

**MINUTES**  
**WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**June 6, 2023**

The Wilkes County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, June 6, 2023 at 5:00 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.

**INVOCATION** – Vice Chairman Stoney Greene led the Invocation.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – Chairman Keith Elmore led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Elmore stated as Vice Chairman Greene mentioned today is the 79<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D Day. They are grateful for the brave soldiers that stormed the beach and the patriotism they had.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Motion was made by Vice Chairman Stoney Greene, seconded by Commissioner Bill Sexton and unanimously adopted to approve the Minutes of the Budget Work Session held on May 16, 2023.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Motion was made by Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson, seconded by Vice Chairman Stoney Greene and unanimously adopted to approve the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on May 16, 2023.

**BUDGET AMENDMENTS/TRANSFERS** – Motion was made by Vice Chairman Stoney Greene to approve Budget Amendment No. 32 (Sheriff – Budget amendment comes at the request to add additional funds of \$30,000 to this line in order to purchase an additional vehicle at the end of the budget year. An opportunity has presented itself where a vehicle was available for sale and the sheriff has funds available at the end of the budget year to help replace an older and aging vehicle); Budget Amendment No. 33 (General – This budget amendment is to adjust the sales tax and interest off investments that has been collected this year. Currently sales tax collections and interest are higher than what was project in the current budget. This amendment request will increase revenues by \$2,000,000: \$600,000 of this will be used for a special one-time appropriation to be applied to a paving project for the School System. \$300,000 to be paid to the School System for their portion of the sales tax collected, \$100,000 for security measures at the courthouse, \$20,000 for roadside cleanups, \$860,000 to cover medical insurance overage, and \$120,000 for professional services). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Greg Minton and unanimously approved.

**NORTH WILKESBORO SPEEDWAY:**

**1. ALL-STAR RACE VIDEO** – Chairman Elmore recognized Greg Adams, IT Director, who showed the video at this time. Mr. Adams said the credit for the video goes to Speedway Motor Sports and it came from the Nascar All-Star Race website. Chairman Elmore stated it was an exciting week of events.

**2. RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION FOR SPEEDWAY MOTORSPORTS REVIVAL OF NORTH WILKESBORO SPEEDWAY** – Chairman Elmore stated they have a Resolution of appreciation for Speedway Motorsports for bringing the race back and revitalizing the North Wilkesboro Speedway. He asked Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson to read the Resolution at this time. Vice Chairman Greene stated everyone that was a part of this at the racetrack or the parade, he has not felt a time of more unity and happiness in this community than that week. Thursday during the hauler parade was like Christmas in Wilkes County with so much excitement for a lot of people. Commissioner Johnson agreed and added it was an exciting week, he took his father to the All-Star Race and he got to meet Richard Petty. He was emotional, that was someone he had watched race for years. The next morning, they were getting ready for the End of Grade test at School and he could hear the kids talking about the race and they were still excited. Commissioner Johnson said they appreciate Speedway Motorsports, the State Government, the Legislators, and Terri Parsons for all their hard work and dedication.

Vice Chairman Stoney Greene made a motion to approve the Resolution of Appreciation for Speedway Motorsports Revival of North Wilkesboro Speedway as presented at tonight's meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson and unanimously approved.

*RESOLUTION  
OF APPRECIATION FOR SPEEDWAY MOTORSPORTS REVIVAL OF NORTH WILKESBORO  
SPEEDWAY*

*WHEREAS, the RESTORATION OF North Wilkesboro Speedway has brought immeasurable joy, excitement, and economic opportunities to the community and racing enthusiasts alike; and*

*WHEREAS, Speedway Motorsports, Inc. (SMI) has demonstrated exceptional vision, commitment, and dedication in the process of resurrecting this iconic racetrack; and*

*WHEREAS, the revival of the North Wilkesboro Speedway had rekindled the historic legacy and heritage of stock car racing, paying homage to the roots of NASCAR and its connection to Wilkes County and the surrounding region; and*

*WHEREAS, the restoration project undertaken by SMI has breathed new life into North Wilkesboro Speedway, revitalizing a once-thriving motorsport venue and transforming it into a world-class and state of the art facility; and*

*WHEREAS, the reopening of the North Wilkesboro Speedway has reinvigorated the local economy, attracting visitors and fans from all 50 states, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and seven foreign countries as far away as Israel and Australia; and*

*WHEREAS, this project has truly had an international impact on Wilkes County and will generate, promote, and support additional events and drive tourism for concerts, car shows, and more racing year-round that will benefit the entire region while creating employment and other opportunities for the residents of Wilkes County; and*

*WHEREAS, SMI's unwavering commitment to preserving the traditions and values of stock car racing while incorporating modern amenities has provided an exceptional racing experience for both drivers and spectators; and*

*WHEREAS, the resurgence of the North Wilkesboro Speedway has reignited the passion and enthusiasm of racing fans, fostering a sense of community pride and unity throughout the region; and*

*WHEREAS, SMI's efforts to bring racing back to North Wilkesboro Speedway have reminded us of an enduring power of collaboration, perseverance, and the importance of preserving our cultural heritage.*

*NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners hereby expresses our deepest gratitude and appreciation to Speedway Motorsports, Inc. for their remarkable achievement in reviving the North Wilkesboro Speedway; and*

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners commend SMI for their foresight, dedication, and unwavering commitment to the sport of racing as well as their contribution to the economic growth and cultural vibrance of this community; and*

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners hereby extend our heartfelt thanks to the drivers, teams, staff, entertainers, and all those who have played a part in making the North Wilkesboro Speedway's revival a reality ensuring that future generations will have the opportunity to experience the thrill and camaraderie of stock car racing at its finest.*

*IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners approve this resolution as a testament to the profound appreciation and gratitude we hold for Speedway Motorsports, Inc. and their efforts to bring racing back to the North Wilkesboro Speedway, Wilkes County, North Carolina.*

*Adopted this the 6<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2023.*

**WILKES COUNTY**

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Gideon Keith Elmore, Chairman  
Wilkes County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sarah D. Call, Clerk

**SAMARITAN KITCHEN OF WILKES, INC.** – Chairman Elmore welcomed and recognized Cecil Wood. Mr. Wood stated he is representing Samaritan’s Kitchen; they do great mission work and are trying to address hunger in Wilkes County, which is an issue. They are here for self-promotion. There are some folks that do not know about the agency and what they do. This is a 501C(3) organization founded in 1977, operational in March 1998. He added they depend on donations and have been blessed, but also have a growing need.

Mr. Wood extended an invitation to the Board, Manager, and Attorneys to the 25<sup>th</sup> Celebration on June 17, 2023 at their facility located near the intersection of Hwy 16 and 421, the address is 4187 West Hwy 421, Wilkesboro from 11 AM – 2 PM. They are governed by a Board of Directors, of which he is a member; Brad Caudill is the Executive Director; office hours M-F 8 to 4; the pantry is open M-W-F 9 to 12:30, which feeds about 1,000 people per week. It is important that they have volunteers and food available. Mr. Wood said the program they are most proud of is the backpack program. They send over 700 backpacks of food to kids at the end of each week. The only meals most of these kids have is at school and from these backpacks on the weekend, it is important. Mr. Wood briefly went over a few trial programs they are working on and explained their approval process. They accept money and food donations and he explained where and how they get their food as well as the local donations they receive. He added they cannot operate without all their volunteers.

Mr. Wood thanked the Board for all they do for Wilkes County; they have a tough job and they appreciate them. Commissioner Minton stated his wife was a school counselor at Millers Creek for years. She worked with the backpack program, with which he helped many times. It is a very needed program, sadly, but the amount of organization and logistics to disseminate all those backpacks is amazing, which happens because of their volunteers. It is a worth while and honorable project. Vice Chairman Greene added he has a business close to them and there is always a line for the food pantry that starts early on M-W-F when they are open. It is a needed program. Commissioner Johnson stated his wife is also a school counselor in Wilkes and just went last week to pick up the backpacks. He is a teacher and has personally witnessed the excitement when those bags come into the classroom. The kids are tickled to receive them and take the bookbags home, especially over a long weekend. They appreciate what they do especially for the kids.

Chairman Elmore asked about Mr. Dick Johnston. Mr. Wood stated he was the Executive Director for years and he did a great job for a long time, but he stepped down and they miss him. They now have Mr. Brad Caudill as the Director. Chairman Elmore asked if they still give out dog food. i\If someone can’t feed themselves, they can’t feed their dogs, so this is a good service. Mr. Brent West added they do still do that. He gave a t-shirt to each Board member at this time as well as brochures for them to share. Commissioner Sexton added they have some great programs in the County to help feed the elderly and sometimes they forget how many hungry children there are. They really appreciate what they are doing, especially to feed the kids in school. Mr. West added they average 7-8 pounds of food in each backpack they send home weekly. Chairman Elmore recognized Ms. Nada Lawrimore also in attendance tonight with Samaritans Kitchen.

County Attorney Tony Triplett stated he would like to mention that Cecil Wood was the County Manager for Wilkes for 9 years and was the first manager he worked with beginning the first Monday in December 1990. He had the pleasure to work with him for 5-years. Mr. Wood has done a lot of good service for this County, including as County Manager, in addition to what he is doing now for Samaritan Kitchen. Chairman Elmore added he also helped them as Director of WTA when they needed him for a short time as well.

Chairman Elmore and the Board thanked Mr. Wood, Mr. West and Ms. Larrimore and Samaritan Kitchen of Wilkes, Inc. for all the do for the citizens of Wilkes County.

**WILKES COUNTY 2023-2024 BUDGET:**

Chairman Elmore stated the additions to the proposed budget at this time are as follows:

Correct clerical error for Blue Ridge Opportunity Commission of \$568,215.00 should have been \$56,815 difference of \$511,400

Additional 2% pay increase (total of 7%) for all full-time employees

Appalachian Regional Library Wilkes County increase of \$22,157 (total \$731,515)

Lincoln Heights Recreation Corp increase of \$750 (total \$2,500)

Wilkes County Soil & Water reduce Mobile Soils Classroom from \$121,053 to \$8,053 and increase Salary line to add one new position Grade 67 Natural Resource Conservationist/Stream Flow Rehab Specialist (\$67,899) total decrease to Soil & Water's Budget \$45,101

Sheriff's Department Pay Plan add step 4 of pay plan for Sheriff's Department, Jail, Communications Center, and Fire Marshall \$146,500

**BUDGET – 2023/2024 FISCAL YEAR**

Motion was made by Commissioner Greg Minton, to approve the six additional items the Board approved to change and/or add for the clerical error under Blue Ridge Opportunity Commission, Additional 2% COLA, Appalachian Regional Library Wilkes County Branch, Lincoln Heights Recreation Corp, Wilkes County Soil & Water, and Sheriff's Department pay plan step four as presented at tonight's meeting. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Stoney Greene and unanimously approved to adopt the 2023/2024 Budget Ordinance in the amount of \$116,167,617 with the tax rate at sixty-six (66) cents per \$100.00 valuation.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, NORTH CAROLINA, IN REGULAR SESSION ASSEMBLED – JUNE 6, 2023.

**SECTION I.** The following amounts are hereby appropriated for the operation of Wilkes County Government and its activities for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2024, according to the following summary and schedules:

SUMMARY	2023/2024 ADOPTED BUDGET	TRANSFER TO/FROM OTHER FUNDS	TOTAL
General Fund	\$100,373,939	[500,000]	\$99,873,939
E 911 Telephone System	616,157		616,157
Law Enforcement Restricted	5,000		5,000
Fire Dist. Funds	5,609,381		5,609,381
Airport Enterprise	4,828,684		4,828,684
Landfill Enterprise	4,709,456		4,709,456
Landfill Capital Reserve	25,000	500,000	525,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$116,167,617</b>		<b>\$116,167,617</b>

**SECTION II.** That for said fiscal year there is hereby appropriated out of the General Fund the following:

<u>GENERAL FUND EXPENSES</u>	<u>APPROPRIATIONS</u>
Governing Body	\$ 313,951
Administration	587,647
Finance	656,275
Fine & Forfeitures	100,000
Tax Administration	1,749,512
Legal	442,961
Court Facilities	742,448
Elections	447,207
Register of Deeds	505,147
Information Technology	571,140
Central Garage	1,569,139
Public Buildings	1,485,915
Purchasing	72,202
Central Operations	2,745,800
<b>TOTAL GENERAL GOVERNMENT</b>	<b><u>\$ 11,989,344</u></b>
Sheriff	\$ 8,720,339
Sheriff Vice/Crime Prevention	120,000
Jail	4,941,910
Jail Inmate Commissary	500,000
Emergency Communications	1,742,761

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Emergency Management	122,399
Fire	343,752
Building Inspections	784,437
Medical Examiner/Coroner	102,000
Emergency Medical Services	7,025,337
Animal Control	836,325

**TOTAL PUBLIC SAFETY EXPENSE** **\$ 25,239,260**

Forestry	\$ 151,736
Other Environmental	160,000

**TOTAL ENVIRONMENTAL** **\$ 311,736**

Planning	\$ 731,625
Economic Development	1,208,481
Other Community Development	202,799
Cooperative Extension	275,719
Extension Local	71,000
Soil & Water Conservation	572,447

**TOTAL ECONOMIC PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT** **\$ 3,062,071**

General Health	\$ 2,702,655
Health Programs – Salaries	2,720,692
Health – Environmental	56,050
Health - Food & Lodging	12,391
Health - Tuberculosis	3,355
HIV & STD Federal	1,305
Health - Communicable Disease	2,293
Comprehensive - B & C Cancer Control	19,850
Adult Health	181,150
Health Promotion	10,200
Women-Infant-Children	37,600
Health-WIC/BPCP	1,300
Maternal Clinic	516
Infant Mortality Reduction	47,371
Child Health	10,000
Health - MESH Unit/Schools	95,650
Health – School Nurse Funding	150,000
Health - Family Planning	43,590
Health – Immunization Action	500
Wilkes Dental Clinic	1,500,000
Health – Preparedness	1,300
Health – AIM	28,125

Health – Substance Use Disorder	28,125
HRSA ARPA	420,598
PH Infrastructure	6,100

**TOTAL HUMAN SERVICE - HEALTH** **\$ 8,080,716**

VAYA Health/Mental Health	\$ 218,612
Daymark Recovery Services – ABC 5¢ Bottle Tax	17,000
Child Abuse Prevention Team	18,066
Adult Developmental Activity Program	27,864
Vocational Workshop	43,000
Wilkes Developmental Day School	131,717
SAFE Program	10,204

**TOTAL MENTAL HEALTH** **\$ 466,463**

Administration	\$ 10,005,731
DSS Occupancy Expense	242,728
Work First Employment	70,000
Income Maintenance/Food Stamps	688,815
IM/Medicaid Assistance XIX	603,500
Legal	75,000
Foster Care	4,696,522
Links	54,803
Other Assistance	66,453
Other Contractuals	146,000
Day Care	44,558

**TOTAL SOCIAL SERVICES** **\$ 16,694,110**

**VETERANS SERVICE** **\$ 142,653**

JCPC/Youth Services	\$ 285,000
Secure Detention/Juvenile Subsidy	68,000

**TOTAL HUMAN SERVICES – YOUTH** **\$ 353,000**

**JUVENILE CRIME PREVENTION** **\$ 10,000**

Aging Program Exp/To Agencies	660,000
Appalachian Senior Programs	2,786
Ruby Pardue Blackburn Adult Day Care Center	4,816
American Red Cross	11,145
Blue Ridge Opportunity Commission	56,815



Wilkes Senior Resources	189,234
National Guard Armory	1,857
Barium Springs/Children’s Hope Alliance	27,590
Volunteers for Wilkes Literacy	12,074
Crime Stoppers	1,720
Mountain View Ruritan Club/Fly-In	4,128
Wilkes Transportation/ROAP Grant	250,000
Wilkes Transportation Authority Appropriation	43,000
Catherine Barber Shelter	10,000
Hospitality House Crisis Shelter	6,500

**TOTAL OTHER HUMAN SERVICES** **\$ 1,281,665**

Public Schools	\$ 20,623,712
Wilkes Community College	4,259,453

**TOTAL EDUCATION** **\$ 24,883,165**

Appalachian Regional Library	\$ 731,515
Traphill Library	34,160
Parks & Recreation	1,157,459
Cultural & Museums	32,246

**TOTAL CULTURAL & RECREATION** **\$ 1,955,380**

**CONTINGENCY RESERVE FUND** **\$ 25,000**

**TOTAL COUNTY DEBT** **\$ 4,879,376**

**TRANSFERS TO OTHER FUNDS** **\$ 500,000**

**TOTAL GF EXPENSES & OTHER USES** **\$ 99,873,939**

**SECTION III.** It is estimated the following General Fund Revenues will be available during the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2024, to meet the foregoing General Fund Appropriations:

Taxes - Ad Valorem	\$ 41,350,545
Sales Taxes	25,475,936
Other Tax and Licenses	450,000
Unrestricted Intergovernmental	462,000
Health - Restricted State & Federal	4,887,921
DSS – Restricted State & Federal	9,086,297
Other Restricted – State & Federal	3,947,950

Restricted Local - General Fund Other	615,100
Restricted Local - Health	69,440
Restricted Local - DSS	152,400
Fines & Forfeitures	100,000
Permits and Fees	720,400
Health Permits and Fees	214,780
Health Sales & Services	292,500
DSS Sales & Services	9,200
Sales & Services - General Fund Other	3,494,695
Investment Earnings/General Fund	401,500
Miscellaneous/General Fund	611,000
Fund Balance Appropriated	7,532,275

**TOTAL ALL TAXES & GENERAL FUND REVENUE** **\$ 99,873,939**

**SECTION V.** That for said fiscal year there is hereby appropriated out of the E-911 Telephone System Fund the following:

**E-911 Telephone System Expense** **\$ 616,157**

**SECTION VI.** It is estimated the following E-911 Telephone System Fund Revenue will be available during the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2024:

**E-911 Telephone System Revenues** **\$ 616,157**

**SECTION VII.** That for said fiscal year there is hereby appropriated out of the Law Enforcement Restricted Fund the following:

Law Enforcement Restricted Fund **\$ 5,000**

**TOTAL LAW ENFORCEMENT RESTRICTED FUND EXPENSE** **\$ 5,000**

**SECTION VIII.** It is estimated the following Law Enforcement Restricted Fund revenues will be available during the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2024 to meet the foregoing Law Enforcement Restricted Fund Appropriations:

Law Enforcement Restricted Fund Revenues **\$ 5,000**

**TOTAL LAW ENFORCEMENT RESTRICTED FUND REVENUE** **\$ 5,000**

**SECTION IX.** That for said fiscal year there is hereby appropriated out of the Fire District Fund the following:

DEPARTMENT	TAX RATE	APPROPRIATED
No. 1 - Broadway	.09	\$ 354,764
No. 2 - Mountain View	.08	\$ 323,888
No. 3 - Moravian Falls	.09	\$ 440,539
No. 4 - Mulberry-Fairplains	.11	\$ 477,818
No. 5 - Pleasant Hill	.12	\$ 216,885
No. 6 - Traphill	.09	\$ 183,974
No. 7 - Boomer	.11	\$ 195,409
No. 8 - Champion	.11	\$ 476,813
No. 9 - Austin	.12	\$ 208,191
No. 10 - Goshen	.10	\$ 172,100
No. 11 - Millers Creek	.10	\$ 700,898
No. 12 - Arlington (Ronda)	.10	\$ 8,773
No. 13 - State Road	.075	\$ 112,015
No. 14 - Ronda	.13	\$ 268,290
No. 15 - Knottville	.12	\$ 134,792
No. 16 - Shepherds Crossroads	.07	\$ 92,600
No. 17 - Roaring River	.06	\$ 213,603
No. 18 - Ferguson	.10	\$ 201,482
No. 19 - Cricket	.10	\$ 223,702
No. 20 - McGrady	.13	\$ 131,878
No. 21 - Brushy Mountain	.08	\$ 82,425
No. 22 - Buck Shoals	.05	\$ 57,562
No. 23 - Little Brushy Mountain	.12	\$ 73,958
No. 24 - Wilkes-Iredell	.12	\$ 93,558
No. 25 - Wilbar	.12	<u>\$ 163,464</u>

**TOTAL FIRE DISTRICTS** **\$ 5,609,381**

**SECTION X.** It is estimated that the following Fire District Fund Revenues will be available during the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2024 to meet the foregoing Fire District Fund Appropriations:

**TOTAL FIRE DISTRICT REVENUE** **\$ 5,609,381**

**SECTION XI.** That for said fiscal year there is hereby appropriated out of the Airport Fund the following:

Airport/Capital Projects	2,600,000
Airport/Operating Expenses	2,228,684

**TOTAL AIRPORT EXPENSES** **\$ 4,828,684**

**SECTION XII.** It is estimated the following Airport Fund Revenue will be available during the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2024 to meet the foregoing Airport Fund Revenue and Appropriations:

Airport – Restricted Intergovernmental	\$ -0-
Airport – Grants/State & Federal	2,600,000
Airport – Sales & Service	1,811,784
Airport – Rents	140,000
Airport – Miscellaneous/Airport	-0-
Airport – Transfers from Other Funds/Airport	276,900
<b>TOTAL AIRPORT REVENUE</b>	<b>\$ 4,828,684</b>

**SECTION XIII.** That for said fiscal year there is hereby appropriated out of the Landfill Fund the following:

Landfill	\$ 4,209,456
Transfer to Other Funds/Landfill	500,000
<b>TOTAL LANDFILL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 4,709,456</b>

**SECTION XIV.** It is estimated that following Landfill Fund Revenue will be available during the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2024 to meet the foregoing Landfill Fund Revenue and Appropriations:

Landfill – Restricted State & Federal	\$ 147,000
Landfill – Sales & Service	3,173,375
Landfill – Investment Earnings	5,000
Miscellaneous/Landfill	24,000
Fund Balance Appropriation/Landfill	860,081
Landfill – Transfer from Other Funds/Landfill	500,000
<b>TOTAL LANDFILL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$ 4,709,456</b>

**SECTION XV.** That for said fiscal year there is hereby appropriated out of the Landfill Capital Reserve Fund the following:

<b>TOTAL LANDFILL CAPITAL RESERVE EXPENSE</b>	<b>\$ 525,000</b>
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**SECTION XVI.** It is estimated the following Landfill Capital Reserve Revenue will be available during the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2024 to meet the foregoing Landfill Capital Reserve Fund Revenue Appropriations:

Interest on Investments	\$ 25,000
Fund Balance Appropriation	500,000

Transfer from Landfill Enterprise Fund

-0-

**TOTAL LANDFILL CAPITAL RESERVE REVENUE**

**\$ 525,000**

There is hereby levied for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024 a tax rate of sixty-six (\$0.66) cents on each one hundred dollars (\$100.00) assessed valuation of taxable property as listed as of January 1, 2023, for the purpose of raising the revenue from current year's property tax as set forth in the foregoing estimate of revenue, and in order to finance foregoing appropriations.

The tax rate of sixty-six (66) cents per hundred dollars valuation is based on an estimated total appraised value of property for the purpose of taxation of \$6,274,314,546 with estimated collection of 97.5% on real and personal property and 100% on vehicles.

**BUDGET 2023/2024 – ADOPTED – JUNE 6, 2023.**

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES:**

**1. UPDATE** – Mr. Blevins stated the first item he wanted to mention is children staying in their office overnight. In 2019 they had children 19 nights; 2020 – 43 nights; 2021 – 20 nights; 2022 – 67 nights; year to date 2023 – 80 nights. The trend is increasing as is the stress level on the staff, tonight they do not have any, they placed the last one today. This is not a Wilkes County problem it is a State of North Carolina problem. There is a lack of beds and placements for children that have disabilities, Mental Health leveling, or other issues. They had one child that they called over 100 placement facilities before securing a placement. In cases like this, they look outside NC for placement when they have to.

Mr. Blevins added when they think about county employees and how hard they work, all county employees work hard and they all put in extra hours. At DSS they don't have a second shift; their first shift has to work 24/7. Please remember this, they are a hardworking bunch of folks. Thank you for doing 7% for all employees, especially two years in a row, they really appreciate this.

Mr. Blevins said next is Medicaid Expansion, they will get some funding for this. It will come from two sources, but has not been released to them yet. Mr. Blevins said the state will transfer \$25 million in hold harmless for 75/25 and \$8.3 million in continuous coverage this year. It has not been released because not all County Managers and DSS Directors have signed it, he and Mr. Yates did this as soon as they sent it. When the money comes, it will be a lump sum payment from both and will be set aside in a line item that Mr. Huffman will need to carry over at the end of the fiscal year. Mr. Blevins said they are looking at what it will take for them and give counties money to transition into the next fiscal year to wean them off. They will get this lump sum upfront, and their part is \$112,252. The other money is for the continuous coverage unwinding and Medicaid expansion. This is in session law that will go into effect in October for counties each month. They will get upfront \$66,573 from now until October. They can use it for

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salaries, furniture, office needs, and equipment for the additional 7 workers they will need. These two together total \$178,825. After October they will get a monthly allocation from the state for as long as it is effective. Mr. Blevins explained that Kevin Brown came up with a great plan it will create 8 workers with only 7 additional FTE's for the expansion. It will take a lot of training and time to get them hired and ready.

Chairman Elmore stated the Medicaid expansion happens when they pass the state budget which has not passed yet, what happens if they don't pass it for a couple of years. Mr. Blevins replied it will not happen until the budget passes. Chairman Elmore asked what happens to this money they are sending now. Mr. Blevins replied they will get it, they actually should have already gotten it. Mr. Yates added the Zoom meeting they attended said this is for the counties to start now to get ready for it by hiring the staff and training them. Chairman Elmore asked if they are going ahead with the hiring process. Mr. Blevins replied yes July 1<sup>st</sup> they will send it out. Chairman Elmore said if Medicaid is not expanded, what will they do. Mr. Blevins replied their caseloads are so high they need more help as it stands.

Mr. Blevins provided the Commissioners with handouts for April and went over the monthly caseload report, Foster Care financial report, Adoption Services financial report, Child Development and Subsidized Child Care financial report. He also went through the CPS Foster Care monthly reports for April. Vice Chairman Greene asked about the hospitalizations. Mr. Blevins replied these vary, they could be in a mental health facility hospital, have a medical illness, and many different things, this is routine with 202 foster kids and none are serious issues at this time. Commissioner Minton asked how is the contract workers doing with the foster kids visit for some of the out of town kids. Mr. Blevins replied they are doing them, they have not had any issues. It is helping the staff and with comp time, because this is growing from the kids in the office, so it helps there as well. Commissioner Minton asked what are the checks and balances on this. Mr. Blevins replied his workers still call and check in with the kids. Vanguard turns in mileage and reports for each visit and they must document each visit and they review these reports. Commissioner Johnson asked if the intake reports go down when school is out and up when they return. Mr. Blevins replied yes, the teachers are one of their best sources for eyes and ears on kids that they need to see and they know what is going on with them.

The Board thanked Mr. Blevins for his update. Chairman Elmore stated this is Mr. Blevins' last meeting with the Board he is retiring June 30<sup>th</sup>. He was hired by a DSS Board which is what they had at that time, the Board of County Commissioners is now the Board of DSS also. Mr. Blevins said Chairman Elmore was on that Board that hired him almost 9 years ago and it has worked out very good for the Commissioners to be their Board at Social Services as well. Chairman Elmore added he is glad, he did not think it would. He added Mr. Blevins has been a very good Director, DSS is a tough job the work they have to do is hard, they have had 80 kids in their office overnight that is difficult on everyone, especially the kids. He has been a great asset to Wilkes County DSS. Mr. Blevins replied it is tough ,but he has enjoyed being here, and thanked them for the opportunity. He added the Board is fortunate they have a great staff and these four here work very hard. Chairman Elmore stated the Board has a little something for Mr. Blevins which they presented to him at this time.

**2. HIRING OF DSS DIRECTOR** – Chairman Elmore stated the Board has discussed this and they have had the opportunity to meet with Mr. Kevin Brown. Mr. Brown said he is honored and humbled by the opportunity and hopes to do a good job. They have an excellent staff at DSS; as Mr. Blevins said this Board has been great to work with and he is excited to get started. Chairman Elmore added Mr. Brown has many years of service with DSS, Mr. Blevins will be hard to replace, but they know he will do an excellent job. Mr. Brown replied he will have 30 years of service in October and these are big shoes to fill.

Commissioner Bill Sexton made a motion, sitting as the Wilkes County Social Services Board, to appoint Kevin Brown as Director of the Wilkes County Department of Social Services with an effective date of July 1, 2023. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson and unanimously approved.

Chairman Elmore and the Board congratulated Mr. Brown and welcomed him as the DSS Director. Mr. Brown thanked the Board.

**SOIL & WATER – LETTER OF INTENT – LONG CREEK RESTORATION** – Chairman Elmore welcomed Rob Baldwin and Kayla McCoy. Mr. Baldwin stated this is a Letter of Intent to hold the easements and to allow the easement. This approval will allow them to move forward to get the full amount of the grant from NC Land & Water. This Letter of Intent is required from whomever is holding the easement and from the landowners that will allow the easement. Fortunately, on this project the County owns the Senior Center property which is 50% of the length of the stream. They have gotten letters from the other two landowners. Ms. Brooke Felts stated she prepared one letter for the Board that will combines both requirements; that the County will hold and allow the easement. This is what is before the Board for consideration at this time. Chairman Elmore asked if this feeds directly into the Yadkin. Mr. Baldwin replied this is the headwaters of Long Creek and it is on the 303D list for NC DEQ. It empties into Mulberry Creek, down behind Samaritan's Purse, and under Hwy 268 and the goal is clean it up and get it off this list and this is where they need to start.

Mr. Baldwin stated Kayla McCoy has written grants to do this, so it will be zero cost to the County. Chairman Elmore added she is getting a great reputation for grant writing and wrote the grant for the Soils Classroom as well. Mr. Baldwin agreed, she has written a number of grants and does a great job. He thanked the Board for moving the funds in the budget earlier as well. Commissioner Johnson asked what does the restoration process include. Mr. Baldwin replied it is storm water clean-up from various projects upstream. They will cut out the banks and level them so the water has somewhere to go when it overflows. Ms. McCoy added it is like a mini Grand Canyon currently. This will be sloped back so it is easily accessible and much safer. The flood waters will be slowed down so they will not cause as much damage downstream with the project as well.

Mr. Baldwin stated in attendance with them tonight is Katelyn Cothren, she is an intern this summer with Soil & Water 2-days a week and with Brooke Felts, Assistant County Attorney 3-days a week through July. She helped with this letter and they are happy to have her at both offices.

Vice Chairman Stoney Greene made a motion to approve the Letter of Intent for the Long Creek Restoration project as presented at tonight's meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson and passed unanimously.

**WILKES COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY – TRAPHILL BRANCH – LEASE AGREEMENT** – County Attorney, Tony Triplett stated there is a memo on this and a lease for the Traphill Branch of the Library from Judy Durham. He added this is a two-year lease and they have leased this for quite some time and after the renewal it will expire on June 30, 2025. Mr. Triplett said Ms. Durham requested a rent increase to \$750 from \$700 per month. It has gone through the approval process with the Local Library and Regional Library Board and it is before the Board for consideration. Commissioner Johnson stated he spoke with Ms. Durham, she is very appreciative of the increase.

Commissioner Bill Sexton made a motion to approve the Lease Agreement with Judy Durham for the Traphill Library Branch with a monthly rental of \$750 as presented at tonight's meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson and unanimously approved.

**TOWN OF NORTH WILKESBORO – ETJ MEMBER APPOINTMENT** – Mr. Triplett said this comes before this Board even though it is for the North Wilkesboro Planning Board. He added it is not the joint City/County Planning Board that they also appoint members to. This is for an ETJ Member of the North Wilkesboro Planning Board. The statute (chapter 160D) requires the Board of Commissioners make the appointments to their Board within 90-days of the request. He added The Town of North Wilkesboro is recommending for your consideration Mr. James (Jim) Murphy for a 5-year term that will expire in June 30, 2028, his application is in the packet.

Commissioner Johnson stated he has known Mr. Murphy for many years and he will be a great addition to the Planning Board. Chairman Elmore recognized Mr. Murphy at this time. Mr. Murphy stated he was looking for some way to give back to the community and a committee to serve on. They have a son with Cerebral Palsy and he is in a wheelchair. Mr. Murphy added they are very passionate about wheelchair assessability for buildings. The Planning Board will allow him to apply their experience with wheelchair access and he is humbled and appreciates being here tonight.

Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson made a motion to approve the appointment of Mr. James (Jim) Murphy to the North Wilkesboro Planning Board as an ETJ member for a five-year term as requested. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Stoney Greene and unanimously approved.



**SET WORK SESSION – PHASE II DESIGN – VANNOY CONSTRUCTION COMPANY**  
– Chairman Elmore stated they need to set a Phase II Design work session with Vannoy Construction Company.

Vice Chairman Stoney Greene made a motion to set a Phase II Design Work Session with Vannoy Construction Company for Tuesday, June 20, 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 Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson and unanimously approved.

The work session is open to the public.

**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

Giddeon Keith Elmore, Chairman

WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Approved: June 20, 2023