

MINUTES
WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
May 1, 2018

The Wilkes County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, May 1, 2018 at 5:03 P.M. at the Wilkes County Agriculture Center, located at 416 Executive Drive, Wilkesboro with the following members present: Chairman Gary D. Blevins, Vice Chairman Eddie Settle, Commissioner Keith Elmore, Commissioner David Gambill, 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, especially all the visitors from the Fire Department, and called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION – Commissioner David Gambill led the Invocation.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Motion was made by Vice Chairman Eddie Settle, seconded by Commissioner Greg Minton and unanimously adopted to approve the Minutes of the Board meeting held on April 17, 2018.

BLUE RIDGE OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION (BROC) – PROCLAMATION – Chairman Blevins welcomed and recognized Jennifer Cooper, Director BROC Senior Nutrition Services. Ms. Cooper said Older Americans month is a nationally recognized event and the theme this year is “Engage at Every Age”. She added no matter if age 50 or 90 staying engaged is what keeps everyone healthy. Ms. Cooper said this is very important emotionally and physically. They see this with the home bound folks that are not engaged in any activities outside their homes. She stated they hope to bring attention to older Americans. Ms. Cooper said the new statistic they received supports what they knew already, the number of older Americans are increasing at a rapid rate. She added there will continue to be shortages in health care providers, nursing home beds and other needs. In closing she said it is more important now than ever to keep older Americans engaged no matter the age and the entire county needs to look at what they can do to help.

Commissioner Keith Elmore made a motion to approve the Proclamation to declare May “Older Americans Month 2018” as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Greg Minton and unanimously approved.

Older Americans Month 2018
A PROCLAMATION

Whereas, Wilkes County includes countless older Americans who enrich and strengthen our community; and

Whereas, the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners is committed to engaging and supporting older adults, their families, and caregivers; and

Whereas, we acknowledge the importance of taking part in activities that promote physical, mental, and emotional well-being—no matter your age; and

Whereas, we as a community, can enrich the lives of individuals of every age by:

- promoting home- and community-based services that support independent living;*
- involving older adults in community planning, events, and other activities; and*
- providing opportunities for older adults to work, volunteer, learn, lead, and mentor.*

Now therefore, I, Gary D. Blevins, Chairman of the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners, do hereby proclaim May 2018 to be Older Americans Month. I urge every resident to take time during this month to recognize older adults and the people who serve them as vital parts of our community.

Dated this first day of May, 2018

Chairman, Wilkes County Board of Commissioners

TAX DEPARTMENT – Chairman Blevins said Alex Hamilton, Tax Administration could not attend and he would like to recognize Cathy Jones, Tax Listing Department Supervisor. He said Mrs. Jones will be retiring at the end of this month and will have 31 years of service on June 1st. He added she is currently the Tax Listings Department Supervision and prior to this she was the Collections Department Supervisor. He welcomed Cathy Jones at this time.

1. TAX RELEASES – LISTING – Mrs. Jones asked the Board to approve tax releases for listings in the amount of \$926.56.

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

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

2. TAX RELEASES – COLLECTIONS – Mrs. Jones asked the Board to approve tax releases for collections in the amount of \$305.70. She added these are all due to bankruptcy, they cannot collect them and have no choice but to release them.

Commissioner David Gambill 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.

Chairman Blevins and the Board congratulated Mrs. Jones and thanked her for 31 years of great service. Mrs. Jones thanked the Board.

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES UPDATE – Chairman Blevins welcomed John Blevins, DSS Director. Mr. Blevins stated he has received more information on the contracts that have to be signed this year, which are legally binding contracts. It will encompass all areas except Medicaid. He added each area will have performance measures and will be standardized across the state, except for Child support, it will be individualized for each county. Mr. Blevins said if a county does not meet the performance standards, this can involve money from the county. He does not see this being a problem for Wilkes County and just wanted the Board to be aware of this because it is a legally binding contract. Mr. Blevins provided a brief summary of the process for a county that does not meet the performance measures set out in the contracts.

Chairman Blevins asked if the Board would need to approve and sign the contracts once finalized. Commissioner Minton replied if the county agrees to federal funding, which they have to, the agreement has to be signed. Mr. John Blevins added he has reviewed the contracts and they should not be any issues, he just wanted the Board to be aware of them. They include performance measures and consequences for not meeting them. Commissioner Minton asked when they will be finalized. Mr. Blevins replied originally it was July 1. Commissioner Minton stated they have been pushed back. Mr. Blevins said they said these said final draft, but they have not received a definitive date. He added he will let the Board know when he gets this date.

Chairman Blevins asked if this is also part of the regionalization and the regional staff will look at the performance measures and provide oversight and remediation if needed. Mr. Blevins replied yes. Commissioner Minton added it is modeled similar to the federal K-12 program and the under-performing schools. Chairman Blevins stated Wilkes DSS will do well. Mr. Blevins agreed and added he wanted to make sure the Board is aware of everything as the DSS Board.

