

**MINUTES  
WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
July 6, 2023**

**PUBLIC CONCERNS – None**

The Wilkes County Board of Commissioners met on Thursday, June 6, 2023 at 5:00 P.M. with the following members present: Chairman Keith Elmore, Vice Chairman Stoney Greene, Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson, Commissioner Bill Sexton, and Commissioner Greg Minton.

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

Chairman Keith Elmore welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at this time.

**INVOCATION** – Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson led the Invocation.

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Motion was made by Vice Chairman Stoney Greene, seconded by Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson and unanimously adopted to approve the Minutes of the Work Session held on June 20, 2023.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Motion was made by Vice Chairman Stoney Greene, seconded by Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson and unanimously adopted to approve the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on June 20, 2023.

Chairman Elmore stated with the consent of the Board item E will be moved to the end of the meeting. He added they will have a short Closed Session and then will discuss the Motorsports Relief Fund Choate Construction Company Sixth GMP Amendment to Design-Build Contract. The Board gave their consent at this time.

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES – UPDATE** – Chairman Elmore welcomed and recognized DSS Director Kevin Brown. Mr. Brown thanked the Board and provided the Commissioners with handouts for May. He stated they received \$178,824 in hold harmless and CCU funds that John Blevins had previously mentioned. They are still having foster care placement issues. The staff sat with kids 29 out of 30 nights last month, this is an ongoing issue and they are dealing with it as best they can. Mr. Brown stated as they have heard many times they have great staff at DSS to be able to handle this.

Next, Mr. Brown went over the monthly caseload report, Foster Care financial report, Adoption Services financial report, Child Development and Subsidized Child Care financial report. Chairman Elmore asked if there is a waiting list for Child Care. Mr. Brown replied no there is not and the number of cases went down. He asked about this and they believe not everyone came back

for recertification that had it before. Chairman Elmore stated they just had a child care study that the EDC did and asked if he was involved with that. Mr. Brown replied he was not and just read about it in the paper. Chairman Elmore stated they will get him a copy of it, but they do not understand, if the need is so great, why is the money not being used and people are not applying for it. Mr. Brown agreed they are helping everyone that applies and is qualified.

Mr. Brown next went through the CPS Foster Care monthly reports for May. He added they found out late last week there will be changes in the funding for adoption assistance payments that will cost the County. He added it was in Senate Bill 20 and included information about adoption assistance and foster home placement. For example: age 0-5 goes from \$514 to \$702 per month; 6-12 from \$654 to \$742; and they write these checks out each month for foster care. They are talking about payment for kinship care, which is great for the family, but it would have been nice to know this before the County budget was approved. This could cost \$200K to \$300K more, it has not been approved, but is being discussed. Chairman Elmore stated right now if a grandparent takes a child they do not receive any payment and this is changing, is that correct. Mr. Brown said it could, it seems it was approved in the Senate Bill, but they don't have final approval on it. He added they did change the foster home placement pricing and adoption assistance payments and this will increase the budget. They received an email about this, but it was not the official decision from the State so they are not sure, but it is supposed to be effective July 1<sup>st</sup> so he just wanted to mention this to the Board. They are not sure how it may affect their budget, but it could.

Chairman Elmore stated the Medicaid expansion does not go into effect until they approve the State budget which has not happened yet. He asked what will they do about hiring additional staff since it has not been approved yet. Mr. Brown replied they are already hiring for income maintenance they just had one to close and received several good applicants. He added all of their Social Worker positions are also filled at this time as well. Vice Chairman Greene asked about the overnight stays with the foster kids. Mr. Brown said so far this year they have stayed 106 out of 187 days. They provide 24/7 care in the new facility the Board was so gracious to allow them to have at Curtis Bridge Board. The staff is so appreciative to have this it is much better than staying in a hotel room and is set up more like a home.

The Board thanked Mr. Brown for his update.

**TAX ADMINISTRATOR – APPOINTMENT OF TAX ASSESSOR AND TAX COLLECTOR** – Chairman Elmore welcomed Will Lankford and stated Assistant County Attorney Brooke Felts will present this. Ms. Felts stated Mr. Lankford was first appointed to his position 2-years ago on July 1, 2021. He served the initial 2-year term as required by statute, he is here this evening to be appointed to a full 4-year term. She added this is the typical term for this position and if the Board would like to do this, she has a motion to read when they are ready. Commissioner Johnson stated two years certainly went quick. Mr. Lankford agreed and added it was a good challenge and he has enjoyed it. He appreciates the support of the Board and would like to thank the staff; they have been truly wonderful and he is blessed to work alongside them. Chairman Elmore said Mr. Lankford also handles the collection for the new TDA as well.

Vice Chairman Stoney Greene made a motion to appoint William A. Lankford, Jr., as Wilkes County Tax Assessor under G.S. §105-294 with a term of four years to run from July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2027, and to appoint William A. Lankford, Jr., as Wilkes County Tax Collector under G.S. §105-349 with a term of four years to run from July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2027, to serve under the title Wilkes County Tax Administrator. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bill Sexton and unanimously approved.

**SET EMERGENCY SERVICES CENTER TOUR** – Mr. Yates stated he and the Clerk were at the Emergency Services Center recently and he would like to get the Board over for a tour in August.

Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson made a motion to set a Facility Tour for the Emergency Services Center for Tuesday, August 1, 2023 at 3:30 P.M. located at 204 Call Street, Wilkesboro, N.C. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Stoney Greene and unanimously approved.

The facility tour is open to the public.

**SET WORK SESSION – PHASE II DESIGN – VANNOY CONSTRUCTION COMPANY** – Mr. Yates stated they need to set another Phase II Design work session with Vannoy Construction Company in August.

Vice Chairman Stoney Greene made a motion to set a Phase II Design Work Session with Vannoy Construction Company for Tuesday, August 15, 2023 at 4:00 P.M. in the Commissioners' Meeting Room located at the Wilkes County Office Building, 110 North Street Wilkesboro, N.C. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson and unanimously approved.

The work session is open to the public.

**CLOSED SESSION** – Motion was made by Commissioner Greg Minton to go into closed session under Section 143-318.11(a)(3) of the North Carolina General Statutes to consult with the Board's attorney to preserve the attorney-client privilege. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Stoney Greene and unanimously approved.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman Stoney Greene seconded by Commissioner Bill Sexton and by unanimous vote adopted to adjourn back into regular session. No action was taken in the closed session.

**MOTORSPORTS RELIEF FUND – CHOATE CONSTRUCTION COMPANY – SIXTH GMP AMENDMENT TO DESIGN-BUILD CONTRACT** – Chairman Elmore welcomed Jon Jacek of Choate Construction. Mr. Jacek said he hoped everyone was able to get out race week and enjoy the track. He added they have wrapped up all the numbers and change orders and this will be the last amendment in the amount of \$88,387 bringing them to a grand total of \$14,032,257. Mr. Jacek stated the \$32,257 will be credited back to the County and will be covered by SMI and Choate Construction. Ms. Felts added the Board did approve a contract with Choate Construction

for an absolute maximum price of \$14 million. This amendment will bring the grand total of the project to \$14 million and if the Board would like to approve this, she has a motion to read.

Chairman Elmore stated they would like to thank Mr. Jacek and Choate Construction, it was a pleasure to work with them. They were all very impressed with their ability to get the Race Track ready in such a short time. Mr. Jacek thanked Chairman Elmore and the Board and added it was a pleasure to work with them. The County has great staff they enjoyed working with Mr. Yates, Ms. Call, Mr. Triplett, Ms. Felts, and Mr. Huffman they hate it has come to an end. It worked out well and they hope they can enjoy the track for many years to come and maybe they can do more work there in the future. Vice Chairman Greene added they were amazed at the second week in February they only had three I-beams at the turn four building. Mr. Jacek agreed their subcontractors that worked on the project really went above and beyond to get it done. That was Mr. Smith's crown jewel at the track and everyone worked hard to make it happen. Vice Chairman Greene added it is an impressive facility; the second floor is very nice, but the view of the race track at the top is amazing. He added in the evenings on the back side there is a beautiful view of the mountains that really capitalizes on the area's beautiful scenery. Mr. Jacek agreed and thanked the Board again.

Vice Chairman Stoney Greene made a motion to approve Contract Amendment No. 6 to the September 23, 2022 Design-Build Contract between Wilkes County and Choate Construction Company for the Motorsports Relief Fund Project, establishing a Guaranteed Maximum Price in the amount of \$56,130.00 for Safer Barrier, Structural and Miscellaneous Steel, Asphalt Paving, Turnkey Concrete, Turnkey Masonry, Roofing, Door Frames and Hardware, Glass and Gazing Systems, Flooring (Carpet, LVT, and Tile), Painting, Toilet Access and Partitions, Mechanical HVAC Systems, Rough Carpentry/Framing, Siding and Soffits, Drywall and ACT, Elevator, Final Cleaning, Construction Document Phase, Construction Administration Phase, and Third Party Testing as presented at tonight's meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson and unanimously approved.

Vice Chairman Greene added he would like to make a comment. They were at the fireworks on Tuesday and it was so great to see all the kids and families all come together, playing and getting ice cream. They are all very blessed to live in this amazing place.

**ADJOURN** – Motion was made by Vice Chairman Stoney Greene, seconded by Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson and by unanimous vote adopted to adjourn the meeting of the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners at 5:38 P.M.

Sarah D. Call, Clerk

Giddeon Keith Elmore, Chairman

WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Approved: August 1, 2023