREAS, Wilkes County is committed to providing a quality education for all students, helping them to achieve their highest potential:*

*NOW, THEREFORE, We, the Board of Commissioners for Wilkes County, do hereby proclaim the week of September 19, 2016, as*

*National GEAR UP Week in Wilkes County, North Carolina, and we urge all citizens to join us in this special observance.*

*WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS*

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*Eddie Settle, Chairman*

*Attest:*

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*Sarah D. Call, Clerk*

**ADJOURN** – Motion was made by Commissioner Keith Elmore, seconded by Vice Chairman Greg Minton and by unanimous vote adopted to adjourn the meeting of the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners at 7:50 P. M.

Sarah D. Call, Clerk

Eddie Settle, Chairman

WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Approved: