STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF AVERY

The Avery County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Monday, January 4, 2021 at the new Community Building, 661 Vale Road, 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.
Tim Phillips led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Senator Warren Daniel was sworn into office by N.C. Supreme Court Judge Tamara Barringer.

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

Public Comment
There were no public comments.

Board Appointments
Avery County Economic Development Advisory Committee
There is one vacancy on the Avery County Economic Development Advisory Committee. This position has been advertised and reviewed.

Each commissioner was given a ballot and instructed to place a one beside their top choice and a two beside their second choice. The ballots were signed and dated by each board member. The ballots were placed on file in the clerk’s office for public inspection and recorded in the minutes.

Martha Hicks voted as follows:  Angela Berry 1; David Tate 2.
Tim Phillips voted as follows:  Angela Berry 1; David Tate 2.
Dennis Aldridge voted as follows:  Angela Berry 1; David Tate 2.
Blake Vance voted as follows:  Angela Berry 1; David Tate 2.
Wood Hall Young, Jr. voted as follows:  Angela Berry 1; David Tate 2.

Angela Berry received 5 first place votes.
David Tate received 5 second place votes.
Motion by Blake Vance and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to appoint Angela Berry to the Avery County Economic Development Advisory Committee. Motion unanimously approved (5-0) Hicks—Aye; Phillips—Aye; Aldridge—Aye; Vance—Aye; Young—Aye.

**Subdivision Approval—Phase I Sunset Lots at Eagles Nest; Cabins at Eagles Nest**

Tommy Burleson, Planning and Inspections, stated that the Planning Board had approved Phase I of the Sunset Lots at Eagles Nest Lots S88-S92. These Sunset lots received final approval for the five tracts of which were marked prior as future development. These lots are in the Fall Creek Fire Department District and close to the back entrance of the development. Also approved was the Cabins at Eagles Nest Lots C86, C88, C90-96, C99-C103. These Cabin lots are also in an area marked future development and are located near the main gate and fall under the coverage of the Banner Elk Fire District.

Wood Hall Young, Jr. stated that in the Planning Board minutes were several issues that was supposed to be taken care of before it came to this Board. Have these been taken care of? Mr. Burleson stated that they had and that Mike Lacey had signed off on these.

Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Blake Vance to approve Phase I Sunset Lots at Eagles Nest and Cabins at Eagles Nest Subdivisions.

Dennis Aldridge questioned if there was a maximum number of lots that can be brought in this manner at one time. Mr. Burleson stated that no there was not. These are sections that have been subdivided before and now have the infrastructure and roads. Mr. Aldridge questioned if 100 lots would be looked at any differently. Mr. Burleson stated it would be more in depth. Mr. Aldridge said my concern is looking at these in parts and pieces. Derek Buchanan with Eagles Nest stated that the Board is seeing this in pieces but there has been an overall plan approval for the entire master plan. The planning board has looked at the overall plan of these sections.

Motion unanimously approved (5-0) Hicks—Aye; Phillips—Aye; Aldridge—Aye; Vance—Aye; Young—Aye.

Chair Hicks stated that the agenda needed to be amended to include Avery County EMS Fee Schedule.

Motion by Tim Phillips and second by Blake Vance to amend the agenda to include Avery County EMS Fee schedule at 3.3C. Motion unanimously approved (5-0) Hicks—Aye; Phillips—Aye; Aldridge—Aye; Vance—Aye; Young—Aye.

**Tax Administrator Report – Bruce Daniels**

**Tax Collections Report**

The Tax Collections for the month of December 2020 is $5,361,198.12.
Motion by Blake Vance and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to approve the Tax Collections for the month of December 2020 as presented. Motion unanimously approved (5-0) Hicks—Aye; Phillips—Aye; Aldridge—Aye; Vance—Aye; Young—Aye.

**Releases**
The Releases for the month of December 2020 is $7,484.68.

Motion by Tim Phillips and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to approve the Releases for the month of December 2020 as presented. Motion unanimously approved (5-0) Hicks—Aye; Phillips—Aye; Aldridge—Aye; Vance—Aye; Young—Aye.

**Sales**
The sales for December 2020 is 121 sales; sales for December 2019 was 71 sales.

Mr. Daniels stated that sales were still robust especially for this time of the year.

**Avery County EMS Fee Schedule**
Joielle Calhoun spoke to the Board regarding the EMS Fee Schedule. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina has raised their rates. EMS needs to raise their rates to the allowable amount because they will be losing money. This is not passed on to the patient.

Dennis Aldridge questioned when the fee was adjusted previously Ms. Calhoun stated it had been two years.

**Motion by Blake Vance and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to adjust the EMS fee schedule to the amount allowed by insurance. Motion unanimously approved (5-0) Hicks—Aye; Phillips—Aye; Aldridge—Aye; Vance—Aye; Young—Aye.**

**County Manager Updates – Phillip Barrier, Jr.**
Covid 19 continues to be a concern. We are 301 days into the state of emergency declaration. Avery County currently has 128 cases; 95 community and 33 prison.

Cares Act Funding was to be over December 30, 2020 but has been extended until December 2021. We have had a plan and carried out the plan. I will bring an update next month.

**Finance Officer Report – Caleb Hogan**

**Budget Amendment**
The Avery County Board of Elections has received money legislated through HB 1105 to give $100.00 to each poll worker during the administration of the November 3, 2020 statewide general election.

**Motion by Tim Phillips and second by Blake Vance to accept the grant and adopt the Budget Amendment in the amount of $7,700.00 with a debit of $7,700.00 to**
Wages—Poll Workers (104300.0240) and a credit of $7,700.00 to Elections Revenue (103706.0000). Motion unanimously approved (5-0) Hicks—Aye; Phillips—Aye; Aldridge—Aye; Vance—Aye; Young—Aye.

County Attorney Report – Michelle Poore
There are no items that require the Board’s attention.

Closed Session
Motion by Blake Vance and second by Dennis Aldridge to go into Closed Session at 4:36 p.m. regarding NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (3) Attorney/Client Privilege. Motion unanimously approved (5-0) Hicks—Aye; Phillips—Aye; Aldridge—Aye; Vance—Aye; Young—Aye. Invitees are the Board; County Manager; Finance Officer; Attorney and Clerk.

Chair Hicks declared the meeting to be back in Regular Session after a time of Closed Session. During closed session, no vote was taken.

Approval of Minutes
Motion by Blake Vance and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to approve the minutes for December 7, 2020. Motion unanimously approved (5-0) Hicks—Aye; Phillips—Aye; Aldridge—Aye; Vance—Aye; Young—Aye.

Agenda Consent Items
Adopted by Consensus of the Board.

Upcoming Meetings
The next regular meeting will be February 1, 2021.

Adjourn
Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Tim Phillips to adjourn this meeting at 5:21 p.m. Motion unanimously approved (5-0) Hicks—Aye; Phillips—Aye; Aldridge—Aye; Vance—Aye; Young—Aye.

_____________________________________
Martha Hicks, Chair
Avery County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST: ________________________________
Cindy Turbyfill, Clerk