

**MINUTES
WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
May 18, 2021**

PUBLIC HEARING – PROPOSED ECONOMIC INVESTMENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN WILKES COUNTY AND PROJECT FLOW – Chairman Eddie Settle declared the Public Hearing open regarding the proposed Economic Investment Agreement between Wilkes County and Project Flow at 5:53 P.M. on Tuesday, May 18, 2021 with the following members present: Chairman Eddie Settle, Vice Chairman Brian S. Minton, Commissioner Keith Elmore, Commissioner David Gambill, and Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson.

Also present were Tony Triplett, County Attorney; John Yates, County Manager; Lee Ann Nixon, EDC President; and Sarah Call, Clerk to the Board.

Chairman Settle stated this matter isn't yet ready for a Public Hearing and the Board will be voting during the regular meeting to continue the Public Hearing until July 1, 2021. Chairman Settle declared the Public Hearing closed at 5:54 P.M.

PUBLIC CONCERNS – KEVIN REECE – WILKES COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE – Mr. Reece thanked the Board. He stated he is before the Board tonight as a citizen, taxpayer and Commissioner for Ronda. They have a great County and have a great Sheriff's Office. Mr. Reece said positive police influence when he was young changed him and help to make him what he is today. He stated new Deputy's pay is too low and needs to be increased to get more great officers. Mr. Reece added he would like to see the county put more in the budget to offer new officers more money and this is why he is here tonight. In closing, Mr. Reece said they have lost officers recently, there are vacancies that are hard to fill. They need them so when folks call and need help there is someone to go. He thanked the Board for their time and opportunity to speak.

The Board thanked Mr. Reece for attending and speaking.

PUBLIC CONCERNS – RICK HARVIN – LIBRARY – Mr. Harvin thanked the Board. He stated he is here to speak about the Library and not pulling out of the ARL System. Mr. Harvin said Wilkes is part of a Region including Watauga and Ashe and they do a great job. He explained all the extra benefits that come from being in a region. He explained and discussed item counts for items checked out of each library branch in the region. Mr. Harvin briefly discussed transit items that come from all over the state as well as the NC Cardinal System and benefits of both. In closing he stated it is not a good idea for the county to run the Library and added a quote "He cannot live without books". Mr. Harvin stated he wants the larger selection that ARL gives him, they have operated for 59 years, and thanks them for forming a Committee to look for ways to improve the Library.

The Board thanked Mr. Harvin for attending and speaking.

The Wilkes County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, May 18, 2021 at 6:03 P.M. with the following members present: Chairman Eddie Settle, Vice Chairman Brian S. Minton, Commissioner Keith Elmore, Commissioner David Gambill, and Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson.

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 stated with the consensus of the Board they will remove Item M. Project Flow Investment Agreement which will be moved to July 1, 2021.

INVOCATION – Commissioner David Gambill led the Invocation.

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

LIBRARY RESEARCH COMMITTEE – APPOINTMENTS – Chairman Settle recognized Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson. Commissioner Johnson stated he would like to thank Chairman Settle and the Board of Commissioners for the opportunity to Chair the Library Research Committee. They had many worthy applicants who would be tremendous on this committee, but they had to limit the number of members as they do on all they appoint. While only ten were chosen, all other applicants and citizens are welcome to attend the meetings which are always open to the public. He added they are happy to accept input and/or suggestions and only ask that folks please provide them to any one of the committee members or himself. Commissioner Johnson stated he looks forward to collaborating with the Library Research Committee as they study, research, and learn about the different options available for the Wilkes County Library and expects great suggestions and information to come from this committee. He added their goal is to report back to the Board of Commissioners by March 2022 with the findings from their research.

