The Avery County Board of Commissioners held a Board Workshop on Monday, February 8, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioners Board Room, Avery County Administrative Complex, 175 Linville Street, Newland, NC. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss and take any action necessary regarding the following items:

1. Avery High School Project
2. Five year departmental capital plans
3. Current Capital Projects
4. Public Buildings and Grounds
5. Personnel
6. Subdivision Ordinance
7. Revenues

Call To Order
Chair Hicks called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m.
Chair Hicks led prayer.
The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Avery High School Project
Caleb Hogan, Finance Officer, updated the Board on the High School Renovation Project Ordinance. There has been $110,013.00 in interest accrued. The total expenditures as of February 5, 2021 is $12,065,141.00.

Wood Hall Young, Jr. stated that Branch Builds has not thrown the machinery and manpower toward this project like they should have. Dennis Aldridge added that there was another party that bears responsibility for lack of oversight and holding the contractor’s feet to the fire.

There was discussion regarding the loan on the high school and whether there could be prepayments made. Caleb stated that there could not be a prepayment made until August 2023. Dennis Aldridge stated it was his opinion that the upcoming budget should include a $600,000 payment for the high school.

Five Year Departmental Capital Plans
The five year departmental capital plans were presented to the commissioners for consideration before the upcoming budget meetings.

Current Capital Projects
Phillip Barrier, Jr., County Manager, updated the Board on the capital improvement plan for the fiscal year and the progress that has been made.

Public Buildings and Grounds
Chair Hicks stated that the Board needed to look at buying the other two pieces of property from the Guy’s. We need this property that connects to our parking lot. Mr. Barrier stated that possibly if that property was bought that an office building could be constructed to house Probation and Parole. The asking price for the Guy property is $180,000.

Mr. Barrier stated that the property near Daymark could house the Department of Social Services. DSS is running out of room. This property could be renovated for the current needs and then later on add on to the building. The asking price for the hospital property is $250,000.

Mr. Barrier stated that maintenance was running out of room at the garage. There was really no place to store the equipment that they had. He stated that previously the Board had looked at the Mike Aldridge trucking. The asking price for this property is $500,000.

There was discussion regarding all of these properties. The Board instructed the County Manager to inquire about these properties and report back to the Board his findings.

There was discussion about the Avery Cares building and the Board instructed the County Manager to begin the process of selling that property.

**Recess**
Chair Hicks called for a brief recess.
Chair Hicks declared the meeting to be back in session after a brief recess.

**Subdivision Ordinance**
Michaelle Poore, County Attorney, explained to the Board the new changes to 160D of the Local Planning and Development Regulations. These changes affect any land use ordinance. We are going to have to review the steep slope ordinance, sedimentation ordinance, and ridge ordinance. Anything that is updated will require a public hearing. We can work on this and plan on the public hearings either the second meeting in May or the first meeting in June then the Board would have time to enact these changes before the July 1st deadline.

Ms. Poore also discussed the occupancy tax and stated that it might be judicious to investigate the legislation. The Board will let the county manager know if they want to pursue the occupancy tax.

**Agricultural Building**
The name of the Community Building at the Agricultural Building was discussed and the Board decided that the name of the building would be the Avery Community Center.

There was discussion regarding the curbing, paving and steps for the inside stage. The County Manager will meet with Jerry Moody and get some estimates on these items.
Solid Waste
There was discussion about the closure of the landfill for construction and demolition. Eric Foster, Solid Waste, stated that there was a survey done by the engineer. We can put the closure off as long as we want to as long as we are putting a ton in the landfill per year. Based off of what the engineer told the Board at an earlier meeting, there will be an increased cost to close the landfill because of a synthetic liner that would need to be used. This would be almost two acres of closure. This will include some of the closure behind the landfill to keep erosion from happening on the back side. When the landfill is closed, I will not need another truck or trailer but I will need another driver.

Mr. Foster informed the Board that the state is now mandating that engineers inspect the transfer stations. He also informed them that recycling has gone down to 25 dollars a ton. In 2019 we brought in 3636 tons of C&D from January to December. This past year we brought in 5580 tons. Our average is between 3800 and 4000 tons.

Personnel
There was discussion regarding cost of living adjustment for employees this year. There was discussion about merit raises.

Revenues
Mr. Barrier stated that there had been approximately 2.43% growth which is just a rough estimation at this time. There was discussion regarding revenues.

Adjourn
Chair Hicks declared the workshop to be adjourned at 3:56 p.m.

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Martha Hicks, Chair
Avery County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:__________________________
Cindy Turbyfill, Clerk