

MINUTES
WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
October 1, 2019

The Wilkes County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, October 1, 2019 at 7:05 P.M. with the following members present: Chairman Gideon Keith Elmore, Vice Chairman Eddie Settle, Commissioner Gary D. Blevins, Commissioner David Gambill, and Commissioner Brian Minton.

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

Chairman Elmore welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. Chairman Elmore said they lost one of their own this week, Mr. Charles Hale was tragically killed. He was a good guy and will be missed.

INVOCATION – Commissioner David Gambill led the Invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Chairman Elmore lead the Pledge of Allegiance at this time.

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 September 17, 2019.

BUDGET AMENDMENTS/TRANSFERS – County Manager John Yates stated there are two budget amendments, No. 9 is for the Health Department and no County money. He said no. 10 is for public buildings to get them started on the Mountain View EMS base. Vice Chairman Settle asked if budget amendment No. 10 could also include a Ronda building. Mr. Yates replied yes if this is stated this in the motion. Vice Chairman Settle said three folks are at the meeting from the Ruritan Club. Chairman Elmore asked them to introduce themselves at this time. Mr. Jason Harrold, President Mountain View Ruritan Club; Mr. Greg Tharpe, Building Committee Chair; and Mr. Jerry Sidden, life-long member of the Ruritan Club was introduced. Chairman Elmore stated the location for the base in Mountain View will be in front of the Raritan Club and they appreciate them being at the meeting tonight.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman Eddie Settle to approve Budget Amendment No. 9 (Health – Programs – MESH – Health Dept. Programs – Wilkes County Health Department received a grant from The Health Foundation in the amount of \$19,700 to provide additional mental health services thru MESH unit to Wilkes County Middle School and High School students. No County money involved. Wilkes County Health Department received Cost Settlement funds from FY 2015 in the amount of \$35,328. They are requesting to utilize funds in their operating expense budget. No County money involved); and Budget Amendment No. 10 (General – Public Buildings Requesting to allocate from fund balance \$250,000 to be used for Mountain View

EMS Base Station and East Wilkes Middle School EMS Base Station in Ronda). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brian S. Minton and unanimously approved.

WILKES COUNTY LITTER COMMITTEE UPDATE – Chairman Elmore welcomed Anderia Byrd Landfill Director. Mrs. Byrd thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak on behalf of Wilkes County's new litter committee. The litter committee includes local and state officials along with volunteers from Clean Up Wilkes. The focus is on promoting the importance of litter prevention in the County, making it more aesthetically pleasing to citizens and visitors. There are 3 main parts to litter prevention: education, enforcement, and clean-up efforts. As a group the committee has agreed to first focus on education, they believe in educating the Students on the importance of litter prevention. Mrs. Byrd said students are the future and knowledge about litter prevention empowers them to make necessary positive changes now. Currently, the committee is holding a litter mascot drawing to represent the litter committee. The contest is available to all Wilkes students from kindergarten through early college, it includes public, private and homeschool students. The mascot will be utilized in press releases and promotional advertisements and the contest will end on October 18, 2019. She said there will be first, second, and third place winners that will be announced at 7:30 PM on October 25, 2019 at the Carolina West Community Commons with cash prizes awarded. This will coincide with the concert in the commons event happening that same time. Mrs. Byrd said they plan to have a booth where they will be providing promotional items such as car litter bags and information about the upcoming clean up days and locations. They will also include a fun activity called treats for trash to involve children and adults.

Mrs. Byrd said after the litter mascot has been chosen they hope to promote a litter video contest also involving all Wilkes students. Cash prizes will be awarded for first, second, and third place winners. The committee plans on promoting a Community Clean Sweep, that will be a week-long event beginning around Saturday, November 2nd and involve clean ups in different locations throughout Wilkes. A local dumpster service is willing to provide a dumpster and Wilkes Telecommunications is allowing the committee to utilize the parking area at the intersection of School Street and 268 W. Clean up efforts will focus on cove clean ups at the W. Kerr Scott Dam, Greenway clean ups, and roads throughout the county with excess litter. She added they hope to hold one community clean sweep a year. The committee has presented several other good ideas to help promote litter awareness. They are in the beginning stages now, but plan long term, on-going events to continue raising awareness on a constant issue.

In closing, Mrs. Byrd said along with the litter committee events and activities, the landfill has begun a non-profit litter collection program. The program will pay non-profit organizations \$3.00 per bag. The forms and guidelines are on the Wilkes County website under the landfill/solid waste tab. The DOT held their second biannual litter sweep from September 14-28th. She added they have Nathan Walters contracted to pick up parts of Red, White, and Blue Road and Clingman Road during the sweep as well. Mrs. Byrd said she spoke to 4-H concerning litter and raising awareness of litter and watersheds for children over the summer. They have also worked with Boy Scouts on earning their litter and recycle badges. They have had a huge amount of support from newspapers, radio stations, Wilkes Telecommunications, and other businesses in the county by displaying the litter mascot flyers. Mrs. Byrd said the Clean Up

Wilkes group is always looking for new volunteers willing to make a difference in their own community. They are hoping to get more community leaders and hold more clean ups and can be reached at cleanwupwilkes@gmail.com or on the Clean Up Wilkes Facebook page.

Chairman Elmore stated they have a member of the Litter Committee and Clean Up Wilkes group, Cindy Mittet at the meeting. Ms. Mittet stated they appreciate all the support, they have met so many people and the response has been great and everyone is willing to do what ever they can. She added having the help from the Local Government is huge and they don't mind putting in the effort and time for a great cause. Ms. Mittet said their goal is to have the cleanest county in North Carolina and said she knows they can do this and thanked the Board for their support, which has been overwhelming. Chairman Elmore stated the first time he met Ms. Mittet their group was picking up trash on Browns Ford Road and it has been a private endeavor of citizens up to this point. He added it is a great group and the committee works well together. Ms. Mittet said it is a good way to also get to know the community and their goal is to be a unit in the community. Chairman Elmore added anyone that wants to be part of this is welcome to volunteer and get in touch with Anderia Byrd and she can get them to the appropriate people.

Commission Gambill stated he was very excited to hear about this and very happy to see the effort. Chairman Elmore stated this went out to all schools and every child in the county has the opportunity to use their creative skills and come up with the mascot. Vice Chairman Settle added it is a good first step. The Chairman and Board of Commissions thanked Mrs. Byrd, the Litter Committee, Clean Up Wilkes, and Ms. Mittet for all they have done to help keep Wilkes clean of litter.

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES:

1. 2019-2020 DILIGENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PLAN –
Chairman Elmore welcomed John Blevins, DSS Director, and Hal Wilson, CPS Supervisor. Mr. Blevins said the first item is the Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan and he asked Mr. Wilson to come since this is his area and he is the expert. Mr. Wilson stated this plan is an effort for the DSS agency to continue to recruit, as last year this is to make the Board aware of their efforts to try to retain and recruit more Foster families in Wilkes County. They have been pretty successful and they work with the State on a plan to see how they can progress. Mr. Wilson said they continue to do radio and new paper advertisement, and this year added yard and information signs. They also place displays, such as the example he brought created by Megan Mathis, that are placed throughout the community to raise public awareness of the need for additional foster families. Mr. Wilson said they also have table displays throughout the community and distribute brochures, cups, pens, paper, and other items with the Agency's logo and phone number. This is all in an effort to recruit people to take care of the foster children, which is a growing need.

Mr. Wilson stated Wilkes gives an additional \$250 sign-on bonus to foster families that keep children up to a minimum of 30-days, which has been in place 4-5 years. They also pay an additional \$50 stipend above the state standard board rate for children in a foster home. Mr. Blevins added most county's do not do that and it is extremely important. Mr. Wilson said October is adoption awareness month and they had an event at the Walker Center with a great

turn out. They recognized the foster families and gave them Two River Movie Tickets and this is paid for by the federal government and does not have to come from the county. They recognize the foster families in other ways throughout the year as well. Mr. Wilson said they work with the Wilkes County Foster Parent Association and have a great relationship with them and the Foster Families. He added one of the biggest accomplishments on advertisements paid for by federal dollars are advertisements at Two Rivers and the Liberty Theater. He played one of the ads at this time for the Board. Mr. Blevins said many people see this and they have heard lots of good comments and this is one of the most impactful things they do. Mr. Wilson stated they are here to ask for approval to institute the Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan for FY July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020. He added they are very proud of the staff and what they do, they work hard and without them they would not be successful. Mr. Wilson gave the Board a sample of the recruitment bag they give out to interested families with all the information.

Commissioner David Gambill made a motion to approve the Wilkes County Department of Social Services Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan, for fiscal Year 2019-2020 as requested and presented at tonight's meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brian S. Minton and unanimously approved.

2. UPDATE – Mr. Blevins went over the monthly caseload report for August. Next, he went through the Foster Care financial report. Commissioner Gambill asked about the difference in the Medicaid transportation from July to August. Mr. Blevins replied it is reporting and year end, some of July cost were paid in August, it is also gas vouchers as well. He added this is not the only number that had this issue. Mr. Wilson stated the foster children number is down today from what is listed on the report to 218, which is a large drop and good to see. Mr. Blevins said this is due to some adoptions and the court has moved some cases along and they have been able to get some children back home as well. Mr. Blevins next went through the Adoption Services financial report, Child Development and Subsidized Child Care financial reports for August.

Mr. Wilson gave out a report for Foster Care Licensure Data from July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019. He said the report includes the following: number of home applications distributed; number of licensure applications completed; number of families MAPP trained per month; number of foster homes with the agency per month; number of foster families that left the agency per month; and number of active foster families with Wilkes DSS per month. Mr. Wilson went over the report at this time. He added they average about 33.08% foster homes. Most foster homes they lose are due to adoption which is great for the children. Their recruitment efforts are continuing and they do a good job with this and will continue to do so, he added. Chairman Elmore asked how many foster families the surrounding counties have. Mr. Blevins replied they will get this information and report back. He added as Commissioner Gambill has mentioned many times they keep about 32 foster homes, they get a few and lose a few and do all they can to increase this number and will continue to do so. Commissioner Blevins ask if foster parents can have more than one child in their home. Mr. Wilson replied yes they can have up to 5 in the home. Commissioner Blevins said the 32 homes can have far more than 32 children. He added, he has met many of these families, they do a great job at recruiting them. Mr. Wilson stated they would like to recognize the DSS staff, they do a great job and are very hard working dedicated folks and

Wilkes is very fortunate to have them. Mr. Blevins added there is no turn over, it has stopped, they are fortunate to have a good staff and be able to keep them.

Commissioner Blevins asked the status of the interface with the state's system. Mr. Blevins replied they are currently in it for intake and assessment and one of 30+ counties that are still in. Some counties have pulled out and they had the option to do this and elected to stay in. Mr. Wilson said it is a phenomenal system, it has glitches and issues, but they are in this for the long haul. They staff has taken the time to learn the system, it is an easy way to track case activities, court records, monthly contacts, participates in a family household and all this is digitalized and in the computer system. Mr. Wilkes stated they feel it will be problematic to pull out and go back to the old filing system and create more work. He added they do well and have a mobile app in the iPad and the school system has now given them access to their Wi-Fi. The Social Workers can use their iPad in the schools and it is working well. Mr. Blevins added if the state ever says they are getting out of NC Fast they would have to, but if they are going to continue it would be much harder to go back later, it is better for them to stay in.

Mr. Blevins said in closing that for two years in a row Wilkes DSS has been voted best of Wilkes for Governmental Agency. This is the results of all the employees and the great job they do and their good work, they are very proud of them.

The Board thanked Mr. Blevins and Mr. Wilson for their update and information.

HIGH COUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS – BOARD APPOINTMENT – WILKES COUNTY ADULT CARE HOME COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR LONG TERM CARE – County Manager John Yates said they received a letter from Ms. Stevie John requesting Ms. Judith Miller be appointed for a one-year term to the Wilkes County Adult Care Home Community Advisory Committee for Long Term Care. He added there are currently two vacancies on the committee and she ask to please submit Ms. Miller's name to the Board for approval. Mr. Yates stated she has completed the required Board application.

Commissioner Gary D. Blevins made a motion to approve the appointment of Ms. Judith Miller to serve on the Wilkes County Adult Care Home Community Advisory Committee for Long Term Care for a 1-year term as requested. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brian S. Minton and unanimously approved.

NORTHWESTERN REGIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY – BOARD OF TRUSTEE – APPOINTMENT – County Manager John Yates said they received a letter from Mr. E.G. "Ned" Fowler Executive Director that said Northwestern Regional Housing Authority is respectfully requesting appointment of Charlie Sink to its Board of Trustees for a five year term effective December 14, 2019 and continuing through December 13, 2024. Mr. Yates stated Mr. Sink is at the meeting this evening and his board application has been completed as well. Chairman Elmore said Mr. Sink served 12 years on the Board of Commissioners and stated they appreciate his willingness to serve. Mr. Sink stated he is glad to serve.

Vice Chairman Eddie Settle made a motion to approve the appointment of Mr. Charles Sink to the Northwestern Regional Housing Authority Board of Trustees for Wilkes County for a 5-year term beginning December 14, 2019 through December 13, 2024 as requested. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins and unanimously approved.

WILKES COUNTY RECREATION DEPARTMENT – APPROVAL OF ADVERTISEMENT FOR NEW LEASE – WILKES COUNTY REMOTE CONTROL CARE CLUB – County Attorney Tony Triplett stated this matter is before the Board to consider a new lease for the Remote Control Car Club as stated in his memo. He said Kevin Anderson, Recreation Director, Keith Bobbitt, Club President, John Yates and himself met and ironed out the details with the Car Club. Mr. Triplett said they would like to continue with what they have been doing, this lease began in 2006. He added this is very popular and brings folks in from other places to race remote control cars. The previous lease expired August 31, 2019. Mr. Triplett said before the Board is a proposal for a 3-year sublease agreement for them to continue to use the space at Lowes Park at Rivers Edge with no changes. He added, they have received their insurance certificate and they have met all the requirements.

Mr. Triplett said it is simply before the Board today as part of a two-step process; the first step is to authorize the publication of a notice in the newspaper. He stated the way this process works is it has to be published for thirty days that the Board intends to render this lease, the public notice goes in the paper, and then at the next meeting following the 30 days the Board of Commissioners could approve the new lease if that is the desire. Mr. Triplett stated there is a specific Motion that is needed when the Board is ready.

Commissioner David Gambill made motion to publish notice, pursuant to G.S. §153A-176 and G.S. §160A-272, of the intent of the Board of Commissioners to enter into a Sublease Agreement between Wilkes County (as sublessor) and Wilkes County Remote Control Car Club (as sublessee) for a portion of Lowe’s Park at River’s Edge as described in the Sublease Agreement presented at tonight’s meeting, with the County Attorney to present a Resolution for final approval of the Sublease Agreement at the next meeting of the Board of Commissioners following the expiration of thirty (30) days after the date of publication of the required notice. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins and unanimously approved.

ADJOURN - Motion was made by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins, seconded by Commissioner David Gambill by unanimous vote adopted to adjourn the meeting of the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners at 7:49 P.M.

Sarah D. Call, Clerk

Gideon Keith Elmore, Chairman

WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Approved: October 15, 2019