The Avery County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Monday, May 3, 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; Wood Hall Young, Jr.; Blake Vance

Members Absent: None

Call To Order
Chair Hicks called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.
Chair Hicks led prayer.
Blake Vance led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment
There were no public comments.

Board Appointments

Jury Commission
Linda Taylor has applied for the Jury Commission.

Motion by Blake Vance and second by Tim Phillips to appoint Linda Taylor to the Jury Commission. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

Planning Board
There are three vacancies on the Avery County Planning Board.

Ballots were handed out to the Commissioners. Each Commissioner will place a number beside the name with their top choice beginning with number 1. The ballots will be signed and dated by each commissioner. The ballots will be kept on file with the Clerk to the Board and included in the minutes.

Cheryl Buchanan received 11 votes (2 first place; 3 third place)
Bill Close received 34 votes (1 fourth place; 2 seventh place; 2 eighth place)
Rachel Deal received 24 votes (3 fourth place; 2 sixth place)
Taunia Erno received 34 votes (1 fifth place; 3 seventh place; 1 eighth place)
Michael Lacey received 8 votes (2 first place; 3 second place)
Michael Smith received 26 votes (1 fourth place; 2 fifth place; 2 sixth place)
Anna Trivette received 11 votes (1 first place. 2 second place; 2 third place)
William Wise received 32 votes (2 fifth place; 1 sixth place; 2 eighth place)
Martha Hicks voted as follows: Cheryl Buchanan 1; Bill Close 8; Rachel Deal 4; Taunia Erno 7; Michael Lacey 2; Michael Smith 6; Anna Trivette 3; William Wise 5
Tim Phillips voted as follows: Cheryl Buchanan 1; Bill Close 7; Rachel Deal 4; Taunia Erno 8; Michael Lacey 2; Michael Smith 5; Anna Trivette 3; William Wise 6
Dennis Aldridge voted as follows: Cheryl Buchanan 3; Bill Close 7; Rachel Deal 6; Taunia Erno 5; Michael Lacey 1; Michael Smith 4; Anna Trivette 2; William Wise 8
Wood Hall Young, Jr. voted as follows: Cheryl Buchanan 3; Bill Close 4; Rachel Deal 6; Taunia Erno 7; Michael Lacey 2; Michael Smith 5; Anna Trivette 1; William Wise 8
Blake Vance voted as follows: Cheryl Buchanan 3; Bill Close 8; Rachel Deal 4; Taunia Erno 7; Michael Lacey 1; Michael Smith 6; Anna Trivette 2; William Wise 5

Review of Applicant
Review of Applicant for the High Country Workforce Development Board.

WAMY Presentation
Starli McDowell, WAMY Community Action representative, explained that WAMY received Care Act Funding in late July 2020. The funding has assisted residents with mortgage and rent payments, utilities, heating fuel and water bills in all the four counties. The need in our community has been immense especially through the holidays. WAMY’s mission is “partnering with families and communities to provide the disadvantaged the support and tools they need to become self-sufficient.” Other funding besides the Cares Act Funding has been AMY Wellness Foundation and Duke Energy Covid-19 Relief Funding. From July 2020 to February 2021, seventeen Avery County households were assisted through the Cares Act; eleven Avery County households were assisted through the AMY Wellness Foundation; three households were assisted through the Duke Energy Covid Relief.

Juvenile Crime Prevention Council Funding Plan
Dennis Aldridge, Chair of the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council explained that the approval of the funding plan is something that must be done every year. This is state funds that are directed to the county level and then JCPC determines how it is directed. There is a 30% county match for this funding.

Motion by Blake Vance and second by Tim Phillips to adopt the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council Funding Plan for the 2021/2022 fiscal year. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

Tax Administrator Report – Bruce Daniels
Tax Collections Report
The Total Tax Collections for the month of April 2021 is $183,494.31.

Motion by Tim Phillips and second by Dennis Aldridge to approve the Tax Collections Report for the month of April 2021 as presented. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

There were no releases.
Sales Statistics
The sales for the month of April 2021 is 105 qualified sales; last year there were 38 qualified sales.

County Manager Updates – Phillip Barrier, Jr.
Covid-19
There are currently 53 positive Covid cases. We have vaccinated 30.3% of the population for Avery County.

Broadband
There has been a meeting regarding the ARC grant and we are now waiting on a press release from the High Country Council of Government. This is a $100,000 grant.

Census
The Census numbers are in. The updated population for Avery County is 18,035.

Finance Officer Report – Caleb Hogan
Budget Amendment
The Department of Social Services has received an allocation of $560.00 from the state for pandemic LIEAP (Low Income Energy Assistance Program).

Motion by Tim Phillips and second by Dennis Aldridge to adopt the Budget Amendment in the amount of $560.00 with a debit of $560.00 to LIEAP (106800.6095) and a credit of $560.00 to County Welfare (103634.0000). Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

Budget Amendment
The Avery County Board of Elections has been awarded the HAVA (Help America Vote Act) Grant in the amount of $29,518.00 to improve the administration of federal elections.

Motion by Blake Vance and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to adopt the Budget Amendment in the amount of $29,518.00 with a debit of $29,518.00 to CARES HAVA (104300.3800) and a credit of $29,518.00 to Elections Grant (103705.0000). Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

Budget Amendment
The Sheriff’s Office has received the NC Department of Public Safety Governor’s Crime Commission Grant. It will be used to purchase technology improvements.

Motion by Tim Phillips and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to adopt the Budget Amendment in the amount of $24,500.00 with a debit of $24,500.00 to Crime Control Grant (105100.7420) and a credit of $24,500.00 to Governor’s Crime Commission Grant (103615.0000). Motion unanimously approved (5-0).
Budget Amendment
Budget Amendment to recognize the settlement agreement for the Department of Social Services.

Motion by Wood Hall Young, Jr. and second by Dennis Aldridge to adopt the Budget Amendment in the amount of $96,614.30 with a debit of $11,587.50 to Law Suit Settlement (104100.6090); debit of $78,983.80 to Salary-Income Maintenance (106100.0210); debit of $6,043.00 to FICA-Administration (106100.0500) and a credit of $96,614.30 to Fund Balance-Appropriated (103990.0000). Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

County Attorney Report – Michelle Poore
Michelle Poore, County Attorney, reported that the 160D changes is progressing. The planning board has gone over three ordinances and will consider the others at the next meeting. We will schedule the public hearings for June.

Approval of Minutes
Motion by Dennis Aldridge and second by Tim Phillips to approve the February 23, 2021 Joint Meeting with the Board of Education; April 5, 2021 Regular Meeting; and April 5, 2021 Closed Session with a revision made to the April 5, 2021 minutes to change the year 2021 to 2020 in the Tax Administrators Report and to seal the minutes of the closed session. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

Agenda Consent Items
Adopted by Consensus of the Board.

Upcoming Meetings
The July 5, 2021 meeting will be rescheduled for July 12, 2021 due to the Independence Holiday. The second meeting in July scheduled for July 19, 2021 will be cancelled.

Adjourn
Motion by Blake Vance and second by Tim Phillips to adjourn the meeting at 4:15 p.m. Motion unanimously approved (5-0).

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Martha Hicks, Chair
Avery County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST: ______________________
Cindy Turbyfill, Clerk