MINUTES
WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
January 21, 2020

PUBLIC CONCERNS – None

The Wilkes County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, January 21, 2020 at 6:07 P.M. with the following members present: Chairman Eddie Settle, Vice Chairman David Gambill, and Commissioner Gary D. Blevins.

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. Chairman Settle stated Commissioner Keith Elmore could not attend the meeting tonight, he is in the hospital and they wish him a speedy recovery. He added Brain Minton could not attend the meeting tonight because he had a death in the family. Chairman Settle asked everyone to remember them during the invocation.

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 Vice Chairman David Gambill and unanimously adopted to approve the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on January 7, 2020.

BUDGET AMENDMENTS/TRANSFERS – Motion was made by Vice Chairman David Gambill to approve Budget Amendment No. 21 (General – Sheriff – The Board of Education applied for and received an additional grant that funded another school resource officer through a school safety grant by the state of North Carolina. This grant is a matching grant which requires 25% of local funding ($17,501) to be matched, the state has allotted the amount of $33,333 in efforts to help fund a salary for a school resource officer. This school resource officer would be added to aid Wilkes County Schools in efforts to secure the elementary schools. Currently they have 1 school resource officer that roves around to all elementary schools with the assistance of the assigned school resource officers at the middle and high schools. With adding an additional school resource officer the Wilkes County Sheriff's office would be able to divide the elementary schools in a geographical manner that would be more conducive to services being met in a timely manner); and Budget Amendment No. 22 (Health – Programs – Wilkes County Women's Circle program received funds from the Health Foundation in the amount of $1,146.66 to provide seven screening mammograms for underinsured/uninsured women and one ultrasound for underinsured/uninsured women in Wilkes County. No county money involved. Wilkes County Health Department received $3,098.10 from the Health Foundation to provide additional services for underinsured/uninsured Child Health patients. No county money involved. Wilkes

County MESH unit received $700 addition funds from private donations for the MESH unit to provide services to Wilkes County middle and high school students. No county money involved); and Budget Amendment No. 23 (General – Fire – Requesting a one-time allocation from the Fund Balance in the amount of $20,000 to be used for the Fireman's Association Training House). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins and unanimously approved.

MULBERRY SCHOOL SEWER PROJECT UPDATE – CDBG REPORT – Chairman Settle welcomed and recognized Kelly Coffee, Senior Planner High Country Council of Governments. Mr. Coffee stated he would like to provide a brief administrative report and an update on the construction. He said CDBG rules required that they report the following information to the Governing Board:

- *Since the project began, the County has received no complaints relevant to the Section 504/Americans With Disabilities Act.*
- *The County has received no Fair Housing complaints since the project began.*
- *To date, no one with Limited English Proficiency has requested translation assistance.*

Mr. Coffee said he talked with the Foreman Friday, in sewer projects there are three main components, the force main, gravity line, and pump station. They said almost all of the force main is installed. He added the plans call for 14,500 fee and all is done except 1,000 feet. They will start on the gravity line at the first of next month, it is 2,500 feet and should be done quickly. Mr. Coffee said the pump station has already been installed at the school and the electrical is being completed now. He stated the contract deadline for the project is June 19, 2020, the contractor expects to be done in mid-March. Mr. Coffee said with it being winter he is not counting on that, but the bottom line is it should be done before the contract date and well before school states back in the fall. He added it is always good to report progress and they have been an excellent company to work with, always friendly and provides anything he needs for the CDBG program.

The Board thanked Mr. Coffee for the update and for all the help from the Planning Department at the High Country Council of Governments.

BLUE RIDGE OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION (BROC) – COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT (CSBG) – EMERGECY ASSISTANCE – FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY – BUDGET FOR FY 2020-2021 – Chairman Settle welcomed and recognized Dare Stromer, Executive Director and Stacey Howell, Community Services Block Grant Program Assistant. Ms. Howell stated CSBG requires them to report to local governments how they plan to spend the Community Service Block Grant money. She said they will use the OEM form 210 and 212 and have two programs to go over. Ms. Howell briefly went over the Emergency Assistance Project form 210 at this time. She said the objective of the Emergency Assistance Program is to adequately respond to 3,701 emergency assistance requests by June 30, 2022 and they plan to do 1,075 per year. Ms. Howell next went over OEM form 212 and said the CSBG funds for the project is $156,459. She also went over the one-year work program and

said the target number of participant families served is 1,075, for a three year total of 3,701. The implementation schedule is also included which sets out what they will do each quarter.

Ms. Howell next went over the Family Self-Sufficiency Program and OEM form 210 and 212. She said their objective is to provide support and comprehensive services for program participants to develop skills and increase income so that 5 may rise above poverty income guidelines by June 30, 2021, which will be a total of 15 for a three year period. She briefly went over the OEM form 212 and said the funds received from this project are $88,008 and they expect to serve 19 families this year. Ms. Howell said the implementation schedule sets out how many they will assist per quarter. The last page has an outcome measure for the program that she went over. Ms. Stromer added they are here to serve the people and make a difference in their lives and the folks at BROC do a great job.

Commissioner Gary D. Blevins made a motion to approve the Application for Blue Ridge Opportunity Commission Community Services Block Grant for FY 2020-2021 for Emergency Assistance and Family Self-Sufficiency Programs as presented. Motion was seconded by Vice Chairman David Gambill and unanimously approved.

The Board thanked Mrs. Stromer and Ms. Howell for their service to the community and all they do at BROC.

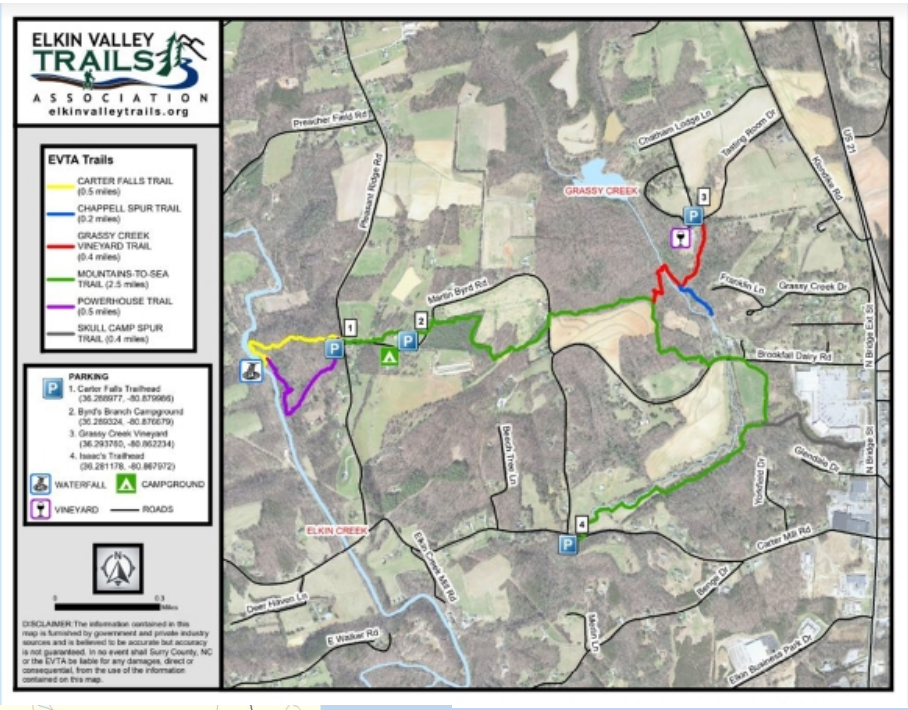
ELKIN VALLEY TRAILS ASSOCIATION – CARTER FALLS BRIDGE – UDATE – Chairman Settle recognized and welcomed Dr. Bill Blackley, Bob Hillyer, and Joe Mickey. Mr. Hillyer said they wanted to provide an update on what has been done at Carter Falls and what they have planned for the future. He went over the below slides at this time.

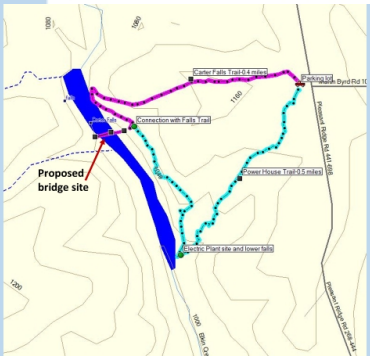





The lower falls







What the bridge might look like (220' suspension bridge in Waxhaw, NC)



Mr. Hillyer went over the background and work up to this point and said they plan to build a 240 feet suspension bridge across the falls that they are calling The Bridge of Dreams. He added they will host a public meeting in Elkin on February 20th for anyone that would like to participate. Mr. Hillyer and Mr. Mickey went over the details for the bridge and the trails as shown on the maps. Mr. Hillyer said they are kicking off the Bridge of Dreams on February 20th with a fundraiser to help pay for the bridge, that will be in addition to what they have already raised. They plan to come back to Wilkes once they know the cost to ask for help to fund it and/or for donors that may donate to the project. EVTA mentioned several things they have done that has been an economic engine for this area and they expect it to continue to grow. Mr. Hillyer said they hope the bridge will be built sometime this year. Chairman Settle asked how much will the bridge cost. Mr. Hillyer replied about $250,000 to $300,000, but that does not include the approaches. They went over details about the bridge construction and what that would include. He added with the help of Derek Goddard, they have received a grant of $150,000 and have raised other funds to help with this project.

Dr. Blackley gave the Board a summary of EVTA initiatives in 2019 at this time and they briefly mentioned some of the projects they have completed. The Bridge is their largest project and will have the biggest impact. EVTA mentioned rental cabins, campgrounds, and outfitters on the river that have opened and grown since 2011when they began helping with the tails at Stone Mountain, Carter Falls, and the Mountain-to-Sea trails. They stated the Over Mountain Victory Trail has been designated as a State trail for the first time, it will get some attention. The State and Federal with both now work on this trail. In closing they said they had over 4,600 volunteer hours on the trails last year.

The Board thanked Elkin Valley Trails Association for all their work on this project and all the trails they help with.

WILKES COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE:

1. REQUEST FOR SERVICE WEAPON AND BADGE AWARD TO RETIREE – SERGEANT M. ANDREW GAILLARD – Chairman Settle said Sergeant M. Andrew Gaillard will be retiring with 25 years in law enforcement service. Vice Chairman Gambill added there have been several retiring lately with a lot of experience that the Sheriff and County is losing. They would like to present the service weapon and badge to Mr. Gaillard in accordance with General Statute 20-187.2 to turn over an Officers service weapon and badge upon retirement and asked the county to turn over his service weapon and badge to him.

Vice Chairman David Gambill made a motion to approve the badge and service weapon worn and/or carried by Sergeant M. Andrew Gaillard be awarded upon his retirement, as requested and presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins and unanimously approved.

WHEREAS, G.S. 20-187.2 provides that retiring members of county law enforcement agencies may receive, at the time of their retirement, the badge worn or carried by them during their service with the county; and

WHEREAS, G.S. 20-187.2 further provides that the governing body of the county law enforcement agency may, in its discretion, award to a retiring member the service sidearm of such retiring member; and

WHEREAS, Sergeant M. Andrew Gaillard served as a member of the Wilkes County Sheriff's Office until he reached a period of 25-years in law enforcement; and

NOT, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners that the badge and service weapon worn and/or carried by Sergeant M. Andrew Gaillard (SN: 47A197250 Sig Sauer Legion 226) be awarded to his on the occasion of his retirement.

ADOPTED this, the 21st day of January 2020.

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Sheriff, Wilkes County *Clerk to the Board, Wilkes County*

2. REQUEST FOR SERVICE WEAPON AND BADGE AWARD TO RETIREE – LIEURENANT JOVEN GREENE – Chairman Settle said Lieutenant Joven Greene will be retiring with after 28 years in law enforcement service. They would like to present the service weapon and badge to Mr. Greene in accordance with General Statute 20-187.2 to turn over an Officers service weapon and badge upon retirement and asked the county to turn over his service weapon and badge to him.

Commissioner Gary D. Blevins made a motion to approve the badge and service weapon worn and/or carried by Lieutenant Joven Greene be awarded upon his retirement, as requested and presented. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman David Gambill and unanimously approved.

WHEREAS, G.S. 20-187.2 provides that retiring members of county law enforcement agencies may receive, at the time of their retirement, the badge worn or carried by them during their service with the county; and

WHEREAS, G.S. 20-187.2 further provides that the governing body of the county law enforcement agency may, in its discretion, award to a retiring member the service sidearm of such retiring member; and

WHEREAS, Sergeant M. Andrew Gaillard served as a member of the Wilkes County Sheriff's Office until he reached a period of 25-years in law enforcement; and

NOT, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners that the badge and service weapon worn and/or carried by Sergeant M. Andrew Gaillard (SN: 47A197250 Sig Sauer Legion 226) be awarded to his on the occasion of his retirement.

ADOPTED this, the 21st day of January 2020.

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Sheriff, Wilkes County

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Clerk to the Board, Wilkes County

WILKES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION – UPDATE – Chairman Settle recognized and welcomed LeeAnn Nixon, EDC President. Ms. Nixon thanked the Board for allowing her to come and provide an update. She said they focus on three key areas: taking care of existing business; facilitator for marketing and recruiting new businesses to Wilkes County; and working on real estate development of buildings and sites with brokers and developers to move each property forward for growth. They work to take care of the larger corporations they have and also are very supportive of their entrepreneurs and small business in many ways throughout the year.

Ms. Nixon stated they have had 32 opportunities through request for information or direct contact with businesses that are thinking of growing or expanding. She added 16 were active at the end of 2019. She stated they missed opportunities on 8 occasions, and of the 16, 10 are new

businesses looking at Wilkes and 6 are existing that want to grow. She went over the breakdown on the missed opportunities and what they were looking for. Chairman Settle said unemployment is 3.5%, and asked what is the likelihood that the businesses they missed on would come to Wilkes. She said if they had a building or site in the size they were looking for they could submit that and have the opportunity to get them to come to Wilkes and look. Ms. Nixon said since they don't have the building they don't get out of the gate at all on these requests. She added it is positive that existing companies are wanting to grown, but they have a hard time because they have no inventory for new businesses to come to look at.

Commissioner Blevins asked what about the flat land in North Wilkesboro where the American Drew use to be. Ms. Nixon replied most industry's want to be right off an interstate or a 4 lane highway for their trucks. Most do not want to be downtown, that area is great for an office complex, flex space, apartments, town homes, medical, Rose Glenn, Banks and things similar to what is there currently. She added she is excited that most of their activity is coming from direct calls to the EDC and folks know they are there to help. The partner referrals and broker referrals have both increased as well. Ms. Nixon briefly went over the existing business activity, their program of work study which is their plan of work as found in the packet. She described their new website they rolled out and the new software and features it has which they received great feedback on. Ms. Nixon went over several of the things they have participated in and that they will be doing in the future. She mentioned what they are doing to help the employees that may be laid off to find jobs. They have had lots of employers that want to attend a job fair with these folks that has openings and want to hire them, which is good news.

Chairman Settle stated he would like to try to do something with the race track and would like the EDC to help with this. It is an asset and they need to work with Bruton Smith and see what can be done, such as hosting music events and other things. Ms. Nixon agreed, and added there has been some filming recently and has been some activity. Chairman Settle said they need to drive this and work on it. Commissioner Blevins said they have met with Marcus Smith in the past, Bruton's son, it would be a stretch, but could also help the airport if they could get something going there.

Commissioner Blevins said there has been lots of talk in the paper recently that there are two small towns that coexist in the county. It mentions the history and condition of the towns. Commissioner Blevins asked would it stimulate the economy, create greater economic activity, or more prosperity if the two towns were more closely connected as a single entity, would it be beneficial. Ms. Nixon replied collaboration is always good, they see that happening with the Town Mangers talking and working together as well and all the Commissioners. They will always accomplish more by working together. She added as far as the articles and whether or not that is the right path she will stay neutral and support the wishes of the County and Towns.

Commissioner Blevins asked if the EDC Board supports a study. Chairman Settle replied he is not on the EDC Board, but he recently met with a developer that mentioned a study of the two towns consolidating services or consolidating in to one. He added the developer talks to companies looking to relocate and they see 4,500 here and 3,500 there, it is a hindrance. If there were united to 8,000 it may help to bring in economic development. Chairman Settle said they

to have a study for consolidation, UNC School of Government could help. Commissioner Blevins said this just happened in Princeton, New Jersey they brought in a consulting firm to help with how to structure it over a period of time with representation being worked out. He added he thinks that was one of the largest reasons they don't have the water intake, the county could not do anything about it. Commissioner Blevins said it is time to move forward and do something about this situation, the two towns are going to have to step up and move forward as one entity. He hopes the EDC will step up and try to look at this. Chairman Settle said in Princeton, New Jersey they did that, it cut taxes by 5%, consolidated services and through attrition over a period of time one will retire and it would work. Commissioner Blevins added it makes sense. The boundary should not exist, it is holding Wilkes County back.

Ms. Nixon said in looking at the EDC mission that may not fit with what the EDC does, as to whether the two towns should merge. They focus on job creation, increasing the tax base, and bring in industry. She added if both towns give money for the study that would show buy in, which they would need. Ms. Nixon stated maybe the County, Towns, and EDC could consider this from many avenues and all help pay for it. Chairman Settle stated he was approached this week about this, it is about doing what is right for the citizens, a study is not asking for a lot. Commissioner Blevins said they can step up, buy in, and shake things up, and the EDC will have to play a role in it. Chairman Settle stated the Commissioners get hit hard on this, normally they don't get involved in town issues, but the towns are the center and hub of the county. A consolidating study is the way to go to at least see what it says they should consider doing. Ms. Nixon said they can all discuss it together.

Chairman Settle and the Board thanked Ms. Nixon for her update, the hard work, and good job they do at EDC.

N.C. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION – ROAD MAINTENACE APPROVAL – CHASE LANE, MILLERS CREEK – County Manager John Yates stated they received a letter from David Poindexter, District Engineer with the Department of Transportation. It said they received a petition (form SR-1) requesting consideration of the addition of Chase Lane to the State Maintenance System. This is in the Millers Crossing Subdivision in Millers Creek. He added Commissioner approval is needed before DOT will consider adding this street to the State Maintenance System.
Motion was made by Vice Chairman David Gambill, seconded by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins and unanimously adopted to approve the N.C. DOT Road Petition for Chase Lane to be added to the State Maintenance System as presented and requested.

COMMISSIONERS' SCHEDULED MEETING – FEBRUARY 18, 2020 – CHANGE OF LOCATION – Mr. Yates stated due to early voting the Board needs to change the location of their February 18, 2020 regular meeting. He stated the Ag Center Meeting room has been reserved if this is the pleasure of the Board. Mr. Yates stated John Cothren will present the Report to the People and provide dinner to the Board beginning at 5:00 PM on February 18, 2020 at the Ag Center before the regular meeting at 6:00 PM.

Commissioner Gary D. Blevins made a motion to move the location of the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting scheduled on Tuesday, February 18, 2020 at 6:00 P.M. to the Wilkes County Agricultural Center located at 416 Executive Drive, Wilkesboro, N.C. Dinner will be provided at 5:00 P.M. along with the Report to the People from John Cothren, Wilkes County Co-Operative Extension Director. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman David Gambill and unanimously approved.

COMMISSIONERS' SCHEDULED MEETING – CHANGE OF DATE – MARCH 3, 2020 – Mr. Yates stated due the primary election the Board needs to change the date of their March 3, 2020 regular meeting. He asked the pleasure of the Board on the proposed new date of Thursday, March 5, 2020 at 6:00 P.M.

Vice Chairman David Gambill made a motion to move the date of the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting scheduled for Tuesday, March 3, 2020 at 6:00 P.M. to Thursday, March 5, 2020 at 6:00 P.M. in the Commissioners Meeting Room located at 110 North Street, Wilkesboro, N.C. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins and unanimously approved.

OLD BUSINESS – Commissioner Gambill said he asked Kevin Bounds to come to the meeting to talk about the contribution to the Fire Safety House and asked if he would like to add anything. Mr. Bounds said last night the Board of Directors at the Fireman's Association met. He added they started this process in 2016 raising money to replace the house that they have been without for 4 years. Mr. Bounds said the cost has gone from $57,000 to $82,000. He said they have now raised the $82,000 with the donation the Board of Commissioner approved earlier, and the house will be ordered this week. Mr. Bounds stated on behalf of the Fireman's Association, Safe Kids and everybody else they appreciate what the Board has done.

ADJOURN - Motion was made by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins, seconded by Chairman Eddie Settle and by unanimous vote adopted to adjourn the meeting of the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners at 7:30 P.M.

Sarah D. Call, Clerk Eddie Settle, Chairman

WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Approved: February 4, 2020