

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

The Wilkes County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, November 1, 2016 at 10:02 A.M. at the Wilkes Heritage Museum, upstairs Courtroom, 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.

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 Vice Chairman Greg Minton, seconded by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins and unanimously adopted to approve the Minutes of the Board meeting held on October 18, 2016.

PLEASANT HILL VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT – APPOINTMENT – FIREMAN’S RELIEF FUND TRUSTEE – Chairman Settle welcomed and recognized Andy Chatman, Fire Chief and Tim Pardue, President Board of Directors. Chief Chatman stated this was to replace a deceased member, Mr. Bob Tulbert on this Board.

Commissioner David Gambill made a motion to approve the appointment of Mr. James Chatman as the Fireman’s Relief Fund Trustee, as presented. The motion was seconded by Keith Elmore and unanimously approved.

The Board thanked the Pleasant Hill Volunteer Fire Department for their service and all they do for their citizens.

TAX DEPARTMENT:

1. TAX RELEASES – COLLECTIONS – Alex Hamilton, Tax Administrator asked the Board to approve tax releases for collections in the amount of \$3,370.94. Mr. Hamilton said these folks are deceased and/or the taxes are uncollectable for some reason.

Vice Chairman Greg Minton made a motion to approve the tax releases for collections as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins and unanimously approved.

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

2. TAX RELEASES – LISTING – Alex Hamilton, Tax Administrator asked the Board to approve tax releases for listing in the amount of \$9,595.92. He said the releases for listing are due to an error made in listing by his office or the tax payer has advised them of a change or mistake.

Vice Chairman Greg Minton made a motion to approve the tax releases for listing 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.

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES – UPDATE – Chairman Settle recognized John Blevins, DSS Director. Mr. Blevins said next month he will be providing results from a state audit which they just finished. He stated they audit all 100 counties in the CPS area. The state does these audits twice per year, Wilkes is in April and October, he added. Mr. Blevins said the preliminary results look good. He stated this time they audited in-takes and assessments. Next October they will audit Foster care, he noted. He said it is a rotating audit and this is for quality assurance from the state.

Mr. Blevins said DSS will have some long term good employees retiring at the end of this year. He stated Jean Brown, Dana Hines, Shirley Myers, and Kay Luffman will all be retiring. Mr. Blevins said they have all worked hard and they do a great job and it is wonderful that they can now retire.

Mr. Blevins next briefly went over the monthly caseload reports for September to include the Foster Care financial report, Adoption Services financial report, Child Development and Subsidized Child Care financial report. He also went over the CPS Foster Care Monthly Report for September.

Commissioner Elmore stated the people that are retiring are key people and asked if they would have difficulty in bring up folks within DSS to cover these jobs. Mr. Blevins replied he thinks that in all four areas there is someone to bring up or there will be interest within the agency for others to step up and into all four roles. He said his concern is not for these jobs because there is talent within the agency to move into these jobs. The concern is the jobs vacated by whomever moves up and this is where they are struggling currently, he added. Mr. Blevins said for example the Social Worker positions or APS job openings are being sent out and advertised three and four times to receive two qualified applications. He added there are times they have to do this five times and this is a concern. Mr. Blevins said it is hard to see good folks leave that have been there 30-years and they are hard to replace, but these are not the hard jobs to replace, it is the entry level jobs.

Chairman Settle asked if the state sets the qualifications and if they have changed a great deal over the past 30-years. Mr. Blevins replied the minimum qualifications have not changed a lot and the state does set the qualifications. He said when they receive applications they have to

send them too Raleigh and they say if they qualify for a Social Worker I, Social Worker II, or they don't qualify at all. Mr. Blevins stated this is not the main issue currently, they are not receiving any applications for some of the openings they have.

Commissioner Elmore asked what date the retirements are effective. Mr. Blevins replied December 31, 2016. He added they still have some time and are working on this now. Commissioner Gary D. Blevins asked when they have a position that is difficult to fill will the state allow a signing bonus to help find folks for critical need areas such as these. Mr. John Blevins replied that is something the Board could approve. Chairman Settle added this is something the military has offered.

Mr. Blevins said there are fewer folks going into this line of work. He said they have always had interns from Appalachian State and this year it looked like, until last week, they were not going to have any. They did get two last week, which is very unusual, he added. Commissioner Blevins added it is supply and demand and typically higher wagers or a bonus can help to change this when the need is great. Mr. Blevins said it is a stressful job and there are a lot of audits so it is tough. Chairman Settle stated it is a very important job because they are working with children and the audits are also important to have as well. Mr. Blevins agreed and said it is continual quality assurance and it is needed. He added the preliminary report he saw stated during no time for any of the cases they audited did they find any children at risk. Commissioner Elmore asked if they participated in the job fair. Mr. Blevins replied he did not go himself, he was out that day, but they did send lots of information over for the folks that attended the event. He added these are good jobs for the county, they offer retirement, health insurance, many other benefits, and they hope to get some more interest.

The Board thanked Mr. Blevins for his update.

PURCHASING DEPARTMENT – SALE OF SURPLUS INVENTORY – County Manager John Yates stated the Wilkes County Purchasing Department is requesting approval from the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners to sell the following surplus inventory using electronic auction method:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Make</i>	<i>Model</i>	<i>Mileage</i>	<i>Department</i>
1997	Ford	Ranger	181802	Inspections

(Not in working order, transmission is out)

Commissioner Gary D. Blevins made a motion to approve the sale of surplus inventory using the electronic auction method govdeals.com as requested. The motion was seconded by Commissioner David Gambill and unanimously approved.

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NEW BUSINESS – County Attorney Tony Triplett said he wanted to let the Board know that he had been informed that former Commissioner Robert Handy, Sr. was not doing well and was in critical condition and hospice has been called in. He added he served four years as Commissioner and two years as Chairman for the Board. The Board stated Mr. Handy did a great job as Wilkes County Commissioner during his time of service on the Board and hated to hear this news.

Commissioner Elmore stated the media has reported another pipeline had burst so there could be another fuel shortage to deal with. County Manager, John Yates said the County will stock up on off-road diesel.

ADJOURN – Motion was made by Commissioner Keith Elmore, seconded by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins and by unanimous vote adopted to adjourn the meeting of the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners at 10:29 A. M.

Sarah D. Call, Clerk

Eddie Settle, Chairman

WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Approved: