The Avery County Board of Commissioners held a Special Joint Meeting with the Avery County Board of Education on Monday, November 29, 2021 at 4:30 p.m. in the Commissioners Board Room, Avery County Administrative Complex, 175 Linville Street, Newland, NC. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Addition and Renovation of the Avery High School to include change orders and to approve a budget amendment and take any other action necessary regarding the Addition and Renovation of the Avery High School.

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

Members Absent: Blake Vance

Board of Education Members Present: John Greene, Chair; Jane Bumgarner; Pat Edwards; Ruth Shirley

Others in attendance: Rob Johnson, Boomerang Architects; Pierre Henwood, Boomerang Architects; John Henning

Call To Order

Motion by Tim Phillips and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to go into the Joint Meeting at 4:35 p.m. Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).

Motion by Pat Edwards and second by Ruth Shirley to go into the Joint Meeting at 4:35 p.m. Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).

Wood Hall Young, Jr. gave the invocation.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mr. Rob Johnson began the meeting by presenting the Avery County High School Project Budget Summary document with both boards. Mr. Johnson also provided another document which was a summary of remaining outstanding items. The document included: (1) a summary of pending change proposal requests under review, (2) a summary of pending change proposal requests awaiting Branch resubmittal, and (3) change requests that are in dispute between the Board of Education and Boomerang. Mr. Johnson stated that Mr. Pierre Henwood would do a broad overview of the variance (which was $242,405.90) of the overage between both contingency and all the allowances. He felt this was a conservative projection considering all the items it included.
A document with change orders being reviewed by Mr. Henwood was given to both boards. The goal of the review was to decide what are fair change orders and what are unfair change orders. Mr. Henwood went through the list of change orders that are presently under review.

Mr. Henwood did mention there was one last big unknown out there which was they are still removing rock for the storm drains. We are not sure what the final number for this will be until the drain trench has been completed. Mr. Jaynes has asked for a second set of eyes to verify the calculations are accurate.

Mr. Aldridge stated that the reason they want things explained and rechecked is because over time Branch has proven that they cannot be trusted. Mr. Young said the project has to be finished but he is very concerned about the workmanship.

Mr. Young questioned about the “Punch list”. It is about one third of the way through according to Mr. Henwood. It started at 606 items, approximately 100 are closed, 110 items Mr. Henwood has to go approve and verify that Branch has completed them. Mr. Henwood explained that it seems a lot of the time one punch list item gets fixed and another is created in the process.

Mr. Jaynes believed additional change orders might come our way. He wanted everyone to know they look at the change orders carefully. Several change orders they have turned down completely because they were included in the bid or part of the scope of the overall project. The change orders have been a challenge for everyone.

Mr. Aldridge asked for clarification as to what was included in the $242,405.90. Mr. Jaynes said it includes every change order that has come across his desk, four change orders that are still being debated with Branch, and two additional change orders that Branch has not finalized but have given us an estimated cost. This amount is the worst case. If 100% of the change orders were approved at face value this is what we would need. $100,000 can be removed because we are not going to consider overages at this time. So now we can look at $142,000 but Mr. Henwood suggested we deny a few of the change orders so we need to remove that amount.

Caleb Hogan, Avery County Finance Officer went over the budget with the Board of Commissioners to find out where they could get money to finish the project. The Board discussed what was needed to complete this project and how much was needed to give the high school construction project at this time. Mr. Jaynes suggested that Mr. Phillips idea of adding in a buffer (rock removal allowance) is a good idea and should be considered.
It was suggested that $200,000 would be fair to complete the project and this would also leave some buffer room. This would bring the total project cost to 20,496,000. Caleb will have a budget amendment for the next Commissioners meeting reflecting the above amount; $112,000 would be taken out of interest and $87,032 out of fund balance.

Caleb presented another Budget Amendment as follows: The Avery County High School Renovation Project ordinance needs to be amended to adjust budgeted amounts in various line items. This change will not increase or decrease the overall project ordinance budget.

**Motion by Dennis Aldridge and second by Tim Phillips to adopt the Budget Amendment in the amount of $92,782.00 with a debit of $71,459.00 to General Construction (456600.4004); debit of $21,323.00 to Architect/Engineering Fee (456600.4005) and a credit of $92,782.00 to Permits, Insurance, Surveys, Other (456600.4006). Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).**

**Adjourn**

**Motion by Tim Phillips and second by Wood Hall Young, Jr. to adjourn this meeting at 6:17 p.m. Motion unanimously approved with those in attendance (4-0).**

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Martha Hicks, Chair
Avery County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:_________________________________
Cindy Turbyfill, Clerk