

**MINUTES**  
**WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**January 19, 2021**

**PUBLIC CONCERNS** – None

The Wilkes County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, January 19, 2021 at 6:00 P.M. at the Wilkes County Agricultural Center located at 416 Executive Drive, Wilkesboro, NC 28697 with the following members present: Chairman Eddie Settle, Vice Chairman Brian S. Minton, Commissioner Keith Elmore, Commissioner David Gambill, and Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson.

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 and called the meeting to order.

**INVOCATION** – Commissioner David Gambill led the Invocation.

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Motion was made by Commissioner Keith Elmore, seconded by Vice Chairman Brian S. Minton and unanimously adopted to approve the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on January 5, 2021.

**BUDGET AMENDMENTS/TRANSFERS** – Motion was made by Commissioner David Gambill to approve Budget Amendment No. 22 (Health – Programs – Wilkes Community Health Center BCCCP program received a donation from Central Middle School in the amount of \$355.00. These funds will be used to provide a mammogram for an underinsured/uninsured BCCCP patient. No county money involved. Wilkes Community Health Center Promotions programs received funding from Project Lazarus in the amount of \$700.92. These funds will be used to prevent substance abuse for Wilkes County residents. No county money involved. Wilkes Community Health Center received remaining cost settlement funds from FY18 in the amount of \$44,080.00. No county money involved. Wilkes Community Health Center received \$12,603.36 from Yadkin County for Medicaid Case Management. These funds will be used to pay for rental equipment used for OBCM services. No county money involved). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Keith Elmore and unanimously approved.

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) – AMEND AND RE-ADOPT CITIZENS PARTICIPATION PLAN** – Chairman Settle welcomed and recognized Kelly Coffee, Senior Planner High Country Council of Governments. Mr. Coffee said this is for the CDBG Grant for the Mulberry Elementary School sewer line. He stated this grant will be closed out in a few weeks, but as long as it is open they have to keep all the plans up to date. The Board adopted this plan when the project started. This updated version is explained on page 6 which

deals with virtual hearings. Mr. Coffee said it states if they are limiting in person attendance at a public hearing they must provide ways for the public to interact. He added media stream, telephone call in, etc. They also accept written comments via mail, email, or social media, etc. Mr. Coffee said the notice of public hearing on page 15 is different as well. He added the county may already be doing some or all of this to comply with the state regulations and this may not be a change. Mr. Coffee said these are reasonable accommodations and is not committing the county to something they will later regret.

Mr. Coffee said in looking ahead a Close Out Public Hearing will be required for this Grant and he will get this scheduled with Mr. Yates in the next few weeks. He added currently he is waiting for Raleigh regarding a financial issue that has to be resolved. The Construction has been completed for several months and they are finishing the paperwork. The only thing needed tonight is for the county to readopt the Citizens Participation Plan.

Motion was made by Commissioner Keith Elmore to approve and re-adopt the Citizens Participation Plan for CDBG-I Grantees as presented at tonight's meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson and passed unanimously.

**HIGH COUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS – PROPOSED CHARTER AMENDMENT DISCUSSION** – Chairman Settle welcomed Julie Wiggins, Executive Director. Ms. Wiggins thanked the Board and stated she is presenting a proposed Charter Amendment for the High Country. She added this came from a review by a sub-committee of the Executive Board after review of their historical documentation and was recommended by the full Executive Board. Ms. Wiggins stated this amendment is an effort to include previous amendments into the actual document and to be more relevant to how it functions. She went over the background of Regional D that was formed in 1974 by the seven northwestern counties that make up the HCCOG as it is now known. The changes before them is intended to be consistent with how they operate and with terminology to reference applicable laws for today. She added the current charter states there are 15 members of the Executive Committee and they will meet monthly and the Council, which is all the members are to meet quarterly. It was amended in 1977 to include all municipalities to be on the Board. Another change they want to make is for the Council Board to be changed to the Executive Board and remove Executive Committee. This is the way they function today; the Executive Board meets monthly and makes the decisions. Ms. Wiggins said it was amended again in 1985 to rotate the Chairs from a County representative rotation to a Town representative. She added they wanted to put this out to all the participating member governments for adoption and requires at least 2/3 adopt in order to the amend the Charter.

Commissioner Elmore asked how many members are on the Executive Board. Ms. Wiggins replied 27. Commissioner Elmore stated they each represent a county or town; Wilkes County would have 4. Ms. Wiggins replied yes and added Paul Robinson, Jr. from Wilkes is also on the Board as their minority member and has been for over 30 years.

Mr. Triplett stated he has reviewed the documents and agrees this will bring the charter up to date with the way they operate now. He stated in 2008 the HCCOG signed an Interlocal

Agreement to purchase an Office Building in Boone. The members agreed not to withdrawal from the HCCOG until the loan for the office building is paid off. Mr. Triplett asked if the loan is still outstanding and if the Interlocal Agreement is still outstanding as well. Ms. Wiggins replied the loan is not paid off, she would assume the Interlocal Agreement is still in effect. She added the reference to someone withdrawing is what the law allows and why it is included, this would have to be a consideration and addressed if someone wanted to withdraw. Mr. Triplett stated he does not think anyone wants to withdraw, but wanted the Board to know this Charter amendment is a good thing, and will not affect the 2008 Interlocal Agreement that remains outstanding until the loan is paid off. Commissioner Elmore asked how many years are left on the loan and what is the balance. Ms. Wiggins replied 9 years are left. Mr. Triplett added it was a 20 year loan. Chairman Settle asked how much are they indebted for. Ms. Wiggins replied she is unsure; the original loan was about \$1 million. Mr. Yates stated he will get this information from Ms. Wiggins and send to the Board.

Chairman Settle thanked Ms. Wiggins for the information and stated they will act on this at the next meeting. Commissioner Elmore asked if they are having any face to face meetings or are they all online. Ms. Wiggins replied they had a couple Advisory Committee Meetings in December in person, the full Board has been online. They are anxious to get back to in-person as soon as they can. Ms. Wiggins thanked the Board.

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES UPDATE** – Chairman Settle welcomed John Blevins, DSS Director. Mr. Blevins said he has a few updates before they go over the reports. The first is so far in January they have had 17 employees to have Covid or under quarantine, which is 13% of their workforce. He added they have had two workers that have lost a parent which is very tough on all of them as well. They are doing their best, Rachel Willard has done a good job and helped with how long they need to be out and what they need to do when these cases come up. They appreciate all she is doing to help them.

Mr. Blevins said they had 288 folks to come and apply for low income energy program in the basement on Curtis Bridge Road and it worked well. This kept them out of the DSS main office and they could spread out and stay safe in that space. They have spent \$167,700 in January and have \$112,000 left that for folks that need it. Mr. Blevins said the top level on Curtis Bridge Road is being renovated and coming along well for the Adult Services unit. They will be able to use that space soon. Mr. Blevins stated in December they were 5<sup>th</sup> in the state for individual Child support collections, Mr. Guy Wyatt collected \$11,369.10. They are very proud and glad he was able to collect that.

Mr. Blevins said the first item in their packets is to help them when they have children come into care they cannot get placed in a timely manner. He added just this afternoon they have a 17 year old they took in that they are having to get a hotel to spend the night. It will be the child and 2 social workers 24/7 until placement. Chairman Settle asked if their workers have received the vaccine. Mr. Blevins replied not yet, their Association sent a letter to DHHS requesting social workers to be moved up on the list. Chairman Settle asked if they test the children. Mr. Blevins replied before they place a child they have to have a negative Covid test, the issue currently is there is nowhere to place this child. They will be at the DSS office or hotel until they are placed.

