

MINUTES
WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
April 7, 2020

The Wilkes County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, April 7, 2020 at 6:00 P.M. at the Wilkes County Agricultural Center located 416 Executive Drive, Wilkesboro, NC 28697 with the following members present: Chairman Eddie Settle, Vice Chairman David Gambill, Commissioner Keith Elmore, Commissioner Gary D. Blevins, and Commissioner Brain S. Minton.

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. He added they are in an unparalleled time in history for the County and they do not know how long this will continue. Chairman Settle stated they appreciate the County Employees showing up and working every day and they are amazed at how well everyone does and thanked them for the great job. Chairman Settle asked everyone to remember all the COVID-19 victims throughout the country. He added there are 3,221 cases in North Carolina, one death in Wilkes County, and 46 deaths in the State and to please remember these during the invocation as well.

INVOCATION – Vice Chairman David Gambill led the Invocation.

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

POLICY FOR ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS DURING THE COVID-19 STATE OF EMERGENCY – Chairman Settle recognized County Attorney Tony Triplett. Mr. Triplett said this is a fairly loose and broad policy and gives the Board discretion of how the meetings will be handled from this point forward. He added this policy will be in affect as long as they are in a State of Emergency and will end automatically once that ends. Mr. Triplett stated the policy says the Board will temporarily move the location of its meeting to the Wilkes County Agricultural Center to make sure all CDC and other spacing recommendations are met. It will allow for public participation in a number of methods that are deemed reasonable by the Board and Staff. He added it is not restricted, it states measures will be taken to ensure there is remote participation in the meetings. Mr. Triplett stated tonight this is being accomplished by having folks at another location that can hear the meeting through an audio feed. Chris Huffman is making sure spacing requirements according to CDC and other recommendations are being met at the County Office Building location as well. Mr. Triplett said other arrangements and remote participation is allowed as directed by the Board and all are encompassed by this broad policy. It is flexible and the Board can change how the meetings are set up as long as they take reasonable measures to assure public participation.

Mr. Triplett stated there will be public concerns as normal at a regularly scheduled meeting, but now they have to be submitted in writing by email. He added they have to be turned in by 5:00 PM on Monday, the day before the meeting, which is the usual deadline to sign up. Mr. Triplett said the County Manager will read these at the meeting. He added many local governments are doing this and it is a method to continue to allow public concerns while in the current crisis. Mr. Triplett said the policy also states they will not set any Public Hearings during the period of this Declaration of the State of Emergency unless the law requires it. He added in that case they will take measures to allow participation it could be written comments or otherwise. Mr. Triplett said there will be a mandated public hearing at sometime in June for the budget, although they are hopeful this will not last that long. The policy leaves flexibility to do this if needed, and it is only in effect as long as the Declaration for the State of Emergency.

Vice Chairman Gambill said they have heard this may extend into June and he would like to explore other avenues such as Zoom or whatever works best. Mr. Yates added they have asked IT to look into this and they are exploring all options at this time. Vice Chairman Gambill added they need to set the example, they are safe tonight and maintaining distance, they are asking folks to stay home and they need to follow all guidelines. He added things change daily, they are talking about peak week maybe around the time of the next meeting. Commissioner Blevins added there are 10 in the room tonight and due to his high risk factors of being over 65 he didn't really want to come. He said he felt an obligation to be here as a County Commissioner. This is an essential meeting and not a social gathering, they are here to conduct the business of the county under extreme duress. Commissioner Blevins stated it is important they are here, meet on the regular schedule if possible, and accommodate the orders of the Governor. He added they need to continue to meet, follow all guidelines and set an example for the people in the county that they will continue to do business for the county. Chairman Settle asked what happens if the budget can't be passed by July 1st. Mr. Yates replied they will be able to get it passed, but could go with an interim if they had to for one month. Chairman Settle stated they would like to have a plan in place just in case.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman David Gambill to approve the Policy for Attendance at Meetings of the Board of Commissioner during the COVID-19 State of Emergency as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins and unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Motion was made by Commissioner Keith Elmore, seconded by Commissioner Brian S. Minton and unanimously adopted to approve the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on March 17, 2020.

BUDGET AMENDMENTS/TRANSFERS – Motion was made by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins to approve Budget Amendment No. 28 (Health – Programs – Wilkes Health Center received federal funding in the amount of \$13,714 for preventing, preparing for, and responding to COVID-19 as needs evolve within the community and Wilkes County. No county money involved); and Budget Amendment No. 29 (General – Mulberry School Project – Received and additional \$30,000 from N.C. Department of Environmental Quality to cover the cost of the Mulberry School Sewer Project. The \$30,000 will cover the amount needed to remove the damaged sewer system that the school currently uses); and Budget Amendment No. 30 (General

Fund – Social Services received an additional allocation in the amount of \$3,747 for Crisis Intervention Funds. No county funds required); and Departmental Line-Item Transfer Request MTR No. 2 (Social Services and Public Buildings – SAA-SAD Payments, Jury Commission and Other Audit Services are running under budgeted amount. Request to transfer \$59,400 funds to cover expenses due to COVID-19 Response) Mr. Yates added they have also met with Phil Trew, High Country Council of Governments and they are going to help the County on the FEMA reimbursements and submitting this paperwork as well. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman David Gambill and unanimously approved.

WILKES COUNTY SOLID WASTE – AWARD BID, PHASE 5 CONSTRUCTION –

Chairman Settle welcomed and recognized Mousa Maimoun, PhD, PE LaBella Associates, Project Consultant and Anderia Byrd, Landfill Director. Ms. Byrd thanked the Board and stated she is joined by Mousa Maimoun from LaBella and they are asking for approval of the bid award for construction of phase 5 at the landfill. She added the Board has been provided a packet with the bids received, the low bidder is D.H. Griffin Infrastructure, LLC at \$2,382,516. Ms. Byrd stated they originally solicited bids for this project on February 12, 2020 and only received one bid. They re-bid on March 5th and on March 31st they received four bids that were verified and tabulated by LaBella with D.H. Griffin Infrastructure, LLC as low bidder. Mr. Maimoun added in reviewing the bid from D.H. Griffin Infrastructure, LLC it was complete and had all the requirements they requested. He said they requested additional information to qualify them and after reviewing this it is their opinion they are qualified for this job as is their subcontractors and personnel. Commissioner Elmore said he is somewhat familiar with D.H. Griffin Infrastructure and he is glad they were the low bid on this project. Commissioner Blevins asked if they have done work for the county before. Commissioner Elmore said he is not aware of anything for the county but has known of them for many years, they are out of Greensboro.

Mr. Maimoun said they recommend awarding the bid to D.H. Griffin Infrastructure for \$2,832,516.00 with a 10% contingency for the overall budget, which is the standard contingency. Commissioner Blevins asked the completion date. Mr. Maimoun replied the contractor has 150 days or 5 months for substantial completion.

Commissioner Keith Elmore made a motion to accept the low bid and award the contract to D.H. Griffin Infrastructure, LLC in the amount of \$2,832,516.00 plus 10% contingency as presented and recommended. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins and unanimously approved.

Below is the bid tabulation sheet provided to the Commissioners:

Vendor	Total Base Bid
D.H. Griffin Infrastructure, LLC	\$2,382,516.00
Jimmy R. Lynch & Sons, Inc.	\$2,588,290.00
Sequola Services, LLC	\$2,808,055.50
Shamrock Environmental Corporation	\$3,954,353.00

MULBERRY SCHOOL SEWER EXENTION – CDBG-I #13-D-2946:

1. WILKES COUNTY GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE – CDBG # 13-D-2946 – Mr. Yates stated he is going to present this for Kelly Coffee. He added they need to update the project ordinance for the Mulberry School Sewer Project. The original Project Ordinance was for \$1 million, as they recall the project came in higher and CDBG agreed to cover the additional cost. Mr. Yates said in addition they also added \$30,000 to cover the cost of the demolition of the old system as well. The total project cost now is \$1,193,114.00. The good news is they are very close to completion and only have pump station work and demolition of old system left. Commissioner Blevins stated the contractor Classic City Mechanical, did a great job. Vice Chairman Gambill agreed.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman David Gambill to adopt the Wilkes County Grant Project Ordinance, CDBG # 13-D-2946 in the amount of \$1,193,114.00 as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brian S. Minton and passed unanimously.

*Wilkes County
Grant Project Ordinance
CDBG #13-D-2946*

BE IT ORDAINED by the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners, pursuant to Section 13.2 of Chapter 159 of the General Statutes of North Carolina, the following grant project is hereby adopted:

Section 1. The project authorized is the Community Development Block Grant – Infrastructure Project described in the work statement contained in the Grant Agreement between this unit and the NC Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ)

Section 2. The officers of this unit are hereby directed to proceed with the grant project within the terms of the grant documents, the rules and regulations of NCDEQ, and the budget contained herein.

Section 3. This ordinance augments the previous \$1.0 million grant project ordinance of the same name and CDBG number dated 09/18/18.

Section 4. The following additional revenues are available to complete this project:

<i>Mulberry School Sewer Extension</i>	<i>\$193,114</i>
<i>CDBG #13-D-2946</i>	

Section 5. The following amounts are appropriated for the project:

Mulberry School Sewer Extension Project – CDBG #13-D-2946

<i>Public Sewer Improvements</i>	<i>\$193,114</i>
<i>Total Project</i>	<i>\$1,193,114</i>

Section 6. The Finance Officer is hereby directed to maintain within the Grant Project Fund sufficient, specific, and detailed accounting records to provide the accounting to the grant agency required by the grant agreement and federal and state regulations.

Section 7. Requests for funds should be made to the grantor agency in an orderly and timely manner as funds are obligated and expenses incurred.

Section 8. The Finance Officer is directed to report quarterly on the financial status of each project element in Section 5 and on the grant revenues received or claimed.

Section 9. The Budget Officer is directed to include a detailed analysis of past and future costs and revenues on this grant project in every budget submission made to this board.

Section 10. Copies of this Grant Project Ordinance shall be made available to the Budget Officer and the Finance Officer for direction in carrying out this project.

ADOPTED this 7th day of April, 2020.

*Eddie Settle, Chairman
Wilkes County Board of Commissioners*

ATTEST:

Sarah D. Call, Clerk

2. RESOLUTION SUPPORTING NATIONAL FAIR HOUSING MONTH –
Mr. Yates said this is part of the CDBG grant requirements, which is to have a Fair Housing activity every quarter. The Resolution will be for this quarter and he requested approval from the Board at this time.

Motion was made by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins to approve and adopt the Resolution Supporting National Fair Housing Month, as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brian S. Minton and passed unanimously.

*RESOLUTION SUPPORTING
NATIONAL FAIR HOUSING MONTH*

WHEREAS, the month of April marks the 52nd anniversary of the federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, which sought to eliminate discrimination in housing opportunities and to affirmatively further housing choices for all Americans; and

WHEREAS, Wilkes County desires that all its citizens have the opportunity to attain a decent, safe, and sound living environment; and

WHEREAS, individuals in the State of North Carolina have the right to choose where to live without discrimination based on race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, handicapped status, or familial status; and

WHEREAS, the State of North Carolina enacted the North Carolina State Fair Housing Act in 1983;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Wilkes County does hereby join in the national recognition by proclaiming April 2020 as Fair Housing Month.

Adopted by the 7th day of April 2020.

*Eddie Settle Chairman,
Wilkes County Board of Commissioners*

*Attest: Sarah Call
Wilkes County Clerk*

TAX DEPARTMENT:

1. TAX RELEASES – LISTINGS – UNCOLLECTABLE – Alex Hamilton, Tax Administrator asked the Board to approve tax releases for listing that are uncollectable in the amount of \$6,100.56.

Vice Chairman David Gambill made a motion to approve the tax releases for listings that are uncollectable 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.

2. TAX RELEASES – LISTING – Mr. Hamilton asked the Board to approve tax releases for listing in the amount of \$14,113.38.

Vice Chairman David Gambill made a motion to approve the tax releases for listing as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brian S. Minton and unanimously approved.

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

3. TAX RELEASES – COLLECTIONS – Mr. Hamilton asked the Board to approve tax releases for collections in the amount of \$470.57.

Commissioner Keith Elmore made a motion to approve the tax releases for collections as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brian S. Minton and unanimously approved.

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

4. 2020 APPOINTMENTS TO THE WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF EQUALIZATION AND REVIEW – Mr. Hamilton stated the Board of Commissioners passed a Resolution in 2001 that established a special Board of Equalization and Review as allowed in North Carolina General Statute Section 105-322. He added it is time to appoint member to the Board for the 2020 tax year. The following: Commissioner Gary D. Blevins, Steve Crysel, Carmen James, Andrew Casey and Janie Cheek have agreed to served this year if that is the Board's desire. Mr. Hamilton asked for the Board consideration at this time. Commissioner Elmore said this is for one year, correct. Mr. Hamilton replied yes. Commissioner Blevins stated he has served with these folks for several years, they do a very good job, are very competent, and work will with Mr. Hamilton. He added they have been able to resolve many cases even during the revaluation. Commissioner Blevins thanked the Board for appointing him to serve one last time. Chairman Settle added this is a tough job and they thank Commissioner Blevins and the others for volunteering.

Mr. Hamilton stated by statue they have to meet May 4th and under the recommendation from the Attorney at the Institute of Government they will meet by zoom or some other form on that date. He added on this date they will meet open it and then adjourn, there will be no hearings at this time. They have to close the Board of taking new appeals and plan to do that on June 1st. Mr. Hamilton said once they end the process of taking new appeals they can hold the hearings throughout the year or even into next year if they had to. They will wait until it is safe to have them, it is important to allow face to face interaction with the Board. He added this is the recommendation they have received and the way they plan to handle the Board of E&R this year.

Commissioner Keith Elmore made a motion to appoint Commissioner Gary D. Blevins, Steve Crysel, Carmen James, Andrew Casey and Janie Cheek to the 2020 Wilkes County Board of Equalization and Review, as presented and requested. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman David Gambill and unanimously approved

NEW BUSINESS – APRIL 21, 2020 BOARD MEETING – Chairman Settle asked if they Board needed to cancel this meeting. Vice Chairman Gambill asked if there is anything pressing that they need to meet on, the peak is supposed to be that week. Mr. Triplett replied he did not

have anything. Commissioner Elmore said they need to meet in person like tonight or by Zoom or something. Commissioner Blevins added he does not see any danger in meeting they way there are unless it gets tremendously worse. Chairman Settle said they will leave the meeting as is. Vice Chairman Gambill asked if that is peak time and things change or get worse what is the option, can they cancel if they need to. Mr. Triplett said they can cancel the meeting if circumstances change.

Chairman Settle stated they are thankful that Wilkes still only has 4 cases, Surry went to 10 today and Ashe had a new case. Commissioner Blevins added Yadkin has 9. He said it is possible there are individuals that have it and have not been tested. They appreciate what everyone has done, but would like to see everyone in the county continue to follow all the guidelines and take this seriously until they get further down the curve. Commissioner Blevins said they need to help the Health Care workers not to be overburdened with carelessness or being irresponsible. Chairman Settle agreed and added please stay home, they will get by and get through this.

NEW BUSINESS PURCHASING AND PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES – County Manager John Yates said this is help with the paperwork and reimbursement from FEMA. Chris Huffman asked due to the coronavirus pandemic; Wilkes County is operating under a State of Emergency. FEMA is allowing local governments to operate under Category B (Emergency Protective Measures). At this time, he requests to waive the formal bid procedure of the Purchasing and Procurement Policy until June 30, 2020. This will assist Wilkes County in providing safety and healthcare as needed.

Vice Chairman David Gambill made a motion to approve the waiver of the formal bid procedure of the Purchasing and Procurement Policy until June 30, 2020 as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Keith Elmore and unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS – DEPARTMENT OF DSS – UPDATE – Mr. Yates said they asked John Blevins to submit his update just in case they are not able to have the second meeting this month. He can answer questions on Thursday if the Board would like to call or email him with questions on the update or report. Mr. Yates read the following DSS update provided by John Blevins DSS Director, at this time:

“As of April 7, 2020, DSS office doors were closed to the public. Drop boxes were installed at the DSS Main location and the Child Support building on Curtis Bridge Road.

Inquires for Medicaid, Food & Nutrition, Child Care Subsidy, Work First, Medicaid Transportation and Adult Services can be made by phone at 336-651-7400 or by email at DSSinfo@wilkes.nc.gov. On line applications for Medicaid and Food & Nutrition can be found at www.epass.nc.gov.

To help families access food during the COVID-19 pandemic, the state is temporarily increasing benefits for March 2020 and April 2020 for current Food and Nutrition Services (FNS)

recipients in North Carolina. All families that receive FNS will receive the maximum amount allowed for March 2020 and April 2020 for their household size.

Child Protective Services workers can be contacted by phone at 336-651-7490 during regular office hours. After business hours if a child is in immediate danger call 911.

Child Support agents can be reached at 336-903-7689. On line applications are available at www.NCChildsupport.com.

Spending for both Foster Care and Adoptions continue to be under budget and should end the fiscal year in good shape.

Child Care spending appears to have decreased by \$8,190. However, the state has delayed in providing up to date numbers as of this report. We feel that when the final numbers come in we will be at or above current spending. For March the numbers will definitely go up as due to the COVID-19 virus the state is paying the full month for every provider for every child.

Currently we have 36 licensed foster homes, with 30 more families in process to license. The number of foster children increased by 7 in February to 223.”

The Board was also provided the monthly reports for February 2020.

ADJOURN - Motion was made by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins, seconded by Vice Chairman David Gambill and by unanimous vote adopted to adjourn the meeting of the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners at 6:43 P.M.

Sarah D. Call, Clerk

Eddie Settle, Chairman

WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Approved: April 21, 2020