

MINUTES
WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
September 15, 2020

PUBLIC CONCERNS – None

The Wilkes County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 6:01 P.M. at the Wilkes County Agricultural Center located at 416 Executive Drive, Wilkesboro, NC 28697 with the following members present: Chairman Eddie Settle, Vice Chairman David Gambill, Commissioner Keith Elmore and Commissioner Brian S. Minton. Commissioner Gary D. Blevins attended the meeting remotely including audio and video through WebEx.

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 Keith Elmore, seconded by Commissioner Brian S. Minton and unanimously adopted to approve the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on September 1, 2020.

BUDGET AMENDMENTS/TRANSFERS – Motion was made by Vice Chairman David Gambill to approve Budget Amendment No. 11 (Health – Programs – Wilkes Community Health Center received \$30K from HRSA to be utilized for the Health Center Programs. No County money involved. Wilkes Health received \$15K from Appalachian District to provide contraceptives for underinsured/uninsured clients in Wilkes County. No County money involved); and Budget Amendment No. 12 (General – COVID Recovery – Wilkes County received \$1,327,736 in Covid-19 Recovery Act funds to be used for Covid-19 related expense). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brian S. Minton and unanimously approved.

BLUE RIDGE OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION (BROC):

1. FINAL FY 2020 BUDGET REVISIONS – WILKES AGING SERVICES AGENCIES – Chairman Settle recognized Jennifer Cooper, Program Director, Senior Nutrition Services. Ms. Cooper stated this is a large packet and apologized for the delay in getting this to the Board. This first item is budget revisions for the three Aging agencies for FY 2020. Ms. Cooper said due to COVID they were forced to shut down the congregate meal sites in March which hurt them in spending the Block Grant funds. She added they transferred as much as they could, added a new route, sent frozen meal boxes to clients, and other things. They were not able to spend all the funds and it was recommended that they split the remaining between the two

other agencies: Wilkes Senior Resources and Ruby Pardue which assisted them in offering additional services. She said this benefited them all rather than having to send the funds back to the state they were kept in Wilkes. Ms. Cooper said they worked closely with everyone on the three budget amendments and this is before the Board for approval. Commissioner Elmore asked if the BROCC Board has approved these. Ms. Cooper replied yes.

Vice Chairman David Gambill made a motion to approve the Blue Ridge Opportunity Commission Final FY 2019-2020 Budget Revisions as presented at tonight's meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Keith Elmore and unanimously approved.

2. APPROVAL OF AGREEMENT – WILKES COUNTY – HIGH COUNTRY AREA AGENCY ON AGING – HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE BLOCK GRANT FOR OLDER ADULTS FY 2021 – Ms. Cooper stated this is the Home and Community Care Block Grant for Older Adults Agreement for provision of county based Aging Services. She added this is the agreement between Wilkes and the High Country Area Agency on Aging and is before the Board for approval. Commissioner Elmore asked if the agreement has change from last year. Ms. Cooper replied the only change was to correct their name from Elderly Nutrition to Senior Nutrition.

Commissioner Brian S. Minton made a motion to approve the Agreement with Wilkes County and the High Country Area Agency on Aging Home and Community Care Block Grant for Older Adults FY 2021 as presented at tonight's meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Keith Elmore and unanimously approved.

3. FY 2020-2021 BUDGET FOR WILKES COUNTY AGING SERVICES AGENCIES – Ms. Cooper said the County funding plan summary in the packets includes all funding from the Home and Community Block Grant for the three agencies. She added they are by code and she is happy to go over that with the Board and answer any questions. It included Meals on Wheels and Congregate Meals, but they do not know when the sites will open back up. They have a new code that allows them to serve meals in alternate areas and they are working to sign up as many folks as they can for this. Ms. Cooper said this is refrigerator meals that will be shipped directly to them from a company called Mom's Meals. The next is for AC units and ramps as those needs come up. She added she can move more funds to this line if they get more request, but need volunteers to build ramps and not sure they will get any this year. MS. Cooper said this is before the Board for approval.

Commissioner Keith Elmore made a motion to approve the Blue Ridge Opportunity Commission Home FY 2020-2021 Budget for Wilkes County Aging Service Agencies as presented at tonight's meeting. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman David Gambill and unanimously approved.

Ms. Cooper stated the packet also includes information on the Families First Cares Act funds for BROCC and does not require approval. She wanted to let the Board know they received \$102,179 for home delivered meals. The goal is to serve as many on their waiting list as possible for as long as possible. It will be through Mom's Meals, they will receive 10 refrigerator meals every

two weeks delivered to their home. Ms. Cooper said they will also hire a temporary part time person to help with the applications over the phone to get them serviced as soon as possible. Chairman Settle stated a lot of the senior folks are probably missing the visits they had daily from BROCC. Ms. Cooper stated they have been lucky. Their regular home delivery routes have not missed a day, she has a great group of volunteers. These funds will serve the folks that they can't get on daily routes and are on the waiting list. They don't have enough volunteers to add more deliveries.

Ms. Cooper said they also received CARES ACT funding to all three agencies and it is earmarked to help with home delivery meals, and the temporary part time to also help with another project for telephone reassurance. They have students from Wilkes Community College that are calling congregate and home delivery clients once or twice a week to check on them to see how they are doing, ask if they are feeling OK, do they have an emergency need, etc. She added this is going very well and hope they can continue it even after things get back to normal. Ms. Cooper said they also received an additional \$52,000 in COVID emergency money since March from Meals on Wheels America and Meals on Wheels North Carolina through State Employees Credit Union and Blue Cross Blue Shield. These funds were used to purchase equipment, PPE, and a new cargo van for Meals on Wheels which they are very excited about.

Chairman Settle said this is all great to hear and the Board thanked Ms. Cooper.

WILKES COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT:

1. BOARD OF HEALTH APPOINTMENTS – Chairman Settle recognized Rachel Willard, Health Director. Ms. Willard said the Wilkes County Board of Health has one member for reappointment Ms. Marcia Reynolds, Pharmacist Member. She is asking for the Board of Commissioners to reappoint Ms. Marcia Reynolds as the Pharmacist Member for a second term. Ms. Willard stated the Board of Health would like to recommend Ms. Adina Watkins to fill the vacancy of Ms. Sylvia Robinson who passed away recently as the public member. She asked for the Board's consideration of the appointment and reappointment. Chairman Settle asked if her Board has approved them. Ms. Willard replied yes.

Vice Chairman David Gambill made a motion to approve the reappointment of Ms. Marcia Reynolds to the Board of Health as the Pharmacist Member for a second 3-year term; and the appointment of Ms. Adina Watkins to the Board of Health as the Public Member for a 3-year term as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brian S. Minton and unanimously approved.

2. UPDATE – Ms. Willard stated Wilkes has a total of 1,124 cases, 9 currently hospitalized, and 32 deaths. She added they are at 10% positivity rate of all the test they are doing, the goal is to be at 5%, they are double that. Ms. Willard stated this fluctuates on a day-to-day basis, based on the number of people who are tested, the number that has symptoms vs. asymptomatic. She added she is not too concerned about that, three days ago they were at 5%. Chairman Settle stated they were at 5% three days ago and the Governor wants it to 5% or less to go to phase three. Ms. Willard replied yes, overall the state is at 5%, but Wilkes County is at

10% at this time. Chairman Settle asked what contributed to this increase. Ms. Willard replied they just had Labor Day weekend, folks got together and had family gatherings, they are seeing lots of household contacts and people are letting their guards down. She added they are not wearing masks, social distancing, and washing their hands, and lots of contributing factors. Vice Chairman Gambill asked if the test numbers have increased. Ms. Willard replied they have a lot of test supplies, Monday they tested 40 people and today tested 8. She added the hospital has increased their testing and the hospitalizations and bed numbers are holding steady. Ms. Willard said school is back in session as well, not that this has anything to do with any cases. She added the state showed a graph earlier today that only 10 new cases have been reported in school age children since school started.

Ms. Willard said there is one outbreak open at Westwood Hills, they have 125 cases; 50 staff, 75 residents, and 13 deaths. There is one cluster opened in an occupational setting and has 25 cases they are watching. She added they have received new guidance from the CDC since the last update, at the beginning of the pandemic if they were a close contact they were out for 14 days. Now if they are a household contact they could be asked to isolate or self-quarantine for up to 24 days depending on if they can separate from the positive case in the house. They have seen this where they have a child who cannot function without a parent if either is positive. She added that could see this if an elderly parent is in the home. Ms. Willard said they have had to issue 24 days on 10 people so far, but the range is 14 to 24 days from the CDC. She added in addition if someone was positive within the past 3 months and have been exposed to a positive they do not have to self-quarantine, they can go about their daily life unless they have symptoms.

Chairman Settle asked if there is any explaining this, folks get tested and are positive and have no clue and no idea where it came from. Ms. Willard replied no. They could have been shopping and touched a cart that was not wiped down, at a party, church, or walking the dog and come across someone that accidentally sneezed on them. She added there is no rhyme or reason why some are contracting the virus and others aren't. Chairman Settle asked if they do contract it are they building antibodies. Ms. Willard replied they are only 7 months into the virus some are testing positive, but they do not know how long the antibodies are lasting or how long their immunity may be, it could be a week, a month, or a lifetime. With more time and as science evolves they will know more. She added the CDC and State of NC is not recommending antibody testing for any course to determine immunity, they are not valid and they should not hang their hat on a positive antibody test. It does not mean they can't get COVID-19, she said.

Vice Chairman Gambill asked how are they prepping with flu season coming up very soon, this is going to be a problem. Ms. Willard replied they have the flu shots in now and are encouraging people to get the flu shots as early as possible, that is the number one way to help protect themselves. She added at the clinic they are working with their sick patients as best they can, they are not letting them in their doors yet. They are getting a rapid COVID testing machine to help them be able to see them again soon. If they test negative they will let them come in. Ms. Willard said some of the pharmacies have the flu shots available and some private practices do as well. She added they need to advocate to go get the flu shot right now. Chairman Settle asked about the rapid COVID testing machine she mentioned. Ms. Willard replied it is an antigen test, they will do a nasal swab and it takes 15 minutes for results. She added the goal is to use on

symptomatic patients only. The goal is to help the school system so they can keep kids in school, if kids have a negative test they are allowed to go back. They purchase this to help with that and to respond to an outbreak at a long term care facility, jail, Tyson, or wherever. She added they can utilize it for their patients and the general public as well. Ms. Willard said they do not have it yet and are still trying to figure out their protocols, but will have prioritized people for the test. Chairman Settle asked how reliable is it. Ms. Willard replied 99.2% based on the latest study and added it is supposed to be there next week and they are excited.

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

FIRE MARSHAL – 2020 FIREWORKS PERMIT APPLICATION – APPROVAL – Chairman Settle welcomed and recognized Niki Hamby, Fire Marshal. Mr. Handy stated he is asking for approval of a Fireworks Display for Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church on Hwy. 421 for an event on October 31, 2020. He added the application meets all the requirements of the 2010 Pyrotechnics Act and the county requirements. Mr. Hamby said they have the appropriate Certificate of Insurance and everything is in order. By statute the local Board of County Commissioners must approve this application.

Commissioner Keith Elmore made a motion to approve the 2020 Fireworks Display Permit Application for Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brian S. Minton and passed unanimously.

TAX DEPARTMENT:

1. TAX RELEASES – LISTINGS – UNCOLLECTABLE – Chris Huffman stated on behalf of Alex Hamilton, Tax Administrator he is requesting the Board to approve tax releases for listings that are uncollectable in the amount of \$461.77.

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 – Chris Huffman, Finance Officer asked the Board to approve tax releases for listings in the amount of \$24,029.97.

Vice Chairman David Gambill made a motion to approve the tax releases for listings as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brian 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 – Chris Huffman, Finance Officer asked the Board to approve tax releases for collections in the amount of \$347.19.

Commissioner Brain S. Minton 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.

PURCHASING DEPARTMENT – SALE OF SURPLUS INVENTORY – County Manager John Yates stated the Wilkes County Purchasing Department is requesting approval from the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners to sell the following surplus inventory using electronic auction method, govdeals.com:

All vehicles listed below have high mileage and in need of repairs, some minor and some with major issues:

*1997 Ford Ranger Vin., 54703 Mileage 157,310 Rec. Department
2004 Ford Crown Vic Vin., 29369 Mileage 171,717 Sheriff's Department
2004 Ford Explorer Vin., 28040 Mileage 154,733 Tax Department
2004 Ford Ranger Vin., 86594 Mileage 89953 Rec. Department
2005 Ford Expedition Vin., 56600 Mileage 171490 Sheriff Department
2008 Ford Expedition Vin., 05376 Mileage 208158 Health Department
2011 Ford Crown Vic Vin., 49565 Mileage 179356 Sheriff Department
2011 Ford Crown Vic Vin., 49566 Mileage 173923 Sheriff Department
2012 Dodge Charger Vin., 62015 Mileage 148494 Sheriff Department
2009 Dodge Motor Mileage 104,285 Asset Number 22892-M Sheriff Department
Interco Super Swamper Radial Truck Tires 371250
4 GM ¾ Ton GM Wheels and Tires
2002 Nitro Bay 1900 Center Console Mercury Brand*

Vice Chairman David Gambill made a motion to approve the sale of surplus inventory using the electronic auction method govdeals.com as requested. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brian S. Minton and unanimously approved.

ADJOURN - Motion was made by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins, seconded by Commissioner Keith Elmore and by unanimous vote adopted to adjourn the meeting of the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners at 6:37 P.M.

Sarah D. Call, Clerk

Eddie Settle, Chairman

WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Approved: October 6, 2020