

MINUTES
WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
May 16, 2023

PUBLIC HEARING – 2023-2024 PROPOSED WILKES COUNTY BUDGET – Chairman Keith Elmore declared the Public Hearing open concerning the 2023-2024 proposed Wilkes County Budget at 5:00 P.M. on Tuesday, May 16, 2023 with the following members present: Chairman Keith Elmore, Vice Chairman Stoney Greene, Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson, Commissioner Bill Sexton, and Commissioner Greg Minton.

Also present for the meeting were Tony Triplett, County Attorney; John Yates, County Manager; Chris Huffman, Finance Director; Brooke Felts, Assistant County Attorney; and Sarah Call, Clerk to the Board.

Public Notice for the Public Hearing was published in the Wilkes-Journal Patriot on May 11, 2023 and posted on the County bulletin board outside the meeting location and on the County website. The Public Notice is attached and made a part of these minutes.

Chairman Keith Elmore recognized the following individuals who addressed the Board:

SUZANNE MOORE AND ARNOLD LAKEY – LIBRARY BUDGET – Ms. Moore began by thanking “*the Board for allowing them to speak on behalf of the Library and the budget request for this year. I gave the Board a copy of our budget history for the last 5 years, but I have only been in Wilkes since 2021. There was a time before I got here where they started with a 3-year pay scale increase from a study they did to get them to the minimum comparable with libraries around the state. The first two years were funded great and then we hit COVID, we have been trying to recover from that since This year the proposed increase is less than what we were hoping for. The operational expense for the Library has also increased and part of the budget covers the cost of those items to take care of the building including rent at the Branch Library, which has gone up considerably. Another \$50 a month does not seem like a lot, but is a proposed increase of 7.15% over the year. Water treatment, cleaning, and elevator expenses have all increased and we’re not sure how much the other utilities will affect us. We are looking at a good increase in operational expenses and hoping you will consider funding the requested amount. This will be an additional \$22,800 to keep them from having to dip into fund balance. This is there to cover our shortfalls, but if we have to keep dipping into it on a regular yearly basis, it will dwindle down and we won’t have it if we need it for an emergency*”.

Mr. Lakey stated “*one example is the cleaning bill went up January 1st and \$638 had to be taken out of this year’s funds for this, that is \$1,260 a year. I understand the situation you are in, but would like for you to give them consideration and make the proposed a little more adjustable if possible*”.

Mr. Bill Davis asked to speak at this time and said “*I have been on this Board 10 years thanks to the Board of Commissioners that appointed me. I have served on various boards and they have*

all been good and I have not saw one that operates any more leanly. They are just as lean as they can be and won't give me a cup of coffee unless I buy it. They are not stingy, but they try to do things like they are supposed to. It concerns me a lot, they are a County Library, they pay for their salaries over there. When the county gives a raise like 5% or whatever you are considering this year our people there may not get that. We are proposing to give 6.5%, last year they had to draw out \$30K from the fund balance to give a raise because it was just not in there. We are the biggest Library in the 3 counties and according to meet what is expected of us and what was promised of us, several years back there was some misunderstanding on both sides. Wilkes has failed in the eyes of others to do their part, I say that is debatable, but the money hasn't been there and we are the biggest. This budget presented to you is very reasonable. I would not know how to cut anything out or what is less important than what you see there. I do say you have lots of people here begging today or whenever, but I do say I can't imagine anything that is needed or requested that doesn't have the backup to show it is a reasonable thing for you to do".

Chairman Elmore said they stated that Wilkes County has not stepped up on funding of the three counties; Wilkes, Watauga and Ashe how do they compare? According to the last numbers they saw, Wilkes was the top funder of the Regional Library. Ms. Moore replied in reference to the pay scale increase that was promised 5 years ago, with inflation and over time it is even less of a good thing than it was, but it would help. She added last year the other two counties funded their budget and in order for them to get the same increase for their employee raises that Watauga and Ashe did, they had to supplement their budget with fund balance. Chairman Elmore asked if they could get the numbers so they can compare them. Mr. Moore replied she can send them by email. Mr. Lakey said the Interim Director who is the Finance person stated yesterday that this year Watauga has agreed to fund the request made, but he doesn't know what those dollars are. He added since they are the biggest, the budget is probably the biggest of the three. Ms. Moore stated in Ashe County they do not have to budget for building expenses, the County takes care of maintenance, utilities and such. Chairman Elmore asked doesn't Wilkes take care of their building? Mr. Yates replied yes all of the repairs. Ms. Moore replied yes the repairs, but not the electric, cleaning, and all of that. They appreciate all the County does, thank you.

Mr. Davis stated the Wilkes Library is larger than the others and the budget is larger and it draws extra state money for the library, you can't compare the three in total dollars. They have to look at several aspects. The employees are not getting what they need because they are county employees and the pay needs to be equal to others or similar jobs. It would help the morale and they need the money, which is why they are here today. Mr. Davis said *"what is planned is 3% and they were hoping for 6.5% and that means with all likelihood they will be into their fund balance again this year. If they can help, they appreciate it."*

Chairman Elmore and the Board thanked them for their comments and the good job they do.

SHERIFF CHRIS SHEW – SHERIFF BUDGET – Sheriff Shew stated *"they can all relax this is nothing that ½ million dollars won't fix. The budget was cut in capital outlay for cars and you gave me 2 more positions for SRO's, we did not think about the equipment and cars. Of course, it was in there but they cut and will have to do without 2 cars. I would rather not keep 2 cars they were going to turn in with high mileage and the shape they are in. I would ask you to*

reconsider and place that back into capital outlay". Chairman Elmore said the 2 new SRO's are in the budget and asked if the schools determine where the SRO's are placed. Sheriff Shew replied no they do not "I have them in every high school and two at Wilkes Central due to the number of students. The two elementary schools that the two new ones are because of the number of students and high number of calls for service they receive, which are Millers Creek with 800+ students and Mulberry, the call volume has increased significantly". Chairman Elmore asked how many SRO's will they now have. Sheriff Shew replied " this will give them 16 SRO's at 4 middle schools, 4 high schools, 1 more at Wilkes Central, 2 new ones, Supervisor and rovers. The rovers visit the other elementary schools and take care of things in case of sickness or something". Chairman Elmore said it takes a special officer with special training to be an SRO. Sheriff Shew agreed and added " they do not put new officers at schools, they have to meet a certain criterion before they can become an SRO".

"I would like to bring to your attention about retaining the officers I have. When I lose an officer, and we have lost several, I hire someone new that does not have previous law enforcement experience. You're talking about 2 years before the new officer is able to function and do what we need him to do, maybe 1 ½ years if they are an exceptional officer. It is a lot to take in the size of this county, the current laws that are changing because of legislation, and different things. Of course, our job is getting more difficult every day, you would not believe the number of calls we get to go out because parents can't discipline their children because they are afraid to. We get calls to go out and intervene between parents and 6-7 year olds, we get calls because my neighbor has moved over the line and I can't settle it on my own, sticks are in my driveway and one thing after another every day. I put in place two more steps to help with retention once an officer gets to around the 10-12-year mark, you can pretty much count on them to stay. Right now, it is built in for 7 years, I put this in with a total cost of around \$300,000 to bring everybody up. This only brings them up to year 12 year being in service. It doesn't do anything for the ones that have been there including Majors and Chief Deputy; they don't get anything out of this. It is built in for deputies to be able to enhance their career and live off their retirement. I have one officer with 21 years and his current pay is \$47K, so the other 2 steps would help with that situation. I lose them to competitors, the Highway Patrol they can get a raise, better benefits, do less work, and the demands are not as much. I ask that you look at that and keep it in mind and what it does to lose an officer with 5-7 years to try to get someone to put in those positions. I am doing what you elected me to do, I look after them so they can look after you".

Chairman Elmore said the Board certainly appreciates what he and all his employees do.

ROB BALDWIN AND CHARLIE SINK – SOIL AND WATER BUDGET – Chairman Elmore stated Charlie Sink is Vice Chair and was on the Board of Commissioners for several years. Mr. Sink stated *"I would like to brag on this crowd our Soil & Water group is ranked the number one group in the state, efficient, they get the job done and spend the money. Most of the time they are able to get reallocations to provide extra service to our farmers, they work very hard. Also, this year Barry Greer was named State Soil & Water Conservation Employee of the Year; Kayla got an award for the drone stuff she does; Julia Hardy Education Specialist was also recognized at the State convention. We have folks on the cutting edge of what is going on in*

agriculture, we have a great group that works hard and it has been a pleasure to be involved with this group". Mr. Baldwin thanked them and said "as you can see, I did a quick Soil & Water by the numbers that you just received. Our ask is on the last page at the bottom our current recommended budget from the County Manager is \$616,580. Our requested budget is \$616,580. The only change I would like to ask for is in the line item under appropriations for \$63K to be moved into salaries to create a new position for Stream Debris Coordinator". Chairman Elmore asked if they are asking for the \$63K in the stream rehab grant to be moved to salaries. Mr. Baldwin replied yes and it is reoccurring funds because we had it last year and it is in the budget this year. "I want to move it there for whatever this salary would be after the benefits are added". Chairman Elmore said this is not an increase, just move it, but it is reoccurring and not a one-time expense. Mr. Baldwin replied "yes sir. It was in the budget last year and is in there this year".

Chairman Elmore stated they appreciate them coming and have a lot of faith in them. Mr. Baldwin added they would not ask for this new position if they didn't feel like they really needed it. Mr. Bill Davis added *"they have a lady filling this position now on the streambank removal she is a recent college graduate and has been with them for 6-8 months or so. She is very capable and qualified with the educational background and it is very difficult to get qualified folks. They are blessed to have her. I can't image if we had to go out and replace somebody that would be close to what they have there now. This young lady has aspirations, is local from western Wilkes County, and I think she is somebody that if we can give a permanent posting, she will be a public servant for many years. McKayla is very bright and dedicated and it will be an investment to ensure they can keep her. I hope you will consider this".*

Chairman Elmore and the Board thanked them for their comments.

Chairman Elmore asked if anyone else would like to speak, hearing no comments he declared the Public Hearing closed at 5:25 P. M. on the proposed 2023-2024 Wilkes County Budget.

PUBLIC CONCERNS – None

The Wilkes County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, May 16, 2023 at 5:26 P.M. with the following members present: Chairman Keith Elmore, Vice Chairman Stoney Greene, Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson, Commissioner Bill Sexton, 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 Keith Elmore welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at this time. He stated with the consent of the Board, Item F will be removed from the Agenda as the Amendment is not ready.

INVOCATION – Vice Chairman Stoney Greene led the Invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Chairman Keith Elmore stated he had an opportunity a few months ago to attend a Scout meeting and was very impressed with the way they conducted it

and invited them to come to a Board meeting. They are very fortunate to have people that will work with Scouts and young people like this; teach them the values this Country was founded on, and instill patriotism in these young people. They are blessed to have them here tonight. Chairman Elmore welcomed and recognized Pack 340 and members Noah Johnson from Mulberry Elementary; Taylor Coggin; Weston Sparks; Luke Nelson; and Newton Roark from Roaring River Elementary along with Chase Sparks, Pack Leader and Michael Johnson, Den Leader. Members and Leaders from Pack 340 led the Pledge of Allegiance at this time and recited the Scout Oath.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Motion was made by Vice Chairman Stoney Greene, seconded by Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson and unanimously adopted to approve the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on May 2, 2023.

BUDGET AMENDMENTS/TRANSFERS – Motion was made by Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson to approve Budget Amendment No. 31 (Landfill Enterprise Fund – the Landfill has collected more in tipping fees than budgeted of \$110,000 and request these funds to be used for necessary equipment repairs. Funds are needed in Maintenance and Repair of Equipment for the unexcepted cost of repairs to the Cat 330 and 836K. Capital Equipment needed for purchase of 2 forty yard containers and front load dolly to move dumpsters). The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Stoney Greene and unanimously approved.

JUVENILE CRIME PREVENTION COUNCIL:

1. BOARD REAPPOINTMENTS AND NEW APPOINTMENT – Chairman Elmore recognized Jane Casarez, Chair and Brant Wilkins, Chief Court Counselor. Ms. Casarez said The Wilkes County Juvenile Crime Prevention Council is submitting the following recommendations for approval of a 2-year term for re-appointments and a new appointment to fill the vacancy on their board. She added they are recommending Andrew Warren, as designee Juvenile Defense Attorney, Shelley Brucker as designee for Wilkes County Manager, Jane Casarez as designee Non-Profit, April Marr as designee Wilkes County Schools, Brant Wilkins, Chief Court Counselor, Regina Billings County Commissioner Appointee, Jared Belk as designee Health Department, Casey Millsaps as designee DSS; and David Porter (New Appointment) as designee Mental Health.

Commissioner Greg Minton made a motion to approve the reappointments for Andrew Warren, as designee Juvenile Defense Attorney, Shelley Brucker as designee for Wilkes County Manager, Jane Casarez as designee Non-Profit, April Marr as designee Wilkes County Schools, Brant Wilkins, Chief Court Counselor, Regina Billings County Commissioner Appointee, Jared Belk as designee Health Department, Casey Millsaps as designee DSS; and new appointment for David Porter as designee Mental Health to the JCPC Board for 2-year terms as requested and presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson and unanimously approved.

2. JCPC – FUNDING PLAN CERTIFICATION STANDARDS – Ms. Casarez stated they are requesting approval of the annual plan for 2023. Chairman Elmore asked if this is

state and federal funding and can't be increased. Ms. Casarez replied that is correct, they have great programs and have one of their program providers in attendance tonight if they have any specific questions for him. Commissioner Minton stated he is on the JCPC Board, it is well funded and well managed and they do not have any problems. He has served twice on this Board and they do a very good job.

Commissioner Greg Minton made a motion to approve the Wilkes County Juvenile Crime Prevention Council County Plan for 2023-2024 2022-2023 as presented at tonight's meeting. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Stoney Greene and unanimously approved.