Mr. Blevins briefly went over the monthly caseload report for March. He next went through the Foster Care financial report and Adoption Services financial report. Commissioner Gambill asked if they still have a dedicated Deputy for Child Support or has this worked out. Mr. Blevins replied they do not. Next he went over the Child Development and Subsidized Child Care financial reports for March. He said they now have 31 Foster Homes. He said they are not going to purchase any more billboard ads, they are going to show a video at movie theaters to advertise this need and the newspaper has posted the video it to their website, which is helping as

well. Vice Chairman Settle asked about using social media. Mr. Blevins said they do not do this currently although some of the Social Workers do this on their own, but nothing formally through DSS. He added this is an excellent point and they will look into this. Vice Chairman Settle said the millennials only use social media and a lot of hiring is now done this way. Mr. Blevins agreed they get most all their new applications for positions online. He added currently there are two open positions and will interview for one week and the other closes next Tuesday. They hope to get these filled very soon and keep them filled.

Chairman Blevins asked if there is a national organization that supports adoptive families and foster families. He said maybe the county could run a campaign and spend a month supporting this and bringing awareness to the need for adoptive and foster families. Mr. Blevins said this is a good thought and he will look into this.

The Board thanked Mr. Blevins for his update and reports.

BUDGET AMENDMENTS/TRANSFERS – County Manager John Yates stated Budget Amendment No. 12 is for the Board's consideration. It is for WTA in the amount of \$35,650 to help them pay their payroll taxes. Commissioner Elmore stated this is unfortunate and they are trying new things at WTA to try to keep their bills current. He added they are struggling and have been for a while. Commissioner Gambill agreed. Commissioner Elmore added they have two new Board members and are looking for more. He added they provide an important service and they need WTA, it does have to make sense and they are working on it. The Board thanked Commissioner Elmore for the good job.

Vice Chairman Settle asked how far behind they are. Mr. Yates replied they missed the first quarter January, February, and March. He added he has been told they are also behind for April. Finance Director Jerry Shepherd added this is correct, but April is not included in the amount requested. Commissioner Elmore said it is their 941 reports and payroll tax. He added they did not know about this until the end of the quarter, they should have paid it every two weeks. They were paying fuel bills because that got behind and was cut off and had to pay this, because at that time this was the most crucial to their operation. Commissioner Elmore said they have told them going forward it is important that they pay the taxes and they owe for the first quarter this year only. Vice Chairman Settle stated all small businesses have to pay their taxes every month even if the owners don't get paid the taxes do. He thanked Commissioner Elmore and the new Board members and added they believe it will get better. The Board thanked Commissioner Gambill and said he did a good job while he served on the WTA Board for several years as well.

Commissioner Gambill stated they ROAP grant use to come in one lump sum and now it is disbursed over the year, this put them behind because they have to wait on it. They got behind from that and are still playing catch up. He added trips went down for a while and also the new system and payments from the state put them further behind, all of this lead to where they are. Vice Chairman Settle asked if there is a plan to fix it or will they be back in 3 months asking for more. Chairman Blevins stated when he had the privilege of becoming Chairman and attended a WTA Board meeting, it became clear that they depend primarily on Medicaid funding and serving the poor and needy. They are not going to have excess money. He added there was a

time when the county appropriated funds to WTA annually. Several years ago the Director was very independent and felt they no longer needed county funding. Chairman Blevins said the county is obligated to provide public transportation and have put minimum money in it the past few years. Mr. Yates stated the last appropriation was 2009-2010 budget year, in the amount of \$40,500. Vice Chairman Settle asked if every year up to that time the same amount was given to WTA. Mr. Yates replied \$50,000 was appropriated in 2008-2009; \$52,500 in 2007-2008 and similar amounts prior.

Chairman Blevins said they are beginning to form a plan to become more self-sufficient, but the county may still have to step up with more funds. Vice Chairman Settle stated most of the time when a budget request is presented the Director comes to present and answers questions, WTA director is not at this meeting. Commissioner Elmore added this is unfortunate, these are all good points but, they have had three directors in the past few years. He said they may have to turn down trips that don't make sense and make other changes. Chairman Blevins stated the director will be at the next meeting to answer questions.

Motion was made by Commissioner David Gambill to approve Budget Amendment No. 12 (General – Other Human Services – Wilkes Transportation Authority. Budgeting funds in the amount of \$35,650.00 to appropriate to Wilkes Transportation. These funds are to be used to help them catch up on the payroll taxes that are past due.) The motion was seconded by Commissioner Keith Elmore and unanimously approved.

WILKES COMMUNITY COLLEGE – BOARD OF TRUSTEES – REAPPOINTMENT –

Chairman Blevins recognized County Manager John Yates. Mr. Yates said they received a letter from Jeff Cox, WCC President. It states *as we approach this time of year for reappointments of community college board of trustees, please be notified of the following Wilkes County Board of Commissioner's appointment whose term will expire June 30, 2018, Mr. J. Terry Bumgarner. As I am sure you are aware, the Board of Trustees elected Mr. Bumgarner as their Chairman, which speaks to his leadership on the board and other trustees' confidence in him. As chairman, Mr. Bumgarner serves as ex-officio member to all standing committees. For the Building and Grounds Committee, Mr. Bumgarner's experience and insight in construction and business are invaluable to the WCC Board of Trustees. His contribution of time has enabled Wilkes Community College to save money and better serve the citizens of Wilkes County. At our April 12, 2018 meeting the WCC Board of Trustees voted unanimously to request that you reappoint Mr. Terry Bumgarner to an additional term and directed me to write a letter to you making that request.* Mr. Yates said this will be a four-year term and his application is attached.

Chairman Blevins said his application states in his qualifications 33 years of service to the endowment board and board of trustees and a life-long resident of Wilkes County.

Commissioner Keith Elmore made motion to reappoint Mr. J. Terry Bumgarner to the Wilkes Community College Board of Trustees for an additional four-year term, as presented. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Eddie Settle and unanimously approved.

PURCHASE OF COUNTY-OWNED PROPERTY IN NORTH WILKESBORO TOWNSHIP – County Attorney Tony Triplett said in the packet of materials there is a memo that provides the background. He added as the Board is aware when the Board sells county owned property it is usually by a procedure of negotiated offer advertised allowing for upset bid. This offer is the first one under a new program they started recently in an effort to clean up blighted homes that had burned or become dilapidated in Wilkes County. This property is located in the Cricket Community, there was a home on it that burned. The owners would not clean it up and did not pay their taxes. The county elected to clean up the property under the Solid Waste Ordinance after many complaints from neighbors. He added the neighbors are now very thrilled with this property.

Mr. Triplett said he brought a tax foreclosure and the county now owns it. He stated the county has \$8,700 in the property. He stated Mr. Matt Lamb has submitted an offer of \$8,000.00 to purchase the property plus cost. As noted in the material in the packet this is very close to being sufficient to cover what the County has in it, he added. Mr. Triplett stated they have found out the property will need a new septic system and Mr. Lamb will have to invest \$3,000 for this. If the Board is agreeable to proceed all that is before the Board is only to publish this offer in the paper to see if there are any upset bids. Mr. Triplett said after the 10-day notice has expired he will bring it back at the next meeting for the Board to decide if they was to accept the bid or not. Commissioner Elmore asked where the upset bids are submitted. Mr. Triplett replied his office. Chairman Blevins added the upset bid has to be at least 5%.

Commissioner David Gambill made a motion to publish notice in the *Wilkes Journal-Patriot*, pursuant to G.S. §160A-269, of the offer received from Matt Lamb on April 13, 2018, for the purchase of property formerly owned by Teresa Gail Blanton and James Thomas Johnson, consisting of 0.257 acres on Boone Trail in North Wilkesboro Township, Wilkes County, North Carolina, the same having been acquired by Wilkes County through tax foreclosure at Deed Book 1262, Page 126, Wilkes County Registry, for \$8,000.00 plus advertising costs, Deed preparation, and recording costs; provided, that the County first receives a 5% deposit from Mr. Lamb. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Eddie Settle and unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS – SET BUDGET WORK SESSION – Chairman Gary Blevins stated the Board needs to set a budget work session. The proposed 2018-2019 Wilkes County Budget will be presented at the work session and it will be held in the Commissioners Meeting Room next Thursday, May 10, 2018 if this will work for the Board.

Commissioner Keith Elmore made a motion to set a Budget Work Session for the presentation and discussion of the proposed 2018-2019 Wilkes County Budget for Thursday, May 10, 2018 at 6:00 P.M. to be held in the Commissioners' Meeting Room located at 110 North Street, Wilkesboro, NC. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Greg Minton and unanimously approved.

The work session is open to the public.

CLOSED SESSION – Motion was made by Commissioner David Gambill to go into closed session under Section 143-318.11 (a)(4) of the North Carolina General Statutes to discuss the location or expansion of business in Wilkes County; and 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. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Keith Elmore and unanimously approved.

Motion was made by Commissioner Greg Minton, seconded by Commissioner Keith Elmore and by unanimous vote adopted to adjourn back into regular session. No action was taken in the closed session.

NEW BUSINESS – SET PUBLIC HEARING – COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT - Commissioner Keith Elmore made a motion to set the initial required Public Hearing for citizens input regarding the use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds from the North Carolina Department Commerce and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for permitted uses on Tuesday, May 15, 2018 at 7:00 P.M. with the meeting to immediately follow. The motion was seconded by Commissioner David Gambill and unanimously approved.

ADJOURN – Motion was made by Commissioner Greg Minton, seconded by Commissioner David Gambill and by unanimous vote adopted to adjourn the meeting of the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners at 7:08 P. M.

Sarah D. Call, Clerk

Gary D. Blevins, Chairman

WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Approved: