

MINUTES
WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
July 2, 2019

The Wilkes County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, July 2, 2019 at 7:00 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 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.

INVOCATION – Commissioner David Gambill led the Invocation.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Motion was made by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins, seconded by Commissioner Brian Minton and unanimously adopted to approve the Minutes of the Board meeting held on June 18, 2019.

BLUE RIDGE OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION (BROC) – BUDGET APPROVAL FY 2020 FOR AGING SERVICES – Chairman Elmore welcomed and recognized Jennifer Cooper, Director BROC Senior Nutrition Services. Ms. Cooper thanked the Board and stated this is to present the Home and Community Care Block Grant budget for older adults. This is for the three aging agencies in Wilkes. She added they hold the contract for this grant and asked for the Board's approval to continue the contract and for the budget. Ms. Cooper said the budgets are for: Blue Ridge Opportunity Commissioner, Wilkes Senior Resources, and Ruby Pardue Blackburn Adult Day. She added in the county funding plan the budget total is \$592,416, the required local match total is \$65,824, for a net services cost of \$658,239. Ms. Cooper stated this is the total and the packets also include each agency's individual budget.

Chairman Elmore asked if their budget has gone up or down. Ms. Cooper replied it has a slight increase from last year. She added there may be another increase throughout the year, this has been the trend, but could go either way. Ms. Cooper said the required local match includes what the county appropriates as well as other local funds that they are able to bring in to those Agencies. Chairman Elmore asked how the meal sites are doing. Ms. Cooper replied there is no change, they will see a drop in attendance for the next couple of months, which is common for the summer and it will pick back up for fall. Vice Chairman Settle asked if they still have a waiting list. Ms. Cooper replied yes, they are currently in the process of updating this. Vice Chairman Settle asked the age limit. Ms. Cooper replied for meals on wheels they must be 60 or older and essentially home bound, they have a weighted criteria that looks at many things. They do not have a waiting list for congregate meals, she added.

Commissioner Blevins stated he attended an Aging Committee meeting for Vice Chairman Settle and they did change some of the priorities and areas of emphasis, and was a good meeting. It was facilitated by Nicole Hiegl, Aging Director at High Country Council of Governments, he added.

Commissioner Gary D. Blevins made a motion to approve the Blue Ridge Opportunity Commission Home and Community Care Block Grant Budget for FY 2020 as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brian Minton and unanimously approved.

WILKES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION – ACTIVITY REPORT – UPDATE – Chairman Elmore welcomed and recognized LeeAnn Nixon, President. Ms. Nixon thanked the Board and said she was able to bring an updated report today, that includes the entire year through June 2019. She thanked the Board for their support of EDC's direction and mission and also the financial commitment.

Ms. Nixon next went over her report that covered July 2018 through June 2019. She added she and Robin Hamby actually began keeping up with this information beginning in mid-August and they are very proud of the results. Ms. Nixon went over the update at this time which included: Existing Business Activities; Meetings; Program of Work Summary; May unemployment rate; Active Project averages; YTD Project Activity States; and YDT Project Opportunities by Source.

Chairman Elmore asked when Ms. Nixon started keeping this information, she said she started in mid-August. Chairman Elmore asked if there is anyway to go back 5-years to see the trends. Ms. Nixon replied no, but they can start with this and go forward. She added this is why it was so important for them to keep this information. They can see what they are accomplishing, what they are doing, and what is working. Vice Chairman Settle asked about the missed opportunities. If Wilkes had a building with the ceiling height requested did she think they would have captured the company. Ms. Nixon replied it is hard to know, there are many factors that go into play to win a project. Vice Chairman Settle asked if they have a facility what is the likelihood they would have gotten it. Ms. Nixon replied they would have had the opportunity to entertain them in the community, if they can get them here for a visit they have a chance to attract them. If they have no building or site they never get the opportunity or first chance to play the game. Vice Chairman Settle asked what about a pad ready site. Ms. Nixon replied in most cases clients are looking for an existing building because they are waiting late in the game to look and want to be in production within 6 months, in most cases they don't have time to build. She added sometime they do want to build from the beginning, but they do not see this very often. Ms. Nixon said she was reading an article that in 2018 there were 157 projects that EDP-NC worked on, 69% chose rural or distressed counties. Wilkes is tier 2 so they fall within this. It is very encouraging to see this and they believe if they had the pad ready site with infrastructure and utilities they would have some success.

Vice Chairman Settle asked if they are looking at a pad ready site, when he served on the board they were looking at a few places. Ms. Nixon replied they would love to have it now, it must be the right location, and they are trying to make sure they chose the best option possible. She added they do have a challenge the land is not flat, but does have lots of water, these factors

increase the development cost. Ms. Nixon stated they have a sub-committee working on this and looking at multiple sites to get the most value. Vice Chairman Settle stated they have been looking for awhile it is time to move forward, they need a pad ready site. Ms. Nixon agreed and added they are going to host EDP- NC in August at the Wilkes County Agricultural Center and they are looking forward to showing them Wilkes and all they have to offer.

