

MINUTES
WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
November 7, 2017

PUBLIC HEARING – ROAD NAME REQUEST – LAZY BEAR LANE, JOBS CABIN TOWNSHIP – Chairman Greg Minton declared the Public Hearing open regarding the Road Name Request for Lazy Bear Lane at 10:02 A.M. on Tuesday, November 7, 2017 with the following members present: Chairman Greg Minton, Vice Chairman Gary D. Blevins, Commissioner Keith Elmore, and Commissioner Eddie Settle.

Also present were Tony Triplett, County Attorney; John Yates, County Manager; Eddie Barnes, Planning Director; and Sarah Call, Clerk to the Board.

Chairman Minton asked if anyone would like to speak regarding the proposed Road Name Requests. Hearing no comments on the proposed Road Name Requests for Lazy Bear Lane, Chairman Greg Minton declared the Public Hearing closed at 10:02 A.M.

The Wilkes County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, November 7, 2017 at 10:03 A.M. with the following members present: Chairman Greg Minton, Vice Chairman Gary D. Blevins, Commissioner Keith Elmore, and Commissioner Eddie Settle.

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

Chairman Greg Minton welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION – Commissioner Eddie Settle led the Invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Chairman Greg Minton led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Motion was made by Commissioner Keith Elmore, seconded by Vice Chairman Gary D. Blevins and unanimously adopted to approve the Minutes of the Board meeting held on October 17, 2017.

BUDGET AMENDMENTS/TRANSFERS – Motion was made by Commissioner Eddie Settle to approve Budget Amendment No. 5 (Health Programs – MPA Grant – AH – CH – FP – Wilkes County Health Department received an Office of Rural Health MPA grant in the amount of \$82,640 to provide additional patient care for uninsured and/or underinsured Family Planning, Child Health, and MESH patients); and Budget Amendment No. 6 (General Fund – Emergency Management – Budgeting for a new Homeland Security Grant from the NC Dept. of Public Safety. This grant is to be used in equipment purchases, planning, training and exercise activities to improve response and preparedness to emergencies. Also, budgeting for the sale of equipment purchased with grant funds to purchase a trailer to be used for emergencies.) The motion was seconded by Commissioner Keith Elmore and unanimously approved.

WILKES COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE – REVERSE 911 SYSTEM – SERVICE AGREEMENT – Chairman Minton welcomed and recognized Logan Kerr, Wilkes County Sheriff's Office. Mr. Kerr thanked the Board and stated Tony Triplett has reviewed the Service Agreement with Airbus for the Reverse 911 system. Mr. Triplett noted he has reviewed the agreement and thanked Mr. Kerr and David Carson for getting this to him for review. He said Airbus made the changes he recommended and it is now ready for approval. Commissioner Elmore asked if this would have helped during the recent storm. Mr. Kerr replied it would have been extremely helpful, especially the few hours following the storm, this could have been utilized to let people know safety tips, power outages, road closures, and more. Commissioner Elmore asked if this system will work with cell phones. Mr. Kerr replied yes it can, and with the tornado incident recently it would have allowed them to use the FEMA notification system and they could have touched everyone in the area for the tornado warning and other emergencies. Commissioner Settle asked if power lines are down can it be used to inform fire departments of this issue, as a Mtn. View Fireman lost his life due to power lines on a building that he was not aware of. Mr. Kerr replied it can be used to alert anyone in that area that a line is down. He added they now use a system called page gate that works with the CAD system and fireman are alerted of specific calls that notify them if lines are down, or structure fire, etc. via text message. They also page them out through the normal radio system for calls as well, he added.

Mr. Triplett said this sounds like a great system, but he wanted to remind the Board as mentioned at the last meeting, this is a five year contract. It will be billed once per year for five years, if the County wants out they still have to pay for the full five years. Chairman Minton stated systems like this have been in place for more than 20 years and as technology improves it becomes cheaper and more effective and efficient and the County needs to grow. Commissioner Settle added if one life is saved it is worth it, there is no price that can be placed on that. Commissioner Elmore asked if other counties locally used this system. Mr. Kerr replied yes Iredell and Caldwell both use the Airbus system.

Vice Chairman Blevins stated all the Volunteer Fire Fighters, First Responders, and Citizens of Wilkes County were quick to respond with chain saws. They took action and got involved with cleaning up and clearing roads. He added due to the quick action from the emergency folks and citizens in the communities it calmed the situation down and within 24 hours it was at a manageable point. Vice Chairman Blevins said the Board of Commissioners and everyone at the County appreciates what the Volunteer Fire Departments, Individual Citizens, and Emergency Personnel did in this situation, it was an outstanding effort by all parties. He added everyone stepped up and did a great job. Chairman Minton added it is not over, now and for the next few months they will be working in the assessment phase and trying to log and identify all the damage. John Yates added the State is in town today taking tours and looking at damage. Chairman Minton added under the State of Emergency that was declared, they are logging all the damage and work, which was massive.

Commissioner Keith Elmore made a motion to approve the Service Agreement with Airbus DS Communication for the Reverse 911 System for a term of five years, as presented. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Gary D. Blevins and unanimously approved.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT:

1. ROAD NAME REQUEST – LAZY BEAR LANE – JOBS CABIN TOWNSHIP – Planning Director Eddie Barnes stated a Public Hearing was held earlier this evening to receive public input on a proposed Road Name Request for Lazy Bear Lane in Jobs Cabin Township, with no opposition. He stated this request meets the requirements of the Wilkes County Road Naming Ordinance and a ten-day notification period has been met. He stated the Planning Department has not received any comments opposing the Road Name Request. This will also serve as an emergency fire road and another access point to the back side of Buck Mountain which has been needed for many years, it will serve about 300 homes, he added.

Commissioner Keith Elmore made a motion to approve the Road Name Request for Lazy Bear Lane as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Eddie Settle and unanimously approved.

2. REQUEST TO SET PUBLIC HEARING – ROAD NAME REQUEST – LONESOME DOVE TRAIL – Eddie Barnes, Planning Director asked the Board of Commissioners to set a Public Hearing on a Road Name Request received by petition to the Planning Department. He stated the Road Name Request is for Lonesome Dove Trail, Boomer Township; the request meets the requirements of the Wilkes County Road Naming Ordinance and as required by the Wilkes County Road Naming Ordinance a Public Hearing and a ten day (10) notification period is required.

Vice Chairman Gary D. Blevins made a motion to set a Public Hearing on Tuesday, December 5, 2017 at 10:00 A.M. with the meeting to immediately follow regarding the Road Name Request as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Keith Elmore and unanimously approved.

3. CARBON CREDIT CONTRACT WITH APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY – Eddie Barnes, Planning Director said the contract that has been worked out with Appalachian State University Energy Center and County of Wilkes in which the County Attorney has also reviewed it is in the packets. He added the ASU attorney has also reviewed it. Mr. Barnes asked for the Boards consideration of the contract between Appalachian State University and County of Wilkes. He added approval of the contract will allow ASU Energy Center to purchase carbon credits from the Landfill gas project at the Germantown Landfill. This project has produced electricity as well as destroying carbon credits since July 2012. Mr. Barnes said ASU Energy Center purposes to purchase the credits at a price of \$4.44 per carbon ton and it has been estimated that 1733.4 tons has been produced thus far. This will be purchased by ASU for \$7,700, and Carbon offset credit produced after the approval of this contract will also be purchase at the price of \$4.44. He added the contract can be terminated by either party with 30-days notification. Mr. Barnes said if approve the contract will be effective as of today's day, it will expire December 31, 2018 and can be renewed if approved by both parties.

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Chairman Minton asked Mr. Triplett if he has reviewed and approved the contract. Mr. Triplett replied yes, he made a few changes and the attorney for ASU has reviewed and approved those. Vice Chairman Blevins stated this is methane gas that would seep out of the landfill, it is being collected and utilized. Mr. Barnes replied yes, the contract requires that the methane gas is destroyed in order to receive the carbon credit, which could be with a flare that burns off the gas, or through the engine. They currently produce electricity and either method is fine under the contract. He added it would become a greenhouse gas if not destroyed. Commissioner Elmore asked the cost to the County. Mr. Barnes replied there is no cost to the county, if they are not producing carbon credit nothing is being received, there are no cost incurred because no equipment is being used. He added the \$7,700 comes from credits already destroyed since 2012, that project was initiated from a grant by the State Energy Office in 2011-2012. The County does have maintenance cost at the facility, but that has been offset by the production of electricity and credits from Duke Energy. Mr. Barnes stated they normally spend about \$10K in maintenance for the engine and structures, but normally they generate about \$12K to \$14K in credit from Duke Power annually. If it is not running it is not costing anything, if it is running it is earning credit with Duke Energy, he added. Mr. Barnes said at this time it is down for maintenance and has been for a while the engine had to be rebuilt, when it runs, it does run 24 hours continuous unless down for maintenance.

Commissioner Elmore asked if the county is responsible for the maintenance of the equipment and operations. He added he was looking through the contract and it stated the county is responsible for hiring McGee Environmental, Eric McGee and Drew Steury as contractors that provide services. Mr. Barnes replied these were contacts, there is no contract with them and the county, only if needed or called upon and they are paid an hourly wage. Commissioner Elmore asked if the county would be required to replace an engine. Mr. Barnes replied not under this contract, basically it says if Wilkes produces carbon ASU will buy it, but there is no commitment by the county to produce. Vice Chairman Blevins said the other option is to flare it off with very little cost. Mr. Barnes replied that is correct. Vice Chairman stated on the point made by Commissioner Elmore if the cost increases, or the electricity created does not pay for the cost or the carbon credits go down it needs to be looked at and monitored. Mr. Barnes replied he does not think this situation will happen, the equipment has already been purchased and actually the \$7,700 is a gift. ASU is doing this voluntarily as a good will effort for a local community. He added ASU wants to be a green community and are buying these credits which there is no market for because the prices have deflated. Mr. Barnes stated he will take responsibility to monitor this project to make sure it is not a cost to the county.

Commissioner Keith Elmore made a motion to approve the Master Carbon Offset Purchase and Sale Agreement with Appalachian State University effective November 7, 2017 through December 31, 2018, as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Eddie Settle and unanimously approved.

TAX DEPARTMENT:

1. TAX RELEASES – LISTING – Chairman Minton recognized Alex Hamilton, Tax Administrator. Mr. Hamilton asked the Board to approve tax releases for listing in the amount of \$2,472.60.

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

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

2. TAX RELEASES – COLLECTIONS – Mr. Hamilton asked the Board to approve tax releases for collections in the amount of \$127.36.

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

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

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES – UPDATE – Chairman Minton recognized John Blevins, DSS Director. Mr. Blevins said first he wanted to mention the coffee mugs on the Commissioners desk. The agency got these with the adoption assistance money, they have been fortunate to do more adoptions than the baseline and received extra funds and this is a great way to advertise the program. Chairman Minton thanked Mr. Blevins.

Mr. Blevins next briefly went over the monthly caseload report for September and the Foster Care financial report. He stated the CPS Foster care has gone down to 212, which they are very happy to see. Mr. Blevins also went over Adoption Services financial report, Child Development and Subsidized Child Care financial reports. He said child care dropped which is good, but the overages from the prior months is an NC Fast issue and they have less control of the funds. The bad news is the funds were cut by almost \$200,000 for this year. Mr. Blevins stated they still cannot add anyone including the foster children, but as the ones that are on now come off this will level out by end of fiscal year. He added if they add anyone to subsidy and they run out of money in this line, they cannot be removed due to lack of funds. The county will have to cover this. Mr. Blevins said they have to be very careful with daycare funding and watch this carefully.

Chairman Minton stated the past three months they went over and this total is almost one month funding and if the overpayments and underpayments cancel out this will cut things close. Vice Chairman Blevins asked if someone wants to apply for subsidized childcare do they come to DSS. Mr. Blevins replied yes they come to DSS and they will determine if they qualify and if they do they are added to the waiting list. He added when an opening comes up they start calling from the top of the list until it is filled. Vice Chairman Blevins asked how daycares are paid. Mr. Blevins replied when they swipe their card it is paid directly to the providers from the state.

Chairman Minton said if the Board needs to send a letter to the legislature to inquire on the status of the overages and time it is taking for NC Fast to work this out, they can do this. Commissioner Elmore asked about eligibility requirements for daycare. Mr. Blevins replied they still do all of this and recertify them, and check attendance. They do everything except control the payments and funds. He added this along with the cut in funding of almost \$200,000 has created this problem. Vice Chairman Blevins said it is their responsibility to meet and talk with the state about this issue these young children need to be taken care of and looked after. Commissioner Settle asked when the county would have to step in and cover this. Mr. Blevins replied if they add folks on the subsidy and get to the end of the year and run out of funds, they can't just take them off, the county has to cover it. Commissioner Elmore added they can draft a letter to their Representatives stating these problems. Mr. Blevins said adding the \$200,000 back to the subsidy would help. Chairman Minton said they do not have control over this, but they can ask for efficiencies with the NC Fast issues which will help everyone to become more efficient and know where they stand. He added as others have said the Children should not have to suffer due to this cut. Vice Chairman Blevins said this is one of the largest responsibilities the government has. Commissioner Elmore stated the parents want to work, but can't afford to work due to day care cost without these subsidies, and this affects everyone. He added the Representatives need to be aware of these issues.

Mr. Blevins went over the CPS Foster Care monthly report for September. Next he briefly reviewed the highlights of the DSS Agency Brochure for 2016-2017 in the packets. The last item he went over is the is Child welfare deployment schedule, Wilkes is in Group 4 which has been backed up two months and now set for May 2018. Mr. Blevins said they had a 2-day training last month with the state, and DSS has the money set aside for the iPads they will need in CPS, they will next need to look into getting scanners for these folks. He added they are getting ready to purchase scanners for all Medicaid now, they have to scan everything into NC Fast. Mr. Blevins said next fiscal year they will need iPads and scanners for Foster Care and are working on identifying the equipment needed to get it all included for the next FY budget.

Mr. Blevins said Ryland's Law, House Bill 630 will begin in FY 2018-2019 and Counties will have to enter into contracts with DHHS. Yesterday they received an excel file with all the potential contracts and questions, this will be really hard for all counties to get their hands around. He added this will include every program except Medicaid, it will have its own separate reports card that is a pass or fail. Mr. Blevins said FY 2019-2020 will be a trail period to get use to the contracts and in FY 2020-2021 it will be fully effective. Vice Chairman Blevins said this will regionalize the supervision of the agencies and add another level. He stated if they are not up to the standard these folks think is needed they will send in contractors to oversee the agency. Mr. Blevins agreed and noted this will happen only if a county fails.

Commissioner Settle asked in reference to the brochure, DSS sees an average of 651 people per day, how many of these are legal US citizens. Mr. Blevins replied the vast majority are, they have very few to come in that are illegal or ineligible or don't have the proper green card. It is a small number and they get calls and asked about this frequently, it is very few, the majority are Citizens he added. Chairman Minton asked if they have seen an increase in poverty, in his research he has found it is going up. Mr. Blevins agreed. Chairman Minton said it is

counterintuitive job are there, people are employed, but poverty is increasing. Vice Chairman Blevins stated that also shows up in the increase of family Medicaid that increased by 500 last year. Mr. Blevins agreed.

The Board thanked Mr. Blevins for his update.

N.C. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION – ROAD MAINTENANCE – BRANCH STREET – County Manager John Yates said they received a letter for the Department of Transportation. It stated they *recently received a petition form SR-1 requesting consideration of the addition of Branch Street to the State Maintenance system. It is required that County Commissioners demonstrate approval of this process. After the approval is sent back to their District Office, property information research, along with road investigation will follow.*

Motion was made by Vice Chairman Gary D. Blevins, seconded by Commissioners Keith Elmore and unanimously adopted to approve the Road Petition for Branch Street to be added to the State Maintenance System as presented and requested.

TOWN OF WILKESBORO – DUKE POWER EASEMENTS – Mr. Triplett stated this item should be ready by the next meeting.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman Gary D. Blevins to table the Town of Wilkesboro Duke Power Easements until the next meeting, November 21, 2017. The Motion was seconded by Commissioners Keith Elmore and unanimously approved.

CLOSED SESSION – Motion was made by Commissioner Keith Elmore to go into closed session under Section 143-318.11(a)(5) of the North Carolina General Statutes to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee, known as the personnel exception; and under Section 143-318.11(a)(3) of the North Carolina General Statute to consult with the Board's attorney to protect the attorney-client privilege. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Gary D. Blevins and unanimously approved.

Motion was made by Commissioner Keith Elmore, seconded by Vice Chairman Gary D. Blevins and by unanimous vote adopted to adjourn back into regular session. No action was taken in the closed session.

ADJOURN - Motion was made by Commissioner Keith Elmore, seconded by Vice Chairman Gary. D. Blevins and by unanimous vote adopted to adjourn the meeting of the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners at 11:45 A.M.

Sarah D. Call, Clerk

Gregory A. Minton, Chairman

WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Approved: