

**MINUTES  
WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
February 6, 2018**

The Wilkes County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, February 6, 2018 at 10:05 A.M. with the following members present: Chairman Gary D. Blevins, Vice Chairman Eddie Settle, Commissioner Keith Elmore, and Commissioner Greg Minton.

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

Chairman Gary D. Blevins welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

**INVOCATION** – Vice Chairman Eddie Settle led the Invocation.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – Chairman Gary D. Blevins led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Motion was made by Commissioner Greg Minton, seconded by Commissioner Keith Elmore and unanimously adopted to approve the Minutes of the Board meeting held on January 16, 2018.

**BUDGET AMENDMENTS/TRANSFERS** – Motion was made by Commissioner Keith Elmore to approve Budget Amendment No. 9 (General Fund – Parks & Recreation – Budgeting a donation from the Carson Foundation to be spent on Girls Softball League); and Budget Amendment No. 10 (Health – Programs – Diabetes – Emergency Preparedness – Wilkes County Health Department received a grant from the Health Foundation in the amount of \$1500 for the Homegrown Health Diabetes project. These funds will be used to purchase food to continue Diabetes cooking classes to create healthy eating habits for Wilkes County families. No County money. Wilkes County Health Department received additional funds from the state of NC relating to Hurricane Matthew from October 2016. These funds will be used to support continuing education and travel for the Emergency Preparedness program. No County money involved.) The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Eddie Settle and unanimously approved.

Vice Chairman Settle asked if the Parks & Recreation amendment was a donation. Mr. Yates replied yes. Chairman Blevins asked if it was specifically for softball. Mr. Kevin Anderson, Parks & Rec. Director replied yes it was specifically for girls that want to play softball and could not afford the registration. Vice Chairman Settle asked if there are a lot of kids that can't afford the registration fee. Mr. Anderson said there are 20-25 annually for all sports programs offered that can't afford the full fee, it is normally multiple kids in the same household. Vice Chairman Settle stated they do have an avenue for these kids. Mr. Anderson replied yes they work with them and do not turn anyone away.

**RESOLUTION – REGARDING IMPACTS OF K-3 CLASS SIZE REDUCTION –**

Chairman Blevins stated they are going to have a discussion regarding the impacts of class size reduction in K-3 that affects all counties in North Carolina. He added they will discuss how this will affect Wilkes County and potentially pass a resolution regarding the Board's concerns and what action they think may be taken to help ease the transition to smaller class sizes in K-3. Chairman Blevins welcomed and recognized Mark Byrd, Superintendent Wilkes County Schools. Mr. Byrd thanked the Commissioners and recognized School Board Vice Chairman Ms. Sharon Huffman and Board Member Ms. Leslie Barnes and stated he appreciates them being here today. Chairman Blevins welcomed and thanked the School Board Members for their attendance.

Mr. Byrd thanked the Board for allowing him to come today, for the support of the school system and the good working relationship. He added the Board has really shown their commitment to the school system in the 2-years he has been there. Mr. Byrd thanked them for their work on the Resolution and stated he is not here to point fingers at legislatures, they passed this legislation with the best of intentions and smaller class sizes at early grade levels can be beneficial. He added he thinks they may not have realized some of the consequences when this was passed. Mr. Byrd said if no changes are made with the class size mandates Wilkes County Schools will have to hire 23 additional Teachers in Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade classes, at an estimated cost of \$1.2 million. He added they do not think there will be additional funding so the true cost will be cutting 23 positions within the system to fund the 23 they will need. Mr. Byrd stated 23 fewer teacher in Grades 4 through 12 will lead to larger class sizes as this is where these cuts would more than likely have to come from. He stated many have ask if Art, Music, or P.E. will be cut. This is not their intent and they would hate to consider this, but if they have to cut 23 positions to add 23 to K-3, everything is on the table. Wilkes is fortunate as they do not need to build additional buildings for classrooms, but will need to equip 23 rooms that are currently not being used for classrooms. He added the estimated cost for only basic technology is \$125K.

Mr. Byrd stated the scariest impact of all will be something every system in the state will face, which is the lack of applicants for K-3 teacher positions, there is not enough to go around. He added this means a lot of classes throughout the state will have substitute teachers in K-3. They have good quality substitute teachers but they are not trained as well as certified teachers in working with these students and helping them to learn to read and write. Mr. Byrd said the impact of this will be felt for many years if these students don't have certified teachers. In closing he said the support from this Board of the school system and work with the general assemble to resolve this issue is greatly appreciated.

Commissioner Elmore said the state pays teachers' salaries, but the school systems thinks there is no new money coming. Mr. Byrd replied yes, they do not anticipate additional funding. He added there may be funding for enhancement positions for Art, Music, and P.E., but they do not expect enough to cover 23 additional positions. Commissioner Elmore stated they do have the building space. Mr. Byrd replied yes they do, but it may not be ideal. Wilkes is fortunate most of the K-5 schools use to be K-8 schools so they should not have to build, but upgrades to these classes would have to take place. Commissioner Minton asked if there have been any more

discussions regarding the funding levels from the N.C. Educational Lottery. He added last year it was about 17%. Mr. Byrd replied they have consistently requested that this be revisited, but have not seen much success. Commissioner Minton said state wide this is an unfunded mandate. It will affect everyone, and they don't understand why a funding mechanism was not added to cover this.

Chairman Blevins asked what exactly is being proposed, what changes will require 23 additional positions and 23 new classrooms. Mr. Byrd replied if this does not change, next year Kindergarten will have one teacher for 18 students, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade will be one teacher for 16 students, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Grades both will have one teacher for 17 students. He added one class at one school could exceed this by 3 students, but the average for the entire district has to remain under these numbers. Most of these classes average 21 students at this time, he said. Vice Chairman Settle asked as an educator is it a benefit to have the smaller classes. Mr. Byrd replied in a perfect world they wish everyone had smaller classes, but what impacts a student's education more than a smaller class is the quality of the teacher. He added they would be better off to have 20 kids in a class room with a strong teacher, than to have 16-17 with a substitute.

Vice Chairman Settle stated some legislators say this has been funded already, but he spoke with the Board of Education Chairman who spoke with someone who said it has not been funded. Mr. Byrd stated a few years ago some positions were cut, funding was cut, and then they received additional money. In his opinion what this did was replace what had been cut rather than fund these addition teachers. Vice Chairman Settle stated it does not appear the 40% lottery funds will be returned by the legislature. Commissioner Minton stated it was taken during the recession and has continually been reduced. Chairman Blevins said the Board along with the association has fought this and will not give up, they have continually requested the 40%, which has to be used for capital improvements. He asked if the teachers association or union have taken a position on this. Mr. Byrd replied yes and they also advocate for Art, Music, and P.E. He stated if this money was given to superintendents prior to next year to fund this, there has been a breakdown in communications as to what those funds were to be used for.

Commissioner Minton said discretion is key, one size does not fit all, there is a shift in the population in North Carolina, and there is a decline among the vast majority of counties within the state. Commissioner Minton stated to allow the superintendent to have access to discretionary funding is the most important thing they can do with state funds. Vice Chairman Settle asked if the legislatures say this is the law, will the school system have to come back and ask for additional funding from the county. Mr. Byrd said if they have to they will make it work, but kids in Grades 4 through 12 will suffer due to very large class sizes. Vice Chairman Settle stated unfunded mandate has been mentioned, if this has not been funded by the state, not sure what they can do.

Chairman Blevins said there is a resolution the Board has, that ask the legislatures to fully fund any changes to be made in class sizes and to slow down the implementation process to give the school system time. He asked how long the class size has been what it is currently. Mr. Byrd replied it has been several years. Chairman Blevins stated the class size has been the same for a

very long time, they have found a way to fund it and now they want to make a drastic change without funding.

Chairman Blevins ask for a couple of good highlights from the school system. Mr. Byrd stated he wished they had time to walk everyone through the middle schools with the implementation of the Leader In Me program. He added they will see a difference in these students with the preparation for the real world and success in life beyond high school. There is a difference when you meet these students, how they present themselves, they are taking more ownership in individual success and realizing if they want to be successful there are things they must do personally. It is making them stronger leaders throughout the communities, in their churches, and all across Wilkes County. Mr. Byrd said they will see a difference in the young ladies and gentleman walking out of the high schools in a few years that will be even more successful than the ones there now.

Vice Chairman Settle said nitch.com ranked Wilkes County 18<sup>th</sup> out of 115 for schools and he was very proud to see this recently in the newspaper. Mr. Byrd stated the same survey ranked them the 11<sup>th</sup> best place to work out of those 115 school systems as well. Vice Chairman Settle added teaches in Wilkes were ranked an A, sports were also ranked an A which is great. Mr. Byrd said across the board students here have a great opportunity. Chairman Blevins added they have a great relationship with the school system and the Commissioners are proud of this and they support them. He said Mr. Byrd coming on board and running the school system along with the good School Board has made it easier to have the good solid relationship because there is trust and honesty, which they appreciate. Mr. Byrd thanked the Board and said they make his job much easier. Vice Chairman Settle added he appreciates the transparency, when they have questions they get the answers, which is nice as well.

Commissioner Elmore asked about taking teachers out of higher grades and moving to K-3, and if there are class size limits on this. Mr. Byrd replied yes, but they have much more flexibility at that level and it is not as strict requirements on class size for middle and high school. He added they will see numbers exceeding 30 + per class if they have to do this. Commissioner Elmore asked what the numbers are currently. Mr. Byrd said there are a few sections that have these numbers now, but it will become much more common, and see classes much larger across the board. Chairman Blevins said this may be OK for high school but this will be tough in Middle School.

Vice Chairman Eddie Settle made a motion to adopt the Resolution Regarding Impacts of K-3 Class Size Reduction as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Keith Elmore and unanimously approved.

*RESOLUTION  
WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGARDING IMPACTS OF K-3 CLASS SIZE REDUCTION*

*WHEREAS, S.L. 2017-9 requires local school districts to take action in 2018-2019 to set class size averages in grades K-3 equal to state classroom teacher funding ratios, which means mandated class size caps in K-3 grades; and*

*WHEREAS, the short timeframe of this new mandate means that LEA's will have a very hard time finding enough licensed and qualified teachers by FY 2018-2019, with the potential of more classroom vacancies led by long-term substitute teachers; and*

*WHEREAS, this legislation also will result in the loss of flexibility to generate State funding for teaching positions in program enhancements courses like art, music, physical education; and*

*WHEREAS, in Section 2.1 of S.L. 2017-197, the General Assembly declared its intent to create new funding stream for program enhancement teachers starting in 2018-2019, which is essential for a sound and basic education; and*

*WHEREAS, even with new legislative funding, Wilkes County could still face major classroom space and staffing challenges in implementing the new K-3 class size requirements; and*

*WHEREAS, the new requirements in individual class size maximums in grades K-3 would, in turn, increase the number of physical spaces required at each grade level, and will require infrastructure updates and improvements to include technology updates adding to an already unmet school capital needs challenge in Wilkes; and*

*WHEREAS, Wilkes County Public Schools estimates that in order to comply, it would need approximately 23 additional teachers at an estimated cost of \$1,265,000 for FY 2018-2019; and*

*NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the members of the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners respectfully request that the General Assembly fully fund small classes and slow implementation of the K-3 class size reductions outlined in S.L. 2017-9 through a multi-year phase-in that increases the number by a couple of students at each grade level in K-3 classes that allows time for the legislature and schools districts to address the aforementioned challenges;*

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NC General Assembly provide full funding for all program enhancement teachers and approve HB 866, the Public School Building Bond Act of 2017, so that districts across North Carolina are better able to meet their school facility needs associated with class size reductions and growth.*

*ADOPTED this the 6<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2018.*

*WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS*

*ATTEST:*

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*Gary D. Blevins, Chairman*

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*Sarah Call, County Clerk*

**BLUE RIDGE OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION – BROCC – HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE BLOCK GRANT BUDGET REVISIONS FOR FY 17-18** – Chairman Blevins recognized Jennifer Cooper, Director BROCC Senior Nutrition Services. Ms. Cooper thanked the Board and stated they have before them a budget revision amendment as they received additional funding to the Home and Community Care Block Grant. She added the new amount was divided per the guidelines of the Aging Advisory Committee and needs the Boards approval. The three

aging agencies in Wilkes increased by \$23,927 and the following increases were made: \$13,509.18 for Blue Ridge Opportunity Commissioner, Inc. Senior Nutrition Services; \$9,348.28 for Wilkes Senior Resources; and \$1,069.54 for Ruby Pardue Blackburn Adult Day Center.

Commissioner Keith Elmore made a motion to approve the Blue Ridge Opportunity Commission Home and Community Care Block Grant Budget Revisions for FY 2017-2018 as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Greg Minton and unanimously approved.

**COMMISSIONERS' SCHEDULED MEETING – CHANGE OF DATE** – Chairman Blevins stated some members of the Board will be on the road when the first meeting in March is scheduled and the Board needs to change the date of the March 6, 2018 regular meeting. He adding they had discussed moving it to Friday March 9<sup>th</sup> as an alternative at 10:00 AM.

Vice Chairman Eddie Settle made a motion to move the date for the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting scheduled on Tuesday, March 6, 2018 at 10:00 A.M. to Friday, March 9, 2018 at 10:00 AM in the Commissioners Meeting Room located at 110 North Street, Wilkesboro, NC. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Keith Elmore and unanimously approved.

**PLANNING DEPARTMENT:**

**1. REQUEST TO SET PUBLIC HEARING – ROAD NAME REQUEST – WHIPPOORWILL DRIVE – BEAVER CREEK TOWNSHIP** – Chairman Blevins recognized Eddie Barnes, Planning Director. Mr. 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 Whippoorwill Drive, Beaver Creek 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 Keith Elmore made a motion to set a Public Hearing on Friday, March 9, 2018 at 10:00 A.M., with the meeting to immediately follow regarding the Road Name Request as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Greg Minton and unanimously approved.

**2. FINAL APPROVAL – BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAIN CLUB – PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT** – Mr. Barnes gave a map to the Board and said this is more retitling this subdivision that was previously approved as the formal Laurelmor Development. He added the Wilkes Joint Planning Board reviewed and recommended approval for the master plan of the Blue Ridge Mountain Club subdivision to be retitled as a Planned Unit Development. He added this gives them a little more flexibility such as multi-family or commercial type uses and set-back lines to use as much as the lot as possible. Mr. Barnes says this development as it is includes property in Watauga County and they do have the other elements within the development. The section in Wilkes is primary residential lots, he added. Chairman Blevins ask if the part in Watauga will be a P.U.D. Mr. Branes replied it is already

and this approval will make it consistent with the total plan. He added 50 of the lots in Wilkes have already been sold. Commissioner Elmore asked if anyone spoke at the Planning Board meeting as far as the residents and are they fully aware and have no oppositions to this change. Mr. Barnes replied this is correct they are aware and the covenants restrictions they have now does reflect a Planned Unit Development and this will make it consistent on record. Chairman Blevins said no public hearing is required just a review by the Planning Board which is recommending this change. Mr. Barnes replied that is correct. Commissioner Elmore asked if the full Board voted. Mr. Barnes replied it was a unanimous decision by the Board.

Mr. Barnes said a Planned Unit Development may be approved under the Wilkes County Subdivision Ordinance when certain factors are present including the development is more than 30 acres, the development has mixed uses. P.U.D.'s may have more flexible design standards such as reduced lot size and setback requirements. The subdivision was previously platted as Laurelmor and is located in Elk Creek Township, and consists of 155.8 acres to be divided into 71 lots. Streets are private with paving and constructed to Wilkes County Subdivision road standards. It is not in a protected watershed and all documentation, lot size, and setback requirements have been met Mr. Barnes said.

Vice Chairman Eddie Settle made a motion for final approval of the master plan for Blue Ridge Mountain Club subdivision to be retitled as a Planned Unit Development as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Greg Minton and unanimously approved.

**TAX DEPARTMENT:**

**1. TAX RELEASES – LISTING** – Alex Hamilton, Tax Administrator asked the Board to approve tax releases for listings in the amount of \$413.19.

Vice Chairman Eddie Settle made a motion to approve the tax releases for listing as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Greg Minton and unanimously approved.

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

**2. TAX RELEASES – COLLECTIONS** – Alex Hamilton, Tax Administrator asked the Board to approve tax releases for collections in the amount of \$180.44.

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

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

**3. PERMISSION TO ADVERTISE TAX LIENS** – Tax Administrator Alex Hamilton stated pursuant to North Carolina General Statute §105-369, the Tax Collector shall report to the governing body the total amount of unpaid taxes for the current fiscal year that are liens on real property. He stated the governing body shall then order the Tax Collector to

advertise such liens and anyone who has not paid their taxes will receive a notice at least 30 days prior to the date of advertising, that taxes are owed and that they will be advertised if the taxes are not paid within that 30 day period.

Mr. Hamilton stated currently for Real Estate \$33,690,782.82 has been billed, and \$3,683,946.03 is uncollected at this time, which is 11%. He looked back to last year's collections and it is almost exactly the same and they will collect more before the advertisement deadline. Commissioner Elmore asked if he expected to collect another 6% before they advertise. Mr. Hamilton replied yes, typically they do. Chairman Blevins asked when they will advertise. Mr. Hamilton replied he talked with the paper earlier and it will be on Thursday, March 29, 2018.

Commissioner Keith Elmore made a motion to grant permission to the Tax Administration to advertise tax liens as requested. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Greg Minton and unanimously approved.

**4. MOTOR VEHICLE GAP BILLING** – Mr. Hamilton said he wanted to bring this to the attention of the Board and to the public because this is a change. He said since the motor vehicles billing was taken over by the State, there has been an issue with vehicles that registered late. People were not being taxed for that time period between when their tag expired and when the tag was renewed. Senate Bill 628 was passed last year to address this issue. The County is now required to bill for this “gap” in the registration, he said. Mr. Hamilton said he wanted to come before the Board to discuss this so the public and Board will be aware of this.

Mr. Hamilton stated he included a question and answer sheet and he will go through some of the highlights. Gap billing of property taxes occur when there is one or more months in bill property taxes between the expiration of a vehicle's registration and the renewal of that registration with the issuance of a new registration. The vehicle is unregistered during the gap in registration. He said before the state took over they had no access to this information. Mr. Hamilton said the legislature decided counties need to be doing this. In his opinion it would have been much easier and better if the state would bill this gap. Instead they have put counties back in motor vehicle billing, he added. Mr. Hamilton said they received the software last week to produce these bills, the law become effective July 1, 2017 but the software was not available to produce the bills. There was no cost to get this as it was in the contract with the software company it just took time to write it, he added.

Chairman Blevins asked if they had any idea what they will collect. Mr. Hamilton said no, they are getting ready to test it. The state is producing the data base that will be loaded into the software and last month there would have been about 250 bills. They were not able to view this at that time, but the county does not bill anything less than \$5.00 and there will be several that are less than \$5.00. Mr. Hamilton said it will be confusing to the citizens because it will not be based on value but for the month or months that it was not registered (1/12<sup>th</sup> of the bill if they had a one month gap). Chairman Blevins asked if there was a penalty. Mr. Hamilton replied there is no penalty. He added some folk's do this and they do not mean to it is not intentional, they just forget to renew their registration because they only get one notice. Chairman Blevins said it sounds like it will cost more than its worth. Mr. Hamilton said he understands the



purpose, but it would have been easier if it was tied to the registration. Commissioner Minton added that system is already in place and people would understand it much better if it was through their registration and billed from the state. Mr. Hamilton said they expect it to be implemented soon and there is an explanation that will be printed on the bill. He wanted the Board and tax payers to know about this because there will be questions.

The Board thanked Mr. Hamilton.

## **DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES:**

**1. WILKES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES 2018-2019 FOSTER/ADOPTIVE HOME RECRUITMENT PLAN** – Chairman Blevins welcomed and recognized John Blevins DSS Director and Hal Wilson, Child Welfare Program. Mr. Blevins stated after this was brought to the Board last month they did follow up on the questions. They changed the first bullet point on the front page and displayed the table and also added the Record along with the Journal-Patriot. Mr. Blevins stated Commissioner Elmore had asked about the \$250 bonus and 30-days. He asked Hal Wilson to research this and found that they are not having an issue with folks getting on collecting the \$250 and going off the program after 30-days. They would like to leave it alone since they do not have a lot of folks dropping off, but this is an excellent point and something they will keep looking at, he added. Mr. Blevins said they also did a comparison with other counties about Wilkes paying \$50 more than the standard board rates. None of the surrounding counties do this, Buncombe does this but it is close to what Wilkes pays. There are a few others that are very far away so they would like to leave this rate the same as well. Commissioner Elmore asked if this is helping them to recruit. Mr. Wilson replied yes it is very helpful. Mr. Blevins said Commission Minton asked about the sustainability. They are well funded and use the special needs and adoption funds and can also fall back on the foster care line item as well, it is well within the budget and no issues.

Next Hal Wilson provided some handouts to the Board to include pictures of the current set up they use in the community to recruit Foster and Adoptive homes. He gave the Board a brochure that they pass out. Mr. Wilson mentioned billboards that they have on Hwy 421 and Hwy 268 East and they hope to run this ad in movie theaters once they received approval. The county website has a video that helps as well. He added they have been out in the community and did a lot over the past year to recruit new families to make it more successful. Chairman Blevins said he has spoken with other agencies and in Raleigh and this is a major issue everywhere it is not just a Wilkes County issue, it is statewide. He added they put a lot of effort in recruiting and it is tough. Chairman Blevins said they have to take care of the kids, they come first and the folks at DSS do a good job.

Commissioner Elmore asked how they get the word out that they pay the \$250 bonus and the additional \$50. Mr. Wilson replied through the advertisements, meeting with families, going out in the communities and churches, brochures, and when they come in for the 30 hour MAPP training course and they go over this at all of these times.

Commissioner Greg Minton made a motion to approve the Wilke County Department of Social Services 2018-2019 Foster/Adoptive Home Recruitment Plan as presented. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Eddie Settle and unanimously approved.

**2. UPDATE** – Mr. Blevins stated the NC Fast rollout for Children’s service or Project 4 (P4) has been delayed, the pilot counties have had many issues. It is much more work for social workers and takes more of their time, as well as financial and billing issues. It could now be July or August before Wilkes before rolls in. Mr. Blevins said they do not want it rolled out until it is fixed they can’t have issues in Children Services like they did in food and nutrition when it went to NC Fast.

He said Medicaid transformation or Managed Care is changing, clients will chose a plan and there will be different types and this will take place around July 2019. Mr. Blevins said DSS will do the eligibility, but they are adding an enrollment broker to help the clients chose a plan, which is a change and brokers may be housed in their office. He said it is in the early stages and will get more information in April when the white paper comes out on this. The workers will also need training and have to be certified to use NC Fast, and recertified every 3-years.

Mr. Blevins said the state contacted them and asked them to be a pilot county for a new Medicaid program, called No Touch Recertification. This is supposed to be an enhancement in NC Fast where they don’t have to handle the recertifications as much and is supposed to speed up the process. They asked them because they did so well on the audit and they see Wilkes as a unit that does well in this area and they value their opinions, which is really good, he added.

Mr. Blevins said H.B. 630 has a Social Service group working on this now, and they are looking at going to Regional models. At this time they will be 5 to 7 regions in the state this will be large regions with many counties. He added they are trying to decide how this model will look and how much supervisions over counties they will have. The plan is due to the General Assembly by November 2018 and in operation by March 2020. Mr. Blevins said the working group will have their first report in April 2018 and will address the size of the regions and the responsibilities between the region, Raleigh, and the counties. He added there will be many changes and these regionals will supervise the contracts the counties have with the state and the performance measures they have to meet. Mr. Blevins said he will provide updates as he receives them.

Mr. Blevins stated there has also been a change for child support agents. They will have to be fingerprinted and have background checks because they access federal tax information. There is a cost to do this, but will received 66% reimbursement on this. There will be a small charge per worker each time they access the system.

Mr. Blevins briefly went over the monthly caseload report for December. He next went over the Foster Care financial report. Then he asked Mr. Wilson to go over the updates in Foster Care since the December report. Mr. Wilson stated they currently have legal and physical custody of 231 children at DSS and 21 of these children they obtained custody within the last two weeks. This is drastic increase based on emergencies. Mr. Blevins added it has strained the staff and

now they are over the state limit for case load size and this will be a budgetary issue that they will have to look at soon. Vice Chairman Settle asked if this is drug related issues. Mr. Wilson replied unfortunately a large percentage are. He added drugs, poverty, unemployment, and domestic violence have resulted in a lot of problems for many families. Mr. Blevins said the underlying predominate problem is drugs. Vice Chairman Settle ask which leads to which. Mr. Wilson replied for whatever reason they become depressed, can't get a job, look at other alternatives and many select drugs. They chose drugs over their family, food, over basically necessities, and children are medically neglected as a result. Domestic violence occurs and one leads to the next. Vice Chairman Settle stated he understands this time of year depression is worse, but to say they can't find jobs but yet Tyson can't find workers, something is wrong. He added they can get a job because they can't pass the drug test, it's a cycle. Chairman Blevins said they don't lose their kids because they don't have a job it is many issues that lead to this, this may be one indication. Mr. Wilson agreed.

Chairman Blevins ask if the 21 children were due to drug arrest. Commissioner Elmore asked how many families were involved. Mr. Wilson replied they had three sibling groups of 5 and there were 5-6 families in total. Chairman Blevins asked as the DSS Board can they have a meeting or closed session to go through some cases and see what the specific issues are and how can they can help as these are confidential files. Mr. Triplett replied they need to decide what information they want to see, then talk with Mr. Blevins, Mr. Wilson, and Mr. Yates and see if it is confidential, which he suspects it will be. He said they would then set a special called DSS Board Meeting to go into closed session and discuss. Commissioner Minton stated for the benefit of the public they would like DSS to classify this as to what is leading to these placements into DSS and share this. If they can at least do that, maybe everyone can take action. Mr. Triplett stated as a reminder, when they meet as the DSS Board what they learn is confidential and has to stay confidential. The Board can come out and make decisions and act on the information, but cannot divulge the closed session details. Chairman Blevins agreed and added they are concerned and want to find out more details and what's going on to see what they can do to help, but are limited on what they can say in public by statute. Mr. John Blevins said it is a good idea.

The Board asks what they need at this time. Mr. Blevins said when it comes time for the budget, they will have to ask for 2 positions. Commissioner Elmore asked if they are fully staffed. Mr. Blevins said they have one open position in Adult Protective Services. He said they are still having an issue with receiving no applications for open positions, the economy has gotten better and less people are looking and it's harder to find qualified folks. Hopefully this is an unusual spike that will work out with time and go back down.

Mr. Blevins next went over the Adoption Services financial report, Child Development and Subsidized Child Care financial reports. He said the state will do some reversions and reallocation this week they hope and their spending is 97% for child care and they may not get anything. They can start to work the waiting list as long as they can sustain the payments as he mentioned earlier in prior updates. Mr. Blevins said hopefully the state will fix the overpayments from a few months ago and that will help. He next went over the CPS Foster Care monthly report for December.

The Board thanked Mr. Blevins for his update and also thanked Mr. Blevins and Mr. Wilson for the great job they do every day.

**SOLID WASTE ORDINANCE AMENDMENT – DISCUSSION ON COVERED LOADS –**

Chairman Blevins recognized County Attorney Tony Triplett. Mr. Triplett said Kent Brandon and Anderia Byrd are also here today to answer any questions. He added they wanted to bring the Board up to date. He said Commissioner Elmore has been very active and they have been working for months to address an extremely difficult problem with litter and roadside trash. This continues to be a challenge but they have worked on many things that they hope will help. Mr. Triplett said one thing they have discussed and worked on is the county now contracts with someone to provide roadside cleanup service. He added he and Mr. Yates met with Sheriff Chris Shew recently to talk about how maybe the Sheriff's Office can be of assistance and work with them on this.

Mr. Triplett stated on the agenda today is one of the many things they discussed which is an amendment to the Solid Waste Ordinance. It is not a major amendment, but important and something they have met on and discussed. It would change the definition of covered or uncovered loads for enforcement purposes by the county. He added the current ordinance has stated anyone engaged in transporting solid waste has to cover the load and can't have an uncovered load. Mr. Triplett said this has not been easy to interpret and leaves it open to interpretation and hard to enforce. They has discussed using wording that Surry County uses in their ordinance as they recently went through a examination of their litter problem like Wilkes is doing and they changed their wording on this. He added this will remove covered or uncovered load and go with a definition that is centered on whether or not a load is secured so as to prevent solid waste from escaping. Mr. Triplett said this language will be more enforceable and easier to interrupt from their standpoint, and he drew up a draft amendment to the ordinance that will accomplish this.

Mr. Triplett said he and Mr. Barnes presented this to the Planning Board in December 2017 and this is required because the Solid Waste Ordinance is a Planning Ordinance. It involve both the planning department and solid waste department. Mr. Triplett said the Planning Board needed to review it and they did. They decided it was a good idea and they unanimously recommended for this Board to consider changing that definition. Mr. Triplett gave the draft amendment out and stated they cannot change the ordinance without a Public Hearing if the Board wants to consider setting this now or in the future.

Commissioner Keith Elmore made a motion to set a Public Hearing on Tuesday, February 20, 2018 at 6:50 P.M., with the meeting to immediately follow regarding the Solid Waste Ordinance Amendment, as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Greg Minton and unanimously approved.

Vice Chairman Settle asked if this is enforceable. Mr. Brandon replied it depends on who is enforcing it. Mrs. Byrd added it would be enforceable for a certified law enforcement office. Commissioner Elmore said it would be great if a law enforcement officer could be close to the entrance at the landfill and write citations to help with roadside trash and littering. Mr. Brandon

and Mrs. Byrd provided examples. Commissioner Elmore said roadside trash is a big problem and they want to take steps to make sure folks cover their loads and they patrol this. There are great people in Wilkes that recycle and do the right thing and they deserve for this Board to help solve this issue.

Chairman Blevins asked about modifying this with a notice period for the penalty or fine and notifying folks with a sign. The Board discussed what they could do to help on this issue so it can be enforced. Mr. Triplett said this could be built in to the ordinance and added Mrs. Byrd has a policy that she follows when she finds a bag or trash on the roadside which he briefly explained. Mrs. Byrd said she always tries to contact the person first, but many times she cannot immediately contact them and then they have to issue a citation. She added many times it does fall from commercial garbage trucks and finding the driver of that vehicle is an issue and lots of time folks will not tell them who their hauler is. Mr. Triplett said you cannot build in that much detail into an ordinance, you describe what behavior is prohibited and provide an enforcement mechanism, and set a penalty. This is what the Ordinance does. He stated then Mrs. Byrd for Solids Waste enforcement and Mr. Barnes in Planning will superimpose on top of the Ordinance a policy to enforce it which they follow.

Mrs. Byrd stated some issues are from the distance folks have to travel to the landfill to dispose of their trash and this is why it accumulates in this area. She added more convenience centers in Wilkes could help. Vice Chairman asked how many convenience center Wilkes has. Mrs. Byrd replied 3 maned convenience centers and 2 unmanned centers. The Board discussed adding sites and the cost associated with this and the difficulty with adding these in a community as well as funding them. Chairman Blevins said they did increase the fee at the landfill to set aside funds to help with roadside clean up, but it is the state's responsibility to clean up the state roads. He added they feel that the state needs to take the lead on this, but if they won't the county will have to step up and do more. Which is another unfunded mandate, he said. Vice Chairman Settle stated he was in Iredell recently and the County jail had inmates out working on the roadside picking up trash.

The Board stated this is important and they will keep working on it. They thanked everyone for their work on this and the good discussion.

**AIRPORT – AARON AEROSPACE, INC. – RESOLUTION FOR FINAL APPROVAL OF NEW COMMUNITY HANGAR LEASE** – Tony Triplett said this matter was on the agenda before and the Board authorized advertisement of a lease for Mr. Sherman Aaron, Aaron Aerospace to lease space at the Wilkes County Airport. He added Mr. Aaron has leased the Community Hangar for several years and would like to renew the lease for 2-years. The Airport Board did approve this and recommended final approval to the Board, he noted. Mr. Triplett said he did advertise per the statue that governs leases for 10-days and the Resolution is before the Board for consideration the Resolution approves the lease. Chairman Blevins said the Airport Board did approve this as well.

Commissioner Keith Elmore made a motion to approve the Resolution authorizing Lease and Operations Agreement with Aaron Aerospace, Inc., at Wilkes County Airport as presented. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Eddie Settle and unanimously approved.

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING  
LEASE AND OPERATIONS AGREEMENT  
WITH AARON AEROSPACE, INC., AT WILKES COUNTY AIRPORT**

*WHEREAS, the County of Wilkes (hereinafter the "County") is the owner and operator of the Wilkes County Airport in Rock Creek Township, Wilkes County, North Carolina, and is further the owner of a hangar and office space which is approximately 12,648 square feet in size, the same having been purchased by the County from U\*S Aviation, LLC, in 2005, and being known as the "community hangar"; and*

*WHEREAS, the County has received an offer from **Aaron Aerospace, Inc.**, a North Carolina corporation with its principal office and place of business in Wilkes County, North Carolina, to lease the above described hangar and office space, together with ground space on which the same is situated and other property as described hereinbelow, upon those terms and conditions as are further described hereinbelow; and*

*WHEREAS, the above described lease, together with all of the terms and provisions for the same, have been reduced to writing in the form of a Lease and Operations Agreement (hereinafter the "Agreement") which the County and Aaron Aerospace, Inc. desire to execute; and*

*WHEREAS, the Wilkes County Airport Board at its regular meeting of November 16, 2017, approved the Agreement and recommended that the same be approved and executed by the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners (hereinafter the "Board of Commissioners"); and*

*WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners, at its regular meeting of December 19, 2017, reviewed the Agreement and, upon the recommendation of the Wilkes County Airport Board, desires to accept said offer by Aaron Aerospace, Inc. and to execute the same; and*

*WHEREAS, a Notice of Intent describing the terms of the Agreement has been duly published at least thirty (30) days prior to the adoption hereof, as required by G.S. §160A-272; and*

*WHEREAS, the description of the property to be leased as set forth in the Notice of Intent was as follows:*

*DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY TO BE LEASED: The Agreement is for the lease of approximately 27,064 square feet of ground space (0.621 acres), together with a hangar situated thereon which is owned by the County and which is approximately 12,648 square feet in size, the same being known as the "community hangar" and having been purchased by the County from U\*S Aviation, LLC in 2005. The County has secured a survey and legal description of*

*said property in order to more fully and accurately describe the same, and said description and legal description will be attached as exhibits to the Agreement.*

*AND WHEREAS, the amount and terms of the offer by Aaron Aerospace, Inc. to lease said property were set forth in the Notice of Intent as follows:*

*AMOUNT AND TERMS OF OFFER: Aaron Aerospace, Inc. proposes to lease the above described property from the County, and the County proposes to lease the same to Aaron, for a term of two (2) years, commencing as of December 1, 2017, at a rental of \$2,000.00 per month. The Agreement authorizes Aaron to engage in the business of aircraft manufacture, assembly, storage, restoring, maintenance, and repair (including composite aircraft and materials), avionics, and charter flight operations. Said lease shall in all respects be subject to the Rules and Regulations for the Wilkes County Airport.*

*NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, pursuant to G.S. §§153A-176, 160A-272, and 63-53(3), that the Agreement with Aaron Aerospace, Inc. as presented at the December 19, 2017 meeting of the Board of Commissioners, and as set forth in the Notice of Intent, is hereby approved, and that the Chairman and Clerk of the Board of Commissioners be and are hereby authorized to execute the same on behalf of the County.*

*This the 6<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2018.*

**WILKES COUNTY**

By: \_\_\_\_\_

*Gary D. Blevins, Chairman*

*Wilkes County Board of Commissioners*

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Sarah D. Call, Clerk*

**HIGH COUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS – WILKES COUNTY NURSING HOME COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR LONG TERM CARE – APPOINTMENT** – County Manager John Yates said they have received a letter from Stevie John, Regional Ombudsman that says Ms. Mazie Mahaffey has indicated her willingness to be appointed for a one-year term to the Wilkes County Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee for Long Term Care. They are currently three vacancies on the Committee with a current roster enclosed for the Boards information. He added she has completed the nomination form and the Board Application and it is for the Boards consideration. Chairman Blevins said they are grateful for anyone that will serve and fill the openings. Commissioner Minton agreed and added especially someone willing to serve on this committee, they provide a valuable service to the citizens and the county.

Commissioner Greg Minton made a motion to approve the appointment of Ms. Mazie Mahaffey to serve on the Wilkes County Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee for Long Term Care for one-year term, as presented. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Eddie Settle and unanimously approved.

**CLOSED SESSION** – Commissioner Greg Minton made a motion to go into Closed Session closed session under Section 143-318.11(a)(3) of the North Carolina General Statute to consult with the Board’s attorney to protect the attorney-client privilege; and under Section 143-318.11 (a)(4) of the North Carolina General Statutes to discuss the location or expansion of business in Wilkes County. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Keith Elmore and unanimously approved.

Motion was made by Commissioner Greg Minton, seconded by Vice Chairman Eddie Settle 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 Greg Minton, seconded by Vice Chairman Eddie Settle and by unanimous vote adopted to adjourn the meeting of the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners at 12:20 P.M.

Sarah D. Call, Clerk

Gary D. Blevins, Chairman

WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Approved: