STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF AVERY

The Avery County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Monday, December 6, 2021 at 3:30 p.m. in the Commissioners Board Room, Avery County Administrative Complex, 175 Linville Street, Newland, NC.

Members Present: Martha Hicks, Chair; Tim Phillips, Vice-Chair; Dennis Aldridge; Blake Vance; Wood Hall Young, Jr.

Members Absent: None

Call To Order
Chair Hicks called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. 
Dennis Aldridge led prayer. 
Wood Hall Young, Jr. led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Organizational Meeting
Chair & Vice-Chair
Martha Hicks turned the meeting over to Phillip Barrier, County Manager. Mr. Barrier opened the floor for nominations for Chairperson of the Avery County Board of Commissioners. Wood Hall Young, Jr. nominated Martha Hicks for Chair.

Motion by Dennis Aldridge and second by Blake Vance to cease nominations and appoint Martha Hicks as Chair of the Avery County Board of Commissioners. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

Mr. Barrier turned the meeting over to Chair Hicks. Chair Hicks opened the floor for nominations for Vice-Chair of the Avery County Board of Commissioners. Blake Vance nominated Tim Phillips for Vice-Chair.

Motion by Blake Vance and second by Dennis Aldridge to cease nominations and appoint Tim Phillips as Vice-Chair of the Avery County Board of Commissioners. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

County Manager
Wood Hall Young, Jr. nominated Phillip Barrier, Jr. for County Manager. 
Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Tim Phillips to cease nominations and appoint Phillip Barrier, Jr. as County Manager of Avery County. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

County Attorney
Tim Phillips nominated Michaelle Poore for County Attorney. 
Motion by Tim Phillips and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to cease nominations and appoint Michaelle Poore as County Attorney. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).
**Finance Officer**
Dennis Aldridge nominated Caleb Hogan for Finance Officer.  
**Motion by Dennis Aldridge and second by Tim Phillips to cease nominations and appoint Caleb Hogan as Finance Officer of Avery County.** Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

**Clerk/Assistant County Manager**
Blake Vance nominated Cindy Turbyfill for Clerk to Board/Assistant County Manager.  
**Motion by Blake Vance and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to cease nominations and appoint Cindy Turbyfill as Clerk to The Board/Assistant County Manager.** Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

**Proclamations and Awards**
Chair Hicks recognized Phillip Barrier, Jr., County Manager for being named the Business Man of the Year by the Avery Chamber of Commerce.

**Public Comment**
Dave Calvert stated that today was his last official day on the Newland Town Council.  He said that the County buying up properties in the Town of Newland was hurting the tax base in Newland.  He also questioned why the County subsidized the tag office in Newland.  Mr. Barrier answered that it was a service to all the citizens and that we wanted to continue that service for the citizens.  Mr. Calvert asked the Commissioners to consider some kind of subsidy for the Newland Police Department because Newland was always running calls for the Sheriff’s Office.

Lee Buchanan stated that he had been serving Avery County for the past 26 years.  He announced that he had filed for candidate for Sheriff of Avery County.  He thanked the Commissioners for their service and asked for their prayers.

**Board Appointment**

**Rural Transportation Advisory Committee**
Wood Hall Young, Jr. is currently on the Rural Transportation Advisory Committee.  His term is expired and Mr. Young has expressed his desire to be reappointed.

**Motion by Blake Vance and second by Tim Phillips to appoint Wood Hall Young, Jr. to the Rural Transportation Advisory Committee.** Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

**VAYA Health Regional Board**
Vaya Health has consolidated with Cardinal Innovations adding more counties to the LME/MCO.  A county commissioner and the county manager needs to be appointed to the Vaya Health Regional Board.

**Motion by Dennis Aldridge and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to appoint Tim Phillips and Phillip Barrier, Jr. to the VAYA Health Regional Board.** Motion unanimously approved (5-0).
Audit Report – Sharon Gillespie
Sharon Gillespie presented the annual audit for the period ending June 30, 2021. Ms. Gillespie explained the financial highlights.

- The assets of Avery County exceeded its liabilities at the close of the fiscal year by $55,013,575.
- The government’s total net position increased for the current year by a net of $6,980,480 primarily due to capital improvements to County properties and continuing construction on Avery High School.
- As of the close of the current fiscal year, Avery County’s governmental funds reported combined ending fund balances of $32,447,067 a net decrease of $400,186 in comparison with the prior year. Approximately 59 percent of this total amount or $19,106,864 is available for spending at the government’s discretion.
- At the end of the current fiscal year, unassigned fund balance for the General Fund was $19,106,864 or 59 percent of total general fund expenditures and transfers to other funds for the fiscal year.
- Avery County’s total long term debt decreased by $1,041,327 during the current fiscal year due to regularly scheduled payments.

Ms. Gillespie stated based on our audit and the report of the other auditors, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material aspects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities. Ms. Gillespie said in other words everything looked great and there were no problems with COVID expenditures.

Motion by Blake Vance and second by Tim Phillips to approve the Annual Audit for the period ending June 30, 2021. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

Public Hearing Regarding the Schedule of Values – Bruce Daniels
Motion by Tim Phillips and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to go into a time of Public Hearing Regarding the Schedule of Values at 4:00 p.m. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

This is a public hearing to receive public comment regarding the Schedule of Values for the 2022 Revaluation. The Machinery Act requires each county to re-value real property at least every 8 years. The Machinery Act also requires the counties to appraise real property uniformly at its true value in money. The new values will become effective January 1, 2022 and will be reflected on the tax bills you receive in September 2022.

Mr. Daniels stated that the Schedule of Values are the rules that we are using and that the schedule shows the appraisal procedures. Values are going to go up and in some places go up substantially. It is a healthy real estate market right now.

There were no public comments.
Motion by Tim Phillips and second by Dennis Aldridge to go out of the Public Hearing Regarding the Schedule of Values at 4:10 p.m. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

Motion by Blake Vance and second by Tim Phillips to accept the Schedule of Values as presented. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

Amend the Agenda
Chair Hicks stated that the agenda would need to be amended to add a Resolution regarding the American Rescue Plan funds. This would be added under the Finance Officer’s Report.

Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Dennis Aldridge to amend the agenda to add a Resolution regarding the American Rescue Plan funds under the Finance Officer’s Report. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

Northwestern Regional Housing Authority Update – Ned Fowler
Ned Fowler, Executive Director of Northwestern Regional Housing Authority, gave an update on Northwestern Regional Housing Authority. NHRA has provided essential housing services to our less fortunate neighbors in the mountain counties every working day for the past 39 years. We acknowledge that this assistance is made possible through our active partnerships with private banking and investment, with federal, state, and local government, and with the community leaders who comprise the Board of Trustees and give their policy guidance.

NRHA manages the Historic Elk Park School. This was built 2004 and includes 40 units. The total number of families assisted in Avery County are 289; 636 individuals with a program cost of $1,375,933. Annual program expenditures include Section 8 Rental assistance with 179 families assisted at an annual cost of $1,012,032; Housing Counseling with 55 families counseled at $16,385 annual cost; Family Self-Sufficiency with 15 families enrolled at $16,413 annual cost and Property Management with an annual operating expense of $313,103.

The Board thanked Ned Fowler for his updates.

Tax Administrator Report – Bruce Daniels
Tax Collections
Tax Collections for the month of November 2021 were $5,027,389.83.

Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Blake Vance to approve the Tax Collections for the month of November 2021 as presented. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

Releases
Releases for the month of November 2021 were $4,066.05.
Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Blake Vance to approve the Releases for the month of November 2021 as presented. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

Sales Statistics
The total qualified sales for November 2021 is 107 sales at 68% of appraised value. Last November there was 142 sales at 83% of appraised value.

County Manager Updates – Phillip Barrier, Jr.
Covid Update
Last November there were 400 Covid cases; this November there are 140 cases.

American Rescue Plan
We are waiting on final guidance. High Country Council of Government is pledging to help with paperwork and all the extra things that we have to submit.

Dogwood Trust – Workforce Housing
There is a meeting tomorrow in the Board room.

Mr. Barrier referred the Board to several items in the Agenda Consent Items including the report for the Veteran’s Service Officer that shows benefits received since July of $139,000.

Finance Officer Report – Caleb Hogan
Budget Amendment
In order to keep the High School renovation moving forward in an effort to prevent further delay the following budget amendment will need to be made to the project ordinance.

Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Tim Phillips to adopt the Budget Amendment in the amount of $200,000 with a debit of $87,032.00 to Transfer to Project Fund-School (107000.6240) and a credit of $87,032.00 to Fund Balance- Appropriated (103990.0000); debit of $200,000 to General Construction (456600.4004) and a credit of $112,968.00 to High School Renovation Interest Income (453105.0000) and a credit of $87,032.00 to Transfer from General Fund (453101.0000). Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

Budget Amendment
Due to personnel changes in Central Dispatch the following budget amendment will need to be made.

Motion by Tim Phillips and second by Dennis Aldridge to adopt the Budget Amendment in the amount of $26,786.08 with a debit of $8,857.33 to Salary—EMS Director (105300.0200); with a debit of $677.25 to FICA (105300.0500); with a debit of $1,090.83 to Retirement (105300.0600); with a debit of $265.42 to 401K Retirement (105300.0800); with a debit of $8,677.67 to Salary-Director
(105250.0200); with a debit of $663.83 to FICA-Administration (105250.0500) with a debit of $992.25 to Retirement (105250.0600); with a debit of $260.17 to 401K Retirement (105250.0800); with a debit of $4,341.75 to Salary Dispatchers (108200.0210); with a debit of $332.50 to FICA (108200.0500); with a debit of $497.00 to Retirement (108200.0600); with a debit of $130.08 to Comm.-401K Law (1108200.0800) and a credit of $26,786.08 to Salary—Director (108200.0200).

Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

Budget Amendment
E911 NC DIT has notified the Department of Central Dispatch that the E911 fund will only cover maintenance for three primary CAD positions and not the five included in the maintenance agreement with Southern Software. This ineligible expense totaling $4,893.60 will have to be paid back to the E911 fund.

Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Tim Phillips to adopt the Budget Amendment in the amount of $4,893.60 with a debit of $4,893.60 to Transfer to E911 Fund (107000.6250) and a credit of $4,893.60 to Fund Balance—Appropriated (103990.0000) and a debit of $4,893.60 to Fund Balance Appropriation (223990.0000) and a credit of $4,893.60 to Transfer-E911 System (223101.0000). Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

Resolution Regarding American Rescue Plan Fund
WHEREAS, Avery County is receiving certain American Rescue Program funds which require reporting of interest income generated from those funds; and
WHEREAS, in order to comply with the reporting requirement for the American Rescue Program funds it is necessary to establish a new account with the North Carolina Capital Management Trust; and
WHEREAS, the Finance Officer will need to file an application to establish an account with the North Carolina Capital Management Trust;
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Avery County Board of County Commissioners does hereby authorize the Avery County Finance Officer to apply for an account with the North Carolina Capital Management Trust for the County for American Rescue Plan funds, and the Finance Officer is authorized to sign any application and related documentation in order to establish the account.

Motion by Dennis Aldridge and second by Blake Vance to adopt the Resolution Regarding the American Rescue Plan Fund. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

County Attorney Report – Michelle Poore
WHEREAS, Avery County is bordered to its south by McDowell County and Burke County; and
WHEREAS, McDowell County has requested that the common boundary line between McDowell County and Burke County be surveyed by the North Carolina Geodetic Survey, County Boundary Surveyor; and
WHEREAS, Avery County does not object to a survey between McDowell County and Burke County; and
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Avery County Board of County Commissioners hereby acknowledges that it does not object that McDowell County’s line be surveyed by the North Carolina Geodetic Survey, County Boundary Surveyor.

Michaelle Poore, County Attorney, explained that McDowell County is having a survey and that they have to inform adjoining counties and get a consent from the adjoining counties. This Resolution says that Avery County does not object to this.

Motion by Tim Phillips and second by Dennis Aldridge to adopt the Resolution Regarding the McDowell County survey. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

Approval of Minutes
Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Blake Vance to approve the October 22, 2021 Special Meeting Minutes; October 25, 2021 Special Meeting Minutes; November 1, 2021 Regular Meeting; November 15, 2021 Special Meeting. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

Agenda Consent Items
Adopted by Consensus of the Board.

Upcoming Meetings
The Employee Christmas Lunch will be December 15, 2021 at 12 noon at the Avery Community Center. The next Regular meeting will be January 3, 2021 at 3:30 p.m. in the Commissioners Board Room.

Adjourn
Motion by Tim Phillips and second by Blake Vance to adjourn this meeting at 4:45 p.m. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

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Martha Hicks, Chair
Avery County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:________________________
Cindy Turbyfill, Clerk