2022 ANNUAL CHILD FATALITY TASK FORCE ANNUAL REPORT – Chairman Elmore welcomed and recognized Lindsey Roberts, Child Fatality Task Force Chair and Rachel Willard, Health Director. Ms. Willard said this is one of the two meetings where they talk about this report; their meetings are in closed session. She added this has been presented to the Board of Health at the April meeting. Ms. Roberts presented the highlights from the report at this time. The full report is below:

*Wilkes County Child Fatality Prevention Team
Annual Report 2022*

General Statutes mandate Child Fatality Prevention Teams in North Carolina. Article 62 outlines the North Carolina Child Fatality Prevention System and the membership of the team. The primary function of the team is to review the records of Wilkes County's child fatalities to identify any system problems or opportunities for preventive actions that could be implemented in Wilkes. A report shall be provided to the Wilkes County Board of Health and Wilkes County Board of Commissioners.

The Director of Nursing, Lindsey Roberts, chaired Wilkes County Child Fatality Prevention Team. 2021 Team members included: Rachel Willard, Health Director; John Blevins, DSS Director; Kevin Brown, Hal Wilson, Cindy Coffey or designated DSS Staff Members; Det. Nancy Graybeal, Law Enforcement Office; Shirl Daemer, Child Abuse Prevention Team; Dr. Donna Cotton, Local School Superintendent; Casey Johnson, DSS Board Member; Tamara Lakey, Guardian ad Litem; Dr. Julie Koch, Health Care Provider; Tim Pennington, Emergency Medical Services; Rob Macaluso, Mental Health professional; Jason McGuire, District Attorney's office designee; Jason Reavis, County Medical Examiner; Judi Mitchell, Representative of Local Head Start (BROC); Melody Haddad, parent representative; Denise Greene, additional appointed member; vacant position, District Court Judge. The team's charge is to review child fatalities in Wilkes County, other than those that are reviewed by the Community Child Protection Team intensive review. The team works to assess all child deaths through the multidisciplinary system established above. The team has the following goals:

- *Involve diverse agencies and disciplines – orient, inform and involve professionals who serve children.*
- *Collect data – collect uniform, retrievable data for all child deaths.*
- *Share results – link child death patterns and trends with agencies and groups that can create and support strategies to prevent child deaths – identify system problems and make recommendations.*
- *Act to prevent child deaths – launch state and local action to prevent child deaths.*
- *Reduce the number and rate of child deaths.*

In 2022, the team met 4 times and reviewed 7 child fatalities, the number reviewed in 2021 was 12. The deaths are not necessarily reviewed in the year they occur due to time lapse for autopsy or other administrative factors.

One death was due to a perinatal condition, two were unspecified causes, one was related to cardiomyopathy, three had a birth defect. There were no trends noted in the cases that were reviewed in 2022. We did have a Safe Sleep recommendation. This recommendation was also received in year 2021. We continue to offer safe sleep classes and provide a safe sleep area to families in Wilkes County.

No systems problems were identified. We have enjoyed improved communication between agencies through team meetings. The death reviews that take place in the team meetings that are confidential. The team is looking for trends or opportunities to improve systems to prevent child deaths as a community, thus the discussions that take place help to break down barriers between agencies that might otherwise limit open discussion.

The Child Fatality Prevention Team has requested that this report be forwarded to the Wilkes County Board of Health and the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners.

This report is respectfully submitted by _____.
Rachel Willard, MSPH

Health Director

Chairman Elmore and the Board thanked Ms. Roberts and Ms. Willard for the report.

TAX DEPARTMENT:

1. 2023 APPOINTMENTS TO THE WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF EQUALIZATION AND REVIEW – Mr. Lankford stated the Commissioners have the right to appoint a special Board to oversee appeals that come in for property values and make decisions on those appeals. These do not come to the Commissioners; this Board handles them instead. Commissioner Minton asked how often does this Board meet. Mr. Lankford replied they meet every year, but they had a special session last year in December due to a court case, but this is not typical. He added normally they finish no later than September, the first meeting this year will be soon. In a non-reval year they usually do not have a lot of appeals, they should only have 3-4 total meetings this year. Mr. Lankford said 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 now time to appoint members to the Board for the 2023 tax year which are: Commissioner Greg Minton, Ronnie Walsh, Carmen James, Andrew Casey, Janie Cheek and alternate Steve Crysel have all agreed to serve if that is the Board's desire.

Mr. Lankford said they typically have a 5-member Board and need 3 for a quorum. Chairman Elmore asked if all of these are reappointments. Mr. Lankford replied all expect for Ronnie Walsh, he was an alternate last year, but this year Steve Crysel will be the alternate. He added Commissioner Settle was on the Board last year and Commissioner Minton is taking his place this year. Chairman Elmore added Mr. Walsh served years ago. Mr. Lankford replied yes he did, this is a very experienced Board that have been doing this for some time.

Commissioner Bill Sexton made a motion to appoint Commissioner Greg Minton, Ronnie Walsh, Carmen James, Andrew Casey, Janie Cheek and alternate Steve Crysel to the 2023

Wilkes County Board of Equalization and Review, as presented at tonight's meeting. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Stoney Greene and unanimously approved.

2. TAX RELEASES – LISTINGS – Mr. Lankford asked the Board to approve 33 tax releases for listings in the amount of \$11,098.86 which covers almost two months from April to mid-May. These will be added to the prior total for the fiscal year of \$86,695.12, for a total year to date of \$97,793.98.

Vice Chairman Stoney Greene made a motion to approve the tax releases for listings in the amount of \$11,098.86 as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson and was unanimously approved.

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

PLANNING DEPARTMENT:

1. REQUEST FOR PUBLIC HEARING – REZONING REQUEST – 230 LARKINS LITTLE MTN. ROAD, FERGUSON TOWNSHIP – Planning Director W. C. Scroggs said at its regular meeting of April 24, 2023, the Wilkes Joint Planning Board approved a re-zoning request filed by Lowell Dean and Sue B. Parker for property owned by them in Ferguson Township, Wilkes County, North Carolina, located at 230 Larkins Little Mtn Rd, Boomer, NC 28606. The property in question consists of 7.5 acres, more or less, being identified on the records of the Wilkes County Tax Mapping Office as Parcel ID #0200003 and being more fully described in that Deed recorded in Book 1222, Page 306, Wilkes County Registry. Mr. and Mrs. Parker have requested that this tract be re-zoned from its current classification of H-B (Highway Business) to R-20A (Residential). The Planning Board found that this tract, on which a residence has been located since 1979, has for unknown reasons been zoned H-B, despite the fact that the tract has been continuously used for residential purposes. The Planning Board also found that property directly across from this tract on the north side of N.C. Highway 268 is also zoned R-20A, and that the general character and use of property adjoining N.C. Highway 268 in this area is residential in nature.

Mr. Scroggs stated for the above stated reasons, the Planning Board recommends that the above described tract which is presently zoned H-B be re-zoned from H-B to R-20A. The Planning Board further finds and advises, pursuant to G.S. §160D-604, that although Wilkes County has not officially adopted a comprehensive zoning plan, the proposed re-zoning in this case is consistent with the current and historical use of the subject property, is consistent with other zoning requirements currently in place in the area affected by the re-zoning and with the existing uses of properties in the surrounding area and district, and is consistent with the goals and purposes of the Wilkes County Zoning Ordinance. Accordingly, the Planning Board recommends that this matter be set for public hearing and that the proposed re-zoning be approved. Chairman Elmore asked if this affects the neighbor's property surrounding this property or just this one. Mr. Scroggs replied no. Mr. Triplett added it only affects this one parcel.

Vice Chairman Stoney Greene made a motion to set a Public Hearing on Tuesday, June 20, 2023, at 5:00 P.M. regarding the Rezoning Request as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bill Sexton and unanimously approved.

2. REQUEST FOR PUBLIC HEARING – REZONING REQUEST – 165 LARKINS LITTLE MTN. ROAD, FERGUSON TOWNSHIP – Planning Director W. C. Scroggs stated at its regular meeting of April 24, 2023, the Wilkes Joint Planning Board approved a re-zoning request filed by the Estate of Ina H. Earp by Linda Earl McClure - Administrator for property owned by it in Ferguson Township, Wilkes County, North Carolina, located at 165 Larkins Little Mtn Rd, Boomer, NC 28606. The property in question consists of 31.84 acres, more or less, being identified on the records of the Wilkes County Tax Mapping Office as Parcel ID #0200005 and being more fully described in that Deed recorded in Book 254, Page 165, Wilkes County Registry. Ms. McClure has requested that a portion of this tract be re-zoned from its current classification of H-B (Highway Business) and R-20A (Residential) to R-20A (Residential). The other portion of the tract not made subject to this request is currently zoned R-20A (Residential). The Planning Board found that this tract, on which a residence has been located since 1930, has for unknown reasons been partially zoned H-B, despite the fact that the tract has been continuously used for residential purposes since before the zoning was adopted. The Planning Board also found that this tract is adjoined on the north, northeast, and northwest by a district already zoned R-20A, that property directly across from this tract on the north side of N.C. Highway 268 is also zoned R-20A, and that the general character and use of property adjoining N.C. Highway 268 in this area is residential in nature.

Mr. Scroggs said for the above stated reasons, the Planning Board recommends that all of that portion of the above described tract which is presently zoned H-B be re-zoned from H-B to R-20A. The Planning Board further finds and advises, pursuant to G.S. §160D-604, that although Wilkes County has not officially adopted a comprehensive zoning plan, the proposed re-zoning in this case is consistent with the current and historical use of the subject property, is consistent with other zoning requirements currently in place in the area affected by the re-zoning and with the existing uses of properties in the surrounding area and district, and is consistent with the goals and purposes of the Wilkes County Zoning Ordinance. Accordingly, the Planning Board recommends that this matter be set for public hearing and that the proposed re-zoning be approved. Chairman Elmore asked if the neighbors have been informed about these requests for both. Mr. Triplett replied after the Board sets the public hearing, they will follow up on the requirements, it will go in the newspaper, and Mr. Scroggs will post the property with a sign as well.

Vice Chairman Stoney Greene made a motion to set a Public Hearing on Tuesday, June 20, 2023, at 5:00 P.M. immediately following the first Public Hearing with the Board Meeting to immediately follow regarding the Rezoning Request as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson and unanimously approved.

Mr. Triplett said he would like to remind the Board as mentioned several times they will be coming before them with revised Planning Ordinances to conform with Chapter 160D. This is the new Planning Chapter of the General Statutes and is referred to on both statements that Ms.

Felts drafted and Mr. Scroggs just presented. They will be forced to re-assess all the Ordinances and they are going by chapter 160D now because they have to. He added this is why these notices reference 160D and they will be bringing the revised ordinances before the Board as soon as they can get to this point. Chairman Elmore asked when did this go into effect. Mr. Triplett replied Chapter 160D went into effect in 2021 and in 2022 they started going by them. There was no deadline to re-do the Ordinances, they just have to go by the requirements no matter what their Ordinances say. They will need to be updated and the first thing they have to bring is a new Interlocal Agreement that forms a new Joint Planning Board for Wilkes County and the Towns of Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro. This is the actual basis for the enforcement of the Planning Ordinances. Mr. Triplett said there will not be any changes and they will keep the same structure they have now if the Board wants to, it just has to be in a new Interlocal Agreement that all three Boards must approve.

Chairman Elmore asked how many members does each approve on this Board. Mr. Triplett replied each Town appoints two and the County appoints eight. Chairman Elmore asked what about the Town of Ronda. Mr. Triplett replied they were not part of the original Planning Board and they adopted a Resolution authorizing the County to enforce our Planning Ordinances in their Town jurisdiction. They have asked the County to do this for them and the County does.

WILKES COMMUNITY COLLEGE – BOARD OF TRUSTEE – APPOINTMENT – County Manager John Yates stated the County received a letter from Dr. Jeff Cox that stated *“Dear John as we approach the time of year for appointment/reappointments of community college board of trustees, please be notified that Bill Davis’ term will be expiring June 30, 2023. Bill has indicated that he will not seek reappointment to the board of trustees. With his 12 years of service, Bill had been an invaluable and active member of the board. He has served with great dedication and has provided vital input as a board member and Building and Grounds Committee member. Therefore, we need to request that a replacement for Bill be chosen to serve on the Board of Trustees for Wilkes Community College. Please advise us at your earliest convenience. Sincerely Jeff Cox”* Chairman Elmore said they have a candidate that seems very qualified, currently serving a third 4-year term as Trustee for Wake Forest University and does have experience as a Trustee.

Vice Chairman Stoney Greene made a motion to appoint Mr. Shelmer Blackburn, Jr. to fill the vacancy of Mr. Bill Davis to the Wilkes Community College Board of Trustees for a 4-year term 2023-2027 as presented at tonight’s meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bill Sexton and unanimously approved.

EMS – MILLERS CREEK VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT – LEASE AGREEMENT – Assistant County Attorney Brooke Felts said for consideration this evening is a lease. She added a year ago, EMS did upfits at the Millers Creek Volunteer Fire Department and converted a section of the facility for another EMS base. The lease provides coverage while they are there. Ms. Felts said the rent this year through the end of the fifth year is \$500, it contains one renewal of 5 more years and the rent will be \$700. She and Mr. Pennington are happy to answer any questions the Board may have. Chairman Elmore stated this is great, anytime they can partner with a Fire Department it is the best way to do this. Mr. Pennington

said this was Millers Creek's idea; they had space. EMS added a small living room space and it is very beneficial for them on response time and serves that community well. Chairman Elmore said moving forward he would like to see more of this. Vice Chairman Greene added the citizens on that side of town sure appreciate having this.

Vice Chairman Stoney Greene made a motion to approve the Lease Agreement with Wilkes County and the Millers Creek Volunteer Fire Department for Wilkes County EMS as presented at tonight's meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bill Sexton and unanimously approved.

