

**MINUTES
WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
April 16, 2019**

PUBLIC CONCERNS – DAN HUFFMAN – CATHERINE H. BARBER MEMORIAL SHELTER, INC. – Mr. Huffman thanked the board and said he is joined by Mary Smith, her mother was Catherine Barber that started the shelter in 1981, 31 years ago. He added their mission is an overnight temporary homeless shelter, open 7 days a week, 365 days per year, on a \$45,000 annual budget. The reason they are here is to talk about building a new homeless shelter and they began a fundraiser 2 weeks ago. Mr. Huffman stated in attendance is their 10-member Board and a few guests. He added their goal at the shelter is to help them help themselves to get back on their feet, that is what they do. The homeless needs in Wilkes is continuing to grow, in 2014 they had 1,400 bed nights, last year they had 2,016 bed nights, a 36% increase.

Mr. Huffman stated currently they can house 10 people, 6 men and 4 women. The new shelter will house 40 people, 1 family area, 1 men's area, 1 female area, 3,000 square feet. There will be a common resource center for speakers, a nice kitchen, and separate showers. He added currently the county gives them \$7,000 toward their annual budget, which they very much appreciate. The new shelter will cost \$500,000 with property and building. Mr. Huffman stated they want Wilkes County to give \$100,000 and they will raise \$400,000. They are trying to get 400 folks to give \$1,000 each and working on this currently, which is tax deductible. He added they need this Board's help. Ms. Smith thanked the Board for hearing their plea as they are trying to help folks as they have for 30 years.

Chairman Elmore and the Board thanked Mr. Huffman and Ms. Smith for speaking tonight and added they will consider this during the upcoming budget process.

The Wilkes County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, April 16, 2019 at 6:54 P.M. with the following members present: Chairman Keith Elmore, Vice Chairman Eddie Settle, Commissioner Gary D. Blevins, Commissioner David Gambill, and Commissioner Brian Minton.

Also present were Vannoy, Colvard, Triplett & Vannoy, County Attorney Law Firm represented by Daniel S. Johnson; Chris Huffman, Finance Director; and Sarah Call, Clerk to the Board.

Chairman Keith Elmore welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. He recognized Mr. Daniel Johnson filling in for Mr. Tony Triplett and added they are glad to have him tonight. Mr. Johnson thanked the Board. Chairman Elmore stated Mr. Chris Huffman is filling in for Mr. John Yates tonight, who is under the weather.

INVOCATION – Commissioner David Gambill led the Invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Chairman Keith Elmore lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Motion was made by Commissioner David Gambill, seconded by Vice Chairman Eddie Settle and unanimously adopted to approve the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on March 19, 2019.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Motion was made by Commissioner Brian Minton, seconded by Vice Chairman Eddie Settle and unanimously adopted to approve the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on April 2, 2019.

BUDGET AMENDMENTS/TRANSFERS – Motion was made by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins to approve Budget Amendment No. 23 (General – The County received insurance funds of \$12,198 from damages at the Developmental Day School, requesting these funds to repair and fix the damage). The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Eddie Settle and unanimously approved.

BUDGET AMENDMENTS/TRANSFERS – Motion was made by Vice Chairman Eddie Settle to approve Budget Amendment No. 24 (General – Cooperative Extension – Cooperative Extension has received a grant in the amount of \$3,000 for the development of a mobile app to help Farmers market crops in Wilkes County. No County dollars involved). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brian Minton and unanimously approved.

BUDGET AMENDMENTS/TRANSFERS – Motion was made by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins to approve Budget Amendment No. 25 (Airport – Due to rising fuel costs and increase in fuel sales in which the Airport is selling more fuel than was projected in this current budget. The Airport is requesting to increase Fuel Sales for Jet A Fuel by \$130,000 to meet flyers demand). The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Eddie Settle and unanimously approved.

BUDGET AMENDMENTS/TRANSFERS – Motion was made by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins to approve Budget Amendment No. 26 (Sheriff – Request to use the funds in the amount of \$16,985 from GovDeals sale of previously owned Sheriff Office Vehicles. This money will be used to replace the wrecked box truck that is used by all county agencies or borrow it as needed). The motion was seconded by Commissioner David Gambill and unanimously approved.

BUDGET AMENDMENTS/TRANSFERS – Motion was made by Commissioner David Gambill to approve Budget Amendment No. 27 (Health – General Programs – Wilkes County Health Department received the FY 2019 Cost Settlement Payment in the amount of \$220,654. These funds will be used in contractual services for General, Adult Health, Child Health, Family Planning and the MESH unit. No County money involved). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brian Minton and unanimously approved.

BUDGET AMENDMENTS/TRANSFERS – Chairman Elmore stated this is an item that has been discussed a few times. Commissioner Blevins replied he is still opposed to this, he has the Tax Administrators value which is \$69,000. Commissioner Minton added this is only a tax appraisal. Commissioner Blevins said he is not going to take \$126K of tax payors money to pay for property valued at \$69K. He added the building is in disrepair, it is aged out, an old metal

building that is almost depreciated out. The inside is gutted with no restrooms and it will cost a lot to fix it. Commissioner Blevins stated it would be a better investment for the county to purchase property and build a new building that will last a very long time. He added, he would propose to build two, one in Mountain View and one at the eastern end of the county, both new buildings at the same time for cost savings. Commissioner Blevins stated this building is right in the property line and it is more property than they need or will utilize. He added it is not a good idea and he does not want to move the money with the budget amendment. He stated if that is what the Board decides to do he will support it and do all he can to help.

Commissioner Minton said you can't use the GSI map, they need a survey to know where it sits on the property. He added they also need a third-party appraisal to know the true value as well. Vice Chairman Settle stated it is \$126K to buy the building and the property and Mr. Pennington has \$60K in his budget to cover the upfit. Mr. Pennington said he has approximately \$80K. Vice Chairman Settle added with \$60K for upfit and \$126K to purchase they could be in the building for \$186K. The cost for a new building would be \$384K plus the land, they are saving at least \$200K by purchasing this land and building together, with a refurbishment of an existing site. Vice Chairman Settle stated in his opinion it's a perfect deal.

Commissioner Gambill asked the urgency. With the budget coming up, is this property going to sell, what is the purpose to move the money now with budget season coming. He added this is his concern and asked are they just moving the money or are they making the purchase. Chairman Elmore replied it is his understanding they are only moving the money at this time; the purchase will be decided at another meeting. Mr. Huffman replied the purpose of the budget amendment is to have the funds in place if the county proceeds to purchase the property. Commissioner Gambill stated shouldn't they do this all at one time. They normally would agree to move forward with a purchase then move the money. The budget is less than 30 days away to begin the process and start meeting. He added he is not saying he is against it, but the concern is they are getting ready to go in the budget season and no deal has been made on the property that he is aware of. Vice Chairman Settle stated typically he would agree that is right, but Mr. Pennington has money in his budget this year for renovations. Commissioner Gambill stated he agrees, but does not understand why they want this approved now.

Chairman Elmore stated he would like to thank all of the Board members for their good comments and discussion.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman Eddie Settle to approve Budget Amendment No. 28 (General – Requesting to allocate from fund balance \$126,000 to be used to purchase existing building for EMS location). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brian Minton. Voting on the motion:

Ayes: Chairman Keith Elmore
Vice Chairman Eddie Settle
Commissioner Brian Minton

Nays: Commissioner Gary D. Blevins
Commissioner David Gambill

LANDFILL PRESENTATION – WILKES COUNTY LITTER PROGRAM – Chairman Elmore welcomed and recognized Anderia Byrd, Landfill Director and Daniel Cranford, Solid Waste Enforcement Officer. Ms. Byrd said Mr. Cranford has been there for almost 6 months and is doing a good job. She stated they are here tonight to discuss litter concerns throughout the county and especially in the Solid Waste Department. Ms. Byrd read the below comments in regards to the litter issues in Wilkes

“Thank you for allowing the solid waste department to have the opportunity to speak concerning litter in the county. We would like to touch on what we have in place, what we are implementing, and what we can propose to help our county and the litter issue. We are not speaking on behalf of other state or local departments, but we are only relaying what we have learned through our research.

Litter and litter laws have been around for decades. Several people and groups over the years have researched, implemented, educated, enforced and removed litter all in an attempt to curtail the world-wide litter problem. Yet litter is still an issue no matter where you go. We wish someone by now would have developed a simple solution to the problem but we can't say that. What we can do is our part as the landfill. There are 3 main parts to a litter program: Education, Enforcement, and Removal. Beginning with Education and what efforts we are planning at the landfill to help educate children and adults to help prevent litter. At the Landfill we are already active in the schools, boy scouts, wellness events as invited and we have asked to participate in 4-H field day and Soil and Water days. We have anti litter signs posted, 4-H field day for all 3rd graders in the county, Soil and Water days to reach all 5th graders, DOT- teacher kits with promotional items such as car litter bags, flyers, pencils, rulers, stickers, and tattoos.

The landfill supports and accepts trash from all businesses located in the county. We calculate that 81% of the trash disposed in the landfill is transported via commercial garbage haulers daily. We have contacted all major garbage haulers in the county advising them to properly contain and prevent any debris from blowing, spilling, scattering, or falling from the vehicle and if any contents are blown, spilled, or scattered from the vehicle or garbage container that they should recover that material immediately. We are advising residents who witness garbage escaping from the vehicles to contact the proper authorities. The highway patrol has told us that if someone sees garbage coming off of vehicles and the witness is willing to testify in court the case can be handled through the judicial system. As commercial haulers are entering the landfill very rarely are they uncovered, the majority of them are attempting to secure their loads. We have utilized KAB in the past for tarp days where we hand out tarps to vehicles who come to the landfill with uncovered loads. We have a phone conference with them on Monday.

We would like to be able to update our website and include best practices to help prevent litter such as not using your truck bed as a trash can, bag your loose items, tarp your vehicles, tie your bags tight so no loose debris escape. We would also like to put this information in the local newspaper.

Enforcement at the Landfill: Our environmental enforcement officer primarily focuses on residential/neighbor trash complaints and dumps throughout the County. We are allowed to operate according to the rules and regulations of the Solid Waste Ordinance. We are limited to

enforce the littering sections of the ordinance outside of the landfill itself because we lack the ability to stop a vehicle for losing litter even if we see that they have lost trash. We are able to stop a vehicle inside of the landfill itself. We can issue litter citations, but primarily ask the driver of the vehicle to clean any trash lost from their vehicle in order to avoid getting a citation. The majority of litter lost from vehicles has already been lost before the load of garbage ever reaches the landfill. If we see litter falling, blowing, or escaping from a vehicle we call and notify the Highway Patrol and give them a description of the vehicle. We advise Wilkes residents to do the same.

The DOT also has a Swat-a-litterbug program. This is an online reporting tool that once a vehicle has been reported to the DOT, they will look up the license plate and issue a letter stating that someone reported them for littering. DOT maintenance dept will also provide a form to apply to have a littering is illegal sign posted on a road. With only one environmental enforcement officer for the county, as he is driving to check the residential complaints and sees a bag of trash along a roadway he can pick it up and look for identifiable information. 50% of the time there is no identifiable information.

We want to implement to widen our spectrum by involving more agencies. We have found that other counties are utilizing their fish and game or wildlife personnel to charge the littering violation. We believe litter prevention is going to take everyone collaborating together. We all produce trash, it is a byproduct from the time we purchase something on line or in a store, eventually the bed you sleep on, the desk at work, the shoes on your feet will end up in a landfill.

Removal in the past was DOT paid the DOC to take 2 to 3 crews of prison inmates out and pick up litter on the primary and secondary roads in Wilkes and surrounding counties. According to DOT articles, legislation did away with these crews and now contracts litter removal to private companies. These contracts are to remove litter only on primary roads. This causes litter accumulation on the 1,164.2 miles of secondary roadways in our county. DOT is now focusing on educating the public on litter prevention and pushing more citizen involvement such as utilizing Adopt-A-Highway and Sponsor-A-highway programs. The DOT also holds Biannual litter sweeps state wide.

What we have in place currently is a private state contracted individual who has a crew of people he uses to help maintain the main roadways in our county. Through our research we found out that if enough complaints are reported to DOT that sometimes the DOT will utilize the contracted crew to clean secondary roads. We also have caring individuals throughout the county who participate in Adopt-A-highway programs. We are extremely fortunate to have litter removal groups outside of the DOT such as the Adopt-a-stream initiative taking place in Elkin, Surry, and Wilkes Counties that focuses on The Big Elkin Creek Watershed and the new group of individuals on social media called Clean up Wilkes. Both of these groups are making an impact helping remove litter in the county. The DOT does provide free trash bags, vest, gloves, and grabbers for individuals looking to clean and remove litter on roadways. The DOT will also pick up the filled bags and transport them to the landfill where we accept those bags for free.

We are grateful to the commissioners that we are able to help support local non-profit organizations and the DOT and accept the trash for free at no charge. Bags of trash and bulky items found in the DOT right-of-way can also be reported via an online highway debris form on the DOT website. We utilize this especially if they are in dangerous sections of roadways where there is no safe place to park on the shoulder of the road. The Environmental Enforcement officer and myself clean and remove tons of trash from dumpsites located throughout the county.

We would like to support non-profit agencies in the county. We would like the chance to pay \$3.00 to 5.00 per bag for each bag they pick up. Surrounding counties have implemented a non-profit pay program that requires these non-profits to register with either the landfill or finance office in their county and we believe it would be successful in Wilkes. Other surrounding counties have also taken advantage of what is referred to as a pay back program. This is a program that includes the DOT, DOC, and the Judicial system and utilizes community service workers to remove litter on the roadsides. This program is available state wide and to our knowledge has not been applied in Wilkes. This program operates separate from the landfill but we would like to pose this as an option.

We are the only landfill in the state of NC that is available to the public 66 hours a week, this allows residence to utilize our landfill at convenient times suited for them. To add to the convenience or our residence the landfill would like the possibility of adding more convenience sites in our county. Wilkes is 754.28 square miles and some people can travel 40 miles to dispose of waste at the landfill. We believe that by adding more convenience sites the potential for loosing debris from vehicles by traveling shorter distances will decrease.

In conclusion, the DOT is/has been in charge of the litter along the roadsides. The state has several beneficial programs that everyone can take advantage of. We as a county department would like to add to what they have already developed and personalize different ways to effectively help our county. We know the landfill serves as only a piece of the litter pie, the last piece, we are the end result of where 69,000 residences trash ends up, we are not the beginning, but we want to do our part and help make a difference.

I am not in control of that decision outside of the solid waste department. I do not have any experience with involving the Sheriff's Office nor does the landfill in the past 12 years. We have operated the environmental position in a non-law enforcement capacity and it has been very successful. I can say that anytime in the past that we have utilized the Sheriff's Office, they have been helpful."

Chairman Elmore thanked Ms. Byrd and Mr. Cranford and recognized folks in attendance from Adopt-A-Highway and Clean up Wilkes. One of the folks from Adopt-A-Highway thanked Ms. Byrd and Mr. Cranford for all they do and added she is trying to come up with ways for more people on her road to help clean it up. This is a beautiful county, the proposals are common sense, and does not seem costly. She added they would like to help any way they can.

Vice Chairman Settle asked about the minimum involvement in the schools' mentioned earlier. Ms. Byrd replied, they have not invited their selves. She added in 3rd Grade as part of the agenda

Teachers have to go over littering and recycling and when invited they go and speak to the class. Vice Chairman Settle asked if they have to be invited. Ms. Byrd replied no, but she does not have a contact to ask how they can be more involved in the schools. Vice Chairman Settle added this would be a good start, when they are in 3rd Grade to talk with all kids and the kids will help remind the parents to not litter. He said Surry County is currently paying the \$3 to \$5 per bag that they mentioned and it is a fund raiser for those programs. If they pick up 100 bags they get \$300 to \$500, this is a great idea. Vice Chairman Settle stated the commercial trucks lose trash he has saw this first hand, there are no real answers for this. Ms. Byrd replied inside the landfill is very clean, but it takes all of them working together to keep eyes out for anyone losing trash. They have a great staff that is very vigilant and knowledgeable. Vice Chairman Settle agreed they do a great job, but education in the schools is important and they need to get with the Superintendent and Board of Education to start this.

Commissioner Gambill agreed, the schools use to educate kids on litter, but these programs have gone away. They have missed a generation being in schools, but education is very much needed and the schools is the best place to do this. Mr. Cranford agreed they need to be more proactive in schools to change the culture among the kids for the future this would be the best course of action. Commissioner Gambill agreed and added the commercial haulers have old trucks with holes in them and they lose a lot of trash on the roadsides, some do they best they can, but this is an issue. Ms. Byrd stated some years back in Raleigh they instituted tying down the sides with bigger tarps to curtail that issue. Commissioner Gambill stated years ago there was a tarp program in place and he remembers seeing folks pull off just before the landfill to tarp in down, they drove all the way there and then tarped it. This needs to stop, but not sure how to do this.

Commissioner Blevins stated the large plastic tarps can also beat the trash off the trucks. He added this is not an effective means to keep trash in with the wind. He said there is over 1,000 miles of secondary roads, and asked how much the DOT pays per mile for the pickup on primary roads. Ms. Byrd replied according to Nathan Walters their contracted person for Wilkes, it is \$41.00 per shoulder mile on the main roads, however he will charge \$71.00 per shoulder mile for secondary roads if he approves the road is safe for a pick up. Chairman Blevins said it would cost \$70K to clean up the secondary roads one time. He said a few years ago the Commissioners voted to add a \$2.00 charge to the tipping fee to be set aside to help clean up trash. This fund was not used to pick up trash for a long time as they did not want to set a precedence because it was the state's responsibility to pick up trash. He added now their policy is to hire contractors to pick up trash on primary roads only. Ms. Byrd replied correct. Commissioner Blevins asked if this was State policy or a Statute. Ms. Byrd replied it was voted on through legislation in 2016 that they would do away with the inmate crews from the prison systems. He asked the revenue generated from the \$2.00 fee. Ms. Byrd replied with 60 tons of trash disposed of at the landfill it is about \$120K. Commissioner Blevins stated they very much appreciate all the volunteers and the great job they do and their work and ideas. There are some roads that are too dangerous that must be done by professionals. Since it is clear DOT is not going to do this they need to be proactive and contract with a professional for some of the roads and utilize the \$2.00 fee to help pay for this. Vice Chairman Settle stated they do this currently. Ms. Byrd agreed they do and also use these funds to clean up large dump sites in the county as well. Commissioner Blevins stated that is good and if they need to increase this fee more to pay for the roads to be safely and

professionally cleaned up they need to do that as well. They still need the volunteers to help in addition, he added. Commissioner Blevins said the non-profit pick up is a great program, but there is more trash than all these folks can clean up, unfortunately they live in a trash filled society. He added some trash is accidental and they need something in place to clean it up and keep the community looking good. It will pay dividends in tourism and pride in the community to spend \$140K to pick up at least twice per year, he said.

Chairman Elmore asked if they are contracting and doing some of this now. Ms. Byrd replied yes. Chairman Elmore stated he saw individuals on Browns Ford Road this past weekend and it was amazing what they did in a few hours. He asked if folks can call and get on a list for pick up. Ms. Byrd replied in the past they have used part-time help for roadside litter pick up through the landfill. She said sometimes they have to contract with haulers that have equipment to clean the larger cleanup sites, it is costly. Ms. Byrd said they can use Nathan Walters and pay him if he approves the road, they are at his mercy. Chairman Elmore asked if a \$3.00 to \$5.00 per bag would be an incentive to get folks out.

Someone from the audience stated they are having a get together on May 4-5, 2019 at the YMCA in Wilkes and they need someone to bring lunch. This is to get folks together for awareness to the issue. They are also trying to get into the schools. She added this is doable if folks work together. It is embarrassing at times on her road, it use to be cleaned up by the prisoners, but that does not happen anymore and it has gotten worse.

Another lady spoke from the group Clean up Wilkes and said when they cleaned up Browns Ford Road someone stopped and said they were considering moving to Wilkes but changed their mind due to the trash. She added this is a bad sign when they are trying to build up the economy in Wilkes. One more spoke and said she is also embarrassed, it is disappointing and makes no sense. Chairman Elmore stated he would like to assure all of them that he and this Board all share their concerns. Commissioner Blevins said they have been hard on Wilkes, but he has traveled all over the state and there are a few communities that are cleaner than here, but there are several that have more trash. It is everywhere, it is not just a problem here, but here is where they need to solve it. Chairman Elmore added if they would like to leave contact information maybe they could have a roundtable discussion on these ideas and get the landfill involved to work together. The Board stated they appreciate what the volunteers are doing to help. Chairman Elmore and the Board thanked Ms. Byrd and Mr. Cranford for the good job they do.

WILKES COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES REAPPOINTMENT – Chairman Elmore stated the County has received a letter from Jeff Cox, President that Dr. William H. Davis' appointment to the Wilkes Community College Board of Trustees will expire June 30, 2019. This would be his third 4-year term and they have his no change form. Vice Chairman Settle said Chairman Elmore serves with Dr. Davis on this Board and asked how he does. Chairman Elmore replied Dr. Davis is very knowledgeable, does a good job and he supports this reappointment.

Vice Chairman Eddie Settle made a motion to reappoint Dr. William H. Davis to the Wilkes Community College Board of Trustees for a 4-year term, as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brian Minton. Voting on the motion:

Ayes: Chairman Keith Elmore
Vice Chairman Eddie Settle
Commissioner Brian Minton

Nays: Commissioner Gary D. Blevins
Commissioner David Gambill

ADJOURN – Motion was made by Vice Chairman Eddie Settle, seconded by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins and by unanimous vote adopted to adjourn the meeting of the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners at 7:47 P.M.

Sarah D. Call, Clerk

Gideon Keith Elmore, Chairman

WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Approved: May 7, 2019