Below is the Library Research Committee Members presented to the Commissioners for consideration:

Beth Tharrington
Dr. Bill Davis
Joe Noble
Heather Tedder
Dr. Susan Blackburn
Dr. Donna Cotton
Deborah Britton
Tracy Romans
Crystal Blackburn
Arnold Lakey
Casey Joe Johnson

Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson made a motion to select these individuals to the Library Research Committee with the goal to report back to the Board of Commissioners by March 2022 with the findings from their research as presented at tonight's meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner David Gambill and unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Motion was made by Commissioner Keith Elmore, seconded by Vice Chairman Brian S. Minton and unanimously adopted to approve the Minutes of the Special Called Meeting held on May 3, 2021.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Motion was made by Vice Chairman Brian S. Minton, seconded by Commissioner Keith Elmore and unanimously adopted to approve the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on May 4, 2021.

BLUE RIDGE OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION (BROC) – ANNUAL APPOINTMENTS WILKES AGING ADVISORY COMMITTEE – Chairman Settle recognized Jennifer Cooper, Director Senior Nutrition Services. Ms. Cooper stated the Board has a list of the nominees for the Wilkes Aging Advisory Committee. All of the individuals are the same as last year with the execution of the new Director of Wilkes Senior Resources, Ms. Elizabeth Oakley. Ms. Cooper said this list was presented and approved by the BROC Board of Directors on May 13th and she is asking for this Board's approval of the nominees at this time.

Below is the list of the FY 2021-2022 Wilkes County Aging Advisory Committee Members presented to the Commissioners for consideration:

- Ms. Jennifer Cooper, Lead Agency Director
- Ms. Nicole Hiegl, Director Area Agency on Aging, HCCOG
- Ms. Elizabeth Oakley, Director, Wilkes Senior Resources
- Ms. Jennifer Snider, Director, RPB Adult Day Care Center
- Mr. Kenneth Foster, Wilkes Senior Tar Heel Legislature Delegate
- Mr. Ormond Loomis, Wilkes Senior Tar Heel Legislature Alternate
- Ms. Karen Hallman, Community Alternative Program
- Ms. Lynn Andrews, BROC Senior Nutrition Services
- Mr. Eddie Settle, Wilkes County Board of Commissioners
- Mr. Dave Snyder, Volunteer, Meals on Wheels of Wilkes
- Ms. Mary Edna Faw
- Ms. Gayle Benton
- Ms. Allison T. Brown
- Mr. Matthew Reece, Executive Director, Rose Glen Village
- Ms. Debbie Wellborn, Director, Appalachian Senior Programs

Commissioner David Gambill made a motion to approve the Annual Appointments of the Wilkes Aging Advisory Committee for FY 2021-2022, as presented. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Brian S. Minton and unanimously approved.

WILKES COUNTY CHILD FATALITY PREVENTION TEAM ANNUAL REPORT 2020

– Chairman Settle welcomed Rachel Willard, Wilkes County Health Director and Lindsey Roberts, Community Health Service Director and Child Fatality Task Force Chair. Ms. Willard thanked the Board and added N.C.G.S. requires they review all deaths of children age 0-18. They have a multi-disciplinary team and present this at two opening meetings. This one tonight and also to the Board of Health at their April meeting.

Ms. Roberts said she is presenting the 2020 Child Fatality Report and presented highlights from the report at this time. The full report is below:

*Wilkes County Child Fatality Prevention Team
Annual Report 2020*

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 Community Health Services Director, Lindsey Roberts, chaired Wilkes County Child Fatality Prevention Team. 2020 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; Brian Minton, 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 2020, the team met 4 times and reviewed 4 child fatalities, the number reviewed in 2019 was seven. The deaths are not necessarily reviewed in the year they occur due to time lapse for autopsy or other administrative factors. 2 deaths were due to car accidents, one was due to a perinatal condition and one was due to a birth defect. One death still remains on hold. There were no trends noted in the cases that were reviewed in 2020, nor were there any recommendations for policy or system process changes in Wilkes County. Dr. Julie Koch provided education to members on medical diagnosis, terminology and results.

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 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

PUBLIC MEETINGS

a. FREQUENCY - Each local CFPT will schedule at least two public meetings annually, one presentation to the County Commissioners and one presentation to the board of health, according to state statute (G.S. 7B-1408.1.2 and G.S. 7B-1410.4).

b. AGENDA - The following shall be included in public meeting agenda items: Information about the local CFPT (including purposes, composition, confidentiality guidelines, access to records, statutory basis, frequency of meetings), information about child deaths in the county/state (number, causes, ages), number of deaths reviewed by the CFPT, system problems identified, recommendations, and action taken. No identifying information about individual child deaths may be addressed, including names, addresses, dates, or circumstances.

c. WRITTEN REPORTS - The local CFPT may release written reports including the information named in Procedure 8(b) above. No identifying information about individual child deaths may be released, including names, addresses, dates, or circumstances.

The Board thanked Ms. Roberts and Ms. Willard for the annual report.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT – REQUEST TO SET PUBLIC HEARING – ROAD NAME REQUEST – WOODLAND SKY DRIVE – TRAPHILL TOWNSHIP – Chairman Settle recognized W.C. Scroggs, Planner. Mr. Scroggs asked the Board of Commissioners to set a Public Hearing on a Road Name Request received by petition to the Planning Department. He stated the Road Name Request is for Woodland Sky Drive off Mining Ridge Church Road (SR 1913) in Traphill Township; the request meets the requirements of the Wilkes County Road Naming Ordinance and as required by the Wilkes County Road Naming Ordinance a Public Hearing and a ten day (10) notification period is required.

Commissioner Keith Elmore made a motion to set a Public Hearing on Tuesday, June 15, 2021 at 5:55 P.M. with Pubic Comments and Meeting to immediately follow regarding the Road Name Request as presented. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Brian S. Minton and unanimously approved.

WILKES COMMUNITY COLLEGE – BOARD OF TRUSTEES – REAPPOINTMENT – Chairman Settle stated the County has received a letter from Jeff Cox, President that Commissioner Keith Elmore’s appointment to the Wilkes Community College Board of Trustees will expire June 30, 2021. He added Commissioner Elmore is very knowledgeable and does a good job and this would be his second 4-year term,.

Commissioner David Gambill made a motion to reappoint Commissioner Keith Elmore to the Wilkes Community College Board of Trustees for a 4-year term, as presented. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Brian S. Minton and unanimously approved.

HIGH COUNTRY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT – BOARD APPOINTMENT – Chairman Settle stated Keith Deveraux, Director of High County Workforce Development Board sent a memorandum to request the Board appoint Jody Call, Technology Officer Wilkes Communications to the High Country Workforce Development Board private sector seat. Mr. Deveraux’s letter stated he will fill the unexpired term of Jim Coleman that will end June 30, 2022.

Motion was made by Commissioner Keith Elmore to appoint Mr. Jody Call to the High County Workforce Development Board as the private sector seat to fill the unexpired term of Jim Coleman that will end June 30, 2022 as requested. The Motion was seconded by Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson and unanimously approved.

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE WILKES COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS – Chairman Settle stated this resolution touches all of them as Mr. Reece mentioned earlier. He added they have a Board member in Law Enforcement and there seems to be a growing disrespect for Law Enforcement throughout the country. The local Law Enforcement in Wilkes is the best and are due way more respect than they get. Chairman Settle added they do not hear of complaints or problems as other counties have. They had a neighboring county that had two deputies killed a few weeks ago that hit close to home. He added this Board wanted to show love, respect, and support with this Resolution. Charmian Settle stated in attendance tonight is Sheriff Shew, Chief McGuire, Chief Thornburg, and Chief Garris as well as many other Law Enforcement Officers in Wilkes County. He added they appreciate all that they do everyday and put their lives on the line, and the sacrifices they make as well as their families. The Wilkes County Board of Commissioners supports all Wilkes County Law Enforcement Officers.

Commissioner Johnson stated he appreciates the Law Enforcement Officers and he sees the SRO Offices at work and appreciate all they do to keep the kids and family safe and prays for God to Bless all of them and keep them safe as they serve. Commissioner Elmore added folks in trouble call them and what more can they say, they are the ones that protects all of us and when someone

needs help they are the ones that come out and put themselves on the line and they appreciate them.

Motion was made by Commissioner David Gambill to adopt the Resolution in Support of the Wilkes County Law Enforcement Officers as presented at tonight's meeting. The Motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Brian S. Minton and unanimously approved.

*A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE
WILKES COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS*

WHEREAS, the men and women of our nation's law enforcement agencies wear their uniforms with honor, dedication, and integrity as they protect and defend the communities they serve; and

WHEREAS, there are approximately 900,000 law enforcement officers serving communities across the nation including the men and women of the Law Enforcement Officers in Wilkes County; and

WHEREAS, since the first recorded line of duty death occurred in 1791, more than 20,000 officers have made the ultimate sacrifice while protecting the communities which they swore to protect; and

WHEREAS, In May of 2016, 252 new names of these fallen heroes and dedicated public servants were engraved on the walls of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington D.C.; and

WHEREAS, the uniforms which were worn and earned with hard work, commitment and pride by these officers, have in recent times become targets by those who seek to kill or injure law enforcement officers simply because of their profession and their commitment to duty; and

WHEREAS, the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners stand with the families of the fallen, and the officers currently protecting our county and the officers throughout the United States; and

WHEREAS, we the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners support the men and women in Wilkes County Law Enforcement who stand every day as our guardians of peace and order, ready to protect our homes and businesses, the weak and oppressed and our very freedom.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners officially acknowledge their support for the commitment and sacrifice made by each and every member of the Wilkes County Law Enforcement Officers.

DULY ADOPTED, this the 18th day of May, 2021.

WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Eddie Settle, Chairman

Attest:

Sarah D. Call, County Clerk

WILKES COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENT POLICY – County Attorney Tony Triplett stated this had been in the works for several years and is an update to their Economic Investment Policy. The first policy was adopted in 2001 by the County. He added this is an updated policy with the biggest change concerning the way they score projects for qualifications for economic incentives. It also includes a new Small Business Incentive Grant. Mr. Triplett stated one new approach is to adopt a points system which begins on page 5 of the policy. The points systems are for scoring projects and how they qualify for an Economic Incentive Grant. Another difference is the term, the last policy called for up to 5 years, the new one allows up to 7 years. It also sets a cap of no more than 80% of taxes generated by the project to be paid back to the company for an Economic Incentive. He added the number of years and amount of return are based in the points. This is not a big departure from what they had just a new way to evaluate the project.

Mr. Triplett said the Small Business Incentive Grant is new and begins on page 6. It has eligibility requirements for projects that fall underneath the usual incentive grants, but over a certain level. They must generate at least 5 jobs and \$250,000 in new investment and would qualify for a \$5,000 Small Business Incentive Grant from the County. He added if the project is located in the County and outside the Towns it is \$5,000. If it is within the Town limits the eligible grant from the County will be \$2,500 and the corresponding Town will contribute the remaining \$2,500. Mr. Triplett said these grants will be first come first serve depending on what has been budgeted. The hope is it will provide incentive to smaller businesses to remain here, grow here, in addition to new ones to relocated here. This is new in this policy; most other guidelines are updates. He added this has been reviewed by the EDC and is a more up to date policy. Local Governments everywhere are in competition for projects and Economic Development and Economic Developments expenditures have become a standard part of local government. This policy gives them a uniform guideline and as it states in the policy it is not binding. The Board can depart from it if they want to, it is a policy for guidance.

Chairman Settle asked if this new policy is based more in investment. Ms. Nixon replied it is based on investment, but there are job points assigned based on the number of jobs created. She added the policy is written more on the investment amount. Chairman Settle stated this is good. The County is growing and lots of good things are going on. Mr. Triplett added both Towns have adopted the same guidelines as found on page 5 and 6, but have not voted to adopt the entire policy. He stated the Towns may approve the full policy in the near future, they are all in agreement and together, with the same unified approach on this policy. The full policy to include the guidelines is what is before the Board tonight for consideration.

Commissioner Elmore stated on page 8 at the bottom and top of 9 it says the “EDIP grant agreement will be executed which contractually bids the County to make the grants, and the company to meet the capital investment, job creation/retention, and/or wage level requirements, as have been mutually agreed upon.” Under conclusion it says “the Board is not obligated”. He added it looks to be contradictory as it binds the County and then states they are not obligated. Mr. Triplett replied this is a good question. The bottom of page 8 is referring to the actual grant

agreement. The Conclusion is referring to just the policy and how they will access a project and decide what the Board is willing to do on offering an incentive. He added once an agreement is reached with a Company they enter into a grant agreement which they call an Economic Investment Agreement. Mr. Triplett said once this is signed they are contractually obligated.

Motion was made by Commissioner Keith Elmore to approve the Wilkes County Economic Development Investment Policy as presented at tonight's meeting. The Motion was seconded by Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson and unanimously approved.

WIKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS SCHEDULED MEETINGS:

1. SET SPECIAL CALLED MEETING – TAX ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEWS – Chairman Settle stated they need to set a Special Called meeting to conduct the Tax Administrator job interviews.

Commissioner David Gambill made a motion to set a Special Called meeting for Tax Administrator Interviews for Thursday, May 27, 2021 at 1:00 P.M. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Brian S. Minton and unanimously approved.

The special called meeting is open to the public.

2. SET BUDGET WORK SESSION – Chairman Settle stated they need to set a budget work session.

Commissioner David Gambill made a motion to set a Budget Work Session for Thursday, May 27, 2021 at 2:00 P.M. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Brian S. Minton and unanimously approved.

The work session is open to the public.

3. CHANGE OF DATE JULY 6, 2021 REGULAR BOARD MEETING – Chairman Settle asked if the Board would like to change their regularly scheduled Board meeting from Tuesday, July 6, 2021 to Thursday, July 1, 2021 at 6:00 P.M.

Vice Chairman Brian S. Minton made a motion to change the date of the July 6, 2021 regular Board Meeting to Thursday, July 1, 2021 at 6:00 P.M. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson and unanimously approved.

4. CANCEL JULY 20, 2021 REGULAR BOARD MEETING – Chairman Settle asked if the Board would like to cancel the second meeting in July.

Commission David Gambill made a motion to cancel the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners second meeting in July scheduled for July 20, 2021. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Brian S. Minton and unanimously approved.

5. CONTINUE PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY – Chairman Settle stated they need to continue the Public Hearing on the proposed Economic Development Activity for Project Flow because the company was not ready to proceed. The Public Hearing can be continued until Thursday, July 1, 2021 at 5:50 PM.

Motion was made by Commissioner David Gambill to Continue the public hearing to Thursday, July 1, 2021, at 5:50 p.m., in the Commissioners' Meeting Room at the County Office Building, pursuant to G.S. §158-7.1, for comment on a proposed Economic Investment Agreement in connection with the economic development project known as Project Flow. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Brian S. Minton and unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS – BUDGET AMENDMENT – Finance Officer Chris Huffman stated JCPC has been award discretionary funds in the amount of \$28,000 that needs to be spent before the end of the month. He added this is why it is being presented under new business. If the Board approves this the funds will go to Wilkes Teen Court to purchase a van to transport youth back and forth to job sites. Commissioner Gambill stated Teen Court is a great program. He participates with it in Ashe and it is a growing trend across the State. This program keeps juveniles out of the Court system and holds them accountable for their actions, he added.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman Brian S. Minton to approve Budget Amendment No. 38 (General – JCPC has been awarded discretionary funds in the amount of \$28,000 for FY 2021. If approved these funds will go to Wilkes Teen Court for the purchase of a van to transport youth to and from work sites. No additional County funds requested). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson and unanimously approved.

CLOSED SESSION – Commissioner Keith Elmore a motion 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. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Brian S. Minton and unanimously approved.

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

ADJOURN – Motion was made by Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson, seconded by Vice Chairman Brian S. Minton and by unanimous vote adopted to adjourn the meeting of the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners at 7:46 P.M.

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WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Approved: June 1, 2021