

**MINUTES**  
**WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**WORK SESSION**  
**August 15, 2023**

The Wilkes County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, August 15, 2023 at 4:01 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 John Yates, County Manager; Tony Triplett, County Attorney; Chris Huffman, Finance Director; Brooke Felts, Assistant County Attorney; and Sarah Call, Clerk to the Board.

Chairman Keith Elmore welcomed everyone and called the work session to order.

**PRESENTATION OF BUILDING SITE PLAN, FLOOR PLAN, AND EXTERIOR OPTIONS FOR THE WILKES COUNTY ADMINISTRATION OFFICE BUILDING** – Chairman Elmore recognized Kris Little, Mike Kesterson, and Mark Vannoy, with Vannoy Construction. Mr. Little thanked Chairman Elmore and the Commissioners for having them. Mr. Little stated they have made big strides since they met in June. He said they have walked through the spaces, talked to employees in the office and measured the building. Next, he went through the handout of the Wilkes County Administration Office Building.

Mr. Little began with the building's orientation, which showed the proposed overall site with the building dropped on it. He explained the parking has about 32 more spots than they have currently. They thought they may have to have a crosswalk or gravel lot across the street, but he doesn't think they will have to add that now. Chairman Elmore asked where the dirt would come from. Mr. Little replied it will be excavation and would be hauled to their other pad. It's about 20,000 yards of export and they'll be taking it across the road. Mr. Little stated they would probably plate the road if they can get approval, and cross with off road trucks so they don't incur the cost of hauling it. They can also improve that pad and work on the slope as well.

Mr. Little went through the elevation view for all floors in the building. Chairman Elmore asked who owned the lot between the future office site and across the road. Mr. Yates replied he thought State Employees Credit Union. Mr. Little mentioned the roof top units on the Ag building and Sheriff's office, they are trying to avoid those. He said it could be an option but, they are proposing in the design that the units would be in the basement. The rooftop penetration would be kept to a minimum, the least amount of penetration the better roof you get and less opportunity for leaks and water infiltration.

Mr. Little went through the plan for each floor at this time. He began with the basement level. He said IT, their server room, and mechanical would all be there. Chairman Elmore asked if the IT office would be in the basement. Mr. Little replied yes, the server room needs to be cool all the time, it will help if it's in the basement. He added having it in the basement level is an advantage for heating and cooling of those units. Vice Chairman Green asked why is the basement 27 less sq. ft. in width than the south side. Mr. Kesterson replied the natural contour slopes down, they would have to build a retaining wall to keep material in place, so they're using the basement rather than having to do this, which cost less.

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Mr. Little added there is a travel rule that you can only be 1/3 total distance away for an exit from the furthest point, so they would actually have to add another stairwell to use that space. Vice Chairman Greene replied that cuts 4700 sq. ft out of it, but there's a logical reason for it. Chairman Elmore asked if the sq. ft. cost is less in the basement than the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. Mr. Little replied the basement level will be the cheapest. Chairman Elmore asked if they are using \$400 per square foot now, and does that include the basement. Mr. Kesterson replied when they came up with that, they gave a range for the cost per sq. ft. on the building. It included the basement, they didn't know what the size would be. They received the plans last week so they actually have these out to the market for pricing. Another thing that will help is they have information on the sight and geo tech now as well. Mr. Little said hopefully they will come back to the Board with good news about the budget, by the end of the month.

Mr. Little went through level 1 and said they tried to keep it as open concept as possible. Chairman Elmore asked how much open space is there between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. Mr. Little replied 800 sq. ft. He added in the lobby if they looked up from the first floor, they would be looking at the bottom of the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. Vice Chairman Greene added it is only open on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, you only lose it one time. Mr. Little said they only have one hallway and a lobby per floor. Vice Chairman Greene stated the Board of Elections will have 574 more sq. ft. than they do now. Mr. Little replied depending on how they work the cubicles, they might could host their own elections including one-stop especially in the off years. In the presidential election years, they may use flex space or could use the Commissioner's Board Room. They are trying to take care of all one stop voting inside their suite. Chairman Elmore stated they only have 3 fulltime employees. Mr. Little replied the flex space doesn't have to be there the whole time. Vice Chairman Greene added they could use that all space and all voting could stay there in one room.

Chairman Elmore asked if the tax departments training room and hearing room could be combined. Mr. Yates replied yes. Chairman Elmore said unless they plan to grow a lot, it's a lot of office space for 31 people. Chairman Elmore asked Mr. Little how they scaled it. Mr. Little replied they designed it from the top down and when they got to other floor levels, they tried to meet suite demands as they came down. When they got to the basement they picked up one suite as more flex space. He added there would be some fluidity within the square footage. They tried to stack the departments vertically. He added they can review and look at another suite, flex area, or someone moving in a corner of another suite. The Board of Elections worked out almost perfect to what they asked for. Tax could take another 1,000 sq. ft. if they had it, they're as packed up as anybody.

Commissioner Johnson asked if it was a requirement for a building this high to have 2 elevators. Mr. Little replied no. They felt like they would want a freight elevator, it is a huge deal with moving furniture, and would be non-patron and non-citizen. They can easily bid the second elevator as an add alternate. They are hydraulic hole less traction-controlled elevators so they don't require big cylinders in the ground. It's the literal cost of the car, with very little structure, it's very easy to bid it as one and they could pick up that space on each floor. Vice Chairman Greene stated that the new building would cause a different issue than the building they are in currently, now they can park on the side and walk in to the second and third level. The new building, everyone would ride the elevator or walk the steps, and two floors would be elevators all the time. Commissioner Johnson said his thought was most foot traffic would be to the tax office.

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Mr. Little went through the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor plan at this time. He stated they want to implement a one stop permitting for the citizens of Wilkes. Environmental Health would be on one side, where most of their employees have work vehicles, with landing zones in the suite. Building Inspections department, Inspectors and Planning officials are on the other side. Mr. Yates stated they went and toured the Surry County Office and they have the one-stop shop. A citizen comes in and fills out the paperwork at the front, if they need to see someone they can bring them to the front, it flows a lot better. Mr. Little said the HR department would be to the right with a small conference room and storage for their personnel files. There is an open format for people that assist, and the Director has his own office. The purchasing office and storage is there and they have 735 sq. ft. of space for future growth.

Mr. Little went through the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor plan and said the Board of Commissioners Room is on this floor. The room would be about 1500 sq. ft. with storage behind the meeting room, and they can make that a flex space if needed. The legal office and county managers office would be there as well as payroll and finance. Next, Mr. Little discussed some finishing options and said the architect, within another week, would have a rendering of the building in color. Vice Chairman Greene asked about the durability and longevity of the metal panels. Mr. Little replied they would last practically forever but, it's a matter of color fade. The lighter they keep them the longer they will look shiny. He added it should be very easy maintenance, washing the building and windows should be one time per year. Chairman Elmore asked the cost to maintain. Mr. Little replied they are still waiting for the mechanical analysis from the electrical engineer and the mechanical engineer and should have two options on HVAC systems. The lighting will be LED, and taking advantage of the natural light, bathrooms and storage closets will be on sensors with timers.

Chairman Elmore said as of now there are three elevators, would they want to go with two. Mr. Little replied it would be the easiest bid alternate. Commissioner Sexton asked what could be a downside to the texture of the glass. Mr. Little replied as long as they do low E, the insulated glass is as about as well insulated as the rest of the building. Commissioner Sexton asked if the more glass they add cause the price to go up. Mr. Kesterson replied not as much as they think, it actually helps with the glass on it. There may be some premium glass over the wall, but it depends on what veneer they're putting on it. He added they are getting good economy with this glass package based on the amount of material they will order.

Vice Chairman Greene asked what percentage of the company's that they used to build EMS were local. Mr. Kesterson stated it was over 54%. Mr. Little, Mr. Kesterson and Mr. Vannoy, thanked the Board for their time. The Board thanked them for their time and presentation.

**ADJOURN** – The Budget Work Session of the Wilkes County Board of Commissioners adjourned at 4:59 P.M.

Sarah D. Call, Clerk

Gideon Keith Elmore, Chairman

WILKES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Approved: SEPTEMBER 5, 2023