

**MINUTES**  
**WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**August 4, 2020**

The Wilkes County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, August 4, 2020 at 6:00 P.M. at the Wilkes County Agricultural Center located 416 Executive Drive, Wilkesboro, NC 28697 with the following members present: Chairman Eddie Settle, Vice Chairman David Gambill, Commissioner Keith Elmore, Commissioner Gary D. Blevins, and Commissioner Brian S. Minton.

Also present for the meeting were Tony Triplett, County Attorney; John Yates, County Manager; and Sarah Call, Clerk to the Board.

Chairman Eddie Settle welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

**INVOCATION** – Vice Chairman David Gambill led the Invocation.

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Motion was made by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins, seconded by Commissioner Brian S. Minton and unanimously adopted to approve the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on July 7, 2020.

**BUDGET AMENDMENTS/TRANSFERS** – Motion was made by Vice Chairman David Gambill to approve Budget Amendment No. 4 (Health – Programs – Wilkes Health received \$4,500 from the Health Foundation. These funds will be used to purchase protective screens in the clinic and Environmental Health. No County money involved. Wilkes Health WIC program received stated funding in the amount of \$12,881.37. These funds will be used to purchase computer equipment, clinical equipment for WIC and advertising for WIC. No County money involved. Wilkes Health received funds from the Health Foundation in the amount of \$7,000. These funds will be used for client vouchers to the Farmer’s Market thru the Health Promotion program. No County money involved. Wilkes Health received an ORH Care Connection grant in the amount of \$150,000. These funds will be used to care for primary care patients of Wilkes County. No County money involved. Wilkes Health received \$96,075 in COVID funds from the state. These funds will be used for testing and contact tracing of COVID-19 patients. No County money involved. Wilkes Health received \$738,268 COVID-19 federal funds. These funds will be used to purchase additional vehicles, a new MESH unit, and for testing and contact tracing of COVID patients as well as testing supplies. No County money involved); and Budget Amendment No. 5 (General – Health Department – This request is to transfer unspent COVID funds from HRSA, DHHS and NCCHCA received in FY 2020 that transferred into fund balance in the amount of \$34,620.98 on June 30, 2020 to current fiscal year 2021, so these funds can be spent on COVID related services provided by Wilkes County); and Budget Amendment No. 6 (General – EMS, Airport, Elections – EMS received \$165,879, Airport received \$69,000, and Elections received \$116,444 CARES ACT funds totaling \$351,323 to be used in COVID-19

expenses for current fiscal year. No County dollars involved. During the Budgeting Process JCPC received additional funding of \$20,000 for FY 2021, to be used on Juvenile Crime Prevention. Lastly, we request to transfer EMS funds of \$167,000 that was budgeted in FY 2020 to be spent on an ambulance that transferred into fund balance on June 30, 2020 to the current fiscal year. The manufacture had COVID related issues that delayed the delivery until fiscal year 2021;) and Budget Amendment No. 7 (General – Schools – This request is to transfer \$400,000 from Fund Balance to Wilkes County Schools operations expense for the FY 2020-2021). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Keith Elmore and unanimously approved.

**WILKES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION – ACTIVITY REPORT – UPDATE** – Chairman Settle recognized and welcomed LeeAnn Nixon, EDC President. Ms. Nixon thanked the Board and stated hopefully they have received the 2019-2020 Annual Report that was just completed yesterday. She added they have elected to not have an annual meeting this year and she will be using the annual report for her update. Ms. Nixon went through the activity report at this time which includes the project activity stats, inquiries, opportunities, program of work summary, existing business activity, and meetings. Next she went through the 2020 Entrepreneurship Grant where 6 grants were awarded to 3 new business; Cook’s Outfitters, Stardust Cellars, Brushy Mountain Granola; and 3 existing businesses; The Vintage Work Shoppe, Hanna Vista Farms, and Northwest NC Batting Facility. Ms. Nixon went over the area growth section of the annual report and notable projects.

Ms. Nixon said the next page of the report is COVID-19 response and through support from the County and others they awarded \$216,500 for Small Business Recovery and Marketing Grants. The citizens have expressed their gratitude and she is also thankful to the Board and all that supported this program. They helped 100 small businesses with recovery funding and 19 with marketing so far. She encouraged everyone to shop local to help support these businesses during these difficult times. In closing Ms. Nixon said Wilkes County’s unemployment went up to 11.2% in May, June declined to 6.8% which is good people are returning to work. The last page of the report list EDC Sponsored events for the past year. She thanked the Board for their time and support.

Commissioner Elmore asked if the North Wilkesboro Water Tank funding has been secured. Ms. Nixon replied the two grant programs are secured which is \$180,000 CDBG Grant and \$200,000 from Golden Leaf. It is her understanding there is a loan option for North Wilkesboro to utilize that was previously approved, so they should have the funding in place to go forward. She added they hope it will go out for bid in the next month and maybe construction can start in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.

Chairman Settle and the Board thanked Ms. Nixon for the update.

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES UPDATE** – Chairman Settle welcomed John Blevins, DSS Director. Mr. Blevins said he had a few updates before they go over the reports. He added today he sent a letter they received from the State about the Medicaid audit they had last year and the 200 cases they reviewed. DSS did very well on it, the letter had their scores and a bill. Mr. Blevins said they looked at three areas, the accuracy standard for eligibility approval

and denial/termination actions is 96.8%. They scored 98% on approval actions and scored 100% on denial/termination actions. He added on the internal control/technical errors the threshold was 90%, they scored 95.5%. Mr. Blevins said Wilkes did excellent, but they did find one error and have a pay back of \$18.09. He added they are very proud of the staff. Mr. Blevins stated they received another letter today by email that shows the three Medicaid audits they underwent. The one mentioned earlier, a Single Audit, and the County Audit. He added two of those had no payback errors and after three very thorough audits last year they had only one small payback. He is very proud and thankful for the staff and the good job they do for DSS, they take their job seriously and it shows.

Mr. Blevins said as part of the COVID money and the Cares and Recovery Act the state has given \$100 per month for the children in foster care for April, May and June. This was paid to the foster families and for Wilkes \$54,400 came in and was paid out to the family foster homes and/or resident care providers. In addition, the state has worked with the federal government and they have agreed to extend the recertifications for food and nutrition services through August 31<sup>st</sup>. He added these individuals do not have to come to DSS. Mr. Blevins said they have also approved the application interview waiver through August 31<sup>st</sup> and they do not have to come in person to do this, which helps as well.

Mr. Blevins briefly went over the monthly caseload report for June. Next, he went through the Foster Care financial report, Adoption Services financial report, Child Development and Subsidized Child Care financial reports for June. He said there are two pages for the Subsidized Child Care this time, the first is for the year that just ended, child care works on a little different schedule. Mr. Blevins said all the child care subsidy money that came into the county was spent except \$83 was left in Smart Start which is a very good job to maximize these funds and get this close on spending. The second page is for June only. Next he went through the CPS Foster Care Monthly Report. Mr. Blevins said the last page in the packet is more Cares money in the amount of \$81,927 that went to DSS, but they are not sure if they can spend it or not. As Mr. Yates has mentioned the problem with the Cares money is that it is very restrictive in how it can be spent. The letter in the packets list ways the money can be used and how it can't be used, but he wanted the Board to know they received it and it will be difficult to spend. Mr. Blevins said he and Joyce Blackburn will be working on this and looking into ways to spend it, they will be very careful and work with Finance to make sure it is spent correctly. They will come back with a budget amendment when they come up with a plan for these funds.

Chairman Settle and the Board thanked Mr. Blevins for his update.

**EMS UPDATE** – Chairman Settle welcomed Tim Pennington, EMS Director. Mr. Pennington said he would like to provide a brief EMS update at this time. He said EMS call volume for July was 31.58 calls per day, which was down 4.3 from July 2019. This average has trended upward toward normal levels since April, and it is important to note crew utilization has increased due to labor intensive cleaning and decontamination of equipment in the patient care area. In addition, the staff in many cases has to shower and change uniforms after a call. Mr. Pennington stated these are challenges they have never faced before, but the unified response from all Wilkes County Departments, the Towns, and business partners has been incredible in the management of

COVID-19. He added he is very happy to report that EMS has only had two in quarantine due to close contact family exposures and both tested negative for the virus. They have provided the very best exposure protection possible for both staff and patients and have been very fortunate after closely caring for very sick COVID patients that the staff and other patients have maintained safety. Mr. Pennington stated he commends the EMS staff in their bravery in caring for everyone during this pandemic.

Mr. Pennington stated the Mtn. View EMS site was delayed due to COVID in the delivery of the metal structure, the weather has been very wet which also slowed the progress. He added during the last few weeks progress has been made, the building is dried in, framing on the inside is done, drainage is in place, electrical has began and the power connection will be completed soon. Plumbing is ready, sidewalks are scheduled for this week as well as Heating & Air, and Natural Gas is in place. They are working with Communications to set the response area for this base in order to best serve the most citizens possible. Mr. Pennington said they are looking at a 4-6 weeks completion date on this project.

Chairman Settle asked about the East Wilkes Station. Mr. Pennington replied the East Middle site is the best location to serve a majority of the citizens in the surrounding community based on their data. He added a partial site plan has been completed and he is willing to move forward when the Board may wish to do so. The Board discussed funding, data, and location for an Eastern/East Wilkes Middle School EMS site.

Chairman Settle and the Board thanked Mr. Pennington for his update.

#### **TAX DEPARTMENT:**

**1. TAX RELEASES – LISTINGS – UNCOLLECTABLE** – Alex Hamilton, Tax Administrator asked the Board to approve tax releases for listings that are uncollectable in the amount of \$1,539.76.

Vice Chairman David Gambill made a motion to approve the tax releases for listings that are uncollectable as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Keith Elmore and unanimously approved.

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

**2. TAX RELEASES – LISTINGS** – Alex Hamilton, Tax Administrator asked the Board to approve tax releases for listings in the amount of \$12,444.28.

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

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

**3. TAX RELEASES – COLLECTIONS** – Alex Hamilton, Tax Administrator asked the Board to approve tax releases for collections in the amount of \$558.95.

Commissioner Gary D. Blevins made a motion to approve the tax releases for collections as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Keith Elmore and unanimously approved.

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

**4. TAX SETTLEMENT – TAX YEAR 2019** – Alex Hamilton, Tax Administrator, stated N.C.G.S. §105-373 requires the Tax Collector to come before the Board and make settlement for the 2019 taxes. As of July 1<sup>st</sup>, the below has been collected:

	Owed	Paid	Rate
Real Estate	\$35,424,790.03	\$34,188,464.86	96.51%
Personal	<u>\$ 5,118,065.60</u>	<u>\$ 4,925,649.95</u>	<u>96.26%</u>
Total	\$40,542,855.63	\$39,114,114.81	96.47%

**5. CHARGE TAX ADMINISTRATOR WITH COLLECTION OF 2020 REAL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY TAXES** – Alex Hamilton, Tax Administrator, stated N.C.G.S. §105-321 requires that the Board charge the Tax Administrator/Collector with the collection of the 2020 real and personal property taxes. Real Estate and Personal Property Taxes are as follows:

Real Estate	\$35,615,626.92
Personal Property	<u>\$ 3,138,609.15</u>
Total	\$38,754,236.07

Commissioner Keith Elmore made a motion to charge Alex Hamilton, Wilkes County Tax Administrator, with the collection of the 2020 Real and Personal Property Taxes as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brain S. Minton and unanimously approved.

**WILKES COUNTY AIRPORT – RESOLUTIONS FOR FINAL APPROVAL OF LEASE AGREEMENTS:**

**1. SAMARITAN’S PURSE – FORMER LOWE’S/CAPITAL BANK HANGAR**  
– Mr. Triplett said this matter was on the agenda in July, the Board authorized advertisement of a ground space lease for Samaritan’s Purse, and he advertised per the statute that governs leases for 30-days. Mr. Triplett said it is before the Board for consideration and all that is needed would be a motion to approve the Resolution as presented at tonight’s meeting which approves the Lease Agreement.

Vice Chairman David Gambill made a motion to approve the Resolution Authorizing Lease Agreement with Samaritan's Purse for the former Lowe's/Capital Bank Hangar at the Wilkes County Airport as presented at tonight's meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Keith Elmore and unanimously approved.

*RESOLUTION  
AUTHORIZING LEASE AGREEMENT*

*WHEREAS, the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners at its regular meeting of July 7, 2020, authorized advertisement for a lease by negotiated offer, advertisement, and upset bid of certain ground space located at the Wilkes County Airport to Samaritan's Purse, pursuant to a Lease Agreement as presented at said meeting (hereinafter "Agreement"), on which is located the former Lowe's/Capital Bank hangar now owned by Samaritan's Purse;*

*AND WHEREAS, said advertisement was completed as required under the provisions of G.S. §160A-269, in the form of a Notice of Intent to Approve Lease Agreement (hereinafter the "Notice of Intent") which was published in the Wilkes Journal-Patriot on July 15, 2020;*

*AND WHEREAS, the Notice of Intent contained the basic terms of the offer received by Samaritan's Purse for the lease of said ground space, as negotiated between Wilkes County and Samaritan's Purse;*

*AND WHEREAS, the description of the property to be leased as set forth in the Notice of Intent was as follows:*

*DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY TO BE LEASED: The Agreement is for the lease of a tract of approximately 3.378 acres of ground space on the west side and northern end of the runway at the Wilkes County Airport, said tract presently having a hangar building and other improvements located thereon which were originally constructed by Lowe's Companies, Inc., and which were purchased by Samaritan's Purse from Capital Bank pursuant to a Deed, Assignment and Assumption Agreement dated March 21, 2014, as recorded in Book 1186, Page 443, Wilkes County Registry, said sale and assignment having been duly approved by the County under Consent to Assignment of Lease dated March 21, 2014, as recorded in Book 1186, Page 444, Wilkes County Registry. Said tract is a portion of a larger tract currently leased by the County to Samaritan's Purse under that Lease Agreement dated August 1, 2014, and recorded in Book 1194, Page 405, Wilkes County Registry (hereinafter the "2014 Lease Agreement"). The tract to be leased to Samaritan's Purse under the Agreement is shown and depicted on that plat to be attached as Exhibit "A" to the Agreement and is more fully described in Exhibit "B" to the Agreement (said tract is hereinafter referred to as the "leased premises"). Under the terms of the Agreement, the 2014 Lease Agreement would be cancelled.*

*AND WHEREAS, the amount and terms of the offer by Samaritan's Purse, to lease said ground space were set forth in the Notice of Intent as follows:*

*AMOUNT AND TERMS OF OFFER: Samaritan's Purse proposes to lease the above described property from the County for a period of twenty (20) years with three (3) five-year renewal options. Rental to be paid by Samaritan's Purse will be \$613.11 per month for the first five (5) years of the initial twenty (20) year term, \$710.76 per month for the next five (5) years of the initial twenty (20) year term, \$823.97 per month for the next five (5) years of the initial twenty (20) year term, \$955.21 per month for the next five (5) years of the initial twenty (20) year term, \$1,107.34 per month for the first renewal term, \$1,283.72 per month for the second renewal term, and \$1,488.18 per month for the third renewal term.*

*AND WHEREAS, no upset bids have been received in response to the Notice of Intent, and the time has expired in which an upset bid may be submitted;*

*AND WHEREAS, the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners desires to accept the above described bid, and to authorize and approve the Agreement;*

*AND WHEREAS, the Agreement has been duly approved by the Wilkes County Airport Board, pursuant to the requirements of the Wilkes County Airport Board Ordinance;*

*NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, pursuant to G.S. §§160A-269 and 160A-272, that the Agreement with Samaritan's Purse, as presented at the July 7, 2020 meeting of the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners, and as set forth in the Notice of Intent, is hereby approved, with an effective date of August 1, 2020.*

*This the 4<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2020.*

*WILKES COUNTY*

*By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Eddie D. Settle, Chairman  
Wilkes County Board of Commissioners*

*ATTEST:*

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

**2. SAMARITAN'S PURSE – NEW HANGAR** – Mr. Triplett said this is for approval of the Lease for the new hanger for Samaritan's Purse.

Commissioner Keith Elmore made a motion to approve the Resolution Authorizing Lease Agreement with Samaritan's Purse for the New Hangar at Wilkes County Airport as presented at tonight's meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brain S. Minton and unanimously approved.

**RESOLUTION  
AUTHORIZING LEASE AGREEMENT**

*WHEREAS, the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners at its regular meeting of July 7, 2020, authorized advertisement for a lease by negotiated offer, advertisement, and upset bid of certain ground space located at the Wilkes County Airport to Samaritan's Purse, pursuant to a Lease Agreement as presented at said meeting (hereinafter "Agreement"), on which is located a new aircraft hangar currently under construction by Samaritan's Purse;*

*AND WHEREAS, said advertisement was completed as required under the provisions of G.S. §160A-269, in the form of a Notice of Intent to Approve Lease Agreement (hereinafter the "Notice of Intent") which was published in the Wilkes Journal-Patriot on July 15, 2020;*

*AND WHEREAS, the Notice of Intent contained the basic terms of the offer received by Samaritan's Purse for the lease of said ground space, as negotiated between Wilkes County and Samaritan's Purse;*

*AND WHEREAS, the description of the property to be leased as set forth in the Notice of Intent was as follows:*

*DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY TO BE LEASED: The Agreement is for the lease of a tract of approximately 2.331 acres of ground space on the west side and northern end of the runway at the Wilkes County Airport, said tract being the location of a new hangar building and other improvements currently under construction by Samaritan's Purse adjacent to that tract which is the subject of a Lease Agreement between the County and Samaritan's Purse dated August 1, 2014, and recorded in Book 1194, Page 405, Wilkes County Registry (hereinafter the "2014 Lease Agreement"). The tract to be leased to Samaritan's Purse under the Agreement, which would include a portion of the tract described under the 2014 Lease Agreement, is shown and depicted on that plat to be attached as Exhibit "A" to the Agreement and is more fully described in Exhibit "B" to the Agreement (said tract is hereinafter referred to as the "leased premises"). Under the terms of the Agreement, the 2014 Lease Agreement would be cancelled.*

*AND WHEREAS, the amount and terms of the offer by Samaritan's Purse, to lease said ground space were set forth in the Notice of Intent as follows:*

*AMOUNT AND TERMS OF OFFER: Samaritan's Purse proposes to lease the above described property from the County for a period of twenty (20) years with three (3) five-year renewal options. Rental to be paid by Samaritan's Purse will be \$423.07 per month for the first five (5) years of the initial twenty (20) year term, \$490.45 per month for the next five (5) years of the initial twenty (20) year term, \$568.57 per month for the next five (5) years of the initial twenty (20) year term, \$659.13 per month for the next five (5) years of the initial twenty (20) year term, \$764.11 per month for the first renewal term, \$885.81 per month for the second renewal term, and \$1,026.90 per month for the third renewal term.*

*AND WHEREAS, no upset bids have been received in response to the Notice of Intent, and the time has expired in which an upset bid may be submitted;*

*AND WHEREAS, the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners desires to accept the above described bid, and to authorize and approve the Agreement;*

*AND WHEREAS, the Agreement has been duly approved by the Wilkes County Airport Board, pursuant to the requirements of the Wilkes County Airport Board Ordinance;*

*NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, pursuant to G.S. §§160A-269 and 160A-272, that the Agreement with Samaritan's Purse, as presented at the July 7, 2020 meeting of the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners, and as set forth in the Notice of Intent, is hereby approved, with an effective date of August 1, 2020.*

*This the 4<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2020.*

WILKES COUNTY

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Eddie D. Settle, Chairman  
Wilkes County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

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

**TOWN OF NORTH WILKESBORO – ETJ MEMBER APPOINTMENT** – Mr. Yates said a letter was received from the Town of North Wilkesboro: “*the North Wilkesboro Board of Commissioners unanimously voted to recommend the appointment of Mike Staley to a fourth 3-year term as an ETJ Member of the North Wilkesboro Board of Adjustments. Mr. Staley’s term will expire in June 2023.*”

Commissioner Keith Elmore made a motion to approve the appointment of Mr. Mike Staley to the North Wilkesboro Board of Adjustments as an ETJ member of the North Wilkesboro Board of Adjustments for his fourth 3-year term as requested. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brian S. Minton and unanimously approved.

**NEW BUSINESS** – Chairman Settle said as Commissioner Elmore mentioned earlier the early voting sites are both in town and not out in the county, and not sure they have any say, but they have concerns. Commissioner Elmore added it is his understanding they are working on this, and it needs to be discussed. He said for folks east of Airport Road it is going to be difficult with the construction going on. Commissioner Elmore said folks will have a hard time finding that site. He added they understand there are a lot of rules they are having to abide by, but maybe there is a better location. Commissioner Blevins asked if the Board of Elections makes that determination on the sites. Commissioner Elmore replied yes. Chairman Settle said the Civic Center in Wilkesboro is a great location. Commissioner Elmore added the second site is at the Edwin McGee Center which will be difficult to get to and these are the only two early voting

sites. Mr. Yates stated they will ask the Board of Elections to attend the next Board meeting so the Board can ask their questions and express their concerns. The Board discussed there should be better locations and options to consider.

**NEW BUSINESS** – Vice Chairman Gambill said it would be good to have face to face presenters at their Board meetings. Mr. Yates stated the Board Room at the County Office is set up with cameras and equipment, but it is a smaller location. He added, Greg Adams and his staff have done an excellent job to get it ready and they can now stream the meetings live on the website. Mr. Triplett stated they need to amend the attendance policy because it states they will meet at the Ag Center, but this can easily be changed. Commissioner Blevins said it is a little tight at the County Office meeting room and has less ventilation, they can transition back over there in a couple months. Chairman Settle replied they can remain at the Ag Center just add face to face presentations. Commissioner Elmore agreed. Mr. Triplett said they will need to amend the Attendance Policy and make this change.

Vice Chairman David Gambill made a motion to amend the Wilkes County Board of Commissioner Policy for Attendance at Meetings of the Board of Commissioner During the COVID-19 State of Emergency to allow all presenters to make presentations in person up to a limit of twenty-five (25) at the Wilkes County Agricultural Center location as presented at tonight's meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brian S. Minton and unanimously approved.

**ADJOURN** - Motion was made by Commissioner Keith Elmore, seconded by Vice Chairman David Gambill and by unanimous vote adopted to adjourn the meeting of the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners at 7:11 P.M.

Sarah D. Call, Clerk

Eddie Settle, Chairman

WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Approved: August 18, 2020