Commissioner Gambill said they know EDC is focused on bringing jobs and building upfits and such, but asked if they have any help available for a start ups to write a business plan and help for the smaller companies. Ms. Nixon replied yes, as shown on the program of work summery, they have an Entrepreneur Grant program. She added they help new businesses and exiting businesses write a business plan and make sure they get the resources they need. Also, once a year they have a competition for new and existing companies and last year awarded \$12,500. They had 20 applicants and were able to help 5 companies, several are getting funding for new equipment. She added they work with the Small Business Center at Wilkes Community College to make sure they can both help them along. They also match them with a mentor in the community. Ms. Nixon said all the companies received help and information and most of all built relationships and contacts that help all of them in addition to the five that received grant money. They try to take care of and help all sizes and levels of businesses.

Chairman Elmore asked when EDC has their next meeting. Ms. Nixon replied Wilkes EDC will not meet in July their next meeting will be in August and they will present their action plan and goals at that time. Vice Chairman Settle added Ms. Nixon is doing a good job and it is great to see this information and they look forward to getting this out in the community. Many folks ask what this Board is doing to bring and keep jobs and they hope a site is identified soon. Ms. Nixon stated they are getting close. Chairman Elmore added everywhere he goes there are help wanted signs, there are jobs out there, whether or not the people are qualified to do them may be an issue, but there are good jobs available. Ms. Nixon agreed and said in most cases employers are willing to train. She added folks do not need to be hesitant to apply if they will show up and be dependable and trainable, companies will teach them. She added the State Community College system provides money to Wilkes Community College to provide customized industry training is available, if needed. Chairman Elmore agreed and added the forum at the Stone Center recently mentioned this as well.

Chairman Elmore and the Board thanked Ms. Nixon for the update and the good job they do at EDC. Ms. Nixon thanked the Board for their time.

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES – UPDATE – Chairman Elmore welcomed and recognized John Blevins, DSS Director. Mr. Blevins said they had a call from the state this past week on the Medicaid audit they are in the middle of. They told them they are doing good and at the top of the 30 counties so far. Mr. Blevins stated they continue to ask how they do this. He replied he has told them it all goes back to the people. The state thinks there is a magic bullet or form, etc. and he keeps telling them it is the continuous, hard-working employees that do the work, this is the difference. They have good supervisors and hardworking people that want it right, and they have done well. Mr. Blevins said they will have some eligibility errors, hopefully it will be minimal, but some of the counties are having more than 50% error rates. He added

they will get the next list of 20 cases soon and will be half-way through the audit. It has been very hard on the staff, they are stressed and this is an audit that doesn't go away for 10 months. Mr. Blevins said the state is now seeing this, it is putting a burden on them as well.

Mr. Blevins stated they received a report today from child support and now have a list of what they will be graded on from the MOU. He added they are passing in all areas and hope this will continue. They should also receive crisis funds soon and be able to open this up to help folks with cooling needs. He added annually they usually get over \$300,000 each for crisis and low income energy program to help folks throughout the year.

Mr. Blevins provided the Commissioners with handouts for May. He briefly went over the monthly caseload report, Foster Care financial report, Adoption Services financial report, Child Development and Subsidized Child Care financial report. He also went through the CPS Foster Care monthly reports for May. Commissioner Gambill said it is tough on DSS when they can only find 39 kinship placements, this is hard as this is their first choice always when they can. Mr. Blevins agreed.

Commissioner Gary D. Blevins asked about staffing. Mr. Blevins replied they do not have any openings, they had one, have made an offer and it was accepted. Vice Chairman Settle added this is a big improvement from two years ago. Commissioner Blevins stated Hal Wilson has made some changes that are great and has fine-tuned things and is wonderful at what he does. Commissioner Gambill agreed he is a hidden jewel and they are lucky to have him. Commissioner Blevins stated if the county didn't have to spend millions on Foster Care, DSS, and a Jail just to mention a few they could focus more on economic development. He added sometimes when it comes to how they distribute money it comes down to what they have to do and then do the other things if they have money left over. It is a shame, but the kids have to be taken care of first. Commissioner Blevins said it is unfortunate, but there is good news, there are great projects going on at the airport currently which is good for economic development.

The Board thanked Mr. Blevins for his update.

DESIGNATION OF VOTING DELEGATE TO NCACC ANNUAL CONFERENCE – Chairman Elmore stated a voting delegate needs to be assigned for the 112TH NCACC Annual Conference to be held August 22-24, 2019 in Guilford County, N.C.

Motion was made by Commissioner Gary D. Blevins to appoint Commissioner Brian S. Minton as the designated voting delegate for the 2019 NCACC Annual Conference as presented. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Eddie Settle and passed unanimously.

WILKES COUNTY AIRPORT:

1. BILLY MCELWEE – RESOLUTION FOR FINAL APPROVAL OF LEASE – Chairman Elmore recognized County Attorney, Tony Triplett. Mr. Triplett said this matter was on the agenda in May and the Board authorized advertisement of a ground space lease for Mr. William H. McElwee, III and Karen I. McElwee at the Wilkes County Airport.

The Airport Board approved this and recommended final approval to this Board. Mr. Triplett said he did advertise per the statute that governs leases for 30-days. He stated if the Board wishes to proceed the only action needed it to approve the Resolution that is in the packets and before the Board for consideration. The Resolution approves the Lease Agreement. Chairman Elmore said there is no change to the rent and everything remains the same. Mr. Triplett replied that is correct, no change.

Commissioner Gary D. Blevins made a motion to approve the Resolution Authorizing Lease Operations Agreement with William H. McElwee, III and Karen I. McElwee at Wilkes County Airport as presented at tonight's meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brian Minton and unanimously approved.

*RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING
LEASE AGREEMENT
AT WILKES COUNTY AIRPORT*

WHEREAS, the County of Wilkes (hereinafter the "County") is the owner and operator of the Wilkes County Airport in Rock Creek Township, Wilkes County, North Carolina, and owns a hangar situated thereon, approximately 5,250 square feet in size, which the County purchased from Dr. John L. Bond/Suncrest Associates, LLC, in 2008 by Assignment and Bill of Sale recorded in Book 1064, Page 039, Wilkes County Registry, and by General Warranty Deed recorded in Book 1064, Page 040, Wilkes County Registry; and

WHEREAS, the County leased said hangar to William H. McElwee, III, and Karen I. McElwee, jointly and severally, of Wilkes County, North Carolina (hereinafter collectively "McElwee"), by Lease Agreement dated July 1, 2008, the same having been recorded in Book 1093, Page 135, Wilkes County Registry, as amended by Amendment to Lease Agreement dated July 1, 2009, the same having been recorded in Book 1113, Page 348, Wilkes County Registry; and

WHEREAS, said Lease Agreement, as amended, expired as of June 30, 2018; and

WHEREAS, the Wilkes County Airport Board at its regular meeting of March 21, 2019, approved a new Lease Agreement for the above described property between the County and McElwee under the same terms and conditions as set forth in the initial 2008 Lease Agreement, and recommended that the same be approved by the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners (hereinafter the "Board of Commissioners"); and

WHEREAS, the above described lease, together with all of the terms and provisions for the same, have been reduced to writing in the form of a Lease Agreement (hereinafter the "Agreement") which the County and McElwee desire to execute; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners, upon review of the Agreement and upon the recommendation of the Wilkes County Airport Board, desires to authorize approval of the Agreement; and

WHEREAS, a Notice of Intent describing the terms of the Agreement has been duly published at least thirty (30) days prior to said meeting, as required by G.S. §160A-272(a1); and

WHEREAS, the description of the property to be leased as set forth in the Notice of Intent is as follows:

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY TO BE LEASED: The Agreement is for the lease of approximately 21,450 square feet of ground space, together with a hangar situated thereon which is owned by the County and which is approximately 5,250 square feet in size, said hangar having been purchased by the County from Dr. John L. Bond/Suncrest Associates, LLC, in February 2008. The County has secured a survey of said property in order to more fully and accurately describe the same, and the description from this survey will be attached as an exhibit to the Agreement.

AND WHEREAS, the amount and terms of the offer by McElwee to lease said property as set forth in the Notice of Intent are as follows:

AMOUNT AND TERMS OF OFFER: McElwee proposes to lease the above described property from the County, and the County proposes to lease the same to McElwee, for an initial term of two (2) years, with a maximum of four (4) automatic renewal terms of two (2) years each unless either party provides notice to the other at least thirty (30) days prior to the end of the term that the Agreement will not be renewed. Rental to be paid by McElwee to the County would be the sum of \$1,000.00 per month. McElwee would be responsible for payment of all utilities, contents insurance, and liability insurance. The County would be responsible for insurance on the hangar. McElwee would be responsible for all repairs and maintenance, except that the County would agree to perform an annual inspection on the overhead doors and to perform any maintenance thereon necessitated by the results of said inspection. The Agreement authorizes McElwee to engage in the storage of aircraft, together with aircraft parts and accessories, and to utilize the leased premises for other purposes consistent with aeronautical use as set forth in the Agreement. Said lease shall in all respects be subject to the Rules and Regulations for the Wilkes County Airport.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, pursuant to G.S. §§153A-176, 160A-272, and 63-53(3), that the Agreement with McElwee as presented at the May 21, 2019 meeting of the Board of Commissioners, and as set forth in the Notice of Intent, is hereby approved, and the Chairman and Clerk of the Board of Commissioners are authorized to execute the same on behalf of the County.

This the 2nd day of July, 2019.

WILKES COUNTY

By: _____
Giddeon Keith Elmore, Chairman
Wilkes County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Sarah Call, Clerk

2. APPROVAL OF ADVERTISEMENT FOR LEASE AGREEMENT – ROBERT WISLICK D/B/A AMERICAN AVIATION – Mr. Triplett said this is a lease for Mr. Robert Wislick. The Airport Board at its last meeting recommended that the Board of Commissioners approve a new lease agreement for Mr. Wislick. He stated this is coming before the Board for the first time. Mr. Wislick has been at the Airport for many years and has a maintenance operation there and the Airport Board stated he is invaluable to the Airport and provides a great service. This lease like Mr. McElwee's expired and is being recommended to renew for five 2-year terms. The lease rental will be set at \$500 per month. He added this is just for publication, a notice will have to run in the newspaper for 30-days and then come back for approval.

Commissioner Gary D. Blevins made a Motion to publish notice, pursuant to G.S. 153A-176, 160A-272, and 63-53(3), of the intent of the Board of Commissioners to enter into a Lease and Operations Agreement between Wilkes County (as Lessor) and Robert Wislick d/b/a American Aviation (as Lessee), for a hangar building and ground space at the Wilkes County Airport, said ground space consisting of approximately 23,370 square feet and said hangar being approximately 5,240 square feet in size, under terms and conditions as set forth in the proposed Lease and Operations Agreement presented at tonight's meeting, with the County Attorney to present a Resolution for final approval of the Lease 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 Vice Chairman Eddie Settle and unanimously approved.

3. WALTER NEWTON HANGAR – ASSIGNMENT AND BILL OF SALE TO BRYAN CARLTON – Mr. Triplett said this is an Assignment and Bill of Sale of the Walter Newton Hangar to Bryan Carlton. He added there is a memo in the packet that explains the history. Mr. Newton built the hangar in 1997 and has been there for 22 years, he has 13 years left on the ground space lease with the County and has decided to get out of the aviation business. Mr. Carlton whom is from Caldwell County is an airplane enthusiast, a flyer, and owns at least 6 planes that he has at the Lenoir Airport. He would like to move them to Wilkes and buy Mr. Newton's hangar for \$50,000 if approved by the Board. He would assume the ground space lease at the Airport. Mr. Triplett stated Mr. Carlton made a proposal to the Airport Board in March and he owns mostly vintage WWII Airplanes and would like to eventually open a museum at the Airport to display the planes. At this time, he will be taking over an empty hangar, fly planes and buy fuel from the county and pay ground space rent. This was approved

by the Airport Board and is before this Board as an Assignment and Bill of Sale. Mr. Triplett said if the Board would like to approve this all that is needed is an approval of the Assignment and Bill of Sale between Walter Newton and Bryan Carlton.

Commissioner Gary D. Blevins made a motion to approve the Assignment and Bill of Sale for the Walter Newton Hangar to Bryan Carlton as presented at tonight's meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brian Minton and unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS – SET PUBLIC HEARING – HB349 LOCAL BILL – FIRE TAX DISTRICTS – County Attorney Tony Triplett stated they have good news at last, the local bill on the fire tax districts passed today unanimously in the Senate and is now law. He added to make the fire districts official they needed this local bill to finalize what this Board has been approving over the past year. Mr. Triplett stated the bill has a specific procedure to follow to give final legal validity to the fire districts. He added, it stated they must notify all the affected property owners, which they have already done, and also notify the affected corporation providing fire protection service. Mr. Triplett said not only have they notified the property owners they have written agreements with each Fire Department and are ahead of what the bill calls for. The only remaining requirement is to set a public hearing. He added they need to allow public comment if any on the proposed designations of the new fire tax districts. Mr. Triplett stated he would like the Board to consider setting a Public Hearing with 30-days' notice for the August 6, 2019 Meeting.

Commissioner David Gambill made a motion to set a Public Hearing on the Approval of the Realignment of Boundaries for Wilkes County Fire Tax District Pursuant to House Bill 349 for Tuesday, August 6, 2019, at 6:50 P.M., with the Commissioners' meeting to immediately follow in the Commissioners' Meeting Room located in the County Office Building at 110 North Street, Wilkesboro, NC. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Eddie Settle and unanimously approved.

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 8:06 P.M.

Sarah D. Call, Clerk

Gideon Keith Elmore, Chairman

WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Approved: August 6, 2019