He added in 2019 they had 10 nights of staying with a kid, 2020 they had 61 nights staying with a child through the night. Commissioner Elmore asked if there are no group homes to place these children. Mr. Blevins replied not quickly, normally these children have aggressive behaviors, and other issues to include mental health problems that have to be leveled and it is difficult. They do everything they can, but these are tough. He added the letter in the packet is the State's first attempt to solve this problem. Mr. Blevins said this is a problem across the state and especially in Wilkes. This is for DSS children with high intensity behavioral needs and the ones that go without placements such as the one they have tonight. There is a lack of providers and this is a short term fix. He added DSSH will have a work group to include mental health, social services, and Medicaid to meet everyday to review these cases. If the local DSS cannot find placement after their normal process they make a referral to this workgroup. If they can't solve it they have an executive group that will look at it after 7 days. He added hopefully this will help to solve this and get placement quicker for these kids, its hard on all of them, staff and kids. They are glad the State is trying to do something that will hopefully help.

Mr. Blevins stated the next item in the packet is a temporary 15% increase in benefits for Food and Nutrition that will run from January through June 2021. Which includes a scale of the increase citizens will received for the next 6 months. He went over the monthly caseload reports for November at this time. Next, he went through the Foster Care financial report, Adoption Services financial report, Child Development and Subsidized Child Care financial reports for November. Mr. Blevins went over the CPS Foster Care monthly report for November. Commissioner Gambill asked what department are the 17 employees that have been out from, are they in CPS. Mr. Blevins replied initially it was and is still active there, within the last week it is more upstairs in income maintenance. He added 60% are in foster care and social workers 40% income maintenance and it has spread throughout the building. Commissioner Elmore asked how many have recovered. Mr. Blevins replied some are in quarantine, but since the beginning they had a few that had it and all have recovered. They had one in the hospital for 2 weeks and was very sick, they are back to work and doing better. Commissioner Gambill stated the had good TPR numbers especially with the limited court system available, was this from relinquishments instead of the court system. Mr. Blevins replied the majority were relinquishments, a few were through the courts, but they are very happy to give these kids a permanent home.

Chairman Settle and the Board thanked Mr. Blevins for the update and all they do.

**RESOLUTION – AUTHORIZING SALE OF COUNTY-OWNED PROPERTY – EDWARDS TOWNSHIP** – Mr. Triplett stated the Board authorized him to advertise the sale of this track of land that had been foreclosed on for taxes and has gone through upsets bids since August. He added it went back and forth between two folks and now the 10-days have run out with no upset. The two tracks had a beginning bid of \$4,000 and ended up at the high bid of \$10,025 from Larry Brindle and wife, Susan Brindle. Mr. Triplett stated if the Board wishes to approve the offer since the bid period ran out, there is a Resolution in the packets that the Board needs to approve.

Motion was made by Commissioner David Gambill to approve and adopt the Resolution Authorizing Sale of County-owned Property in Edwards Township as presented at tonight's meeting. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Brian S. Minton and passed unanimously.

*RESOLUTION  
AUTHORIZING SALE  
OF REAL PROPERTY*

*WHEREAS, the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners at its regular meeting of August 18, 2020, authorized advertisement for the sale of two tracts of land owned by Wilkes County (hereinafter "the County") located in Edwards Township, Wilkes County, North Carolina, each consisting of 0.30 acres, more or less, and 0.50 acres, more or less, respectively, the same having been acquired by the County under Commissioner's Deeds both dated March 11, 2020, and recorded in Book 1301, Page 147, and Book 1301, Page 148, respectively, Wilkes County Registry, pursuant to the tax foreclosure sales in those actions captioned "Wilkes County vs. James Monroe Bates, et al.," File Nos. 19 CVD 370 and 19 CVD 369, respectively, Wilkes County Clerk of Superior Court's Office., and being identified on the records of the Wilkes County Tax Mapping office as PIN #4932-40-5637, Parcel ID No. 06-03750, and PIN # 4932-40-4524, Parcel ID No. 06-00156, respectively;*

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

*AND WHEREAS, the County received an initial offer from Rodrigo Trujillo, 1610 Luffman Road, Ronda, North Carolina, for the purchase of said tracts, in the total amount of \$4,000.00 plus the cost of publication for the required public notice, Deed preparation, and recording costs;*

*AND WHEREAS, said offer was duly advertised in the Wilkes Journal-Patriot on August 26, 2020, as required under G.S. §160A-269;*

*AND WHEREAS, the County then received a timely upset bid from Larry G. Brindle and wife, Susan W. Brindle, of 154 Eastridge Lane, Millers Creek, North Carolina, 28651, for the purchase of said tracts, in the total amount of \$5,100.00 plus the cost of publication for the required public notice, Deed preparation, and recording costs;*

*AND WHEREAS, said offer was duly advertised in the Wilkes Journal-Patriot on September 2, 2020, as required under G.S. §160A-269;*

*AND WHEREAS, the County then received a timely upset bid from Rodrigo Trujillo, 1610 Luffman Road, Ronda, North Carolina, for the purchase of said tracts, in the total amount of \$5,405.00 plus the cost of publication for the required public notice, Deed preparation, and recording costs;*

*AND WHEREAS, said offer was duly advertised in the Wilkes Journal-Patriot on September 23, 2020, as required under G.S. §160A-269;*

*AND WHEREAS, the County then received a timely upset bid from Larry G. Brindle and wife, Susan W. Brindle, of 154 Eastridge Lane, Millers Creek, North Carolina, 28651, for the purchase of said tracts, in the total amount of \$7,000.00 plus the cost of publication for the required public notice, Deed preparation, and recording costs;*

*AND WHEREAS, said offer was duly advertised in the Wilkes Journal-Patriot on October 7, 2020, as required under G.S. §160A-269;*

*AND WHEREAS, the County then received a timely upset bid from Rodrigo Trujillo, 1610 Luffman Road, Ronda, North Carolina, for the purchase of said tracts, in the total amount of \$7,400.00 plus the cost of publication for the required public notice, Deed preparation, and recording costs;*

*AND WHEREAS, said offer was duly advertised in the Wilkes Journal-Patriot on October 21, 2020, as required under G.S. §160A-269;*

*AND WHEREAS, the County then received a timely upset bid from Larry G. Brindle and wife, Susan W. Brindle, of 154 Eastridge Lane, Millers Creek, North Carolina, 28651, for the purchase of said tracts, in the total amount of \$9,000.00 plus the cost of publication for the required public notice, Deed preparation, and recording costs;*

*AND WHEREAS, said offer was duly advertised in the Wilkes Journal-Patriot on November 11, 2020, as required under G.S. §160A-269;*

*AND WHEREAS, the County then received a timely upset bid from Rodrigo Trujillo, 1610 Luffman Road, Ronda, North Carolina, for the purchase of said tracts, in the total amount of \$9,500.00 plus the cost of publication for the required public notice, Deed preparation, and recording costs;*

*AND WHEREAS, said offer was duly advertised in the Wilkes Journal-Patriot on November 25, 2020, as required under G.S. §160A-269;*

*AND WHEREAS, the County then received a timely upset bid from Larry G. Brindle and wife, Susan W. Brindle, of 154 Eastridge Lane, Millers Creek, North Carolina, 28651, for the purchase of said tracts, in the total amount of \$10,025.00 plus the cost of publication for the required public notice, Deed preparation, and recording costs;*

*AND WHEREAS, said offer was duly advertised in the Wilkes Journal-Patriot on December 30, 2020, as required under G.S. §160A-269;*

*AND WHEREAS, no further 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 high bid of \$10,025.00 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 \$10,025.00 plus the cost of publication for the required public notice, Deed preparation, and recording costs received from Larry G. Brindle and wife, Susan W. Brindle, of 154 Eastridge Lane, Millers Creek, North Carolina, 28651, is hereby approved, and upon payment of said purchase price, a Special Warranty Deed shall be executed by the County and conveyed to them or their assignee for the above referenced property.*

*This the 19<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2021.*

*WILKES COUNTY*

*By:*

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*Eddie D. Settle, Chairman,  
Wilkes County Board of Commissioners*

*ATTEST:*

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*Sarah D. Call, Clerk*

**ADJOURN** – Motion was made by Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson, seconded by Vice Chairman Brian S. Minton and by unanimous vote adopted to adjourn the meeting of the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners at 6:54 P.M.

Sarah D. Call, Clerk

Eddie Settle, Chairman

WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Approved: February 2, 2021