FOURTH REVISED GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE FOR THE COUNTY OF WILKES CORONAVIRUS STATE AND LOCAL FISCAL RECOVERY FUNDS – Ms. Felts stated before the Board for consideration is the fourth revision of the Grant Project Ordinance. She added about a year ago she made a mistake and they have been allocating \$70 too much in the ARPA funds. They had the funds at \$13,288,299.00, but they only have \$13,288,229.00 and just need to change this number for their audit; that is all this does.

Commissioner Greg Minton made a motion to approve the Fourth Revised Grant Project Ordinance for the County of Wilkes Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds as presented at tonight's meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson and unanimously approved.

*FOURTH REVISED GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE FOR THE COUNTY OF WILKES
CORONAVIRUS STATE AND LOCAL FISCAL RECOVERY FUNDS*

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

WHEREAS the County of Wilkes adopted the Grant Project Ordinance for the County of Wilkes: Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund under date of November 16th, 2021; and

WHEREAS the County of Wilkes adopted the Revised Grant Project Ordinance for the County of Wilkes: Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund under date of June 21st, 2022; and

WHEREAS the County of Wilkes adopted the Second Revised Grant Project Ordinance for the County of Wilkes: Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund under date of October 4th, 2022; and

WHEREAS the County of Wilkes adopted the Third Revised Grant Project Ordinance for the County of Wilkes: Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund under date of February 21st, 2023; and

WHEREAS the County of Wilkes desires to revise the same, amending the allocations set forth therein; and

WHEREAS this Revised Grant Project Ordinance for the County of Wilkes: Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds is adopted for the purpose of affecting said revisions; and

NOW, THEREFORE the County of Wilkes hereby adopts the following Revised Grant Project Ordinance for the County of Wilkes: Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds.

Section 1: This ordinance is to establish a budget for a project to be funded by the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds of H.R. 1319 American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (CSLRF). The County of Wilkes has received the first tranche in the amount of \$6,644,114.50 of CSLRF funds and the second tranche in the amount of \$6,644,114.50. The total allocation is \$13,288,229. These funds may be used for the following categories of expenditures, to the extent authorized by state law:

- 1. Support public health expenditures, by funding COVID-19 mitigation efforts, medical expenses, behavioral healthcare, and certain public health and safety staff;*
- 2. Address negative economic impacts caused by the public health emergency, including economic harms to workers, households, small businesses, impacted industries, and the public sector;*
- 3. Replace lost public sector revenue, using this funding to provide government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue experienced due to the pandemic;*
- 4. Provide premium pay for essential workers, offering additional support to those who have borne and will bear the greatest health risks because of their service in critical infrastructure sectors; and,*
- 5. Invest in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure, making necessary investments to improve access to clean drinking water, support vital wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, and to expand access to broadband internet.*

Section 2: The following amounts are appropriated for the project and authorized for expenditure:

<i>INTERNAL CODE:</i>	<i>PROJECT TITLE:</i>	<i>ARPA FUNDS:</i>	<i>COUNTY FUNDS:</i>	<i>PROJECT DESCRIPTION:</i>
<i>ARPA 1</i>	<i>Vaccine Incentive Program</i>	<i>\$288,933</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>The Wilkes County Board of Commissioners is dedicated to creating a safe workplace environment and to achieving herd-immunity in the county. To that end, the County of Wilkes is implementing a program that will reward employees who have already chosen to become vaccinated and motivate other employees to do so. This appropriation would fund the vaccine incentive program.</i>
<i>ARPA 2</i>	<i>Rural Community Wastewater Infrastructure Extension</i>	<i>\$3,288,299</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>The Wilkes County Board of Commissioners recognizes that critical infrastructure is lacking in the more rural areas of the county. It is a priority to bring wastewater infrastructure to underserved communities. This will serve current area residents and contribute to eminent growth. This appropriation would fund preliminary engineering for a wastewater infrastructure extension in one rural area of the county as well as the installation of sewer pipes and</i>

				<i>pump stations in another rural area of the county.</i>
ARPA 3	<i>Emergency Services Center / COVID Vaccination Center</i>	<i>\$3,100,000</i>	<i>\$7,000,000</i>	<i>The Wilkes County Board of Commissioners has an indispensable interest in the rapid, prepared deployment of emergency services to county residents. Wilkes County is among the largest counties in North Carolina and as such, strategically locating emergency service facilities throughout the county is vital to rapid response times. This base would also serve as the county's primary COVID-19 vaccination center in the coming years through utilization of the drive-through bay, which will provide shelter for public health and emergency personnel and allow citizens to remain socially distanced in their vehicles. The construction of this facility would be the final phase of the county's ongoing efforts to minimize response times and maximize preparedness. This appropriation would fund between one-third and one-fourth of the Emergency Services Center, which would be used as the county's COVID-19 Vaccination Center during ongoing and future COVID-19 mitigation efforts.</i>
ARPA 4	<i>Emergency Response Vehicles & Training Facility</i>	<i>\$1,600,000</i>	<i>\$1,000,000</i>	<i>The Wilkes County Board of Commissioners has a vital interest in ensuring that citizens have access to reliable emergency services. Due to the geographic layout and size of the county, emergency response vehicles rapidly accrue mileage. Additionally, EMS and public safety officers need more vehicles in rotation to allow for adequate cleaning and quarantine time between COVID-19 cases. It is critically important to maintain a fully-functional fleet of uncontaminated emergency response vehicles. Furthermore, since many of the county's EMS personnel are also volunteer firefighters, the county intends to construct a "Burn Building" in an effort to provide them additional training opportunities and to boost their morale/mental health during these unprecedented times. The "Burn Building" will be a facility where firefighters can harness their skills and it will ultimately</i>

				<i>provide citizens with better emergency services. This appropriation would fund the procurement of two (2) ambulances and ten (10) public safety vehicles as well as the construction of one (1) "Burn Building."</i>
ARPA 5	<i>North Carolina Parks & Recreation Trust Fund Project – River's Edge</i>	<i>\$571,194</i>	<i>\$191,194</i>	<i>The Wilkes County Board of Commissioners is dedicated to providing access to recreational activities for citizens at the River's Edge Park. This allocation will fund the construction of recreational facilities and thereby ensure that citizens of the county as well as visitors, coaches, parents, and children have access to recreational facilities at one of the area's most popular locations for outdoor recreation.</i>
ARPA 6	<i>Salaries & Benefits</i>	<i>\$4,439,803</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>The Wilkes County Board of Commissioners has a vital interest in ensuring public safety through the provision of law enforcement services. This allocation will help pay for a portion of the salaries and benefits of personnel in the Wilkes County Sheriff's Department.</i>

Section 3: The following revenues are anticipated to be available to complete the project:

<i>CSLRF Funds</i>	<i>\$13,288,229</i>
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Section 4: The Finance Officer is hereby directed to maintain sufficient specific detailed accounting records to satisfy the requirements of the grantor agency and the grant agreements.

Section 5: The Finance Officer is hereby directed to report the financial status of the project to the governing board on a quarterly basis.

Section 6: Copies of this grant project ordinance shall be furnished to the Finance Officer and to the Clerk to the Board.

Section 7: This grant project ordinance expires on December 31, 2026, or when all the CSLRF funds have been obligated and expended by the County, whichever occurs sooner.

This the 16th day of May, 2023.

WILKES COUNTY

By: _____

*Giddeon Keith Elmore, Chairman
 Wilkes County Board of Commissioners*

ATTEST:

Sarah D. Call, Clerk

WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS – SCHEDULED BUDGET WORK SESSION – Chairman Elmore asked the Board if they would like to set another Budget work session.

Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson made a motion to set a Budget Work Session for Wednesday, May 31, 2023 at 3:30 P.M. in the Commissioners’ Meeting Room located at the Wilkes County Office Building, 110 North Street Wilkesboro, N.C. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Stoney Greene and unanimously approved.

The work session is open to the public.

OLD BUSINESS – Mr. Yates said they picked up Byrd Ridge Road to Sparta Road 1.7 miles; and Cedar Forest Road to Elkin Highway 4.8 miles; total 6.5 miles and 21 tons of garbage was picked up. Chairman Elmore asked how are they paying for this, is it in the budget. Mr. Yates replied contractual services and yes they had this in the budget, they don’t have all funds they need to pick up all the trash, but this will help. He added the State picked up Hwy 421 and was going to also pick up Speedway Road. Chairman Elmore said it looks good. Mr. Yates agreed.

Commissioner Sexton added when the litter committee was meeting they discussed maybe next year could they take a portion of the tipping fees and set aside for this. It seems they are going to have to pay for this it does not seem anything will change with the State on this. Chairman Elmore replied that sounds good, but if they do this the State will not help. Commissioner Sexton added their other suggestion was to add a \$7.00 tax on everyone and that would not go over well and he is not recommending this.

Vice Chairman Greene said Mr. Scroggs has been putting up litter signs in the County recently. Mr. Scroggs replied they purchased 20 signs and are putting them up across the County and will have them in all quadrants soon. Vice Chairman Greene added it did not go unnoticed. Mr. Scroggs thanked the Board. Mr. Yates stated Mr. Scroggs came to him and asked to do this and had 20 signs made and Mr. Hal Cooper is putting them up, every little bit helps.

ADJOURN – Motion was made by Vice Chairman Stoney Greene, seconded by Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson and by unanimous vote adopted to adjourn the meeting of the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners at 6:14 P.M.

Sarah D. Call, Clerk

Gideon Keith Elmore, Chairman

WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Approved: June 6, 2023