

MINUTES
WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BUDGET RETREAT WORK SESSION
February 25, 2021

The Wilkes County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, February 19, 2019 for a lite Dinner beginning at 5:30 P.M., Budget Retreat Work Session followed at the Wilkes County Agricultural Center Meeting Room located at 416 Executive Drive, Wilkesboro, NC with the following members present: Chairman Eddie Settle, Vice Chairman Brian S. Minton, Commissioner Keith Elmore, and Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson. Commissioner David Gambill was not available to attend due to a conflict.

Also present for the meeting were John Yates, County Manager and Chris Huffman, Finance Officer.

WELCOME – CALL MEETING TO ORDER – Chairman Eddie Settle called the Budget Retreat to order.

APPONTMENT OF ACTING CLERK – Chairman Settle stated the Board needs to appoint an acting Clerk.

Vice Chairman Brian S. Minton made a motion to appoint Chris Huffman, Finance Director as acting Clerk for the Budget Retreat Work Session. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Keith Elmore and unanimously approved.

INTRODUCTION OF RETREAT FACILITATOR – Chairman Settle stated Ms. Rebecca Troutman worked in the N.C. Association of County Commissioners for 25 years and did a great job and they a glad she could be here tonight for the Budget Retreat.

Ms. Troutman thanked the Board for the opportunity to facilitate the Board Retreat. She stated the Budget is a plan, it is where they want the County to go and where they want to be as a County at the end of the process. She added the budget is a guide for the Commissioners, they are the policy setting body for Wilkes County. Ms. Troutman added in NC the counties have a tremendous role such as having to furnish Health and Human Services which is an oddity for counties nationally. They also fund school's which is a rarity when compared nationally and it seems the county's portion gets larger each year. Ms. Troutman said they provide lots of services to the citizens and the Board's role and leadership is critical for the success of the County.

Ms. Troutman discussed with the Commissioners' their expected outcomes for the Budget Retreat at this time. They briefly went over the agenda and any changes or additions they would like to make.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – The Board welcomed and recognized Emily Miller, President McAdams & Associates, LLC. Ms. Miller stated she has worked with the County, both Towns, and the EDC for a long time on the financing of projects. Ms. Miller stated her company focuses on planning, site development, infrastructure, and anything to help move the needle forward for economic development with a focus on rural communities. She went through a power point presentation on Economic Development with the Board at this time. Chairman Settle and the Board thanked Ms. Miller for her good work in Wilkes and for the economic development update.

LOOKING BACK:

Chris Huffman presented the January 2021 Financial Report. John Yates presented an update on Capital Projects that are in process or recently completed to include estimated cost and source of funds. Rebecca Troutman presented several power point slides that included a graphic look at the County's Economy, Demographics, Funding, and Peer Budget Comparisons.

LOOKING AHEAD:

John Yates presented the below Budget Process and Timeline

<i>Distribute Forms to Non Profits and County Departments</i>	<i>March 1, 2021</i>
<i>Budget Submitted to Board of Commissioners</i>	<i>May 4, 2021</i>
<i>Commissioners hold Work Sessions</i>	<i>May 7 – June 1, 2021</i>
<i>Public Hearing on Proposed Budget</i>	<i>May 18 or June 1, 2021</i>
<i>Commissioners Adopt Budget</i>	<i>June 15, 2021</i>

Ms. Troutman discussed with the Board their Budget Priorities to include Capital Investments for County projects the Board would like to move forward on. The Board mentioned they will discuss COLA's when they get the budget packets. School Funding requests have not been received at this time, they typically get this much later from the schools. Wilkes Community College Funding, it was noted the county is well above the average in contributions from property tax and total resources dedicated to the Community College with Wilkes being over double the state wide average. Ms. Troutman added these are all large drivers for the total budget and have to be taken into consideration by the Board in the Budget process.

Ms. Troutman said next they will discuss where they want to go and strengths they have they mentioned earlier included: Economic Development opportunities; Investments in Education areas to prep for jobs; Level of Connectivity in Wilkes to bring in coders and programmers that can live anywhere and work from home.

She asked if there are any weaknesses or threats they see on the horizon that may impede moving forward on capital investments and benefits to employees or things such as these. The Board briefly discusses strengths and weaknesses at this time.

Mr. Yates thanked Rebecca Troutman for her time tonight. Chairman Settle and the Board thanked her for the good job and all the information she has provided. They also thanked Ms. Troutman for the great work she did at the State Association during her time there.

ADJOURN – Motion was made by Commissioner Keith Elmore, seconded by Vice Chairman Brian S. Minton and by unanimous vote adopted to adjourn the Budget Retreat Work Session of the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners at 7:52 P. M.

Chris Huffman, Acting Clerk

Eddie Settle, Chairman

WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Approved: